

Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill  
(November 30, 1874 – January 24, 1965)  
By Carl Moore

In January 1919, with the close of the Great War, Winston Churchill took up the position of Secretary of State of War and Air in the Lloyd George Liberal coalition government. Though not part of the official British contingent at the Paris Peace Conference, while in attendance Churchill provided input and guidance for Prime Minister Lloyd George's stand "To endeavour to secure from Germany the greatest possible indemnity she can pay, consistently with the economic well-being of the British Empire and the peace of the world, and without involving an Army of Occupation in Germany for its collection." (1) With the agreed principle that Germany must pay for war costs, Churchill doggedly pursued a policy for demobilisation that benefited the average soldier, maintaining a volunteer army and policies to deal only with the Bolsheviks in Russia.

Winston Churchill was the son of Lord Randolph Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, and Jannie Jerome, an American socialite. In 1893 after leaving Harrow School, Churchill on his third attempt, was accepted to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. After passing with credit twentieth out of a class of one hundred and thirty, he joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Queen's Own Hussars as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in 1894. (2) From 1895 to 1900, Churchill volunteered to see action in the



The Minister of Munitions, Winston Churchill, watching the march past of the 47th Division in the Grande Place, Lille.

In the second row, next to the French officer is Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, who ran a Red Cross hospital at Calais during the First World War. Standing next to her is her daughter, Lady Rosemary Leveson-Gower, who worked in her mother's hospital, and then Sir Edward "Eddie" Marsh, Private Secretary to Winston Churchill.

Photograph by Aitken, Thomas Keith (Second Lieutenant)

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Mohamand Campaign, in the Battle of Omdurman in Sudan (4), and was captured during the Boer War (3), where he took part in Spion Kop, the relief of Ladysmith, the occupation of Pretoria. As much as Churchill found enjoyment in the military, “he regarded it as a means to an end – the making of a reputation that would allow him to enter the House of Commons.” (2) In 1900, on Churchill’s second attempt, he won the Conservative seat for the Town of Oldham to start a political career. Churchill quickly rose through the political ranks, leaving the Conservatives and joining the Liberals in 1904. Churchill at the start of the Great War in 1914 held the position of Minister of the Navy. His political career ran aground when the naval attack at the Dardanelles and Gallipoli failed to achieve the objective of quickly knocking out the Ottoman Empire.

Leaving the government in November 1915, Churchill left for France to take up a post with the Queen’s Own Oxfordshire Hussars. In January 1916, he was appointed lieutenant colonel, commanding an infantry battalion, the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Scots Fusiliers. It was during this time that the idea of the caterpillars (tanks) was developed. In 1916, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle praised the idea of tanks. (5)

In May 1917, Churchill returned to Great Britain as Minister of Munitions. (6) Churchill would hold this position until the end of the Great War. With the armistice on November 11, 1918, Churchill assembled the Munitions Council to redirect its attention to the demobilisation of British Industry. (7)

With the Paris Peace Conference preparing to start, Lloyd George appointed Churchill to the War Cabinet in the position of Secretary of State for War and Air. In this position, Churchill’s primary responsibility was the demobilisation of British Forces.

In the summer of 1917, with mostly civilian input, a draft scheme for demobilisation had been prepared by the War Office. This scheme was to bring back “key” people needed to restart the British industry. These “key” people were also the same people who were held back from enlistment because they were needed in the British industry. Churchill realized this would put the ordinary soldier at a disadvantage, not being able to acquire any of these important positions in industry.

The proposed demobilisation program imbalance was not missed by the ordinary soldier. He watched these “key” people, who had only recently joined the units, being rushed back home to fill positions, that the ordinary soldier should have had the first opportunity to fill. In the two months, after the armistice while the demobilisation program was in effect, Army units mutinied and disorder was common. Churchill proposed a 3-part solution:

“First: Soldiers should as a general rule only be released from the front in accordance with their length of service and age. Those who had served the longest at the front were to be the first to be demobilised, and any man with three wound stripes or more was to be discharged forthwith. Everyone must take his turn in accordance with this order.

