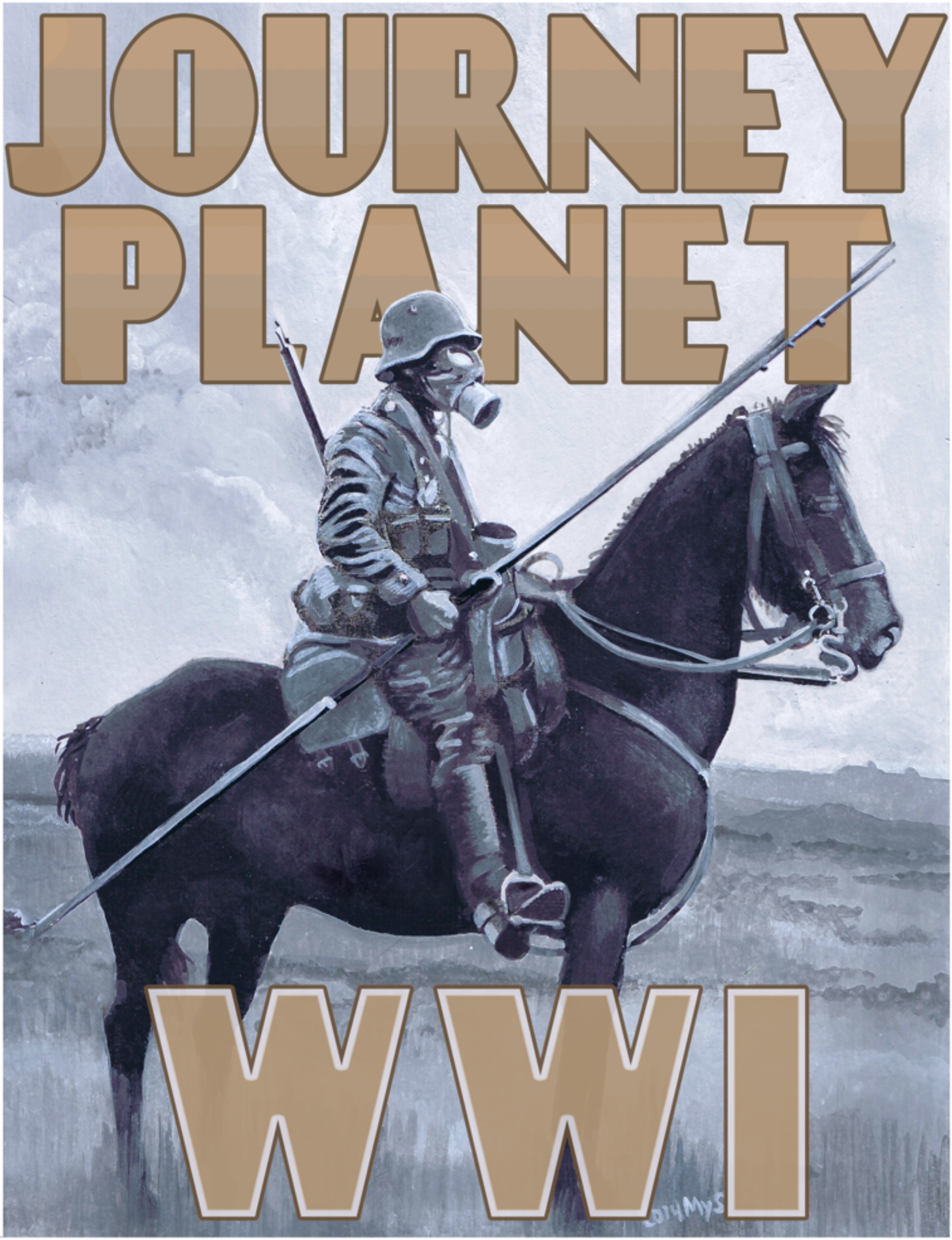
JOURNEY PLANET



WWI

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&
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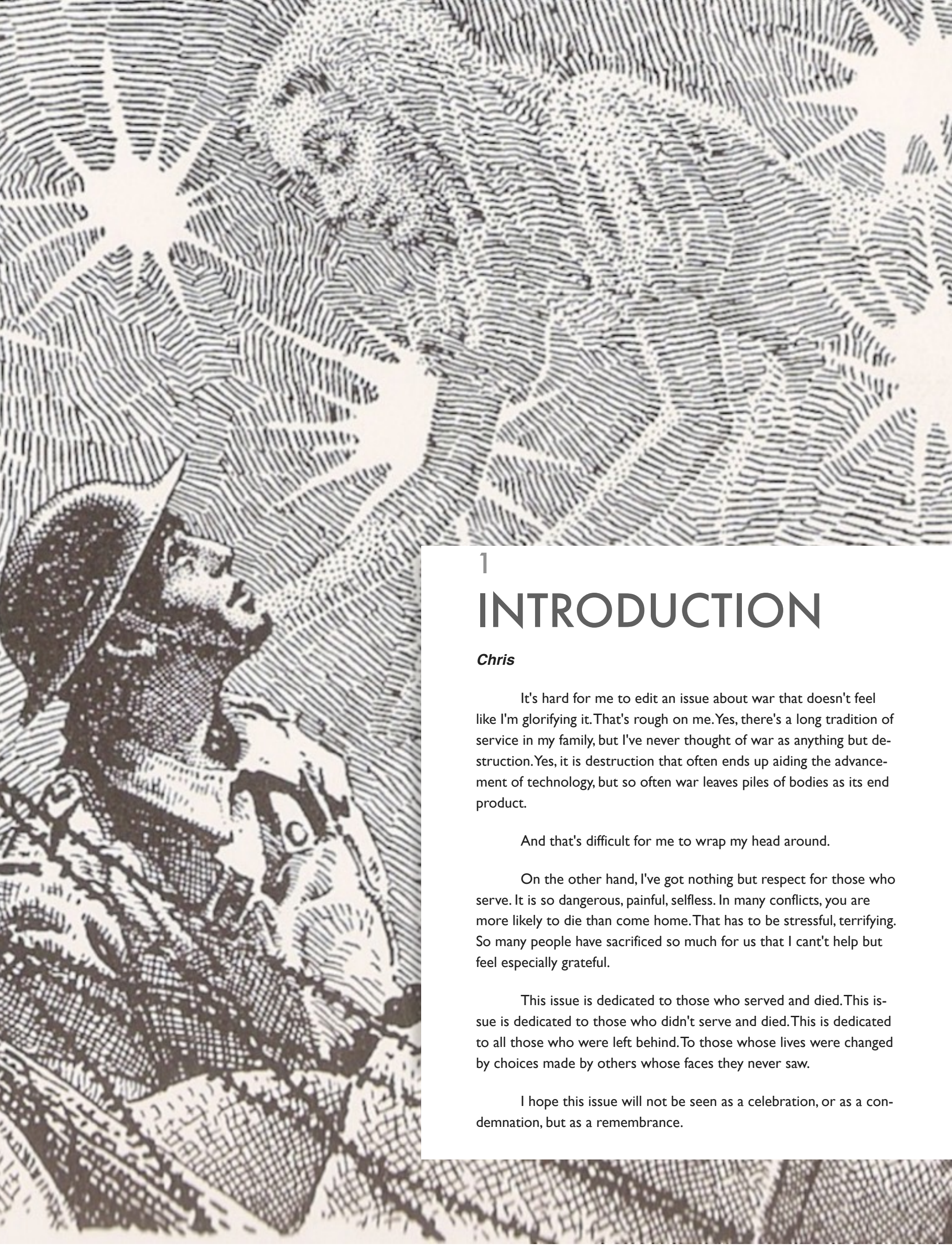

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INTRODUCTION

Chris

It's hard for me to edit an issue about war that doesn't feel like I'm glorifying it. That's rough on me. Yes, there's a long tradition of service in my family, but I've never thought of war as anything but destruction. Yes, it is destruction that often ends up aiding the advancement of technology, but so often war leaves piles of bodies as its end product.

And that's difficult for me to wrap my head around.

On the other hand, I've got nothing but respect for those who serve. It is so dangerous, painful, selfless. In many conflicts, you are more likely to die than come home. That has to be stressful, terrifying. So many people have sacrificed so much for us that I cant't help but feel especially grateful.

This issue is dedicated to those who served and died. This issue is dedicated to those who didn't serve and died. This is dedicated to all those who were left behind. To those whose lives were changed by choices made by others whose faces they never saw.

I hope this issue will not be seen as a celebration, or as a condemnation, but as a remembrance.

EDITORIAL BY JAMES BACON

The First World War should be a major historical epochal moment in time. In every small hamlet across Britain, at Cross Roads, in centres of towns, in the major cities, monuments stand remembering the fallen. Demonstrating the significance that the First World War holds, yet there is a lacking of true cultural awareness I often feel, a deficit, which is shown by the dearth of works, well up until the centenary, and a deserved reverence for those wo successfully have portrayed the war in fiction and factually but not always the breadth of knowledge about them. I feel this elevates the First World War to a position where it is not easy to write about well. With this in mind it was lovely to read such insight, research and personal reflection and reminiscences in this fanzine.

Apparently we are in a post truth time, where lies and propaganda are believed. But are we?

Posters depicting grotesqueness, suppression of news, lies about what had occurred, all were tools of war, if ever there was nationalistic jingoism, it was the First World War.

Charles Kuentz said to Harry Patch in a Flanders fields "I fought you because I was told to and you did the same.". The two were World War 1 veterans. Britain's last surviving Tommy, Patch took a long time to tell his story, but when he did he was unequivocal: "War is organised murder and nothing else….politicians who took us to war should have been given the guns and told to settle their differences themselves, instead of organizing nothing better than legalized mass murder"

British soldiers unloaded at Dun Laoghaire on Easter 1916 in Ireland were confused when they didn't hear French being spoken, they had no idea what they were marching towards, let alone what country they were in, and their officers kept ordering them into a fusillade of urban warfare that no one seemed to be ready for. Even when courageousness occurred, and it was rare, no one was honoured, no medals presented, for this was warfare at home.

Seriously, the first World War is remembered so much, it is difficult to actually know it.

This makes our contributions and earnest efforts of our contributors all the more important. The loss of life and sacrifice in war beggars belief. It was beyond dreadful and incomprehensible on many levels. Even my own research demonstrated that nothing is as simple as it seems.

I'm grateful for the input of all our contributors, it is a hard subject to write about, and I am very thankful for memoirs, original transcripts and all the research and consideration that has made this a fine collection on the subject.

My thanks.

INSTANT FANZINE

Des Grogan

Do you have any personal connections to the First World War. If so would you like to share what that is, with any details that you know of.

Granddad and Grand uncle both in France. My Granddad was wounded at the Somme. We lost his medals!

Is there a part of the First World War that strongly interests you, what is the part, what have you read or understand of it, why does it interest you, what should others read to learn more

The piece that interests me is the truly global pat of the war and not just the French and Belgian campaigns. German battleships in the Southern Hemisphere causing mayhem among ships coming in from the Empire. The turks invading neighbouring countries and dying in their thousands due to Cold and hunger. The Armenians. West Africa. The Arabian campaigns.

The moral of World War I is 'Never assassinate Archduke Ferdinand." Lemony Snicket

Maybe there is a part that makes you sad, maybe there is a part that makes you think, or indeed makes you angry, please let us know. help us understand your perspective, all are welcomed.

The whole lot to be honest. Stupid waste. Man's inhumanity to man. And I recall with dismay that one French general was overruled by Woodrow Wilson and other politicians when he said they should invade Germany as otherwise they wouldn't think they were beaten. German soldiers came home in 1919 with their new President welcoming them home 'unvanquished' . encroyable.

Is there a Book, Film, Poem, Piece of Art, Comic, Story that you feel really epitomises the First World War. Tell us what you like about it, what draws you to it, and share why you appreciate it.

'Oh what a lovely war' is a satire which still holds great resonance, and *Black Adder goes Forth* of course.

How is the First World War remembered in your community, neighbourhood, city or locality. Unfortunately in my immediate locale it is remembered for the Rising by plastic republicans however 5 minutes further in Glasnevin Cemetary there are Gravestones for the dead from both wars and the Rising and all are cherished equally as befits a mature educated society looking back on its' own birth . And on Blackhorse avenue as you know there is the small service man's cemetery.

Kerry Kyle

The first and strongest time WW1 touched the imagination of three generations of children in my family came, not in the school room, not from reading history books, but through pop culture.

My father was born on Valentine's Day in 1919, just three months after the Great War had ended. As a child, Dad adored movies and, early on, he had the insane goal of seeing every movie ever made. It was a romantic goal—and one destined for failure—but it meant that, when he was 8, he was in the theatre when Wings came out. Growing up post-WW1, he had, of course, other influences at the time. But he told me it was *Wings* that first totally caught his imagination. It was *Wings* that filled his heart and mind with the excitement, adventure, and sorrow of The Great War. It was *Wings* that fed his burgeoning enchantment with futuristic machines and larger-than-life stories that morphed into science fiction. A movie captured the interest and imagination of that 8-year-old. Later he would learn of the horrors, the death, the despair. But not then. Not yet.

I was born (err—*cough*—well) in 1964. When I was 11, I discovered the Lord Peter Wimsey books by Dorothy L. Sayers. Much went over my head at that age, but one theme that didn't was the darkness in Lord Peter's past. Lord Peter would lose himself in flashbacks of a world of gas and mud and artillery fire and bombs. It was hinted at, it was whispered at, but it rarely came out in the open. And that captured my imagination: It fed a fear and awe and pity for the hell of trench warfare. When I was a pre-teen, WW1 loomed over me far more than WW2: loomed over me and colored my perceptions of other books of fiction that I later read—and prepared me, if only a little, for such more serious books as *All Quiet on the Western Front.*

My son was born in 2002. Since he was 5 or 6, we've made our own music mixes. Our choices can be offbeat, eclectic, and broad-ranging. From Devo to Flatt & Scruggs to Mozart, we've hunted for just the right song for our mixes. When my son was about 8, we were looking for more songs to update our Christmas Mix, and I played him Robbie O'Connell's cover of "Christmas in the Trenches." I gave him a brief summary of WW1, so he could understand the context, and he cried as he listened. It quickly became one of his favorite Christmas songs, and I know that his view on the war will always be colored by this song. Through that song my son's imagination touched the lives of these men from both sides: men with girlfriends, with wives, and with mothers; men who are cold and hungry, alone and afraid. That's the kind of human narrative I'm glad is in the back of my son's mind, as he learns about the war in school. (For the record, we've heard that song nearly a dozen times in the first two weeks of December this year. We still cry sometimes.)

There you have it. From movies to books to songs, WW1 in pop culture touched three generations of children in my family and colored our perception of it to this very day (or, in the case of my father, to the last month of his life). Dad and I watched Wings together many times since he came to live with us. Our last viewing came in September, just a couple of weeks before his death. It's what I think of, when I look at the war drawings he made as an 8 and 9 year old. Tonight, when I get home after work, my son will light a fire in the fireplace and turn on the Christmas tree lights. And I'll bet one of the songs he'll play will be "Christmas in the Trenches."

Brian Nesbit

Do you have any personal connections to the First World War. If so would you like to share what that is, with any details that you know of.

I've only one connection of which I'm aware. My Great Great Grandfather was in the Merchant Navy during the war and he received a couple of medals for service. They're now on display in Kilmore Quay.

Is there a part of the First World War that strongly interests you, what is the part, what have you read or understand of it, why does it interest you, what should others read to learn more

All of it? I'm an historian by education (although that is receding into the past). The complexities of the Irish Volunteers and their involvement in the war is hugely interesting. However it's probably actually the situations leading up to the conflict that I've studied most and know the most about. I think this is one of the most important things for people to learn and, hopefully, avoid.

Maybe there is a part that makes you sad, maybe there is a part that makes you think, or indeed makes you angry, please let us know. help us understand your perspective, all are welcomed.

The entire war was utterly unnecessary and a blight on the history of humanity. While it is arguable that the acts of defence were necessary, none of it ever needed to happen. Millions of lives were lost so old men could argue over borders. The huge issue now is that some sides are remembered exclusively as noble and others as evil. Unsurprisingly it was not, and never is, that simple. In my limited understanding no country comes out of this looking well at all and it's only a pity that humanity has never turned around to the politicians and the generals and told them to go fight the war on their own.

Is there a Book, Film, Poem, Piece of Art, Comic, Story that you feel really epitomises the First World War. Tell us what you like about it, what draws you to it, and share why you appreciate it.

Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme is a critical piece of theatre about WWI, especially in the context of Ireland. It's a difficult play and I disagree with quite a lot of the opinions contained within, but it gives amazing insight into the thoughts of Protestant/Unionist soldiers. It shines a light on the view points of the Unionist community at that critical point in time and asks huge questions of the Nationalist/Republican community in both states on the island. It also highlights so many of the horrific things about being a front line soldier in WWI, along with the hope and camaraderie that those men found amongst the horror.

'**How is the First World War remembered in your community, neighbourhood, city or locality.**

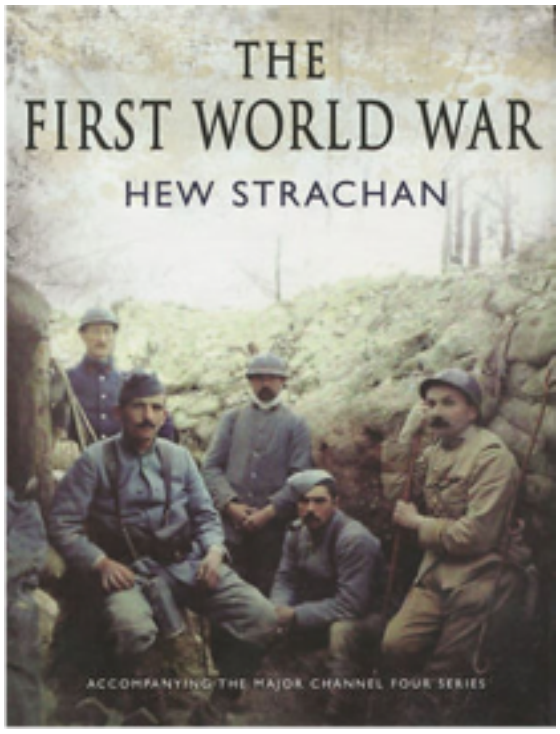
In Ireland it is still not really remembered in the way that it should. Because of the 1916 Rising and the complexities of politics it's only very recently that Ireland has begun to really acknowledge those we lost during WWI and those who came back, forever changed. Officially things are changing now and there are ceremonies, but it's not part of the general psyche and I doubt it ever will be. The increased politicisation of the Poppy in the UK further complicates this. It is now, sadly, seen as a required symbol of Britishness and not something that I would ever wear.

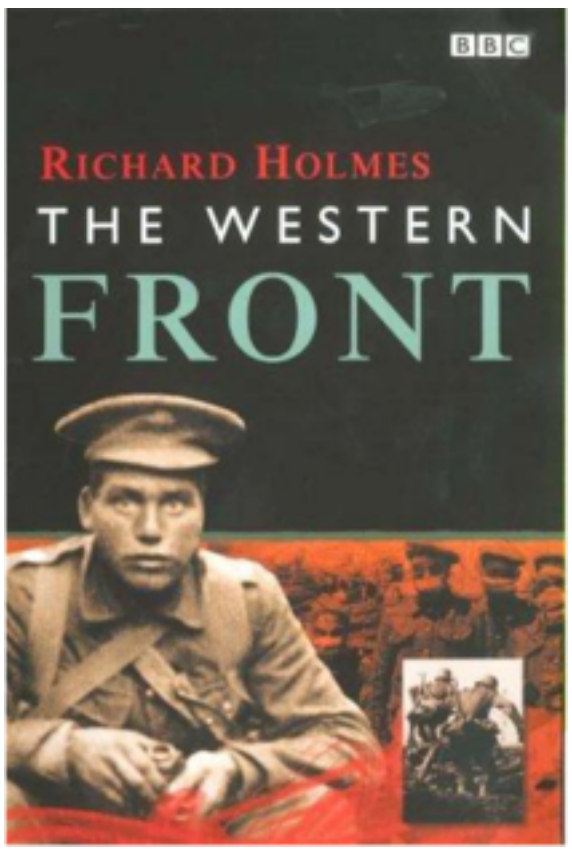
TONY KEEN

When the email from James and Chris popped into my inbox inviting me to write something for the 'Instant Fanzine' section of *Journey Planet*, despite my overall business, I immediately wanted to respond. I haven't written anything for *JP* since, I think, issue 13, back in 2012; in fact, I haven't written much for fanzines of any stripe since then. So it's about time I did. And the First World War is something I'm interested in.

But what to write? I'm more of a Second World War person than a First (I can bore for England on fighters of the Royal Air Force, 1939-1945). The bit of WWI I probably know best is the Battle of Jutland, but there are other people in fandom who know that better, and I don't know that I have any real insight to give without doing a lot of research, which I really don't have time for right now. The only real family connection to the War is a relative of my maternal grandmother who was killed at Jutland while serving on *HMS Malaya*. There didn't seem to be much I could do that went beyond the books I've read.

And that's when I realized I could write about the books. So here are two I'd recommend to anyone who wants to learn more about the First World War.





Hew Strachan's *The First World War* was published in 2003, a single volume distillation of work he was doing towards a three volume 'definitive' history of the War, of which, so far, only the first volume has appeared. It appeared in conjunction with a ten-part Channel 4 documentary series based on his work, the most significant such series since the BBC's *The Great War* in 1964.

Strachan's objective, and part of the reason I like the book (besides its being very readable), is to restore the global perspective on the War. The common view of the War is often that it was a European one, and in the UK, that it was a war primarily between Britain and Germany. British knowledge of the War centres around the Western Front, with excursions to Gallipoli, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Jutland, Lawrence of Arabia and the Russian Revolution. Occasionally the Easter Rising will be presented as a German proxy campaign against the British (and whatever else the Rising was, it was certainly that). The BBC's *The Great War* falls into this at times. But the War was indeed, a world war, much like the Napoleonic Wars. How could it not be, with Germany having been trying since 1884 to establish a colonial empire to rival those of Britain and France, the Russian and Ottoman empires sharing a land border, and Japan participating in the War from its outset?

So, naturally, Strachan covers all the usual campaigns and actions. But he also recounts naval actions in the Pacific and South Atlantic, where Maximillian von Spee humiliated the Royal Navy at the Battle of Coronel, before the British exacted a devastating revenge at the Falkland Islands. Here is the East African campaign, where Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck ran rings round a British force nearly ten times the size of his (Strachan also wrote *The First World War in Africa*). And here are campaigns where the British and Germans played only a small role, if any at all: Turks and Russians fighting back and forth across the Caucasus; Italians and Austrians digging in to caves high up in the Dolomites; the crushing of Serbia. More than a decade on, it remains my recommendation for a basic history of the War.

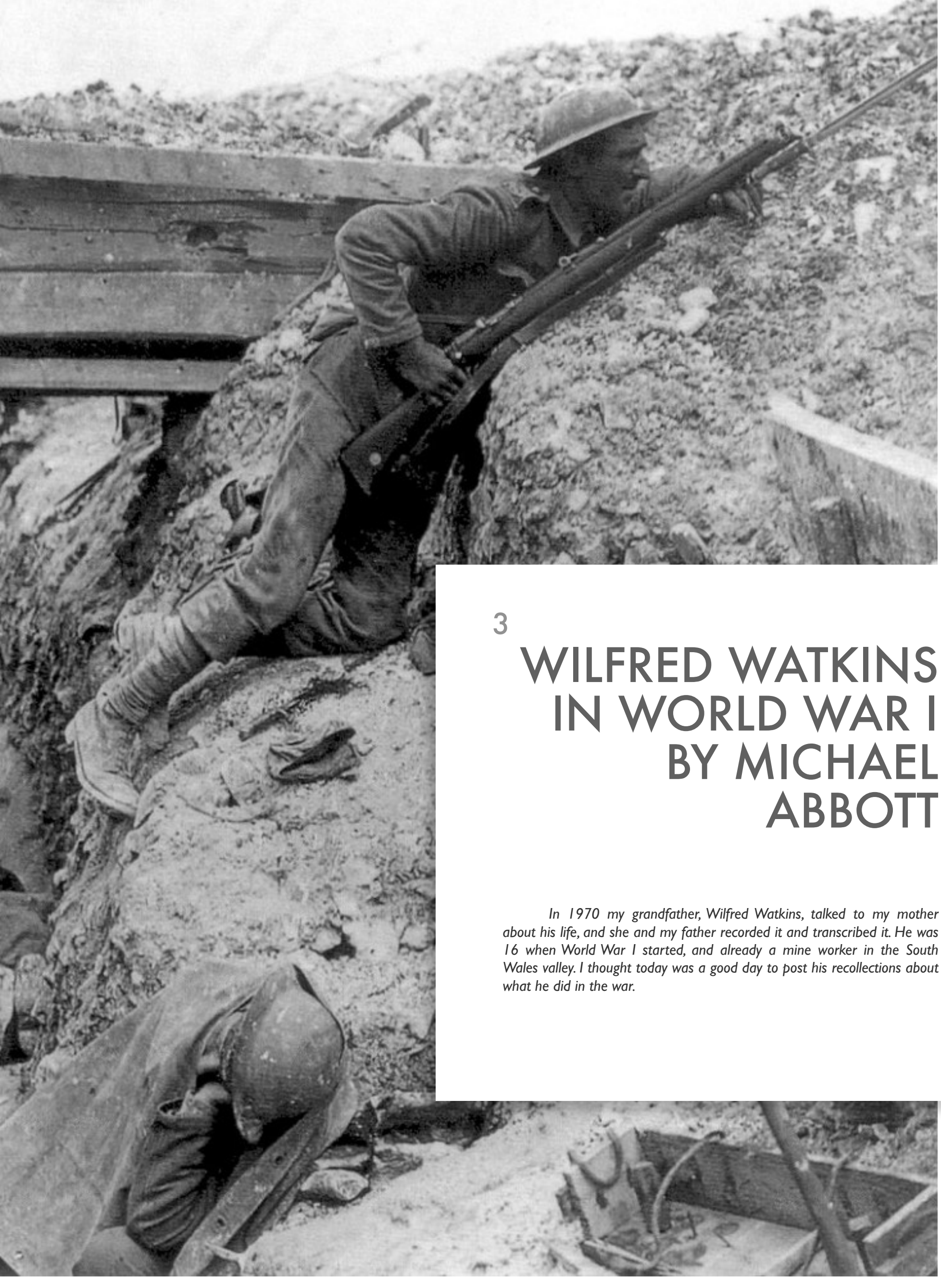
It's worth tracking down the original 2003 hardback, as that is rather more profusely illustrated than the 2014 paperback reissue, though the latter does have a new introduction. Strachan is also editor of *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, which I don't know so well, but looks useful.

Aside from four pages at the end, Richard Holmes has no such pretensions to a global perspective on the War in *The Western Front*, another book connected with a TV series, from 1999. As the title reveals, this is a book about the theatre seen as the principal one by most Britons, and, as the cover implies, Holmes is primarily interested in the British experience, though he does devote a chapter to the Franco-German charnel house of Verdun.

Where Strachan's thesis is to remind the reader that the War was global, Holmes' clear intention is to restore the reputation of the British Expeditionary Force and its commanders, to correct the picture of 'Lions led by Donkeys' peddled by Alan Clark, and repeated in *Oh! What A Lovely War* and *Blackadder Goes Forth*. When Michael Gove (who I strongly suspect had either read this book or seen the series) attacked '*Blackadder* myths' about the First World War, he had a point – where he was wrong was in attempting to replace these myths with an equally false picture of glorious flag-waving bravado and good British against bad Germans[1].

Most Britons still imagine the British command in the Western Front in the terms found in *Blackadder* – the mad, callous, and out-of-touch Brigadier-General Melchett, dining in luxury in a French chateau, while his men are slaughtered in the trenches, supported by the venal and cowardly Captain Darling, ever trying to secure his cushy job away from the action. Holmes points out that it wasn't always like that. The real General Melchetts, at least at brigade and divisional command level, were often to be found at the front (corps and army commanders were less visible); many of them were killed and maimed along with their troops. The real Captain Darlings at staff command often worked themselves into a state of exhaustion, guilty about not being at the front, where they felt they should be, and trying to get themselves reassigned not to places of safety, but back into danger. Holmes does not deny that mistakes, horrible, bloody mistakes, were made at the Somme and at Passchendaele and elsewhere. But he argues that these mistakes were learnt from. Those lessons enable the British to blunt the German spring offensives in early 1918, and subsequently

1 - See my blogpost here:
http://tonykeen.blogspot.co.uk/2014/01/michael-gove-and-first-world-war.html.



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WILFRED WATKINS IN WORLD WAR I BY MICHAEL ABBOTT

In 1970 my grandfather, Wilfred Watkins, talked to my mother about his life, and she and my father recorded it and transcribed it. He was 16 when World War I started, and already a mine worker in the South Wales valley. I thought today was a good day to post his recollections about what he did in the war.

Thanks to ***history_monk*** *for assistance getting this material ready. This is an extract from the full conversation which we published in our fanzine, Attitude, in the 1990s. If people are interested, I can try to post the rest of the transcript later. (Edit: it's now at* ***http://doubtingmichael.livejournal.com/16694.html****)*

When I'd been working [in the mine] for a year or two, the First World War came along.

I'll tell you about that; I was very keen to go. I wanted to be a hero. Five of us went down to the recruiting office in the Billiard Hall and told the Recruiting Sergeant we wanted to join the Army. There was no possibility we could join unless we had the manager's signature to release us. So we thought, "That's done it." We got outside and I said to the other boys, "Wait a minute, we'll fix this now. We'll go down to Top Pit and I'll copy the manager's signature for us all." So we went and I copied the signature on to all the forms and took them back to the Sergeant. He had a look at them. "Oh," he said, "so everything's all right, is it?" "Yes, yes," we told him, "everything's all right, we've got the signatures." "Well, now," he said, "do you know what you've done? You've forged the manager's signature by here." He said, "I've got his real signature here, see. Now, the best thing you lot can do is to bugger off home before you get into trouble." And I thought I'd been clever!

So back we went, downhearted, of course. Well, my blind brother, Bert, always called us in the mornings, so that night I persuaded him — well, I bribed him — to sleep late in the morning. So he did that and we all met again as we'd planned and we went down to another recruiting office in Pontypridd. We went through it all again and we were asked again, "Where are you working?" One of the chaps, Frank Wallace, had an uncle who was a foreman in the quarry so we said, "Oh, we're working in the quarry." "Oh, that's all right, then," he said, "as long as you're not working underground. Strip off, then." So we all stripped off and he had a good look at us. Now in those days it was reckoned a bad thing to wash your back, they said it was weakening. So he saw we all had a black patch on our backs. "Oh yes," he said, "I can see you're working in the quarry, you little so-and-so's. Well, I'll pass it over, get on the scales."

Well, we were all weighed and measured; four of us passed but one of us, Frank Wallace, was standing on tip-toes and he failed. We were dished out our clobber: tunics, hats, great-coats, everything, and that night we dressed up and thought that we were very big, walking down the street. My trousers were about a foot too long, my great-coat was dragging on the floor and my tunic was a bit too slack, sure, but we thought we were looking great. The following morning we had to go to Milford Haven, to Ubbeston Fort, from Quaker's Yard station. So the four of us trooped over there and behind us came my father, trying to get me back out because my mother was terrible about it. But it was no use, we'd signed, everything was settled, so off we had to go. I was glad, myself, of course. Well, we got to the camp and they gave us three planks each for our beds, two little trestles about nine inches high and two or three blankets and a kit-bag for our pillow. So that was how we slept that night — no mattresses, of course — and when we got up in the morning we were a bit sore, sure, but we didn't mind. They brought in breakfast, then, bacon and something else. Well, we were waiting like lemons, now, for it to be brought to us, but as soon as the orderly brought it in everyone rushed for it. Of course, we just sat there, waiting — we had no breakfast, anyway. But, believe me, when the next meal came we were there with them!

When we'd been there quite a while they wanted volunteers for the Dardanelles. So out we trooped, the four of us, again. The CO came up to us and looked at us. "Are you sure you want to go out there?" "Yes, sir, of course we do." "Well," he said, "I think you're rather young." (We were only about 16 then.) "Yes, I think you're rather young, all of you. Now, wouldn't it be better for you if you stayed here and joined the bugle band?" "All right, sir, if there's nothing else for us, we will."

Well, Fred Thomas became a cold-shoe-er — I don't know why, because it wasn't the cavalry — and I forget what Will Harris did, now, and two of us joined the band. I was on the drums and John James was on the bugle. We'd never played anything before but we got on pretty well; it came pretty natural. We had a good teacher, too, kind, not stern, and in fact, I became right-hand drummer, leading drummer in the band, that is. So we had about a year in the band. There was a brass band there as

well, of course, and we always used to follow them. Well, we noticed that whenever we went through a town or village they struck up; when we were marching through open country we could play! We didn't like this, so one day when the brass band had finished and we had orders to strike up, none of us would! We mutinied! So when we got back to barracks we were put on a charge; they gave us a full pack to put on our backs and there they were, doubling us up and down the parade-ground all the time.

