

Summary: World War I

Florida Supports the War

World War I began in 1914. France, Britain, and their allies fought against Germany and its allies. The United States tried not to take sides. Then a German submarine sank a British ship carrying many Americans. In 1917, German attacks sank three American ships. Soon after, President Woodrow Wilson declared war on Germany and its allies.

The Florida Naval Militia reported for duty two days after the United States declared war. Thousands of Floridians began serving in the U.S. Armed Services. Women worked as ambulance drivers and nurses. Men worked as soldiers, sailors, and pilots.

Americans at home helped the war effort too. Factories and stores needed workers as many men left their jobs to become soldiers. Women took many of these jobs. Many African Americans moved north to work in factories manufacturing goods.

Thomas Edison was a Florida inventor who helped the U.S. Navy. He tried to make phones that could be used on ships. He also worked on machines that could find submarines.

Supporting the Troops

Airplanes were used in battle for the first time during World War I. Many soldiers trained at Florida's aviation centers. Pensacola became a training base for pilots and airplane mechanics. Other pilots trained in Jacksonville and Miami.

The U.S. Navy used the submarine base in Key West to guard the U.S. coast. Floridians also built ships that brought supplies to troops in Europe. These ships were built at shipyards in Jacksonville and Tampa.

Florida farmers produced pork, corn, and beans to feed the troops. Farmers planted castor beans. Castor bean oil was used to help airplane engines run smoothly.

In 1918, Germany and its allies surrendered. Thousands of soldiers returned to their homes in Florida.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

militia *noun*, a small army of ordinary people that may be asked to fight in emergencies

manufacturing *noun*, the process of making goods

aviation *noun*, the business of building and flying airplanes



After You Read

REVIEW In what way did Americans at home help the war effort? Circle the sentences that tell how women and African Americans helped the war effort.

REVIEW In what ways did Florida contribute to the war effort in World War I? Draw a box around three paragraphs that tell the answers.