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1 minute to discover an aspect of Rotary history

The Impact of the First World War on Rotary's International Expansion

The First World War had a profound impact on Rotary's international expansion, representing both a challenge and an opportunity.

During the conflict, Rotary's growth in Europe slowed significantly.

International communications were disrupted, existing clubs were often isolated, and many Rotarians were mobilized for the war effort, halting development initiatives.

However, the war also strengthened Rotary's belief in the importance of international understanding and peace.

After the conflict, Rotary experienced rapid expansion, particularly in Europe.

In a continent seeking reconstruction and determined to prevent future wars, Rotary's ideals of service and international cooperation found strong resonance.

New clubs were established in countries such as France, Germany, and Italy, often with the support of American Rotarians involved in postwar reconstruction.

The war also influenced Rotary's growing commitment to international humanitarian projects, addressing reconstruction needs and supporting war victims.

This experience reinforced Rotary's dedication to global peace, positioning it as an early actor in citizen diplomacy and transforming it into a truly international movement.