Anyway, things went pretty well after that; they sent a Captain Berry from Merthyr to take charge of us, a very decent chap he was too. He could do anything with us; he'd come round — "Any complaints?" "Yes," we'd say, "there's not enough sugar in our tea." "Right", he'd say, "I'll see to that." And he would, too. Then he'd come into our hut and have games with us, boxing and everything.

He was boxing one night with the lance-corporal and the lance-corporal gave him a black eye. He was on parade next morning with this black eye; he didn't resent it a bit but some of the other officers turned their noses up at him.

Oh, it was quite a happy time there but we still weren't satisfied, we kept on volunteering all the time, you see, we kept on at them so much that they got fed up with us in the end and they put us on a draft. They kitted us out — oh, we were right now, we were going to be heroes. We had to leave the band, of course, and start training for this draft. Training or not, though, we had no idea what to expect, no idea at all.

They put us on this boat — we were sailing from Folkestone to Boulogne — and in the middle of the ocean we had to stop and put all lights out — there was a U-boat in the offing. Things cleared up and we landed at Boulogne, had a day or two at a camp there, then they sent us up to Rouen. A bit longer there, then the call came for us to go up to the front line. Now we were happy!

We got there and what we saw of the front line wasn't a trench at all, it was just a lot of shell holes. That was where we were posted, into these shell holes. We were sitting there quite happily, with some old soldiers, you see, and shells came whistling overhead — well, these old soldiers were ducking down every time, but we sat there on the edge to have a good view, laughing and cheering and whooping. And they said to us, "Yes, you little buggers, you won't laugh just now, when they come a bit nearer!"

Well, about a yard away from our shell hole was another with the Cheshires in it. And in a minute a shell came over and landed a direct hit on it. It blew my mate down into our hole and blew me up into the air and then down on top of him. When we went to help these Cheshires, as we thought, there was nothing left of them, brains and blood and bits splashed everywhere, equipment all over the place, but nothing else left of them at all; I did get a bit frightened then, sure.

Well, we had quite a time there until we were relieved, then when we were coming out from the line, I was in the gun team. We had to carry ammunition over our shoulders and it was very, very muddy there. We had to walk on boards, you see, and I remember one chap carrying two buckets of ammunition, one over each shoulder. He slipped off the boards, went down into this mud and he sank before we could get to him. It was so soft and so deep and he'd got this weight on him as well, you see — we couldn't do anything about it. Coming out, now, I got stuck in the mud,

"When I said I was from Wales they sent me to Portsmouth. They always did that – if I'd been from Portsmouth they'd have sent me to Wales, I expect."

too, but it wasn't quite as bad as that. My trench boots came off and I was exhausted now; I couldn't go any further. I just leaned over, there in No-Man's Land between our trenches and the Germans. Well, when they got back they missed me and they sent one chap out to look for me, but I didn't care, I didn't want to move. What he didn't threaten me with wasn't worth telling! Oh, he was going to shoot me and I don't know what all! When I did get back they made me take a tot of rum. Well, I'd never tasted the stuff before, you see, and I drank it all up at once; I couldn't get my breath for a while. But afterwards I was walking on air! I didn't get my boots back, of course; they gave me another pair.

We came out on December 23rd, very pleased because we were supposed to be having six weeks' break back in reserve on Divisional Rest. In the meantime, though, the Germans had annihilated the Pioneer Corps — Dai Watts-Morgan from the Rhondda was in command of them. They only had picks and shovels, no weapons at all, because their work was digging the trenches and that, but the Germans came and annihilated them. So instead of having our six weeks' rest, we were called straight back up on Christmas Eve to go and bury their dead and to take up positions again. We spent our Christmas in the line and nothing special happened, no carol singing, no fraternisation, no parcels, nothing at all. I think it was on Christmas Night that I was out on listening post, in two feet of snow, lying flat on the ground, about two or three hundred yards from the Germans. We could hear them laughing and talking and every now and then they'd send up Very lights to have a look at us, but we were covered in a — a thing like a white sheet — to hide us. We could hear them clapping their hands to keep warm, but we couldn't move, of course, and we were so cold, when it was time to get up we just fell back down.

I saw some nasty things happen there; I was walking along one day with my mate by my side and the shells were whistling overhead. I turned to my mate to say to him, "That was a bit close!", and I saw him walk a step or two without his head. The shell hadn't hit him, you understand, but it had passed so close, the force of it had taken his head clean off. A great friend, a mate of mine. His head was clean off his shoulders and I suppose his nerves had carried him forward, but only a couple of steps and then he dropped.

I was with another mate now, on listening post in the snow as I was telling you about, and I saw he was falling asleep in the snow. I had to keep nudging him all the time to wake him up. When we got back to the line and reported, we were put on guard with our heads just looking over the parapet. The same mate was with me and when I looked at him there he was again — asleep with his head on the parapet. The captain came around, heard him snoring and thought it was me sleeping! At this time I was feeling very ill. I'd got feverish, you see, and I tried to explain to the captain. "It wasn't me, sir," I said, "I feel too ill to sleep. I feel more like dying," I said. "Well, that won't do me," he said, "You'll report to the Company Commander in the morning. You've been caught sleeping at your post and you know the consequences of that." He meant I'd be shot. "Very good, sir," I said, "but I wasn't asleep."

Anyway, morning came and I had to crawl to get down to the Company Office down the line, but when I got in there, "What the devil is the matter with this boy?" the CO said. "He shouldn't be here. Get him down to the first-aid post at once," he said.

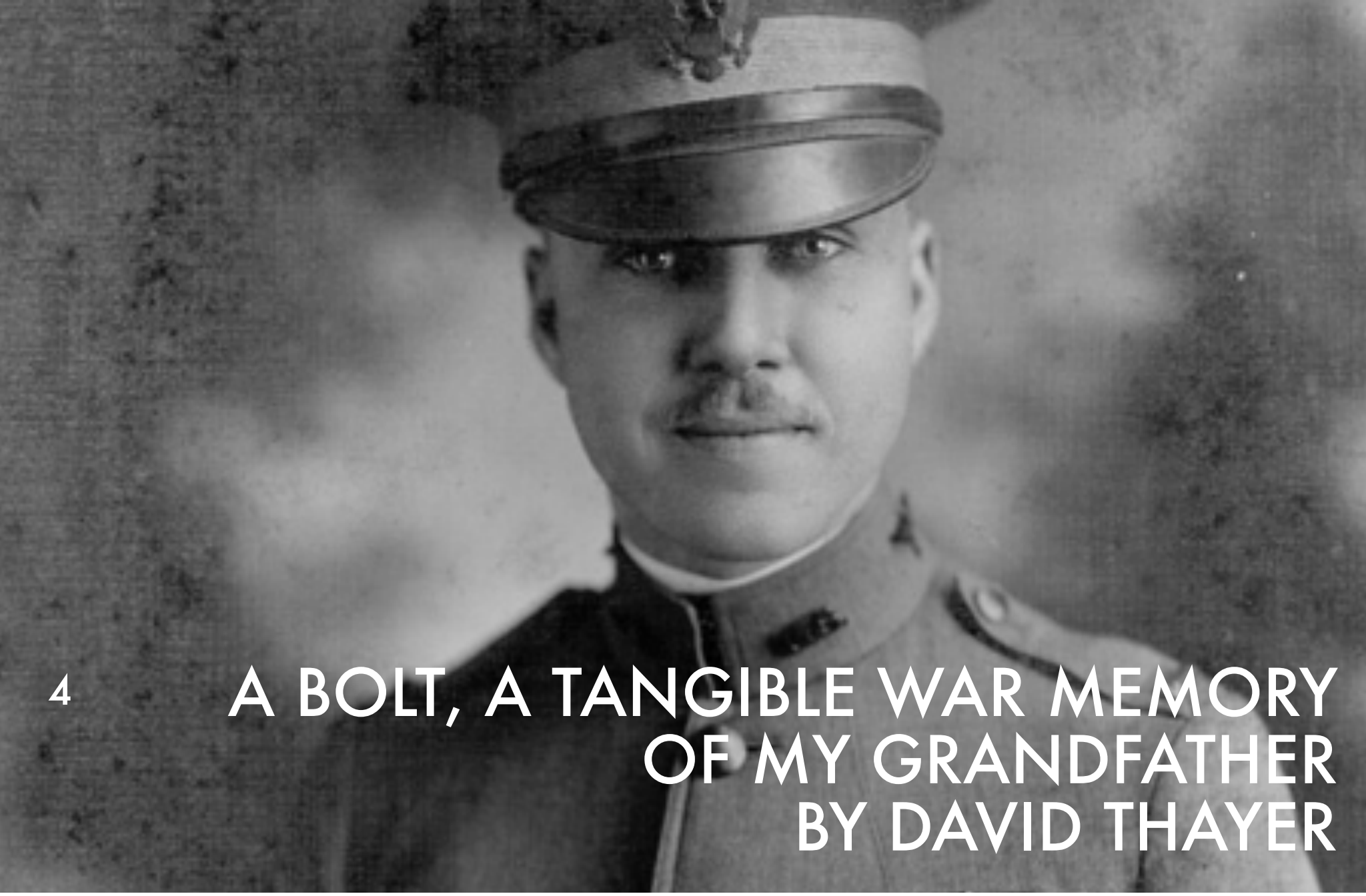
So that was what they did; they had stretcher bearers to take me down to the first-aid post and from there to the clearance station, where they put me in bed. "Oh," I thought, "how lovely." That was all I remembered for a fortnight. It was pneumonia, I think, and frostbite. And they put PUO — something of unknown origin — pyrexia or something, I think. Some sort of fever. When I was getting better they decided they'd send me back to England. When I said I was from Wales they sent me to Portsmouth. They always did that — if I'd been from Portsmouth they'd have sent me to Wales, I expect.

The hospital had previously been a workhouse. Look through one window, you'd see a prison, look through another and you'd see a graveyard, and you could see an asylum through the other one, I think. But the nurses and sisters were very nice. They called me Tiny because I was so small and young-looking — one sister wrote to me when I left. "Dear Tiny Watkins," she used to begin.

I had a few months there, then they sent me to a convalescent camp, Heaton Camp in Manchester, for a while until I got well, then they sent me to Pembroke Dock. They called all the men who'd been in France out to the front and asked us who'd like to go on courses. So I stepped out, of

course — still volunteering — and they asked us if we'd like PE, musketry or anything like that. I chose musketry, so they gave us two stripes straight away and I had to go up to Alcar, to the musketry school up there. I don't want to sound big-headed but it was only because I didn't want to stay there to be an instructor that they didn't give me a Distinguished Certificate; as it was, they gave me a First-class Certificate. But by now, I wanted to get back home. I was offered the chance to become a Permanent Staff Instructor and I think it would have been a very fine life. I was often sorry later, very sorry I was, because I think I was good at it; it came quite naturally. I had a chap in the squad one day, asking me a lot of questions, tricky questions, and I was answering them. I thought, "I fancy you've had experience of the Army before." So I put it to him one day; I said, "Have you been in the Army before?" "Yes," he said, `I was a sergeant- instructor, and I congratulate you." I reckoned he'd joined again after deserting. Quite a few of them used to do that.

When I came back home again there wasn't any fuss or much of a welcome. Well, from my own family there was, of course, but everybody was used to seeing soldiers coming back by then; it was the first few who got all the flags and everything. It was a bit of a let-down after the first day or so because I had to go back down the mine; I soon realised that it would have been a better life if I'd stayed, much better.



4

A BOLT, A TANGIBLE WAR MEMORY OF MY GRANDFATHER BY DAVID THAYER

My maternal grandfather, Troy Corley, was born in Arkansas in April 1896, the second of eleven children, and grew up on a farm. At the age of 20, he began teaching school, the same year that the U.S. Congress passed the Selective Service Act. In May 1918, he joined the Army and served with the U.S. Army in France during World War I. In all the years I knew him, I remember him telling only one war story.

The story centered around a bolt. Holding it in the palm of his hand, my grandfather told us that it came from a German observation aircraft. Since he had served as a preacher his entire adult life after his return to the States, I never doubted that what he said was the truth.

The story began with my grandfather's infantry company taking a rest near a field behind the front lines, and a German aircraft leisurely circling overhead. A rifleman in his unit, acting on his own, took aim at the plane and fired. That single shot disabled it, and sputtering, the aircraft glided toward the ground and landed in the field. En masse, the Americans raced after it. The pilot jumped out and cringed under the fuselage, fearing for his life, but the soldiers ignored him, more interested in getting souvenirs. As children, we were amazed by the tale.

The hand that held the bolt was missing parts of two fingers. I had heard that he lost them in an oil-field accident. The truth came out 50 years after the end of the war, that he had been wounded 5 days before the Armistice. In a military ceremony, my uncle, himself a World War II veteran, pinned a Purple Heart on my grandfather's chest. I never knew the details, but I'm convinced that the story behind the award was connected to too many bad memories for him to want to tell.

My grandmother was pregnant with my mother when my grandfather entered the Army. He was overseas when he learned that he was a father. On his birthday in 1919, he received his Honorable Discharge.

I wish now I could hear the stories he never told.

David Notes - I could not find the photograph of my grandfather, but here is one of Diana's paternal grandfather, Virgil Franklin Dougherty, a pilot in the Aviation Section of the U.S. Army Signal Corps. He had his orders to France when the Armistice was signed.

5

A CAREER ENDED TOO SOON – CHRISTY MATHEWSON & THE GREAT WAR

I'm a collector of stories. That's kinda obvious, right? I've put myself through a lot to gather my own stories, and thus those that have toiled and suffered deserve to be heard. Sadly, The Great War ended many lives, but also the careers of a great many individuals who made it through the war. Of these, at least in the eyes of a lover of the San Francisco Giants baseball team, the saddest was that of Christy Mathewson.

Christopher 'Christy' Mathewson was born in Factoryville, Pennsylvania during the fall of 1880, but to hear people talk, he was really born in the spring of 1895 when he played his first semi-professional baseball game. He was a pitcher, and even at the age of 14, he had a hell of an arm. In his first game, though, it was his bat that scored several runs, allowing the Factoryville side to take the win over their archrivals – Mill City. Still in school, Mathewson didn't play the entire season, and he would go on to college, playing baseball in the spring and summer, and football in the fall and winter. He was fullback and part-time drop-kicker. He played semi-professionally at the age 18 for the Pittsburgh Stars in their only year of existence in an early version of the National Football League. He was a star athlete in both football and baseball, but it was baseball where he truly excelled.

After two years of stellar pitching in minor leagues on the East Coast, Mathewson made it to the New York Giants of the National League.

"Christy Mathewson brought something to baseball no one else had ever given the game. He handed the game a certain touch of class, an indefinable lift in culture, brains, and personality.'"

-

Grantland Rice

And as soon as he came up, he failed. Appearing in six games, he was handed the loss in three of them and failed to win any. That earned him a trade to the Cinncinati Reds, who didn't want him either, and actually traded him back to the Giants!

That was a stroke of fortune for the Giants. From 1900 through 1904, there were few in baseball who could touch him. He had incredible control and his pitches movement. His 'fadeaway' pitch, supposedly learned from the legendary Negro Leagues pitcher Rube Foster, was considered the most dangerous pitch in the game.

Starting in 1905, and continuing through 1910, he was absolutely the Best Pitcher who had ever lived. He led the league in wins four times, earned run average and strikeouts three times each, as well as providing leadership for the entire team. He was a clean-cut, All-American boy. A devout Christian who never pitched on Sundays, he never drank or gambled, something players of the day were well-known for. Outside the game, he was a golfer, a hiker, and a checkers champion. He was, perhaps, the most respected man in baseball, both among the players and the fans.

The Giant won the World Series in 1905, arguably his best year, and he threw two no hitters. When Jamesian Baseball Analysis is applied to Mathewson's career, he is ranked as the 7th greatest pitcher ever almost 100 years after his final game. I once heard him compared to Randy Johnson by Mike Krukow, who then added, “but we won't be talking about Randy in a hundred years.”

While he remained a solid pitcher his entire career, it was before 1911 that he was at his peak. By 1916, he was still solid, still throwing his baffling pitches, but he was no longer the master. Pitchers like Grover Cleveland Alexander, Walter Johnson, and Hippo Vaughn had started to draw the spotlight away from Christy.

"Greatest of all of the great pitchers in the 20th century's first quarter." "Matty was the master of them all."