Secondly: The pay of the Army must be immediately increased to more than double the war rate, in order to lessen the gap between the rewards of military and civilian employment.

Thirdly: In order, whilst still maintaining the necessary forces in the field, to release the men who had fought in as large numbers and as quickly as possible, the 80,000 young lads who had been trained but had not quitted our shores, must be retained compulsorily for a period of two years and sent abroad.” (9)

After convincing the War Cabinet of the merits of this proposal, with its reluctance to introduce a new conscription bill, Churchill headed to France to meet with Lloyd George on January 23, 1919. After attending the Peace Conference with Lloyd George, that evening he pressed for approval the new demobilisation procedures. With the Prime Minister’s approval, on January

29, 1919 Army Order 54 (Extra Remuneration to those retained on Military Service) and Army Order 55 (Armies of Occupation) were issued. (10) With this new policy in place, the rate of men discharged averaged 10,000 daily. The 80,000 young lads, currently completing training, were eager to release their fathers, uncles, and brothers from the hardship of war and take their place in industry. The issue of conscription was approved in Parliament. With demobilisation, underway and a retention of 900,000 for the occupation armies, Churchill looked at other issues, namely the continued fighting in Russia.

“In those days the Russian revolution had not been exposed as a mere organisation of tyranny, perverse and infinitely cruel. The events which had taken place in Russia, the doctrines and watchwords which poured out from Moscow, seemed to millions of people in every land to offer prospects of moving forward into a bright new world of Brotherhood, Equality and Science. Everywhere the subversive elements were active; and everywhere they found a response.” (11) On April 16, 1917, the Germans “turned upon Russia the most grisly of all weapons. The Germans transported Lenin in a sealed truck like a plague bacillus from Switzerland into Russia.” (12) With the return of Lenin, the Bolsheviks were able to consolidate the party and in October seized power. With the revolution, Lenin looked to other nations to join the worldwide revolution. Lenin believed that the Bolshevik could appeal to the general population of the other nations over the wireless to encourage the people of the other nations to raise up with the Bolshevik, overthrow their governments, and join with Russia in a general cessation of hostilities. It was these actions that Churchill had to deal with when he took the office of Secretary of War and Air and “became an heir to the pledges and tragedies of this situation as well as to those domestic difficulties.” (13)

With British troops unwilling to continue to fight with the defeat of Germany and demobilisation ongoing, it was decided that all current action in the Batum-Baku operations in the Caucasus be completed, and British troops withdrawn without delay, then making peace with Turkey, and providing arms and equipment to anti-Bolshevik forces. In opposition to this policy. Lloyd George proposed a meeting, which President Wilson supported, with the Bolsheviks, the white Government of Siberia, Archangel, Nabokov, Sazonov and other representatives of anti-Bolshevik groups to meet on the island of Prinkipo (Princes' Island) in the Sea of Marmora. Churchill who had repeatedly pressed Lloyd George for a policy on the military commitments in Archangel and to Admiral Kolchak and Anton Denikin, was now sent to the Paris Peace Conference to see what he could get accomplished within the scope of limited action. (14)

On February 14, Churchill crossed the Channel to attend the Peace Conference, the same day President Wilson was to return to America. The conference ran late that day, with President Wilson getting ready to leave, the Russian agenda was finally reached. Churchill

“with the persistence born of my direct responsibilities upon the various Russian fronts, and with all sorts of cruel realities, then proceeding, present in my mind, I stood up and made my appeal. ‘Could we not have some decision about Russia? Fighting was actually going on. Men were being killed and wounded. What was the policy? Was it peace or was it war? Were we to stop or were we to go on?’” (15)

At this point President Wilson, turned around to listen, leaning on Clemenceau's chair. Churchill spoke about the ongoing support of anti-Bolshevik groups, the need for joint action by the Great Powers, and efforts to hold free elections under Allied auspices to sweep away the Bolshevism currently taking hold in Russia. President Wilson reply, before leaving was

