The Technology Of War Essay, Research Paper

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there were many technological advances that changed the way war was looked upon. War was no longer two opposing groups meeting in a field for a prearranged fight. It had evolved into a strategic game where the stronger your toys, the better your team fought. The industrial revolution had changed the way war was engaged, fought, and ended. This transformation would bring about the second of the worldwide battles, the Second World War.

The Technologies that effected war, overall, had changed greatly in three ways.

To begin with, transportation had been greatly advanced. One major change in transportation was the invention of the train. With this new invention many countrie’s economie’s were boosted and they were internally connected. The train allowed them to ship goods to and from the coasts for trading and it also allowed for the people in distant areas to be able to travel to a distant part of their own country. The train also allowed for troops to be transported many miles, but without losing valuable energy. The invention of the train also helped boost the economy in another respect. It increased the need for raw materials like steel for the production of rails. Overall the train helped in many ways. Trains were also a large factor in the time of war. It helped for speedy transportation of men, food, munitions, fodder, and other necessities to the battlefield. In the case of the American Civil War, railways played a large factor in helping the North defeat the South. The North?s victory happened in part because of their intricate system of rails. The South also had a system of rails, but they were unable to expand them because of their lack of industrial areas.

Technologies also changed the way of war through weaponry. The many new inventions previous to, and during the Second World War altered war yet again. One of the largest inventions of the twentieth century was the H.M.S Dreadnought. This was the first modern, ?all-big-gun? battleship. The Dreadnought was the model for all battleships to come. The artillery on this ship consisted of ten twelve-inch rifles in five turrets. The Dreadnought was equal in firepower to any two other battleships afloat at the time she was launched. The ten twelve-inch rifles were able to accurately fire upon other ships at distances up to 20,000 yards. Another advancement that this boat had over others was the eleven-inch armor belt that was placed upon it. The belt was two inches thicker than a normal ship’s armor belt. The Dreadnought was not only physically stronger than other battleships, it was also able to travel longer distances and at speeds as high as 21 knots. With the invention of the Dreadnought the entire naval field of strategy had to change.

Many other advances in technology came in the field of artillery. Countless new weapons were being produced. One example of this would be the machine gun. The machine gun was a very powerful firearm that left opposing armies in the dirt. The machine gun was a very frightening to go up against and it also changed the way war preceded. Instead of men marching at each other, the armies turned to trench warfare. To escape the deadly blows from this new weapon, soliders dug holes to take cover in.

One other gun that played as a large factor in the outcome of many wars was the breechloader gun. This gun allowed troops to be able to load their firearms while on the ground, instead of standing and creating a larger target of themselves. The breechloader was a great advance and saved many lives.

Along with these new inventions and ways of transportation the way war was fought had to be changed. The tactics of war were on the verge of modification. One way that the tactics were being changed is illustrated through the invention of the H.M.S. Dreadnought. ?The Backbone of the fleet was the battleship which would, for maximum gunfire concentration, be fought in line of battle but at great distance from the enemy. It would be supplemented for scouting and special duties by the battle cruiser, a ship with the high speeds and relatively light armor of a cruiser, but with the guns of a battleship. Cruisers would be the eyes of the fleet or could be detached like the frigates of the days of sails. Destroyers would screen the fleet from attack by submarines and torpedo boats and would use their own torpedoes as offensive weapons. The submarine would revolutionize fleet actions.? (MEN IN ARMS, 206).

Tactics also changed in respect to fighting on the battlefield. As I stated before the way war was fought changed due to the new invention such as the machinegun and the breechloader. Men no longer stood in lines and marched toward each other. Skirmishing and trench warfare were put to use to ensure victory and the preservation of the lives of each opposing side?s men.

In short with the industrialization of society, the invention of new ways of transportation and weaponry, and the evolution of tactics molded the way war was engaged, fought, and ended. The Second World War was the testing ground for the tactics, inventions, and transportation that had been improved upon during the century. This war illustrated how the improvements made in the field of technology were far more important than the tactics used in battle.