"History said Napoleon "is a fable agreed upon." Perhaps he was correct. Perhaps the record of the past becomes so ornamented with the dust and the interpretations of time that it takes on the quality of fable. When this happens, the stark and brutal facts of history lose their severity and potency as instructors to the present. They are not dished up often enough, free from all comment, to carry the lesson which only stubborn facts can convey. Cold facts of the past in authentic form, standing naked and alone, can be so brutal and disturbing. Let's take a look.

THE SOURCE

In the year of Our Lord 1930, the American Legion rendered a constructive service to the nation and mankind when it officially presented through the National Source Record Commission, a seven-volume history of the World War which is titled "Source Records Of The Great War." Skilled historians set themselves to the task of examining accurate data of the war and putting it in readable form. They began with Causes, carried the narrative through the Treaty of Versailles. In the last volume were included a Chronology of the war, a Bibliography, a Statistical Summary, Diagrams, Maps, and International Comparisons. The Statistical Summary was prepared by Col. Leonard F. Ayres, a Colonel on the General Staff whose title was Chief of The Statistics Branch of the General Staff. He is the same Colonel Ayres who today occupies an office in the War Department and twice monthly, presents to Members of Congress a statistical picture of defense progress.

DURATION.

For the little country of Serbia, the world war raged for 1564 days. Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914. Thereafter in rapid succession came similar declarations until both sides to the conflict had made 32 separate declarations of war between July 28, 1914 and July 19, 1918. Query: How long may the present conflict endure?

THE HUMAN EQUATION

Total population of the nations involved was 1,031,502,000, of which 60,339,106 were mobilized for war. Of this number 8,163,518 were killed, 20,203,653 were wounded and 6,383,757 were taken prisoners. Civilian deaths totaled 8,000,000 and permanent human wrecks were set at 6,000,000 making a total human loss of 22,000,000. This factual account describes this as the "total human loss chiefly of vigorous males." 22,000,000 vigorous males. That's really something!
PROPERTY AND MONEY COST

The total direct property loss consisting of ships, cargoes, factories, farms, churches, dwellings public works etc was 56 billion dollars. The total direct money loss thro expenditure, relief and bankruptcy was set at 202 billion. The indirect loss because of lack of peacetime production was set at 150 billion. The money loss of human life on the basis of life insurance figures was set at 70 billion. Final total estimated cost of that war - 478 BILLION DOLLARS. The estimated wealth of the U.S. in 1916 in the form of money, securities, farms, home, factories, machines, farm products, personal property and everything was 220 billion. The cost of the World War was therefore the equivalent of the destruction of every dollar of wealth in two nations the size of the U.S.

SHIPS SUNK

Total loss of merchant ships was 14,710,000 tons. This is the equivalent of 1471 vessels with a displacement of 10,000 tons. Total number of warships lost or sunk was 1,218,000 tons. This is the equal of 34 of the largest battleships afloat.

IRONIES OF HISTORY

The ironies and vagaries of a quarter century of history are many and varied.

Back in 1914-15-16-17
Germany declares war on Russia
Germany declares war on France
Turkey declares war on Russia
Britain declares war on Turkey
Japan declares war on Germany
Italy declares war on Turkey
Italy declares war on Austria
Rumania declares war on Austria
Germany declares war on Portugal
Italy declares war on Germany
China declares war on Germany

In 1940-41
Nazi's war on Communists
Vichy France aids Nazi's
Turkey under pressure from both sides
Britain wooing Turkey
Japan and Nazi's in alliance
Italy wooing Turkey
Fascists, Nazi's and Austria together
Austria, Rumania and Nazi's allied
Portugal sympathetic to Nazi's
Fascists and Nazi's allied.
Japan allied with Nazi's invading

COMMENT

Such are the brutal facts of history.