“Russia was a problem to which he did not pretend to know the solution. There were the gravest objections to every course, and yet some course must be taken— sooner or later. He was anxious to clear out of Russia altogether, but was willing, if necessary, to meet the Bolsheviks alone (i.e. without the National Russians) at Prinkipo. Nevertheless, if Prinkipo came to nothing, he would do his share with the other Allies in any military measures which they considered necessary and practicable to help the Russian armies now in the field.” (16)

The next day, an Allied Council for Russian Affairs was established. The military was to inquire into what resources could be available and co-ordinated, as defined by the Allied Governments, if Prinkipo fell through. Churchill reported this to Lloyd George and added, ““If Prinkipo fell through, the Supreme War Council could be presented immediately with a complete military plan and an expression of opinion from the highest military authorities as to whether within the limits of our available resources there is a reasonable prospect of success. The Supreme War Council would then be in a position to take a definite decision whether to clear out altogether or to adopt the plan.” (17)

Lloyd George received a telegraph from Churchill on February 15, 1919 that outlined some issues currently facing delegates. The Prinkipo Island proposal of the Allied Powers had been made public for about a month, and the Bolsheviks replied of wanting to meet the wishes of the Allied Powers. In so much as it was imperative to see peace restored, the Bolshevik Government in “verbally accepting the invitation to Princes Island have, so far from observing a truce of arms, taken the offensive in many directions and are at the present time attacking on several fronts. In addition they have called up new classes and expedited and expanded their military preparations.” (18) Included in this telegraph was a time table of 10 days from the 15<sup>th</sup> for the Bolsheviks to pull back 5 miles from current lines, otherwise the Princess Island proposal

will be deemed to have lapsed. Once confirmed the Allied forces will withdraw; these were the circumstances for the Princes Island discussions to take place.

At this point, Churchill moved to the question of the development of the Proposal for a Committee of the Associated Powers to Examine the Possibilities of Allied Military Intervention in Russia. This committee was comprised of military representatives from American, British, French, Italian, and Japanese. The purpose was to form an estimate of the actual military assistance that would be needed from each government to provide competent representation in Russia, Finland, Estonia, Poland and other boarder States. The current military organization present were deemed able to, acting as “mouthpieces of the Chiefs of the Staff of their respective nationalities” (19) within 10 days formulate a position on their ability to supply and a plan for the utilisation for the joint resources.