Christy Matthewson's Hall of Fame plaque

Then America entered World War I.

A number of players were pulled from the ballfield to the battlefield. Grover Cleveland Alexander was the biggest name drafted, though many others were sent over to Europe as well. Most never saw real action, though some certainly did. Baseball players at the time were likely the biggest celebrities in America at the time. As is tradition, many players enlisted and were given cushy assignments. Not Christy. No siree. He enlisted and served as a Captain in the Chemical Warfare Service, where he served alongside Baseball's bad boy – Ty Cobb. He served from 1917 through the end of the war on the Western Front, though largely in training maneuvers. During one of these training situations, Mathewson was in charge of an exercise with gas when the wind changed, sending the poison back on him and his unit. He was lucky, others in the area died, but Mathewson lived.

It was the end of him as a ballplayer.

He returned to the US, but his lungs were ruined. He had not recovered from the gassing, which had seriously compromised his immune system, and by the time he returned to the US, he had already contracted tuberculosis. He could no longer pitch, but he served as coach for the Giants for a couple of years. Later, Mathewson was involved in the ownership of another team, but his illness had progressed too far, and with his declining health, so went his career. He retreated to a new home in Upstate New York, and finally died in 1925. When the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum was established in 1936, five players were enshrined. Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, Honus Wagner, and Christy Mathewson. Those five, the three most feared hitters of the first fifty years of organized baseball, and the pitchers who terrified the opposition, were recognized as the Greatest of all-time, and a giant celebration was held for them.

Christy was the only one honored unable to attend the ceremony.

FROM JUAN SANMIGUEL

World War I was a challenge to write about. My family came from a country that was not in the war, so there is no personal connection for me. The outcome of the war led to an even deadlier war and that makes it hard to romanticize in fiction. Most World War I fiction focuses on the brutality and senseless of the conflict. After a long think and a tweet from a friend, I found three things to discuss about World War I, a graphic novel and two exhibits.

In 1990, Enemy Ace: War Idyll written and drawn by George Pratt was released as hard cover graphic novel by DC Comics. Enemy Ace was Hans von Hammer, a World War I German pilot that appeared in DC's war comics. Though Enemy Ace was from a former enemy country, the writers portrayed him with depth. Hard cover releases and painted art were rare at that time. These things indicated that DC thought this was an important book.

In 1969, reporter and Vietnam veteran Edward Mannock interviews von Hammer in an island sanatorium of the coast Germany. During his time with Mannock, Von Hammer remembers the time the enemy shot him down in 1917. Mannock is looking for way to deal with what he saw as a tunnel rat in Vietnam. Hammer explains to Mannock that he has to find something to displace the horror. Hammer tells Mannock how he dealt with his experiences.

For me there was flight. In the sky, I was alive…when I got into it off the ground with my whole body in it then everything was changed. After the killing was over, after the fighting subsided…the sky belonged to me…as much I did to it. It made everything simple for me…when all else failed, flight was there…I was free.

That scene always stuck with me. It told me no matter how bad things get, you must find something to focus on.

"Relieved by Seaforths on night of 17th, and went back to trenches just to West of Contalmaison, near the Chateau. I spent about half an hour looking for the Chateau, but could not find it, though I could see for miles in every direction. I believe the foundations exist in parts! Took a tremendous feed when we got back, and then slept with the rats (my companions for the next 2 - 3 years). Rain came down and soaked us through in our shelters."

The Diary of Robert Lindsay Mackay

In 2005, since Worldcon was in Scotland I planned an extended vacation in Europe starting in Rome and working my way to Glasgow. My Dad would come with me as far as Belgium. He helped me plan the trip. Originally I was going straight to Germany after Italy. My father advised me to stop in Vienna. There he took me to the Arsenal, Austria's military museum. There on permanent exhibit is the car and jacket used by Archduke Franz Ferdinand on the day Gavrilo Princip assassinated him. It amazes me that with all the chaos going on after the assassination, someone realized that these things needed to be preserved. It was also disquieting seeing an exhibit of American forces in a former belligerent country.

At Loncon 3, the 2014 Worldcon, there was an exhibit called "Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers in the Great War". This exhibit chronicled the war experiences of 100 writers from eight countries. These writers were our genre ancestors. The war influenced by the war and influence the generations of writers and fans that came after them. Information on this exhibit can found at fantastic-writers-and-the-great-war.com.

While I was in London, I went to the Tower of London. There were over 800,000 ceramic red poppies planted in the moat. Each poppy represented a British fatality during the First World War. Seeing this sea of red reminded one of the impact the war had on Britain. The things discussed here also shows the impact the war had on individuals and our community.

Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers in the Great War

This project has been undertaken by Edward James (on whom see www.edwardjames.com), with financial support from the Science Fiction Foundation (Registered Charity 1040152) (www.sf-foundation.org).

These banners remember those writers of science fiction and fantasy, on both sides of the War, who were engaged in the War in some way, as soldiers, sailors, airmen, spies, nurses, ambulance drivers, hospital orderlies, writers of propaganda, or conscientious objectors.

In the panels that follow, the left-hand column details the experiences of the writers; the right-hand column sets their experiences in the context of the war as a whole. Most of the writers on whom there is sufficient documentation were connected with the Western Front, in Belgium and France, so in the right-hand column there is a bias towards events in that area.

Many of the people named on these banners were better known as literary novelists or poets, or as politicians, or as something else entirely, but all of them wrote works that would nowadays be regarded as science fiction or fantasy. All of them can be found in the online versions of the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* or the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (both at www.sf-encyclopedia.com). (I would like to thank John Clute of the *Encyclopedia* for his constant help and encouragement in this project.)

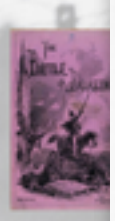
For further details of these writers, of their lives before, during and after the war, see the website which provides all the background information for these banners – the footnotes. If you like: www.fantastic-writers-in-the-great-war.com. If you cannot remember that cumbersome URL, Googling "Fantastic Great War" will find it very easily.

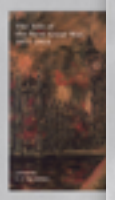
The 88 writers covered on the site, as of July 2014, were the following:

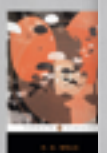
Guillaume Apollinaire, Henri Barbusse, Maurice Baring, Vernon Bartlett, Pierre Benoit, Stella Benson, Algernon Blackwood, Fenner Brockway, John Buchan, Mikhail Bulgakov, A.M. Burrage, Philip George Chadwick, G.K. Chesterton, Michel Corday, W.A. Darlington, Léon Daudet, Geoffrey Dearmer, Guy Dent, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Émile Driant, Charles Duff, Lord Dunsany, Hanns Heinz Ewers, Claude Farrère, George Fitzmaurice, Ford Madox Ford, E.M. Forster, Gilbert Frankau, Ronald Fraser, David Garnett, John Glosig, Robert Graves, Gerald Grogan, Cicely Hamilton, L.P. Hartley, A.P. Herbert, Edward Heron-Allen, James Hilton, William Hope Hodgson, Claude Houghton, Muriel Jaeger, W.E. Johns, Ernst Jünger, Bernhard Kellermann, Hugh Kingsmill, Rudyard Kipling, Jean de La Hire, C.S. Lewis, Wyndham Lewis, David Lindsay, Eric Linklater, Hugh Lofting, A.M. Low, Rose Macaulay, Arthur Machen, H.C. McNeile ("Sapper"), Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, John Masefield, André Maurois, Régis Messac, Gustav Meyrink, A.A. Milne, Naomi Mitchison, C.E. Montague, José Moselli, R.H. Mottram, H.H. Munro ("Saki"), Robert Nichols, Ernest Pérochon, Leo Perutz, J.B. Priestley, Maurice Renard, Bertrand Russell, Robert W. Service, Edward Shanks, George Bernard Shaw, R.C. Sherriff, May Sinclair, Osbert Sitwell, Jacques Spitz, Olaf Stapledon, Karl Hans Strobl, Barbara Euphan Todd, J.R.R. Tolkien, Jan Weiss, H.G. Wells, Franz Werfel, Dennis Wheatley and Yevgeny Zamyatin.

By no means all these writers appear on these banners. In some cases there is insufficient biographical detail to provide dates. Many of these writers wrote accounts of their war experiences, but often they provide few if any dates, making it difficult to record their experiences in the chronological format of these banners.

The website will continue to be updated, as and when new information is provided. Please send comment and information to the website, or direct to edward.james@ucd.ie.







1914, June to December

28 June. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, by Gavrilo Princip, of the group Young Bosnia.

28 July. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.

29 July. Russia ordered partial mobilisation.

3 August. H.H. Munro ("Saki") was in the Commons to hear Sir Edward Grey (Foreign Secretary) talking about Belgium's response to Germany's demand.

4 August. Maurice Baring was in the Commons to hear Asquith's announcement of war. Dennis Wheatley was in the crowd that saw the King, Queen and Prince of Wales appear on the balcony of Buckingham Palace in the evening. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had a meeting to organise the Crowborough Volunteers in his Sussex village; it later became the Crowborough Company of the Sixth Royal Sussex Volunteer Regiment (Doyle served as a private).

5 August. Dennis Wheatley was rejected by the Westminster Dragoons, because of his poor horsemanship.

7 August. J.B. Priestley enlisted, as a private, and the following morning reported to the regimental depot in Halifax.

9 August. Maurice Baring became Second Lieutenant in Intelligence, attached to the Royal Flying Corps; on 12 August he was in Amiens, and saw the crowds welcoming the British troops, shouting "Vive l'Angleterre".

21-23 August. Pierre Benoit was involved in the battle of Charleroi; he fell ill shortly afterwards, and was invalided out of the French army.

25 August: H.H. Munro, already well known as the writer Saki, was accepted into the 2nd King Edward's Horse; he later transferred to the Royal Fusiliers.

September: H.G. Wells published *The War That Will End War*, his first contribution to the debate about the war.

September 2: Prominent writers were called to the new Propaganda Bureau at Wellington House, by Charles Masterman, to discuss possibilities of writing propaganda: they included J.M. Barrie, Arnold Bennett, G.K. Chesterton, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Ford Madox Ford, John Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy, John Masefield, Gilbert Murray, G.M. Trevelyan, H.G. Wells and Israel Zangwill. Rudyard Kipling and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch sent their apologies.

18 September. Maurice Baring assisted in the first experiment in dropping bombs from an RFC plane.

18 September. 25 writers signed an Author's Declaration in *The Times*, saying that Britain could not have refused to take part in the war "without dishonour". It contained the paragraph to the right. Signatories included Arthur Conan Doyle, H. Rider Haggard, Thomas Hardy, Jerome K. Jerome, Rudyard Kipling, John Masefield, May Sinclair, and H.G. Wells.

25 September. May Sinclair crossed to France to work with Hector Munro's Ambulance Corps near the Front at Ypres. She only stayed a few weeks.

29 September. The *Evening News* published Arthur Machen's "The Bowmen", the ultimate origin of the legend of the Angels of Mons.

9 October: Gilbert Frankau obtained a commission with the East Surrey Regiment.

2 November: H.C. McNeile ("Sapper") went to France with the Royal Engineers. He had been in the Army since 1907.

12 November. Fenner Brockway called for the founding of a No-Conscription Fellowship. His activities protesting about conscription led him to two periods of imprisonment: he was only released from the second one in April 1919.

14 November. *New Statesman* published a supplement: George Bernard Shaw's *Common Sense about the War*. Many were outraged, including H.G. Wells.

25 November. Ford Madox Ford published a piece called "The Scaremonger", in which he attacked his neighbour and landlord Edward Heron-Allen (a writer of fantasy) for being paranoid about German spies. Ford, then still called Ford Hermann Hueffer, at this point was still openly expressing German sympathies.

1 December: Cicely Hamilton started work as a nurse at the Abbey of Royaumont, some 50 km north of Paris, where Dr Elsie Inglis established the Scottish Women's Hospital. Hamilton worked there until Spring 1917, when she joined a group putting on plays for the troops, under the auspices of the YWCA. She was still doing this, in occupied Germany, until August 1919. Her 1922 SF novel *Theodore Savage* was partly based on her experiences.

8 December. Régis Messac received a head wound at the Front, and thereafter worked at auxiliary jobs: cook, cleaner, stable boy.

12 December: J.R.R. Tolkien met with his old school friends for the last time in what they called the Council of London. Two were killed in 1916.

17 December: Osbert Sitwell left for France, a day after the German navy sent a piece of shell through his father's front door in Scarborough. His mother brought him a piece of the shell as a souvenir, when she came down to London to see him off.

Christmas 1914. Bertrand Russell (see right) visited as many destitute Germans in England as he could find, to offer them help.

1915, January to June

13 January. H.C. McNeile published his first story about life in the trenches, in the *Daily Mail*. Serving officers were not allowed to publish under their own names, so Lord Northcliffe called him "Sapper", after the standard nickname for those in the Royal Engineers. By the end of the war he had published four collections of short stories, including *No Man's Land* (1917).

4 January. The London Stock Exchange reopened for trading.

19-20 January. First Zeppelin raid on Britain: minor damage in King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth.

February. The first volume of *Nelson's History of the War*, written by John Buchan, appeared; Volume 24 was published in 1919.

10 February. A.A. Milne heard that he had a commission with the Warwickshire regiment.

3 March. John Masefield (rejected for the Army on medical grounds) arrived at the château of Arc-en-Barrois, in the Haute-Marne. He served as a hospital orderly, helping with the wounded and in the operation theatre, carrying meals and so on.

15 April. Olaf Stapledon signed up to work in the Friends Ambulance Unit, although he was neither a pacifist nor a Quaker. It was, in the words of the narrator of Stapledon's *Last Men in London*, a "fantastic organisation", and an "anomalous organisation, whose spirit was an amusing blend of the religious, the military, the pacific, the purely adventurous, and the cynical".

May: Rose Macaulay signed on as a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) at Mount Blow, in Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire, a military convalescent home.

12 May. Robert Graves, Second Lieutenant in the Welch Fusiliers, sailed for France.

15 May. Second Lieutenant Dennis Wheatley and part of the First City of London Territorial Royal Field Artillery left London for Ipswich: they had no artillery, or rifles, but they did at least have a regimental band.

17 May: Second Lieutenant A.P. Herbert landed at the Bay of Mudros, near Gallipoli.

17 May: the first report of John Buchan's visit to the Western Front (during the Second Battle of Ypres) was published in *The Times*. When Buchan next came to France, in October, he was a lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps.

23 May. The futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's Lombard Battalion of Volunteer Cyclists and Motorists was mobilised; they were to fight in the Alps in October.

31 May: Stella Benson, doing war work in the East End of London, went out at night to investigate the damage done by the first Zeppelin raid on London.

June: David Garnett and his friend Francis Birrell went to France to help restore the village of Sommeilles

1915, July to December

9 July. A week after hearing he had been awarded a First at Oxford, Second Lieutenant J.R.R. Tolkien was ordered to report to his regiment, the Lancashire Fusiliers.

6 August. The British landed at Suvla Bay, near Gallipoli.

30 July: Ford Hermann Hueffer officially changed the "Hermann" to "Madox"; he did not become Ford Madox Ford until 1919.

1 August. Olaf Stapledon arrived in France, with his own ambulance.

13 August: John Masefield left for the Eastern Mediterranean, hoping to organise medical facilities there; he visited the ANZAC troops at Gallipoli. Ford Madox Hueffer became Second Lieutenant in the Welsh Regiment.

End of August: over a year after his enlistment, J.B. Priestley was sent to France.

25 September. The Royal Welch Fusiliers attacked at Loos, and many of Robert Graves' fellow soldiers killed. Graves was promoted to Captain.

27 September. No. 2 Company of Irish Guards fell back during the Battle of Loos. Lieutenant John Kipling, Rudyard Kipling's son, was missing.

End of September. R.H. Mottram joined the 9th Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment at "Pop" (Poperinghe). They were pathetically keen to see the newcomers; later Mottram realised it was because so many of them had been lost at Loos.

25 September-6 October. The Second Champagne Offensive, which cost Joffre's French army around 143,000 casualties.

25 September. The start of the Battle of Loos, which was the most important British offensive of 1915 on the Western Front. It saw the first British use of poison gas. There were over 48,000 British casualties in the main attack.

October 6. Christopher, brother of the writer Geoffrey Dearmer, was killed by a shell at Suvla Bay. Geoffrey landed at the Dardanelles a few days later. Later he dedicated his first volume of poetry (Poems, 1918) to Christopher.

6 October. Leo Perutz joined his regiment at Szolnok, about 100 km southeast of Budapest; a month later he received the copy of his first novel.

