

The Seven Years War

The Seven Years War, or 'The French and Indian War' as it is known as in the Northern American nations, was a practically global war fought in the years from 1754 to 1763, but largely during the seven year time period between 1756 and 1763, giving the war the name 'The Seven Years War'. The war included every European superpower and was fought on every continent except Oceania, which is a disputed continent consisting often of the modern day nations of Australia and New Zealand. The war is a very complex topic which caused practically most major events after the end of the war. It is due to the complexity of the war and the effects of it that I am going to go into as much detail about it as I can throughout this essay.

The Leadup

The state of power around the globe was at the brink of warfare at this point of time, especially in the rival filled nation of Europe. In the lands where the British, French and Iberians can't get enough of their precious colonies in the new world, the Holy Roman Empire is an absolute mess, the rivalries between the English and the French along with the Prussians and the Austrians heating up into all out war, and the Polish, Danes and Russians are building up their empires/commonwealths, is where the main conflicts are beginning

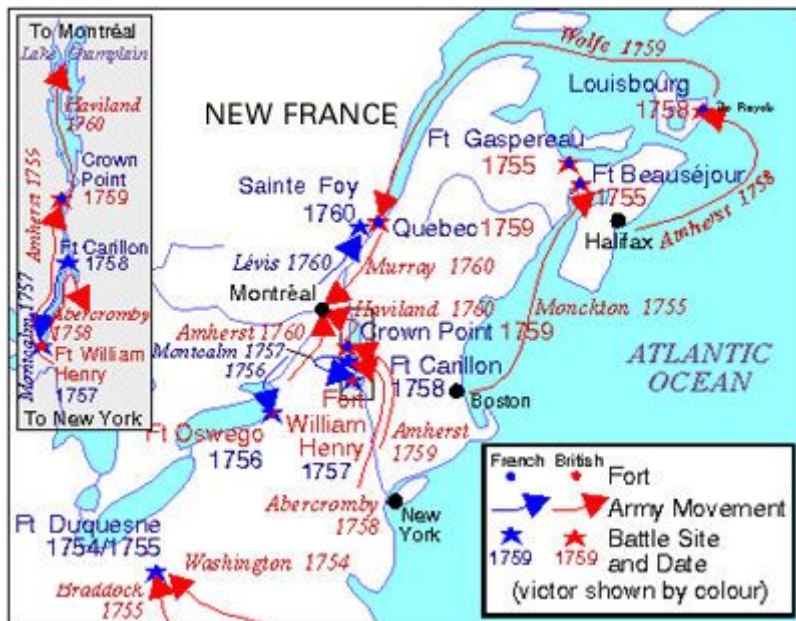
Europe - The land of Empires



It is commonly agreed that the earliest cause for the seven years war was the death of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles VI of Austria, in the year of 1740. He is succeeded by his Daughter, Maria Theresa, being declared the many titles she had inherited from her father, such as being crowned queen of Hungary, Croatia and Bohemia, as Austria controlled those lands, the former of those occupations leading to the formation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire , along with being declared the Archduchess of Austria. She however wasn't granted the right to the crown of the Holy Roman Empire until 1745, due to some complications with century old sexist traditions, barricading a woman from being declared Empress. The age old rival of Austria, Prussia, with its leader Frederick II, or as history would remember him Frederick the Great, criticised Theresa's inheritance due to the age old 'Salic Law' (The law that states that in a royal succession, if the heir is descended from a previous monarch only through the bloodline of a Female, then that heir is considered illegitimate), which he would then use as his justification for declaring war on Austria with the intent of deposing her.