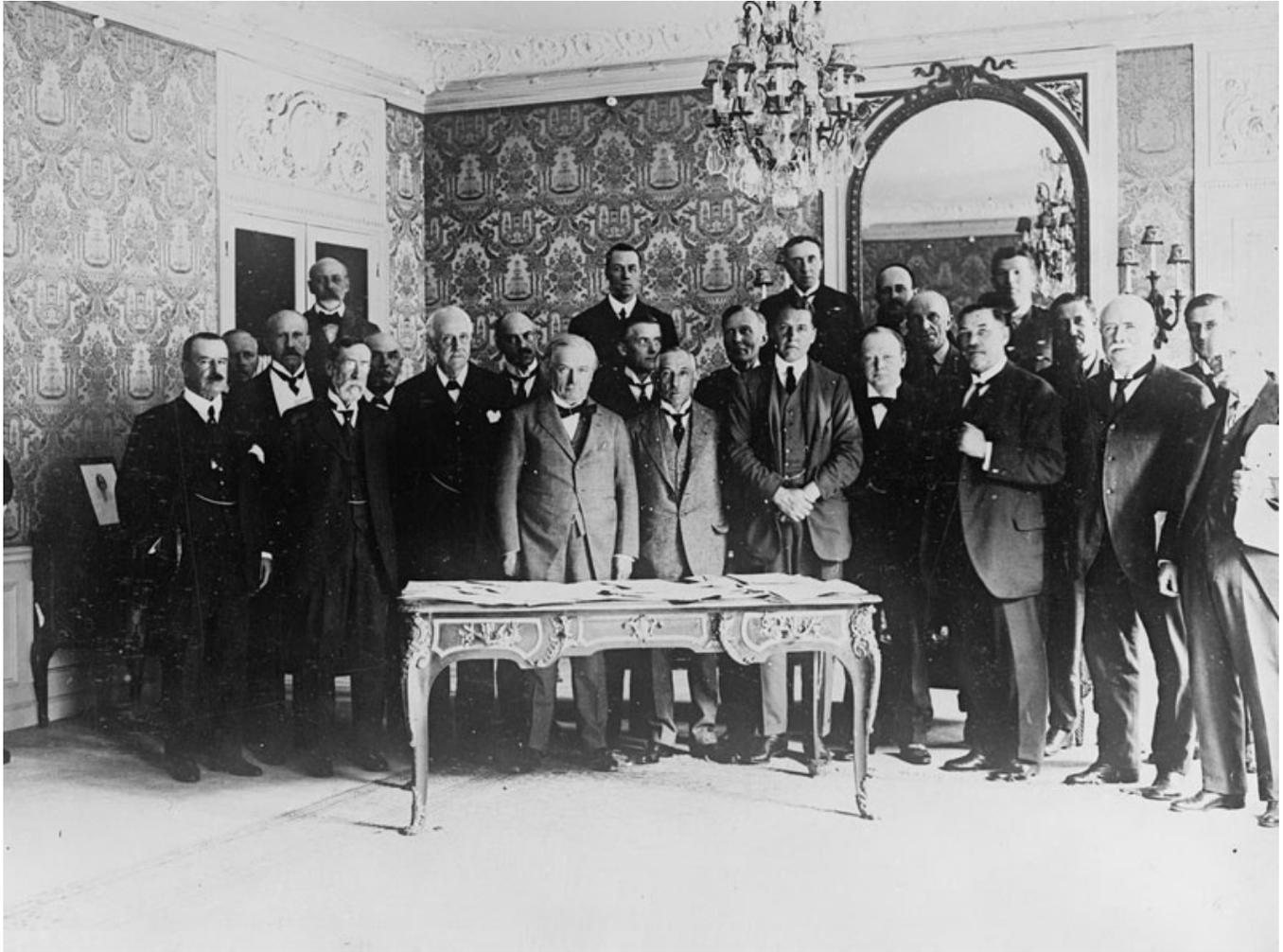
Lloyd George’s view was well set for the Prince Island proposal, and he felt that Churchill had in this, committed the British to more than was allowed. To address this issue, a telegraph to Mr. Philip Kerr was sent on February 16, 1919. Lloyd George stated: “See Churchill and tell him I like the cable which it is proposed to send Bolsheviks. As to alternative programme. I trust he will not commit us to any costly operations which would involve any large contribution either of men or money. The form of his cable to me looks rather too much like this.” (20) Lloyd George went on to say that no British volunteer army will be used in Russian or be allowed to interfere with the development of this volunteer army. He continues that this should be made clear to

“other Powers before an agreement is arrived at otherwise they might either depend too much on us or subsequently upbraid us with having failed in our promises. The main idea ought to be to enable Russia to save herself if she desires to do so; and if she does not take advantage of opportunity, then it means either that she does not wish to be saved from Bolshevism or that she is past saving.” (21)

Thus, undermining Churchill efforts

Churchill in the afternoon wrote to the Prime Minister, informing him of the proposal of the formation of the military commission to enquire “to sustain the Russian armies we had called into being during the war with Germany and to protect the independence of the border States.” (22) With fears being expressed, Mr. Balfour proposed that no formal commission be established but informal talks between military authorities be allowed, with a report presented to their own Government. After Clemenceau commented on how strange the “spectacle of the victorious nations in this great struggle being afraid even to remit to the study of their military advisers at Versailles a matter admittedly of vital importance to Europe,” (23) this project was allowed. With both the Prinkipo proposal and study of military and diplomatic possibilities amounting to nothing, Churchill returned to London on February 18, 1919.