10 October: W.E. Johns landed at Gallipoli, with the Norfolk Yeomanry.

6 October. French and British troops landed at Salonika in Greece.

7 October. The Austrians and Germans invaded Serbia.

11 October. The Bulgarians invaded Serbia.

12 October. Nurse Edith Cavell was shot by a German firing squad.

November: E.M. Forster went to Alexandria to work as a searcher for the Red Cross, looking for soldiers reported missing in action; he worked there until January 1919.

7 November. H.H. Munro ("Saki") finally arrived in France, fourteen months after enlisting.

10 November. Edward Heron-Allen recorded some good news in his journal: "However – one thing is to the good – the fatuient Winston Churchill has left the ministry in a cloud of obloquy and derision. Pray heaven he is not jobbed back ingeniously into some less noticeable office where he can go on gambling with the life and honour of the nation."

19 November. The British began their advance on Baghdad.

20 November. R.C. Sherriff left his insurance job to enlist in the Artists Rifles.

15 December. Haig replaced French as the commander-in-chief of the British Expeditionary Force.

19 December. British and Anzac troops began their withdrawal from Gallipoli.

25 December. To prevent a repetition of the events of 25 December 1914, the British ordered a continuing artillery barrage throughout Christmas, and the Germans reminded their troops that fraternization was treason.

25 September-6 October. The Second Champagne Offensive, which cost Joffre's French army around 143,000 casualties.

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29 December: Leo Perutz was sent for officer training in Budapest, two days before he sent off his second novel to the publisher.

EXCERPTS FROM SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY WRITERS IN THE GREAT WAR BY EDWARD JAMES

Editor's Note - So, Edward James provided his wonderful material on SF&F Writers involved in The Great War. You can view the entire site (which won the British Science Fiction Association's award for best non-fiction) at https://fantastic-writers-and-the-great-war.com/

We're including only the portion dealing directly with the SF&F authors and figures involved in the war, but trust me, you should read the entire site because it truly blows the mind!

This project has been undertaken by Edward James (on whom see www.edwardfjames.com), with financial support from the Science Fiction Foundation (Registered Charity 1040152) (www.sf-foundation.org).

These banners remember those writers of science fiction and fantasy, on both sides of the War, who were engaged in the War in some way, as soldiers, sailors, airmen, spies, nurses, ambulance drivers, hospital orderlies, writers of propaganda, or conscientious objectors.

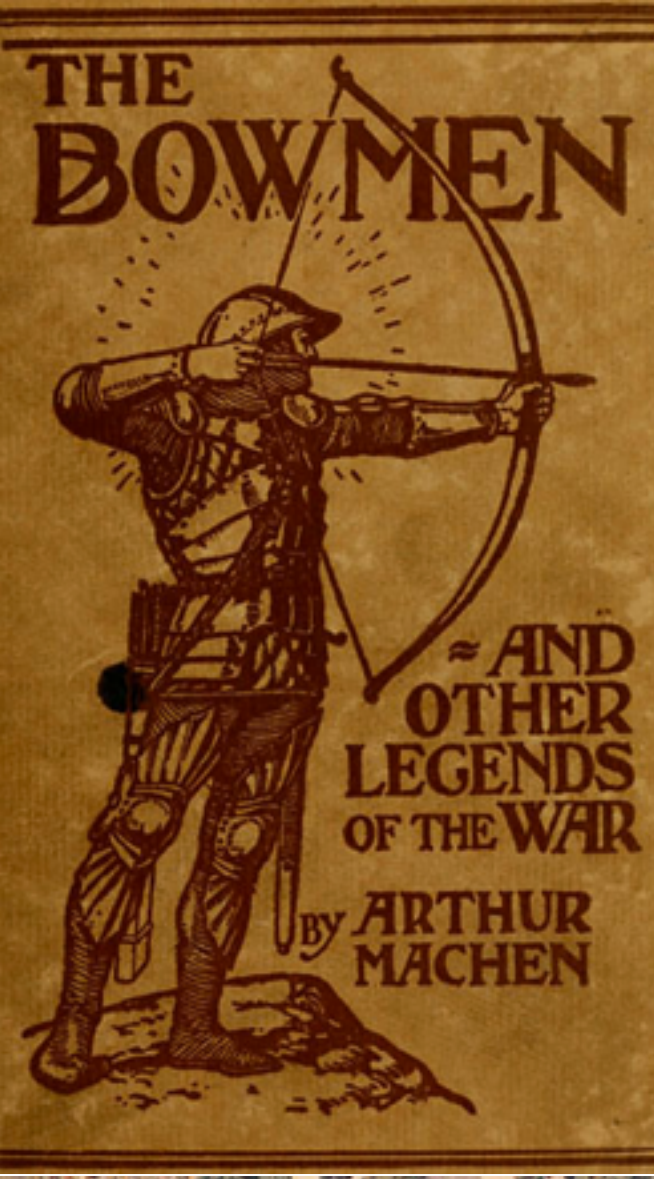
In the panels that follow, the left-hand column details the experiences of the writers; the right-hand column sets their experiences in the context of the war as a whole. Most of the writers on whom there is sufficient documentation were connected with the Western Front, in Belgium and France, so in the right-hand column there is a bias towards events in that area.

Many of the people named on these banners were better known as literary novelists or poets, or as politicians, or as something else entirely, but all of them wrote works that would nowadays be regarded as science fiction or fantasy. All of them can be found in the online versions of the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction or the Encyclopedia of Fantasy (both at www.sfencyclopedia. com). (I would like to thank John Clute of the Encyclopedia for his constant help and encouragement in this project.)

For further details of these writers, of their lives before, during and after the war, see the website which provides all the background information for these banners—the footnotes, if you like: www.fantasticwriters-in-the-great-war.com

If you cannot remember that cumbersome URL, Googling "Fantastic Great War" will find it very easily.

The 89 writers covered on the site, as of July 2014, were the following: Guillaume Apollinaire, Henri Barbusse, Maurice Baring, Vernon Bartlett, Pierre Benoit, Stella Benson, Algernon Blackwood, Fenner Brockway, John Buchan, Mikhail Bulgakov, A.M. Burrage, Philip George Chadwick, G.K. Chesterton, Michel Corday, W.A. Darlington, Léon Daudet, Geoffrey Dearmer, Guy Dent, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Émile Driant, Charles Duff, Lord Dunsany, Hanns Heinz Ewers, Claude Farrère, George Fitzmaurice, Ford Madox Ford, E.M. Forster, Gilbert Frankau, Ronald Fraser, David Garnett, John Gloag, Robert Graves, Gerald Grogan, Cicely Hamilton, L.P. Hartley, A.P. Herbert, Edward Heron-Allen, James Hilton, William Hope Hodgson, Claude Houghton, Muriel Jaeger, W.E. Johns, Ernst Jünger, Bernhard Kellermann, Hugh Kingsmill, Rudyard Kipling, Jean de La Hire, C.S. Lewis, Wyndham Lewis, David Lindsay, Eric Linklater, Hugh Lofting, A.M. Low, Rose Macaulay, Arthur Machen, H.C. McNeile ("Sapper"), Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, John Masefield, André Maurois, Régis Messac, Gustav Meyrink, A.A. Milne, Naomi Mitchison, C.E. Montague, José Moselli, R.H. Mottram, H.H. Munro ("Saki"), Robert Nichols, Ernest Pérochon, Leo Perutz, J.B. Priestley, Maurice Renard, Bertrand Russell, Robert W. Service, Edward Shanks, George Bernard Shaw, R.C. Sherriff, May Sinclair, Osbert Sitwell, Jacques Spitz, Olaf Stapledon, Karl Hans Strobl, Barbara Euphan Todd, J.R.R. Tolkien, Jan Weiss, H.G. Wells, Franz Werfel, Dennis Wheatley and Yevgeny Zamyatin.



By no means all these writers appear on these banners. In some cases there is insufficient biographical detail to provide dates. Many of these writers wrote accounts of their war experiences, but often they provide few if any dates, making it difficult to record their experiences in the chronological format of these banners.

The website will continue to be updated, as and when new information is provided. Please send comment and information to the website, or direct to edward.james@ucd.ie.

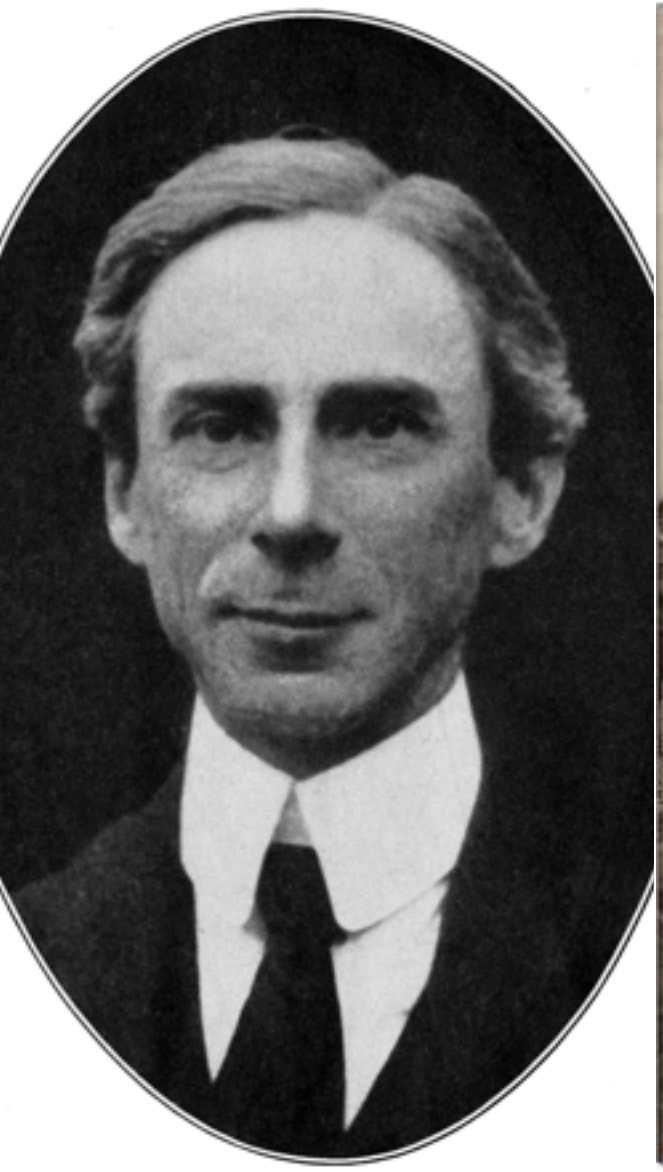
Science fiction writers had already played their part before the declaration of war in 1914, in preparing the European public for the likelihood, or even inevitability, of war.

The anonymous The Reign of George VI, 1900-1925, which was published in 1763, had even suggested that there would be a European War between 1917 and 1920 — only a little bit out in the timing (and although the future George VI in our world took part in the war, as a naval officer, the actual king at the time was George V). But the real spate of future war stories came after the devastating victory of the Prussian-led coalition over France in 1870-71: a month after hostilities began the German armies had captured Emperor Napoleon III, and they had taken Paris by siege only five months after that. Many Europeans saw this as a warning of the rapidity of future wars: no wonder people thought the war which began in August 1914 would be over by Christmas...

German success in the Franco-Prussian War alarmed people across Europe. The first fictional response was General Sir George Tomkyns Chesney's The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer (1871), which imagined a German invasion of Britain. Like many of his successors, he wrote with a practical aim: to warn the establishment of the need to have the armed forces properly prepared.

Anyone interested in this topic should seek out three books by I.F. Clarke. Voices Prophesying War 1763-1984 (originally published by Oxford University Press in 1966) looked at the whole future war theme, while his two later books focused on the period leading up to 1914, and collected together many of these stories, translating some from French and German. The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914: Fictions of Future Warfare and of Battles Still-to-Come (Liverpool University Press, 1995) showed that not everyone in Britain assumed that Germany would be the next enemy. The French and English had been traditional enemies for too long. Even in 1901the French army officer who wrote as Capitaine Danrit could write a novel about the future conquest of England by France, as could the anonymous Englishman who in the same year wrote The Sack of London in the Great French War of 1900.

By the end of the century, however, the arms race was clearly between Britain and Germany, and the future battle-lines were clearly drawn up after the Entente Cordiale of 1904 between Britain and France. Clarke's second volume was called The Great War with Germany 1890-1914: Fictions and Fantasies of the War-to-Come (Liverpool University Press, 1997). I.F. Clarke also edited a reissue of two of future-war classics: The Battle of Dorking by Chesney (1871), and When William Came by Saki (that is, H.H. Munro) (1913). 'William' was, of course, Kaiser WIlhelm II, and when Saki himself enlisted, on 25 August 1914, he wrote to his publishers "It is only fitting that the author of 'When William Came' should go to meet William half way."



Apart from the stories by Chesney and Saki, the most interesting fictional "predictions" of the First World War are probably these:

Capitaine Danrit (Émile Driant), La guerre au vingtième siècle (1894).

William Le Queux, England's Peril (1899).

Erskine Childers, The Riddle of the Sands (1903).

H.G. Wells, "The Land Ironclads" (1903).

A. Niemann, DerWeltkrieg—Deutsche Träume (1904), translated as The Coming Conquest of England.

William Le Queux, The Invasion of 1910 (1906)

H.G. Wells, The War in the Air (1908)

P.G. Wodehouse, The Swoop! Or, How Clarence Saved England (1909).

H.G. Wells, The World Set Free (1914).

These are just the tip of the iceberg: in 1966 Clarke listed 220 titles in this subgenre of science fiction published between 1890 and 1914.

"This is already the vastest war in history. It is a war not of nations, but of mankind. It is a war to exorcise a world-madness and end an age. This is now a war for peace. It aims straight at disarmament. It aims at a settlement that shall stop this sort of thing for ever. Every soldier who fights against Germany now is a crusader against war. This, the greatest of all wars, is not just another war—it is the last war!"
H.G. Wells

1914 – June to December

3 August. H.H. Munro ("Saki") was in the Commons to hear Sir Edward Grey (Foreign Secretary) talking about Belgium's response to Germany's demand.

4 August. Maurice Baring was in the Commons to hear Asquith's announcement of war. Dennis Wheatley was in the crowd that saw the King, Queen and Prince of Wales appear on the balcony of Buckingham Palace in the evening. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had a meeting to organise the Crowborough Volunteers in his Sussex village; it later became the Crowborough Company of the Sixth Royal Sussex Volunteer Regiment (Doyle served as a private).

5 August. Dennis Wheatley was rejected by the Westminster Dragoons, because of his poor horsemanship.

7 August: J.B. Priestley enlisted, as a private, and the following morning reported to the regimental depot in Halifax

9 August. Maurice Baring became Second Lieutenant in Intelligence, attached to the Royal Flying Corps; on 12 August he was in Amiens, and saw the crowds welcoming the British troops, shouting "Vive l'Angleterre".

21-23 August. Pierre Benoit was involved in the battle of Charleroi; he fell ill shortly afterwards, and was invalided out of the French army.

25 August: H.H. Munro, already well known as the writer Saki, was accepted into the 2nd King Edward's Horse; he later transferred to the Royal Fusiliers.

September: H.G. Wells published *The War That Will End War*, his first contribution to the debate about the war.

September 2: Prominent writers were called to the new Propaganda Bureau at Wellington House, by Charles Masterman, to discuss possibilities of writing propaganda: they included J.M. Barrie, Arnold Bennett, G.K. Chesterton, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Ford Madox Ford, John Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy, John Masefield, Gilbert Murray, G.M. Trevelyan, H.G. Wells and Israel Zangwill. Rudyard Kipling and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch sent their apologies.

18 September. Maurice Baring assisted in the first experiment in dropping bombs from an RFC plane.

18 September. 25 writers signed an Author's Declaration in The Times, saying that Britain could not have refused to take part in the war "without dishonour". It contained the paragraph to the right. Signatories included Arthur Conan Doyle, H. Rider Haggard, Thomas Hardy, Jerome K. Jerome, Rudyard Kipling, John Masefield, May Sinclair, and H.G. Wells.

25 September. May Sinclair crossed to France to work with Hector Munro's Ambulance Corps near the Front at Ypres. She only stayed a few weeks.

"Everyone found themselves doing strange things. I was not only a private in the Volunteers, but I was a signaller and I was for a time number one of a machine gun. My wife started a home for Belgian refugees in Crowborough. My son was a soldier, first, last, and all the time. My daughter Mary gave herself up altogether to public work, making shells at Vickers' and afterwards serving in a canteen."
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

29 September, The Evening News published Arthur Machen's "The Bowmen", the ultimate origin of the legend of the Angels of Mons.