The colonial status had been slowly tilting in the British and French favor, as the Portuguese appeared to only be staying to South America, and the Spanish Claims on Northern America had been steadily losing significance allowing the English and the French to take large swaths of land in modern day Canada, and the East coast of the modern USA, which was known as the 'Thirteen Colonies' back then. The British owned the Thirteen colonies and the Canadian territory of 'Newfoundland', while France claimed the midwest of Canada and the USA, modern day Louisiana, and Eastern Canada. These claims, however, more the French's than the British's, were lightly populated, some areas just possessing a sign stating that this area of land was under possession by the French or the British. However the conflicts stirring in the Americas didn't just involve the colonial superpowers, they also involved the native American tribes, who majorly relied on colonial trade, some tribes basing their whole states around it, using it to fund wars and their needs. For many decades the native tribes had been able to play the two sides against each other, in order to retain independence and control from them both. This had to stop, as the native tribes were forced to pick a side in the coming war, which everyone knew was coming. The result was that the major tribes of the Iroquois and the Cherokee to side with the British, while the other tribes sided with the French, the major ones being The Hurons, Algonquins and the Wabanaki Confederacy. The French also needed the large amounts of natives helping them, as they were at a large disadvantage due to their lack of manpower in the colonies. The war in the Americas began sooner than the conflict in Europe, in 1754 (about two years earlier), which is why it is occasionally given the name 'The French and Indian war'. The first year of the war would be mainly filled with the British failing to gain any ground, while still keeping the land they already had. While there was a single renowned victory located in Acadia the situation seemed very bleak for the British. However, the Americas were not the only place the British were sticking their hands into. In India, the once renowned Mughal Empire had been steadily losing power over time. Due to this the British privately owned 'The Right Honorable East India Company', stated economic war against the French, Dutch and the smaller minors dotted about the breaking Mughal empire, in order to gain the large amount of rich spices in the area. The Mughal empire was also in an independence war against the maratha confederacy, giving the perfect opportunity for the European powers to expand into the Indian subcontinent. The East India Company was threatened by other companies funded by the Dutch and the French, and wished to cement its position as the major company on the subcontinent. So now we get to the war itself, and the events ripple throughout history to this very day.

The War



The majority of the war would be fought between two separate coalitions, known as the 'The Convention of Westminster', featuring the major powers of Prussia and Great Britain, and 'The Treaty of Versailles', consisting of France, Austria and Russia. Both sides also consisted of some Germanic minors, along with other countries joining in, such as the Spanish and the Portuguese joining opposing sides in 1762, joining the Treaty of Versailles and the Convention of Westminster respectfully. In Europe, Frederick's invasion of Saxony went successfully and he was able to fully capture the state. However, he never got the opportunity to push into Austrian held Bohemia through recently conquered Saxony. In the Americas, the state had begun to change as Britain devoted more resources to the forces in the American Theatre. This would mean however that Frederick would not be able to expect much help from the British due to their resources being spent on the Americas. The British knew this would happen as the government mainly saw Prussia as a defensive ally for Britain, specifically in defending George II's title in the electorate of Hanover. However, there was still something, Britain could do, and that was crippling France by taking out its economy along with its colonies and navy. In Central Europe, Frederick was being majorly threatened on all sides, as the french began to invade Hanover, while the Austrians tried to take back Saxony. These attempts, however, were futile as Frederick defeated both armies in Saxony. This victory however would be short lived, as the Austrians would proceed to reconquer their territory of Silesia in late 1757. Along with this, Sweden also began to see weakness in Prussia and wish to reclaim their previous conquered territories, creating another theatre known as the 'Pomeranian war'. As is this wasn't enough, Russia would then proceed to take Prussia's eastern territories, split from the rest by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and an attempt at attacking the Austrians was met with failure. On the over side of the world, however, the other main member of the Convection of Westminster, Great Britain, was doing much better in the Americas, especially in the July 1758, where the British were victorious at the battle of Louisbourg, which is considered as the main moment when it was obvious that the French were losing. However, this did practically no good for Frederick, as his main problem were the