Once again Lloyd George, under pressure from the War Cabinet, for a Russian policy requested exact cost information. Churchill responded on February 27, 1919 and reminded the PM that exact costs on the current assistance to Russia being considerable as no concerted policy is in place. The lack of policy was a serious drain on resources and the moral of our troops, not to mention it communicated to our Russian allies our lack of commitment to their cause and hindering their ability to organize, thus encouraging the Bolshevik in their efforts. Churchill went on to say the issue with getting exact cost from the military was due to the question being intermingled with lack of a political direction. “For instance, to begin with what is fundamental, the Allied Powers in Paris have not decided whether they wish to make war upon the Bolsheviks or to make peace with them. They are pausing midway between these two courses with an equal dislike of either.”(24)



Historic group taken after the deliberations of the British Empire Delegation at the Premier's house in Rue Nitot, Paris, at which the most momentous decisions were arrived. Left to right: Sir Joseph Ward, General Smuts, Lord Milner, Sir Joseph Cook, Mr Barnes, Mr Balfour, Mr Montague, Mr Lloyd George, Mr A Chamberlain, Mr Hughes, Sir F Smith, Mr Winston Churchill, General Sir Henry Wilson, Mr Botha, Mr Massey and Mr Kerr.  
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On March 14, 1919, Churchill updated the Prime Minister on the events our months since the signing of the Armistice. Churchill pointed out that the Bolshevik have not increased in strength but have had disastrous effects on the anti-Bolshevik forces due to a lack of policy by the Allies or an effort of support for the anti-Bolshevik campaigns going on within Russia. Prinkipo has only contributed to these issue, along with the German troop withdrawal without Allied ability

to stop the Bolshevik advances which allowed vast territories full of new supplies and resources to be taken. The Siberian front has seen many Bolshevik manifestations behind Allied lines. It was not until May that the Supreme Council made a decision on Russia, with Churchill in attendance. Leading up to this the Bolshevik had made advances to the Black Sea, the Siberian army under Kolchak (now under General Gaida), reformed the front as the Czechs withdrew, moved closer to Volga, and moved through Viatka and Kotlas onto Archangel. So, on May 26, 1919 the Allied powers (Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Wilson, Orlando, and the Japanese delegate, Saionji) set forth these views:

NOTE FROM THE SUPREME COUNCIL TO ADMIRAL KOLCHAK, MAY 26TH,  
1919.

The Allied and Associated Powers feel that the time has come when it is necessary for them once more to make clear the policy they propose to pursue in regard to Russia.

It has always been a cardinal axiom of the Allied and Associated Powers to avoid interference in the internal affairs of Russia. Their original intervention was made for the sole purpose of assisting those elements in Russia which wanted to continue the struggle against German autocracy and to free their country from German rule, and in order to rescue the Czechoslovaks from the danger of annihilation at the hands of the Bolshevik forces.

Since the signature of the Armistice on November 11th, 1918, they have kept forces in various parts of Russia. Munitions and supplies have been sent those associated with them at a very considerable cost. No sooner however did the peace conference assemble than they endeavoured to bring peace and order to Russia by inviting representatives of all the warring governments within Russia to meet them in the hope that they might be able to arrange a permanent solution of the Russian problem.

This proposal and the later offer to relieve the suffering millions of Russia, broke down through the refusal of the Soviet government to accept the fundamental condition of suspending hostilities while negotiations for the work of relief were proceeding.

Some of the Allied and Associated Governments are now being pressed to withdraw their troops and to incur no further expense in Russia on the ground that continued intervention shows no prospect of producing an early settlement. They are prepared, however, to continue their assistance on the lines laid down below, provided they are satisfied that it will really help the Russian people to liberty, self-government, and peace.

The Allied and Associated Governments now wish to declare formally that the object of their policy is to restore peace within Russia by enabling the Russian people to resume control of their own affairs through the instrumentality of a freely elected constituent assembly, and to restore peace along its frontiers by arranging for the settlement of disputes in regard to the boundaries of the Russian State and its relations with its neighbours through the peaceful arbitration of the League of Nations.