9 October: Gilbert Frankau obtained a commission with the East Surrey Regiment.

2 November: H.C. McNeile ("Sapper") went to France with the Royal Engineers. He had been in the Army since 1907.

12 November. Fenner Brockway called for the founding of a No-Conscription Fellowship. His activities protesting about conscription led him to two periods of imprisonment: he was only released from the second one in April 1919.

14 November. New Statesman published a supplement: George Bernard Shaw's Common Sense about the War. Many were outraged, including H.G. Wells.

25 November, Ford Madox Ford published a piece called "The Scaremonger", in which he attacked his neighbour and landlord Edward Heron-Allen (a writer of fantasy) for being paranoid about German spies. Ford, then still called Ford Hermann Hueffer, at this point was still openly expressing German sympathies.

1 December: Cicely Hamilton started work as a nurse at the Abbey of Royaumont, some 50 km north of Paris, where Dr Elsie Inglis established the Scottish Women's Hospital. Hamilton worked there until Spring 1917, when she joined a group putting on plays for the troops, under the auspices of the YWCA. She was still doing this, in occupied Germany, until August 1919. Her 1922 SF novel Theodore Savage was partly based on her experiences.

8 December. Régis Messac received a head wound at the Front, and thereafter worked at auxiliary jobs: cook, cleaner, stable boy.

12 December: J.R.R. Tolkien met with his old school friends for the last time in what they called the Council of London. Two were killed in 1916.

17 December: Osbert Sitwell left for France, a day after the German navy sent a piece of shell through his father's front door in Scarborough. His mother brought him a piece of the shell as a souvenir, when she came down to London to see him off.

Christmas 1914. Bertrand Russell visited as many destitute Germans in England as he could find, to offer them help.

1915 - January to June

13 January. H.C. McNeile published his first story about life in the trenches, in the Daily Mail. Serving officers were not allowed to publish under their own names, so Lord Northcliffe called him "Sapper", after the standard nickname for those in the Royal Engineers. By the end of the war he had published four collections of short stories, including *No Man's Land* (1917).

"I had no belief that killing, simply as such, must in all circumstances be wrong. It was war, modern war, that was wrong, and foolish, and likely to undermine civilisation. It was nationalism that was wrong, and militarism, and the glib surrender of one's responsibility to an authority that was not really fit to bear it"
Olaf Stapleton

February. The first volume of Nelson's History of the War, written by John Buchan, appeared; Volume 24 was published in 1919.

10 February. A.A. Milne heard that he had a commission with the Warwickshire regiment.

3 March. John Masefield (rejected for the Army on medical grounds) arrived at the château of Arc-en-

Barrois, in the Haute-Marne. He served as a hospital orderly, helping with the wounded and in the operation theatre, carrying meals and so on.

15 April. Olaf Stapledon signed up to work in the Friends Ambulance Unit, although he was neither a pacifist nor a Quaker. It was, in the words of the narrator of Stapledon's Last Men in London, a "fantastic organisation", and an "anomalous organisation, whose spirit was an amazing blend of the religious, the military, the pacific, the purely adventurous, and the cynical". May: Rose Macaulay signed on as a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) at Mount Blow, in Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire, a military convalescent home.

12 May. Robert Graves, Second Lieutenant in the Welch Fusiliers, sailed for France.

15 May. Second Lieutenant Dennis Wheatley and part of the First City of London Territorial Royal Field Artillery left London for Ipswich: they had no artillery, or rifles, but they did at least have a regimental band.

17 May: Second Lieutenant A.P. Herbert landed at the Bay of Mudros, near Gallipoli.

17 May: the first report of John Buchan's visit to the Western Front (during the Second Battle of Ypres) was published in The Times. When Buchan next came to France, in October, he was a lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps.

23 May. The futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's Lombard Battalion of Volunteer Cyclists and Motorists was mobilised; they were to fight in the Alps in October.

31 May: Stella Benson, doing war work in the East End of London, went out at night to investigate the damage done by the first Zeppelin raid on London.

June: David Garnett and his friend Francis Birrell went to France to help restore the village of Sommeilles (Marne) (see below) on behalf of the Friends War Victims Relief Mission.

1915 – July to December

9 July. A week after hearing he had been awarded a First at Oxford, Second Lieutenant J.R.R. Tolkien was ordered to report to his regiment, the Lancashire Fusiliers

30 July: Ford Hermann Hueffer officially changed the "Hermann" to "Madox": he did not become Ford Madox Ford until 1919.

"I knew that it was my business to protest, however futile protest might be. My whole nature was involved. As a lover of truth, the national propaganda of all the belligerent nations sickened me. As a lover of civilization, the return to barbarism appalled me. As a man of thwarted parental feeling, the massacre of the young wrung my heart. I hardly supposed that much good would come of opposing the War, but I felt that for the honour of human nature those who were not swept off their feet should show that they stood firm"
Bertrand Russell

1 August. Olaf Stapledon arrived in France, with his own ambulance.

13 August: John Masefield left for the Eastern Mediterranean, hoping to organise medical facilities there; he visited the ANZAC troops at Gallipoli. Ford Madox Hueffer became Second Lieutenant in the Welsh Regiment.

End of August: over a year after his enlistment, J.B. Priestley was sent to France.

25 September. The Royal Welch Fusiliers attacked at Loos, and many of Robert Graves' fellow soldiers killed. Graves was promoted to Captain.

27 September. No. 2 Company of Irish Guards fell back during the Battle of Loos; Lieutenant John Kipling, Rudyard Kipling's son, was missing.

End of September. R.H. Mottram joined the 9th Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment at "Pop" (Poperinghe). They were pathetically keen to see the newcomers; later Mottram realised it was because so many of them had been lost at Loos.

October 6. Christopher, brother of the writer Geoffrey Dearmer, was killed by a shell at Suvla Bay. Geoffrey landed at the Dardanelles a few days later. Later he dedicated his first volume of poetry (Poems, 1918) to Christopher.

8 October. Leo Perutz joined his regiment at Szolnok, about 100 km southeast of Budapest; a month later he received the copy of his first novel.

10 October: W.E. Johns landed at Gallipoli, with the Norfolk Yeomanry.

November: E.M. Forster went to Alexandria to work as a searcher for the Red Cross, looking for soldiers reported missing in action: he worked there until January 1919.

7 November. H.H. Munro ("Saki") finally arrived in France, fourteen months after enlisting.

18 November. Edward Heron-Allen recorded some good news in his journal: "However—one thing is to the good—the flatulent Winston Churchill has left the ministry in a cloud of obloquy and derision. Pray heaven he is not jobbed back ingeniously into some less noticeable office where he can go on gambling with the life and honour of the nation."

20 November. R.C. Sherriff left his insurance job to enlist in the Artists Rifles.

25 December. David Garnett spent Christmas with Dr Hilda Clark, a volunteer doctor at a hospital near

Châlons-sur-Marne, before returning to England to apply for exemption as a conscientious objector.

28 December: Leo Perutz was sent for officer training in Budapest, two days before he sent off his second novel to the publisher.

"The man that took me prisoner, looking at the hole in my face made by one of the bullets, a ricochet, made a remark that people often consider funny, but it was quite simply said and sincerely meant: he said, "I am sorry." He led me back to the rest, and one of them came for me with his bayonet, now cleared of its scabbard; but the bullet having made my wits rather alert than otherwise I saw from his heroic attitude that there was no malice about him, but he merely thought that to bayonet me might be a fine thing to do. When the other man suggested, with little more than a shake of his head, that it was not, he gave up the idea altogether. "Where's a doctor? Where's a doctor?" they shouted. "Here's a man bleeding to death""

Lord Dunsany

1916 - January to June

January. Bertrand Russell joined the No-Conscription Fellowship to attack government policy and to defend conscientious objectors. Robert Graves was sent from the Front to Le Havre, to give lectures on trench warfare.

February. While still working as a VAD in a hospital, Rose Macaulay started work as a land-girl on a farm in Cambridgeshire. Despite the hardships ("I think no soldier is as cold as we / Sitting in the Flanders mud") she enjoyed it much more than the work as a VAD.

21 February 1916, Émile Driant (who wrote future war stories as "Capitaine Danrit") commanded two battalions in the defence of the Bois des Caures, near Verdun, from a massive German attack. He lost his life in the attempt.

April: Osbert Sitwell, who had been in France since December 1914, returned to England, seriously ill with blood-poisoning.

25 April (Easter Tuesday), Lord Dunsany (on leave from the Army but trying to help out) was shot in Dublin by nationalist rebels barricading the quays by the Liffey. He spent the rest of the Easter Rising in a hospital listening to the gunfire.

May/June: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle visited the front in France and Italy, at suggestion of Lord Newton of the Foreign Office.

May. Bertrand Russell was fined £100 for impeding recruitment and conscription. (The money was handed over by his friend Philip Morrell MP—the husband of Russell's lover Lady Ottoline Morrell—as Russell refused to pay.)

11 May: The Times published Osbert Sitwell's first poem, "Babel", written in the trenches near Ypres.

13 May. Second Lieutenant Tolkien was given a certificate allowing him to instruct army signallers.

1 June. A mortar bomb landed in a trench a couple of yards from J.B. Priestley. "All I knew at the time was that the world blew up." He was buried alive, leaving him with a life-long claustrophobia. From then on and through most of 1917 he was convalescing. When he went back to France in 1918 he was gassed.

6 June. J.R.R. Tolkien landed in Calais on his way to the front.

June: H.C. McNeile, "Sapper", published a series of articles in The Times, which came out in book form as The Making of an Officer.

June: William Hope Hodgson, a second lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery, was thrown from his horse during training; his injuries were so severe he was discharged from the Army. (He re-enlisted in 1917, and went to the Front in October.)

28 June. J.R.R. Tolkien joined the 11 th Lancashire Fusiliers at Rubempré, north of Amiens, on the Somme.

"By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead".
J.R.R. Tolkien

1916 - July to December

4/5 July. Leo Perutz was shot in the chest by a Russian bullet. It took months for him to recover; he was promoted to lieutenant while in hospital, but never went back to the front. For the rest of the war he undertook clerical work for the Austrian army, including the censorship of letters from POWs.

20 July. Robert Graves was wounded by a shell as he waited the order to advance at the Somme.

21 July. J.R.R. Tolkien was promoted to battalion signal officer, and probably to acting full lieutenant.

27 July. The Times published the report of Robert Graves's death.

28 July: Ford Madox Hueffer was wounded in the Battle of the Somme; he lost his memory for several weeks.

August: after a few weeks in France the poet Robert Nichols was declared unfit for further service, and was sent back to spend several months in hospital. Later he worked in the Foreign Office, and then in the Ministry of Information.

August: H.G. Wells went a tour of the Italian and French fronts, at the invitation of the Foreign Office.

5 August: The Times announced that "Captain Robert Graves, Royal Welch Fusiliers, officially reported died of wounds, wishes to inform his friends that he is recovering from his wounds at Queen Alexandra's Hospital, Highgate."

18 August. Charles Masterman, head of the War Propaganda Bureau in Wellington House, sent John Masefield to France to write about the American Red Cross hospitals. "He is going into the American Red Cross hospitals deliberately as an orderly in the humblest position in order to write his experiences for the American press. Although a poet, he is first class, and I think we should do everything for him we can."

22 August. Yevgeny Zamyatin's wife agreed to leave Russia and join him in Newcastle-upon-Tyne: he was overseeing the construction of ice-breakers for the Russian fleet.

September, John Masefield's book Gallipoli was published—the result of a trip to the USA where he realised that the failure of the Dardenelles campaign had diminished Britain's reputation. Masefield presented a traditional story of heroism and glory in defeat.

September: H.G. Wells published his successful Great War novel, Mr Britling Sees it Through.

1 September: W.E. Johns left the Norfolk Yeomanry and joined the Machine Gun Corps.

5 September. R.C. Sherriff was commissioned as a second lieutenant and sent to the East Surrey Regiment. 28 September. R.C. Sherriff joined his regiment in France.

October: Captain Gilbert Frankau was sent out to Italy to counter German propaganda on behalf of the British Army.

"I should like to put asterisks here, and then write 'It was in 1919 that I found myself once again a civilian.' For it makes me almost physically sick to think of that nightmare of mental and moral degradation, the war. When my boy was six years old he took me into the Insect House at the Zoo, and at the sight of some of the monstrous inmates I had to leave his hand and hurry back into the fresh air. I could imagine a spider or a millipede so horrible that in its presence I should die of disgust. It seems impossible to me now that any sensitive man could live through another war. If not required to die on other ways, he would waste away of soul-sickness."
A.A. Milne

October: W.E. Johns landed at Salonika.

October: John Masefield visited the Somme.

12 October: Cecil Chesterton edited his last issue of *The New Witness*: he joined the Army, and his brother G.K. Chesterton took over as editor.

27 October. J.R.R. Tolkien reported sick with trench fever.

8 November. A.A. Milne invalided out of service in France; J.R.R. Tolkien hospitalised in England.

Early November: Algernon Backwood went to Switzerland to operate as a spy, out of a hotel near Montreux.

14 November. Lance-sergeant H.H. Munro ("Saki") and his men were resting in some trenches, at 4 a.m., on the point of advancing to take Beaumont-Hamel (in the battle of the Ancre). Munro's friend Spikesman heard Munro say "Put that bloody cigarette out". Then there was a shot from a German sniper. An hour later that Spikesman discovered Munro to be dead, and he realised that those must have been his last words.

December: David Lindsay married Jacqueline Silver, whom he had met while working for the Grenadier

Guards in an administrative capacity, near Birdcage Walk, close to Whitehall.

Christmas Day: Bombardier Wyndham Lewis heard that he had been promoted to second lieutenant in the Artillery.

"It was practically impossible (as well as forbidden) to keep a diary in any active trench-sector, or to send letters home which would be of any great post-War documentary value; and the more efficient the soldier the less time, of course, he took from his job to write about it. Great latitude should therefore be allowed to a soldier who has since got his facts or dates mixed. I would even paradoxically say that the memoirs of a man who went through some of the worst experiences of trench warfare are not truthful if they do not contain a high proportion of falsities."
Robert Graves

1917 - January to June

January. Lord Dunsany wrote two poems at "Plug Street Wood": Ploegsteert, at the Front south of Ypres.

January. Rose Macaulay started work in the War Office, in the department that dealt with exemptions from military service, and with conscientious objectors.

26 January. Captain Robert Graves rejoined the Royal Welch Fusiliers on the Somme. At the end of February he was sent back to England to recover from bronchitis and shell-shock.

February. George Bernard Shaw's play O' Flaherty, V.C. : A Recruiting Pamphlet, had its first performance not far from the Front (and a long way from the censor). It was Shaw's satirical response to the plea from the Undersecretary for Ireland that he should help out in recruitment of the Irish for the Army.

5 February: Hugh Kingsmill Lunn (who wrote as Hugh Kingsmill) was captured by the Germans; from 15 February 1917 to 24 April 1918 he was in a camp at Karlsruhe.

9 February. John Buchan (right) was made director of a new Department of Information, reporting directly to Lloyd George, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

Early March: Ford Madox Hueffer was invalided back to the UK.

5-8 March, Daily Chronicle published George Bernard Shaw's account of his visit to the Western Front, at the invitation of General Haig. His jokes (e.g. that the cathedral at Arras "looked better as a ruin than when it was intact") did not go down well. (It would have been worse had Shaw allowed the subsequent sentence of his first draft to stand, which alleged that the British had done a much better job of destroying Dublin in April 1916 than the Germans had done of destroying Arras.)

21 March. Archie Low had his first test of the guided missile he had invented, on Salisbury Plain. (It crashed.) April. W.A. Darlington was shot right through his body while leading a platoon near Arras; sent back to London in a hospital ship. While recovering, the idea of Alf's Button came to him. (Alf is a serving soldier who finds he has a button containing metal that had once been part of Aladdin's lamp.)

16 April. Claude Farrère, who was a career naval officer from 1899 to 1919, took part in the first tank assault by French troops, at Berry-au-Bac, during the Second Battle of the Aisne.

19 April. Tolkien was recovered enough to join the Humber garrison, on Holderness peninsula.

23 April. A.P. Herbert was wounded in the left buttock, west of Arras; he credited the brandy in his hip flask with saving his life, by sterilising the wound. While convalescing he wrote The Secret Battle, the story of a soldier's nervous breakdown at Gallipoli, and his

"In a trench you are sitting, while I am knitting
A hopeless sock that never gets done.
Well, here's luck, my dear;—and you've got it, no fear;
But for me … a war is poor fun"
Rose Macaulay

subsequent execution for cowardice. Field Marshal Lord Montgomery called it "the best story of front-line war I have read" It began Herbert's twin careers as a writer and a campaigner for legal reform.

