The Killing Front, 1914-1918

1. Introduction:
   a. WWI still the Great War, much more important to UK history than WWII:
   b. 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 compared
      i. Similarities
      ii. Differences
         (1) Numbers killed and wounded larger
            (a) 9.5 million enlist, 10% die, 100,000s missing
            years length soldiers killed wounded civilians
            1914-18 4 750-908,000 2-2.5 mill. 1,400
            1939-46 6 270-300,000 600,000 60-70,000

2. Causes of the war
   a. “The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.” British Foreign Minister Sir Edward Grey, 3 Aug. 1914
   b. Diplomacy: the end of isolation and the making of alliances 1902-1914
      i. already two groups
      ii. Britain feels isolated
      iii. Joseph Chamberlain’s approach to Germany, from 1901
      iv. Instead rapprochement with France and United States
   c. Anglo-German Military Rivalry
      i. Admiral Tirpitz in insists on a large German Navy
      ii. Why stay in a naval race?
      iii. Public Support for military arms race

3. Course of the war
   a. Trigger
      i. June 1914, Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand
      ii. 4 Aug. 1914, British Empire enters war
      iii. Schlieffen Plan
   b. Western Front
      i. Sept. 1914, 1st Battle of the Marne
      ii. Oct.-Nov. 1914, British at Ypres (Belgium) halt German advance
      iii. Spring 1915, trench war, Alps to English Channel
      iv. limited technology (none are decisive in war)
   c. Search for a Back Door
      i. French want British to open up new front
      ii. attack on Ottoman Empire
   d. Home Front
      i. allotments, pub hours, rationing
      ii. Spring-May 1915, unrestricted sub war
      iii. 1916, universal conscription
      iv. British blockade versus sub war, 38% of merchant fleet lost
      v. 1917
      vi. 1918
      vii. 1919, Paris Peace Conference

4. consequences: legacy of the Somme
   a. Accounting for massive casualties?
      i. inability of General H.Q. to develop new tactics
      ii. Strategies
         (1) result?
   b. Somme, July 1916—test case
      i. late 1915, Douglas Haig (1861-1928) replaces Sir John French as
Commander-in-Chief of B.E.F.

ii. at Somme, Haig hopes for a *breakthrough*

iii. 7:30 a.m., 1 July 1916, long lines of assault divisions start slowly forward, mist, support of artillery, smoke, and overhead machine gun fire

5. consequences: home front

a. Change in role of labor
   i. Decline in domestic servants
   ii. Women’s role in war

b. increase in state regulation
   i. poorest of working class better off under wartime allocations than before

c. Rise and then fall of Lloyd George Liberals
   i. After failure at Gallipoli, 1915
      (1) 3-party coalition lead by PM Asquith
   ii. 1916, Press campaign for new PM
      (1) popular choice, D. Lloyd George, asked to lead coalition
      (2) under Lloyd George, Cabinet not Commons runs “total war” effort
   iii. 1818, “coupon” election
      (1) Lloyd George and the Unionists

d. Shift in international balance of power
   i. 38% of Britain’s merchant marine shipping had been sunk
      (1) Replaced by USA as leading merchant marine and naval power
   ii. Changing role in Middle East (next Paris Peace Conference)