They are convinced by their experience of the last twelve months that it is not possible to attain these ends by dealing with the Soviet Government of Moscow. They are therefore disposed to assist the government of Admiral Kolchak and his associates with munitions, supplies, and food to establish themselves as the government of all Russia, provided they receive from them definite guarantees that their policy has the same object in view as the Allied and Associated Powers.

With this object they would ask Admiral Kolchak and his associates whether they would agree to the following as the conditions under which they would accept continued assistance from the Allied and Associated Powers.

In the first place as soon as they reach Moscow that they will summon a constituent assembly elected by a free, secret, and democratic franchise, as the supreme legislature for Russia, to which the government of Russia must be responsible, or, if at that time order is not sufficiently restored, they will summon the Constituent Assembly, elected in 1917, to sit until such time as new elections are possible.

Secondly— that throughout the areas which they at present control they will permit free elections in the normal course for all free and legally constituted assemblies, such as municipalities, Zemstvos, etc.

Thirdly— that they will countenance no attempt to revive the special privilege of any class or order in Russia. The Allied and Associated Powers have noted with satisfaction the solemn declaration made by Admiral Kolchak and his associates, that they have no intention of restoring the former land system. They feel that the principles to be followed in the

solution of this and other internal questions must be left to free decision of the Russian Constituent Assembly. But they wish to be assured that those whom they are prepared to assist stand for the civil and religious liberty of all Russian citizens and will make no attempt to re-introduce the régime which the revolution has destroyed.

Fourthly— that the independence of Finland and Poland be recognised, and that in the event of the frontiers and other relations between Russia and these countries not being settled by agreement, they will be referred to the arbitration of the League of Nations.

Fifthly— that if a solution of the relations between Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Caucasian and Trans-Caspian territories and Russia is not speedily reached by agreement, the settlement will be made in consultation and co-operation with the League of Nations, and that until such settlement is made, the government of Russia agrees to recognize these territories as autonomous and to confirm the relations which may exist between their de facto Governments and the Allied and Associated Governments.

Sixthly— that the right of the Peace Conference to determine the future of the Roumanian part of Bessarabia be recognised.

Seventhly— that as soon as a government for Russia has been constituted on a democratic basis, Russia should join the League of Nations and co-operate with other members in the limitation of armaments and military organisation throughout the world.

Finally— that they abide by the declaration made by Admiral Kolchak on November 27th, 1918, in regard to Russia's national debt.

The Allied and Associated Powers will be glad to learn as soon as possible whether the government of Admiral Kolchak and his associates is prepared to accept these conditions, and also whether in the event of acceptance they will undertake to form a single government and army command as soon as the military situation makes it possible.

G. CLEMENCEAU.  
LLOYD GEORGE.  
ORLANDO.  
WOODROW WILSON.  
SAIONJI. (25)

Kolchak did not delay his response, he did not want to retain power past the defeat of the Bolsheviks. Kolchak agreed to elections of the Constituent Assembly to determine their own system of government, dated June 4. The tone of the response was welcomed, as it seemed to be in agreement to the Allied and Associated Powers positions as stated. Churchill note that what happened in June could have happened in January with a better result. This 6 months' delay, eroded the authority of the Omsk Government with uncertainty of Allied support. This time allowed the Bolsheviks the ability to raise an army and consolidate power in the pretense of being for the Russian people. This late declaration provided enough relevance in opposition to draw interest but not real support to overcome the strength of the Bolsheviks.

From this point Winston Churchill, faded into the background of the Paris Peace Conference. For the Allied have come to some conclusion on the different issues each face, that at the beginning of May the Germans' where invited to Paris. Treaty of Versailles was printed with the Germans' receiving a copy. By June, the Treaty was signed. With the loss in the British General Election in November 1922, Winston Churchill once again fines himself, out of the Government.