24 May. Wyndham Lewis set off for France.

7 June. Wyndham Lewis wrote to Ezra Pound "I have been particularly lucky in dropping into the midst of a very big attack."

1917 - July to December

July. Robert Graves, convalescing at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, intervened on Siegfried Sassoon's behalf, persuaded his superiors not to court-martial him, and escorted him personally to Craiglockhart in Scotland, the hospital specialising in nervous cases. (Sassoon called it "Dottyville"; it is now part of Napier University—see below.) Sassoon was persuaded to accept he was suffering from shell-shock.

31 July. W.A. Darlington finished the first draft of Alf's Button, his orientalist fantasy set in the trenches.

2 August. R.C. Sherriff was wounded at the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), and sent to Hampshire to recuperate. He was not sent back to France; he spent some time training new recruits, and was demobbed in January 1919 with the rank of Captain.

8 August: Second Lieutenant Dennis Wheatley set off for France.

20 August. Eugène Bonaventure Vigo (the father of film director Jean Vigo) was found strangled in his cell: he had been accused by Léon Daudet (French science fiction writer) of treason. Daudet later pursued two former left-wing Ministers (Joseph Caillaux and Louis- Jean Malvy), and helped secure them prison terms for alleged treason.

26 September. Lance-Corporal W.E. Johns was given a temporary commission as Second Lieutenant in the Royal Flying Corps. (He left the RAF with the rank of Flying Officer; although he achieved fame as a writer as "Captain W.E. Johns" he never held either that rank or its RAF equivalent.)

September. *The Strand* published the last Sherlock Holmes story, "His Last Bow". in which Holmes "outwits a German spy". Doyle had been inspired by a conversation he had with a French general on his trip to the front in May/June 1916.

10 November. Private A.M. Burrage took part in the Passchendaele action, and noted that the Canadians were being praised, but not the British:

"I am surprised that I did not dislike the army more. It was, of course, detestable. But the words "of course" drew the sting. That is where it differed from Wyvern. One did not expect to like it. Nobody said you ought to like it. Nobody pretended to like it. Everyone you met took it for granted that the whole thing was an odious necessity, a ghastly interruption of rational life. And that made all the difference. Straight tribulation is easier to bear than tribulation which advertises itself as pleasure. The one breeds camaraderie and even (when intense) a kind of love between the fellow sufferers; the other, mutual distrust, cynicism, concealed and fretting resentment. And secondly, I found my military elders and betters incomparably nicer than the Wyvern Bloods."
C.S. Lewis

19 November: Edward Heron-Allen was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

20 November. Dennis Wheatley took part in a big attack (the battle of Cambrai). On the other side was Ernst Jünger, who was decorated for bravery for his role in the defence of his position from British attack. He was wounded (in all he had 13 wounds in the War).

29 November. C.S. Lewis's nineteenth birthday, and the day he arrived at the front line near Arras.

1918 - January to June

January. Rose Macaulay was transferred from the War Office to Lord Beaverbrook's Ministry of Information, working in the Italian section with Gerald O'Donovan (with whom she maintained a secretive relationship until his death in 1942).

January. Henri Barbusse, invalided out of the French army, went to Moscow and joined the Bolsheviks.

7 January. Ford Madox Hueffer, training troops in Yorkshire, was promoted to captain.

8 January. Gerald Grogan was killed in action at Boesinghe in Belgium. He was a mining engineer by training, and served in the Tunnelling Dept of the Royal Engineers. An explosive shell burst immediately above him.

15 February. Algernon Blackwood (having given up spying) began as a searcher for the Red Cross in Rouen, looking for evidence of missing soldiers.

22 February. Captain Gilbert Frankau (who had served since October 1914) was invalided out with shell-shock.

4 March. John Buchan's Department of Information became the Ministry of Information, with Lord Beaverbrook as minister and Buchan as director of intelligence.

23 March: C.S. Lewis's friend Paddy Moore was killed in action. (In response to a mutual pact they had made, Lewis looked after Moore's mother until her death in 1951.)

1 April. The Royal Air Force was created, and W.E. Johns began as a flying instructor for the RAF at Marske-by-the-Sea (then in the North Riding of Yorkshire).

7 April. A.M. Burrage was wounded, leading to his being invalided out of France.

10 April. William Hope Hodgson was wounded, and had a brief stay in hospital.

Lift not thy trumpet,
Victory, to the sky,
Nor through battalions
nor by batteries blow,
But over hollows full of
old wire go,
Where, among dregs
of war, the. longdead
lie
With wasted iron that
the guns passed by
When they went
eastwards like a tide at
flow;
There blow thy trumpet
that the dead may
know,
Who waited for thy
coming, Victory.
Lord Dunsany

15 April. C.S. Lewis was wounded; his friend Laurence Johnson was standing near him, and was killed instantly.

19 April. William Hope Hodgson, serving as a Forward Observing Officer (directing the fire of his battery), was killed by a German shell.

24 April. Hugh Kingsmill was transferred from a POW camp near Karlsruhe to one near Mainz.

29 April. Edward Heron-Allen was appointed to a staff post in the Propaganda Department in the War Office, and had to give up his position with the Sussex Volunteers. He began editing *Le Courrier de l'Air: Le Journal Hébdomadaire Aérien de la Vérité*, which was to be dropped behind enemy lines.

10 May. Wells began working at Crewe House, for the Advisory Committee to the Director of Propaganda, Lord Northcliffe.

15 May. Dennis Wheatley, suffering effects of poison gas, was sent back to England.

4 June: Ernst Jünger was ordered to defend what the British called Rossignol Wood, but which was for him Das Wäldchen 125. He published a book of that name in 1924, translated as Copse 125 in 1930.

1918 - July to December

July. Hanns Heinz Ewers, the German fantasy writer, who spent the entire war in the USA, was sent to the internment camp Fort Oglethorpe, in Georgia, as a suspected German spy. He had certainly done his best to publicise the German position before the USA entered the war.

20 July. Edward Heron-Allen noted in his diary that H.G. Wells had had a row with Lord Northcliffe, and left Propaganda to go to Lord Beaverbrook's department. (Heron-Allen says that Propaganda had suffered from Wells's "interference and cocksuredness".)

August. John Gloag, a junior officer involved in the Amiens Offensive, was gassed and invalided back home. He was in the advance of the attack, and subsequently noted that the gas was probably British rather than German.

12 August. W.E. Johns flew a De Haviland DH4 heavy bomber on a raid on Frankfurt.

24 August. Ernst Jünger was shot through one lung, and he was sent back to Germany for recovery; on 22

September the Kaiser presented him with the Pour la Mérite, the German army's highest order.

> ""Vive la France!" I yelled, and ran down the street. Already every building was a rash of bunting. Flags flamed and pennants streamed. Everywhere was colour, joy, triumph, and above the mad cheering was the madder tumult of bells. Never again would there be such a frenzy of joy. The people were heading for the Grand Boulevards, crazy to celebrate the victory. Down the Boul' Mich' I hurried in the midst of a riotous throng, across the flag festooned Tuileries, up the Rue de la Paix to the Opera which was a mass of bunting. There a prima donna was singing the "Marseillaise" and everyone joined it."
> Robert Service

14 September. Bertrand Russell was released from Brixton Prison after serving nearly six months for writing that American troops were going to be used in the UK as strike-breakers.

16 September. W.E. Johns was shot down behind German lines after a raid on Mannheim; he spent the rest of the war in POW camps, from which he was released on 30 November.

18 September. Wyndham Lewis, who had been seconded to the Canadian Army as an official war artist, finished his huge picture of a Canadian gun pit.

26 September. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle addressed Australian soldiers at the Front, near the River Somme.

October. Lord Dunsany, working in Propaganda since early 1918, went back to France on a visit. He stood in what had been Nomansland (his spelling) near Bourlon Wood, "the neglected dead lying with wasted wire and fragments of shells, and the guns away to the eastward with the advancing line."

2 October. Lieutenant-Colonel H.C. McNeile ("Sapper") broke his ankle: his first serious wound since joining the army in 1907, although he had been gassed at the Second Battle of Ypres.

11 October. Tolkien was sent to the Savoy Convalescent Hospital in Blackpool.

8 November. Remembering his October visit, Dunsany "wrote a poem called A Dirge of Victory, picturing Victory with her trumpet, not exulting among the army, but blowing her trumpet downward amongst the weeds to tell the dead they had not fought in vain."

8 November. Olaf Stapledon heard that he was one of four Englishmen cited by the French authorities for heroism under the most violent bombardment, and for being "careless of danger". He was awarded the Croix de Guerre.

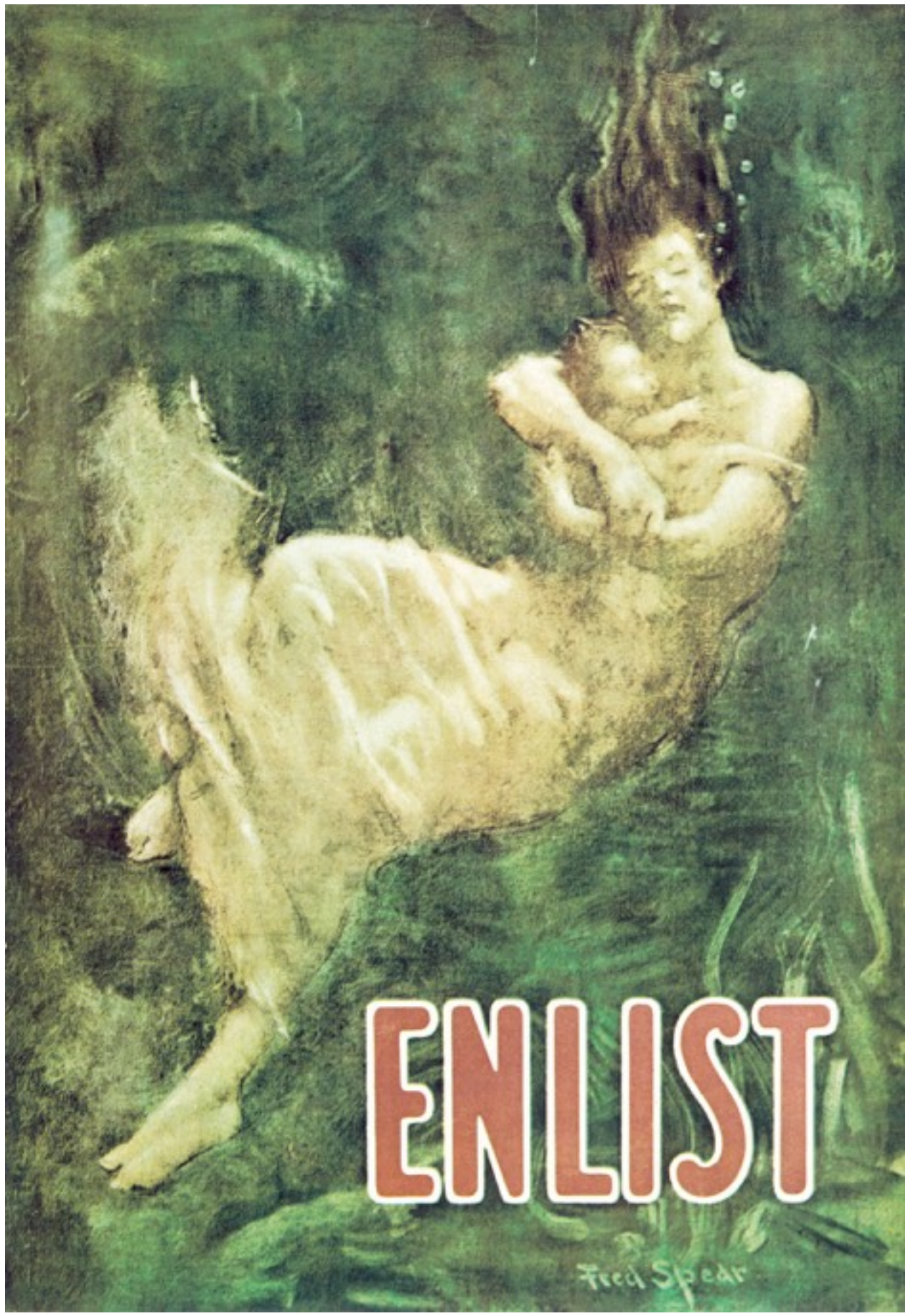
9 November. Bernhard Kellerman later wrote Der 9. November (1920), about the events of this day.

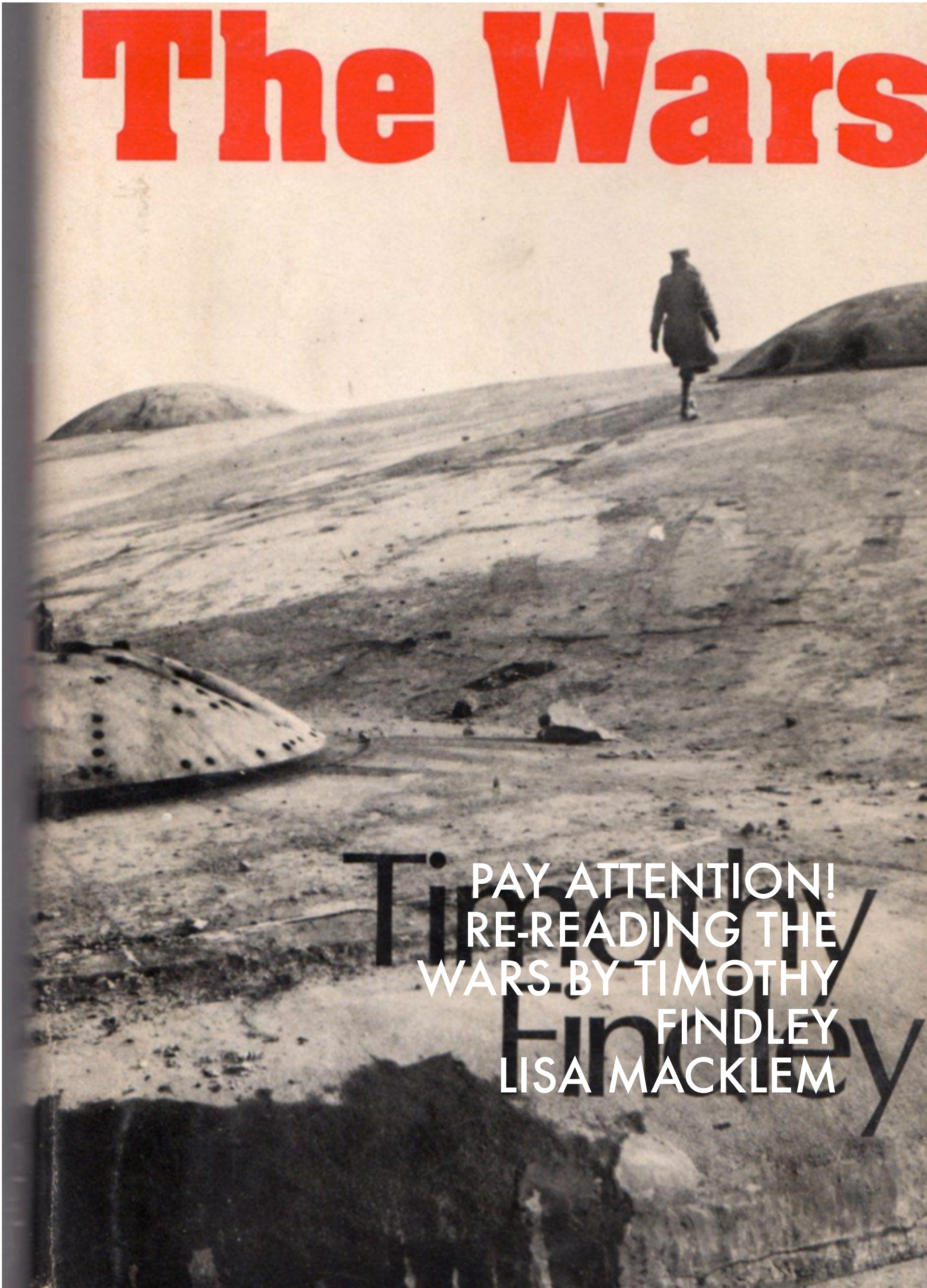
9 November. Guillaume Apollinaire, wounded in 1916, died in the Spanish Flu epidemic.