Austrians and the Russians, who threatened to crush Prussia as the combined armies of Austria and Russia succeeded at the battle of Kunersdorf, leaving Prussia open for an all out assault upon it. The event that was to follow however, Frederick would title 'The Miracle of The House of Brandenburg', in which both Austria and Russia would be unable to seize this opportunity for unknown reasons. While this was going on, France was unable themselves to act on this opportunity due to the fact that while they were already spread thin between the war in the colonies and the war in Europe, now they were also at a war at sea. Back at the Americas, the British would continue to push into French territory, taking the Canadian cities of Quebec and Montreal, practically stopping France from ever making a pushback in the Americas. In Europe however, even after the Prussian miracle Frederick was still on the edge of defeat, unable to push into enemy territory without immediate defeat. All he and Prussia could do now was nothing except wait. This comes to the years of 1760-1762, in which the European theatre would begin to slow down, and the fight in India would start following the same old story of the French being spread too thin, allowing the British to take victory after victory, even though the French had the Mughal Empire as an ally. Back in the European theatre, Frederick's luck had seemed to change, as the Empress of Russia, Elizabeth, had died, being succeeded by Peter III, the last surviving relative of Peter the Great, who ended the war with Prussia in the treaty of St Petersburg which, while drastically damaging Peter's popularity, which would eventually lead to a coup d'etat, improved Prussia's chances of coming out on top in this war. Sweden also soon exited the war in the form of the treaty of Hamburg. Russia leaving the war however did not hinder the Treaty of Versailles, as Spain's monarch, Ferdinand VI, had recently died in 1759, leaving the Spanish throne to his half-brother Charles III, who entered Bourbon Spain into the war on the side of both Bourbon France and the Treaty of Versailles. Spain then went on to attack Portugal, who up to this point had stayed Neutral in the war, due to the fact that they were still recovering from the devastating Lisbon earthquake of 1755 and their king Joseph I, on account of this, had decided to focus on developing Portugal and rebuilding, rather than building up their military. This Spanish-Portuguese war would be dubbed, however, the fantastic war as Portugal, despite Spain and France's overwhelming advantage in numbers, the Portuguese would be able to survive by avoiding fights they couldn't win and letting enemy troops succumb to hunger, disease and overall low morale, causing them to lose some of their territory in colonial Brazil to Spain, but not anything significant. Even due to Spain's colonial might, even they failed to push back British forces in North America as Britain had just become too dominant on the continent. France decided that now was the time to end the British in a plan that was proposed by the French foreign minister, Choiseul, which basically consisted of attacking Britain directly across the Channel. The ambitious plan would be sunk along with the entire French navy and a very large chunk of the French military, right to the bottom of the English channel. Due to Frederick's main adversaries in the war either having left the war or being distracted with another enemy, his only main enemy left was his age old foe, Austria, who he would proceed to defeat in a multitude of battles in the closing months of the war, with Frederick's war at least ending officially in 1763, with the pre-war boundaries being restored with little-to-no border changes. The final two treaties of the war would be the treaties of Paris and Hubertusburg, being signed on

the 10th and 15th of February 1762 respectfully. As the war ends we finally get to the Aftermath.

The Aftermath



As a consequence of the war, Frederick had been able to place Prussia as on of the Great powers of Europe, while France, on the other hand, had begun its dwindling descent into decay and chaos that would eventually cause the 'French revolution' and the 'Napoleonic wars' about 40 years later. Britain however would now begin its quest to create the biggest empire on the planet, as in India the East India Company would eventually proceed to conquer the entirety of India, eventually going on to become such a trade superpower that it would go to war with China in the 'Opium wars', where Britain would seize the island of Hong Kong and gain special benefits during Chinese trade with Britain. This war, however would take a massive toll on Britain's economy, which would eventually cause the huge surge of taxes in the thirteen colonies, which would eventually cause the American revolution, which would end with America becoming it's own independant state. This would also eventually result with France taxing its people and it's colonies in order to provide for the military. This would eventually be another reason for the French revolution, along with the spark for the Haitian and Latin American revolutions. Spain's war with Portugal would reignite in 1776 for control of the colonies in South America. Going back to Prussia for a bit, Prussia's victory would also cause Prussia to be the clear country to eventually form the German Empire hundreds of years later. This would also cause Austria to

eventually form the Austro-Hungarian Empire, who, along with the German Empire, would be prime players in WW1. Russia would eventually have a coup against Peter III, as he was an overall poor ruler, which was spearheaded by his wife, who would become to be known as Catherine the Great.

Conclusion

The Seven years war is an incredibly historic war that is responsible for most major events after it. Without it the Napoleonic wars don't occur, changing Europe forever. Without it, we don't have either World Wars, changing the world forever. This war, which changed the face of the world forever, is surprisingly rarely talked about in classrooms around the nation of Britain, and is only talked about in colleges and universities, when it is such an important war that it is surprising that it is neglected in High schools at least. However this is just my personal opinion. I hope this essay has increased your knowledge on this historic war and I hope that this helps you increase your knowledge on the events surrounding this time, as this part of History has so much happening, shaping the world to what it is today.