1914

JUNE

28
Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, assassinated in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip. Austria-Hungary blames Serbia for supporting this terrorist attack in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

JULY

5
Germany promises to support Austria-Hungary in its confrontation with Serbia over the assassination

23
Austria-Hungary issues ultimatum to Serbia to accept its terms or face recrimination

25
Serbia orders mobilization of its army

20
Austria-Hungary begins mobilization of its army, including along the Russian border

29
Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia

31
In self-defence and in support of Serbia, Russia orders partial mobilization of its army

31
As Austria-Hungary's ally, Germany demands an end to Russian mobilization

London stock market closes due to European crisis

AUGUST

1
Germany declares war on Russia and begins mobilization

2
Germany invades Luxembourg and demands permission to move through neutral Belgium against France

3
Germany declares war on France

Belgium refuses Germany permission to cross its territory to reach France and asserts its neutrality under international treaty

Britain promises to defend Belgian neutrality

4
Germany declares war on Belgium and invades the country. Over 1 million refugees flee the country over the coming weeks, mostly to the Netherlands but also to France and Britain.

Britain declares war on Germany

5
German mine layer *Königen Luise* becomes the first naval casualty of the war when sunk in the North Sea by three British ships

6
Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia

British parliament gives approval for the recruitment of half a million men to begin a rapid expansion of the British Army

Battle of the Frontiers. Fighting begins between French and German troops along the border linking the two countries. Continues until early September with heavy casualties.

7
British Expeditionary Force (BEF), under the command of Field Marshal Sir John French, begins to land in France. Disembarkation completed on 16 August.

The first 'call to arms' issued by the British Secretary of State for War, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener

British forces enter the German protectorate of Togoland in West Africa. Hostilities also begin in East Africa.

8
The First Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) is passed by the British parliament, giving the government widespread new powers over people's lives

12
Britain and France declare war on Austria-Hungary

13
Austro-Hungarian forces begin their first invasion of Serbia

15
Japan sends Germany an ultimatum demanding the evacuation of its naval base at Tsingtau in China

Russian Army invades East Prussia in a quick strike against Germany

20
Battle of Gumbinnen. Advancing Russian troops drive back German forces in East Prussia.

German troops occupy Brussels, the Belgian capital

Battle of the Ardennes. Intense fighting as the French attempt to advance into Germany. French driven back after suffering severe losses. Continues until 25 August.

22
Battle of the Sambre. French troops try to block the German advance north-west of the Ardennes.

23
Battle of Mons. Fighting begins for British troops around the Belgian town of Mons. The BEF begins to retreat alongside its French allies.

European war becomes global when Japan declares war on Germany

General Max von Prittwitz replaced in command of the German Army in East Prussia by General Paul von Hindenburg, with General Erich Ludendorff as his chief of staff

24
First Indian Army contingent leaves India to serve in France

26
Battle of Tannenberg. German armies in East Prussia defeat Russian forces. Battle lasts until 30 August.

Battle of Le Cateau. Part of the BEF fights a rearguard action against the Germans to allow the main retreat to continue.

German forces surrender in Togoland

28
100,000 British men already recruited by Kitchener. Immediate calls follow for a second hundred thousand.

Naval action between British and German ships off the Heligoland Bight in the North Sea. Four German ships sunk.

30
First German aeroplane raid on Paris

SEPTEMBER

3
Second Battle of Lemberg (or Lvov). Russian forces capture the fourth largest city in Austria-Hungary. Battle lasts until 11 September.

Benedict XV elected Pope

High point of British voluntary recruitment. 33,204 men enlist on this day, almost the entire number of men recruited in a year before the war (35,000).

5
Pact of London signed by the Allied powers of France, Britain and Russia, in which all three agree not to sign a separate peace

Battle of the Masurian Lakes. German armies in East Prussia defeat Russian forces. Battle lasts until 15 September.

6
Battle of the Marne. French forces, with British support, stop the German advance through northern France only a short distance from Paris and launch a counter-attack. Battle continues until 10 September.

13
Battle of the Aisne. German armies stop Franco-British counter-attack astride the River Aisne. The first trenches begin to appear in France. The battle lasts until 15 September.

14
General Helmuth von Moltke replaced in command of the German armies in France and Belgium by General Erich von Falkenhayn

16
First battalion of British part-time territorial troops, the 1/14th Battalion, London Regiment –known as the London Scottish– lands in France

17
Known as the 'Race to the Sea', the German, French and British armies move north from the Aisne and try to outflank each other. Continues to 16 October when the lines reach the Belgian coast.

22
First British aeroplane raid on Germany against Duisedorf and Cologne airship sheds

Three British cruisers, HMS *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy* sunk by a German submarine off the German coast

26
First Indian Army troops land in France

OCTOBER

3
First troops leave Canada and Newfoundland to continue their training in Britain

10
German forces take the Belgian city of Antwerp

14
First Canadian and Newfoundland troops arrive in Britain

16
An Indian Army force leaves Bombay to secure British interests in the Persian Gulf by landing in Mesopotamia, part of the Ottoman Empire (Turkey)

19
First Battle of Ypres. French and British troops stand firm around the Belgian city of Ypres, preventing the German armies breaking through to the Channel ports. Continues to 22 November.

29
Turkey joins the war on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Turkish warships shell Russian coastal towns in the Black Sea.

31
The London Scottish become the first battalion of British Territorial troops to go into battle at Messines in Belgium

NOVEMBER

1
Battle of Coronel off the coast of Chile. British squadron of ships defeated by German East Asiatic Squadron.

First Australian and New Zealand troops leave Australia, expecting to continue their training in Britain

2
Russia declares war on Turkey

Britain declares the North Sea to be a 'military zone', effectively beginning a distant blockade of Germany

Battle of Tanga. The first action of a long-running campaign in East Africa. German forces led by Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck defeat British and Indian troops. Fighting continues until 5 November. The campaign lasts until November 1918.

3
British ships blockading the Dardanelles bombard the Turkish forts guarding the entrance to the Straits

5
Britain and France declare war on Turkey

6
Indian Army troops land in Mesopotamia to protect British oil interests in neighbouring Persia, and encourage an Arab revolt against Turkish rule

7
Japanese troops, with British support, capture the German naval base of Tsingtau

22
British troops enter Basra in Mesopotamia at the head of the Persian Gulf

DECEMBER

2
Capture of Belgrade, the Serbian capital, by the Austro-Hungarians

3
Troops of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) disembark in Egypt to complete their training after it is decided conditions in Britain are unsuitable

8
Battle of the Falklands. In the South Atlantic, a reinforced British naval squadron defeats the German East Asiatic Squadron.

15
Recapture of Belgrade by Serbian forces

16
Bombardment of Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby on the British east coast by German battlecruisers. 137 civilians are killed.

17
Turkish forces launch attacks on the Russians in the Caucasus. In difficult conditions, the Russians initially do badly but soon recover. Fighting continues until 18 January 1915.

21
First German aircraft raid on British south coast towns

29
Battle of Sarikamish in the Caucasus. Russian troops initially pushed back by the Turks before the situation is reversed. Battle continues until 2 January 1915.

Military events
Naval events
Aviation events
Political events
Social events