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## Time Line

Dates	Events
1892	Left Harrow School
1893	Entrance to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, which he eventually did on the third attempt
1894	Passed with credit in December 1894, twentieth out of a class of one hundred and thirty
February 1895	Joined the 4th Queen's Own Hussars, as a 2nd Lieutenant
October 1896	Transferred to Bombay, British India
1897-1898	Served in the Mohmand Campaign, as Commander of the 2nd Brigade
1898	Joined the 21st Lancers serving in the Sudan
October 30, 1899	Enters the Boer War via Cape Town South Africa
November 1899	Captured when his troop train was attacked
December 1899	Escaped from the Boers POW camp, making his way to Durban
January - July 1900	Took part in the battle of Spion Kop, relief of Ladysmith and the occupation of Pretoria
October 1900	Entered the House of Commons as Conservative for the town of Oldham
1904	Switched parties joining the Liberals
1905	Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, assisting Lord Elgin
1906	Elected as the Liberal MP for North-West Manchester.
1911	Minister in charge of the Navy
March 18, 1915	The Anglo-French naval attack at the Dardanelles began
May 1915	Left office over the Dardanelles tragedy and the slaughter at Gallipoli
November 11, 1915	Leaves the Government and goes to France as an officer in the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars.
January 1, 1916	Appointed to Lieutenant Colonel commanding an infantry battalion, the 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers.
Fall 1916	Received a letter of praise from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle regarding his ideas for caterpillars (tanks).

May 1917	Returns to the Tories Government under PM Lloyd George
July 1917	Becomes Minister of Munitions
January 1918	President Wilson delivers speech to Congress mentioning fourteen points which should guide American aspirations, became the basis of the peace accord.
October 1, 1918	German Government ask for armistice based on the Fourteen Points.
October 29, 1918	Meeting between France, Italy, Great Britain and United States representatives held at Quai d'Orsay over the Fourteen Points
November 11, 1918	1st Armistice signed; End of the Great War Churchill assembles the Munitions Council to plan the demobilisation of British Industry in the war effort
January 10, 1919	British Peace Delegation with Mr. Lloyd George crosses the Channel for the Paris Peace Conference
January 14, 1919	The Council of Ten meet
January 15, 1919	Churchill takes position as Secretary of State for War and Air
January 16, 1919	2nd renewal of the Armistice: clause added for provisioning of Germany
January 18, 1919	Plenary session of the Peace Conference
January 23, 1919	Churchill heads to Paris to meet with Lloyd George about 3 point policy for demobilisation
January 29, 1919	Demobilisation Orders: Army Order 54 (Extra Remuneration to those retained on Military Service) and Army Order 55 (Armies of Occupation) were issued.
February 14, 1919	Covenant of the League of Nations
February 14 - 17, 1919	A Plan of War Against the Bolsheviks - Council of Ten Meeting
February 16, 1919	President Wilson returns to America, Covenant of the League of Nations Churchill attends the Paris Peace Conference, addressing the issue of Bolsheviks in Russia
February 18, 1919	Churchill heads home to London, with
March 3, 1919	Churchill address House of Commons on enforcing the blockade with Germany near starvation
March 13, 1919	President Wilson returns from America

May 7, 1919	Treaty of Versailles was printed, German's invited to Paris
May 26, 1919	Note from the Supreme Council to Admiral Kolchak, to make clear the policy they propose to pursue regarding Russia
June, 1919	Treaty of Versailles, peace in substantial accordance with these terms was duly signed.
November 1922	Loses seat in general election, Political life looks to be ending

Links:

[Wikipedia – Winston Churchill](#)

[Encyclopaedia Britannica – Winston Churchill](#)

[Imperial War Museums](#) – History involving Britain and the Commonwealth, from the First World War to the present day.

[International Churchill Society](#) - Dedicated to preserving the historic legacy of Sir Winston Churchill.

[Churchill Book Collection](#) – Books and a Blog on Winston Churchill

Videos:

[Paris 1919 Full Documentary](#) published by the Canadian Film Board. Historical documentary with reenactments of events in Paris in 1919.

[C-Span Book Review with Margaret MacMillan](#) “Paris, 1919: Six Months that Changed the World” The video talks about the people, event and outcome from the Paris Peace Conference.