"Dancing, cheering, singing, hugging, kissing–for two days and two nights the boulevards were given up to a saturnalia of romping rowdyism."
Rudyard Kipling

11 November. David Garnett and Duncan Grant met up with Lytton Strachey, the Sitwells, Diaghelev, and others, and they went to dance with the crowds in Trafalgar Square; Robert Service was in Paris: "Dancing, cheering, singing, hugging, kissing—for two days and two nights the boulevards were given up to a saturnalia of romping rowdyism." Rudyard Kipling could not bear the rejoicing in London, and went to his country house in East Sussex, Bateman's: 'I … had my dark hour alone.'

27 November. Hugh Kingsmill landed in Hull, after 21 months of captivity in German POW camps.





PAY ATTENTION! RE-READING THE WARS BY TIMOTHY FINDLEY

LISA MACKLEM

"Think of any great man or woman. How can you separate them from the years in which they lived? You can't. Their greatness lies in their response to that moment."

Whenever I'm asked to write something, my initial reaction is always to say yes, but when the subject was WWI, I was initially stymied – until I got to "Is there a Book, Film, Poem, Piece of Art, Comic, Story that you feel really epitomises the First World War. Tell us what you like about it, what draws you to it, and share why you appreciate it." And that was definitely a head slapping moment because there is a novel that looms very large for me that is set during WWI – *The Wars* by Timothy Findley.

Just the title should tell you that it is about more than WWI – it's about the wars that we all face in our daily lives. It's about what it means to be human, to face violence and death and still retain our humanity. It's about change and trying to do that for the better regardless of the personal cost. I first encountered the book when I was facing some pretty big changes and it helped to steer me in one direction, and it's particularly interesting that it should come back to me at this time when I'm going through another period of intense flux and change. The themes in the book remain as relevant today as ever in terms of the wider universe too.

I first read the novel in university. I was shifting from a science major with the goal of becoming a veterinarian to an English major with my sights on becoming a journalist. Animals had always been a big part of my life and at that point I'd been riding and competing seriously for over ten years, but chemistry and physics were not my jam. I ultimately didn't become a journalist though I currently write regularly for an entertainment site, but horses have remained a constant in my life.

Over the summer that I switched majors, I decided to get a jump on what was looking to be a lot of reading in the coming fall semester. *The Wars* was relatively short (182 pages) and I was captivated by the very first image: "She was standing in the middle of the railroad tracks. Her head was bowed and her right front hoof was raised as if she rested. Her reins hung down to the ground and her saddle had slipped to one side. Behind her, a warehouse filled with medical supplies had just caught fire. Lying beside her there was a dog with its head between its paws and its ears erect and listening" (9). So much of this image resonated with me and resonates throughout the novel. Animals played a huge part in Robert Ross' (the novel's protagonist) life just as they did mine. The symbol of the railroad looms large in Canadian history and is credited with joining the vast spaces of Canada and her people – from ocean to ocean. The novel is about what connects us as much as what separates us.

This was one of my first forays into post-modern literature. It's also a significant Canadian work. WWI really marks the point at which Canada became an independent country, important in its own right on the world stage – something I was trying to achieve myself as a young adult, embarking on what I hoped would be a successful career. A point that Robert Ross was also at in the novel. The second image in the novel is of Robert: "Twenty feet away, Robert sat on his haunches watching them. His pistol hung down from his fingers between his knees. He still wore his uniform with its torn lapels and burned sleeves. In the firelight, his eyes were very bright. His lips were slightly parted. He could not breathe through his nose. It was broken. His face and the backs of his hands were streaked with clay and sweat. His hair hung down across his forehead. He was absolutely still. He had wandered now for over a week" (9). Robert then releases 130 other horses from the train cars standing on the tracks and rides the mare with them down the tracks, away from town and toward Magdalene Wood and the countryside. Both these images and the entire prologue that they begin are repeated verbatim 172 pages later. When you read the passage the second time, of course, it has an entirely different resonance based on the context of all the reader has learned about how Robert got there. It's a wonderful reflection on memory, storytelling, journalism, and history itself. One thing that hasn't changed for me is just how powerful that image still is.

The novel unfolds in a non-linear way as we learn Robert's story through the eyes of an unnamed historian or journalist or researcher as he/she sifts through archival records, including numerous pictures, which are described but never shown. He also conducts interviews with people who knew Robert and the transcripts are included. In the first section, we are told "All of this happened a long time ago" (10), but the novel was published in 1977 when many of the people who lived through WWI were still alive, and their reactions to being asked about Robert Ross range from not wanting to talk about it to anger or grief over what happened to the horses. The

"Nothing so completely verifies our perception of a thing as our killing of it."

author points out that many men have died "obscured by violence" and lists Lawrence, Scott, Mallory, and Euripides: "These are like statements: 'pay attention!' People can only be found in what they do" (11). This sentiment has resonated with me from that time forward – the importance of doing things, not leaving them to someone else to do. The importance of pushing boundaries and writing. The importance of not taking actions at face value but delving deeper. And of course, the importance of not letting history repeat itself tragically.

Reading such intense reactions to Robert right after his introduction leads the reader to suspect that he did something horrible, but the novel leads us to quite a different conclusion. Actions may not always have the desired outcome but context and intent have to be taken into account – be paid attention to. The narrator tells us "You begin at the archives with photographs. Robert and Rowena – rabbits and wheelchairs – children, dogs and horses" (11). Photographs are often our window to the past but like old family photos with no names on the backs, the actual people and their stories can disappear from memory with no one to remember and re-tell those stories – as the narrator does for Robert. One picture shows the Ross family on a ship sailing between England and Canada. In the background is a white speck, which the narrator clearly identifies as an iceberg, but on the photo itself, it is circled with an arrow and the question what is this? History and even the present unfolding are so often only a small piece of what is actually going on.

The very last photograph – and paragraph – of the novel is also of Robert and Rowena: "Robert and Rowena with Meg: Rowena seated astride the pony – Robert holding her in place. On the back is written: 'Look! you can see our breath!' And you can" (191). We can see their breath because the narrator has brought them alive for us, he/she has made us pay attention to the life and actions of Robert.

Rowena was Robert's older sister who was born with hydrocephalus. The narrator tells us that "Robert was her guardian," (21) but he wasn't with her when she fell while looking after her rabbits. Instead, Robert was in his bedroom "Making love to his pillows" (21). Robert's care of his sister is likely the reason that she lived ten years past the usual life expectancy of 10 to 15 years for a hydrocephalic. Nevertheless – or perhaps because of this – Robert is consumed with guilt over Rowena's death. Robert will only outlive his sister by a year, dying at 26. His mother is devastated by Rowena's death and wants Robert to kill all of Rowena's rabbits – because they had survived her. In the end, Teddy Budge, a large man from Robert's father's factory is called to take care of the rabbits. Robert has been sitting upstairs in his sister's wheelchair when he hears the car arrive with Budge and realizes why he's arrived. He attacks Budge from behind to try to save the rabbits, and Budge defends himself but almost kills Robert. Robert is severely bruised and end up in a convalescent home in England twice because of how deeply he bruises. It's Mrs Ross who points out that some people never bruise, but some bruise easily. It's a symbol of how Robert feels things more deeply and differently from others.

Robert doesn't save even one of the rabbits and leaves for the war almost immediately – to learn how to be a man and how to face death and kill. It's clear that the notion of war is still romanticized as Robert sets off to war – but WWI was war on a scale never seen before. The novel is particularly Canadian as Robert is sent to the prairies for training where he meets Eugene Taffler, a war hero, who becomes a model for Robert. He meets Taffler because of horses. Robert is assigned to a detail to bring in wild horses from Calgary that are destined for the war in France. Taffler ultimately returns to the war and loses both his arms. Taffler attempts suicide, but Robert chooses a very different path after his own tragedy.

Robert again ends up with horses playing a part when he is assigned to the horses in the hold of the ship that is taking him to the war. During a storm, one of the horses falls – as Rowena did – and breaks its leg. Robert must shoot it to put it out of its misery but his first shot misses. While he does manage to kill the horse, it is another traumatic event for him. The lesson is clear. Even when death is necessary, it is not – and should not be – an easy thing.

The bulk of the novel follows Robert through his time spent at the convalescent home in England and in the war. He ends up injured on the ship over and is then also injured while fighting. Robert comes to care for the men he is fighting alongside only to have a group of officers rape him. This is a turning point for Robert, so when his commanding officer Captain Leather has clearly

"1915. The year itself looks sepia and soiled-muddied like its pictures. In the snapshots everyone at first seems timid-lost-irresolute. Boys and men squinting at the camera."

lost his grip on reality and refuses to let Robert retreat with 30 mules and 30 horses who are being heavily shelled, Robert determines to save them anyway. His friend Devlin tries to help, only to be shot by Leather. Robert kills Leather and then the wounded horses and mules: "Then he tore the lapels from his uniform and left the battlefield" (178).

We return to the opening scene of the novel. Robert then goes on to kill a Private Cassles who tries to stop him and is hunted down by Major Mickle. Robert holes up in a barn, and Mickle sets fire to it to force Robert out. In the end, once again, Robert is unable to save the horses and is horrifically burned in the incident. Yet, when his nurse Marion Turner offers to end his suffering, he tells her "Not yet" (189). Robert will survive and even find love in his final years.

On page 158, the narrator ends a chapter by telling the reader that "So far, you have read of the deaths of 557,017 people – one of whom was killed by a streetcar, one of whom died of bronchitis and one of whom died in a barn with her rabbits." It's a shocking juxtaposition, and it highlights that people are found in what they do, but their death really impacts us when we have that personal connection to them and this underscores the importance of paying attention and not letting the individuals and the horror be lost in a faceless number.

In the epilogue before we reach that final picture of Robert and Rowena, the narrator quotes Nicholas Fagan, an Irish essayist and critic, writing in 1943, during WWII: "*the spaces between the perceiver and the thing perceived can … be closed with a shout of recognition. One form of a shout is a shot. Nothing so completely verifies our perception of a thing as our killing of it*" (191). Not paying attention is one way of not closing the gap between history and the present. It is very easy to get caught up in the present and the day to day struggle. *The Wars* reminds us to pay attention – to history, to memory, but perhaps more importantly to our own actions.

8

KING VIDOR'S THE BIG PARADE

BY CHUCK SERFACE

"Waiting! Orders! Mud! Blood! Stinking stiffs! What the hell do we get out of this war anyway!"

World War I, as many know, became a catalyst for certain technological advances in combat. What humanity now calls weapons of mass destruction first appeared in the form of chlorine gas, concocted by Fritz Haber, head of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Physical Chemistry, who after using himself as a test subject witnessed from a distance its use on the Western Front, specifically near Ypres in Belgium. In this battle alone as many as 1,200 were killed with 3,000 wounded. Throughout the war, pilots fought in the skies, and soldiers went over the top from trenches into clouds of Haber's mustard gas, as well as into the bayonets, gunfire, and ordnance of the other side. In his WWI: Technology and the Weapons of War, historian A. Torrey McLean concludes:

One of the saddest facts about World War I is that millions died needlessly because military and civilian leaders were slow to adapt their old-fashioned strategies and tactics to the new weapons of 1914. New technology made war more horrible and more complex than ever before. The United States and other countries felt the effects of the war for years afterwards.

Although the eventual death tally reached an estimated 9 million, as compared to 14 million for all wars that occurred during the previous century, arguably the greatest toll resonated in the minds of survivors, and researchers began studying shell shock, now known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). On the one hand, commanders considered soldiers showing early signs of this condition to be cowards or malingerers, sentencing many to face firing squads. On the other hand, psychiatrists – for example, Robert Gaupp, E. Regis, and Charles Myers -- would pioneer efforts toward increasingly more effective treatments for the psychological effects of war. So, yes, this enormous conflagration netted enormous technological advances for society at large, but the terrors birthed from these "leaps forward" seem to overshadow the blessings.

As with previous conflicts, former soldiers penned first-person and artistic accounts, but never in such numbers. Robert Graves, Ernst Junger, and Henri Barbusse all published war autobiographies, and the British poets Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen crafted nightmares into frightening but elegant verse. Novelists also provided creative perspectives, with Erich Maria Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front and Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms still thriving as exemplars of the genre. But before these novels were released, director King Vidor initiated the "War is Hell" trend in film with The Big Parade (1925), starring John Gilbert and Renee Adoree. If like me your first viewing of this silent classic generated a strong sense of déjà vu then you too appreciate its influence on many later movies, among them the cinematic version of A Farewell to Arms, The Best Years of Our Lives, and more recently Apocalypse Now and Platoon.

The story isn't complicated. Gilbert plays Jim Apperson, the scion of a wealthy family living easily until patriotic friends convince him to enlist and fight in Europe. Leaving behind his father, his mother, his elder brother, and his long-time girlfriend, Apperson enters basic training and then travels to France with his unit, including Slim, a construction worker, and Bull, a bartender. The first part of the film outlines the growing love between Jim and Melisande, a farm girl in Champillon, the village in which his unit waits until deployed to the front.

The second half involves Jim's ordeal at the front. Here Vidor displays the full horrors of war on screen for the first time. Viewers see the gas, the trenches, and soldiers dying in the mud. Jim loses track of Melisande, since Champillon has been destroyed and its inhabitants displaced. After the war, he returns home older, wiser, wounded, and confronted with changes that have occurred during his time away.

"What a thing is patriotism! We go for years not knowing we have it. Suddenly - Martial music!... Native flags!... Friends cheer!... and it becomes life's greatest emotion!"

One doesn't despair in the end, however, as Jim strives to ensure that love wins out. Love conquers all, and only love will propel Jim through his worst days and nights, the film seems to say. I'm reminded of Homer Parrish in William Wyler's The Best Years of Our Lives (1946), who returns from World War II without his arms. What eventually integrates him back into society and life is the continued love of his fiancée, who will not abandon him despite his condition. We imagine that Jim Apperson, also an amputee, will receive similar spiritual healing after reuniting with Melisande. More to the point, he'll fight for his love, as Homer's fiancée fights for hers. He'll receive something for what the war has cost him, even if it means reliving the agonies of France.

The filmmaker never openly questions the causes of World War I, but the battle scenes spare us nothing. No shots of heroes enjoying ticker-tape parades ever touch the screen. Jim Apperson is a GI, not the officer his girlfriend back home romantically dreamt he would be. Wounded soldiers sit in trenches with blood running out of helmets. We feel the fear of Apperson, Slim, and Bull when they draw to decide who will crawl out of the trench, across barbed wire and gunfire, to confront the enemy. If you seek propaganda, go elsewhere. Here you'll not find brave souls standing resolutely for God and Country. Vidor examined actual combat footage for realism, hoping to represent the grunt's perspective. Laurence Stallings's script based on his wartime recollections only adds to the gritty verisimilitude. The final product, then, more resembles Graves, Hemingway, Remarque, and Sassoon rather than the peppy war songs spawned in that era. In spite of all this, audiences reacted positively, making The Big Parade a record-breaking hit that filled MGM's coffers and catapulted King Vidor and John Gilbert to legendary status. This success mirrored how Americans felt about World War I: they wanted it to remain the war that ends all wars.

Obviously, this hasn't been the case. Historians have defined the Twentieth Century as a century of enhanced conflict – World War II, Korea, the Cold War, Vietnam, and the as of yet unsettled issue of global terrorism, all seeding exponential growth in methods for mass killing. Although extremely realistic, The Big Parade never displays the cynicism of later war films, like those set in Vietnam: Apocalypse Now, Platoon, and Full Metal Jacket. Who could blame anyone for such cynicism? Surely, the Second World War was necessary to halt fascism, but the world has moved far beyond the moment that was supposed to have ended all wars. Weren't mustard gas and trenches enough? Nuclear deterrents, ICBMs, napalm, and now drones have entered the arena. We're no longer saying, "These nightmares will put an end to this." Instead we're asking, "When will the nightmare end?" At least commanders have stopped condemning psychologically wounded soldiers to firing squads, but then again, we now expect that all who survive battlefields will suffer at least a moderate level of PTSD. I only hope they will fight for love like Jim Apperson and thus reap benefits from their sacrifices.

In summary, The Big Parade begins a journey through which filmmakers question the costs of war, reflect on history, and provide catharsis for viewers. As I've stated earlier, a sense of déjà vu only highlights the effect this movie has had on all others since, whether they agree with Vidor's vision or speak against it. World War I accelerated not only certain technologies and our understanding of the human mind, but also the means through which our species communicates realistically about the shared predicament of war. Honor The Big Parade for illustrating that war is hell, but also honor it for instructing on what should inspire us to fight – love. Definitely the rewards are greater.

"ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT" AND ANTI-WAR ARTS BY DOUGLAS BERRY

"History is written by the winners" is an accepted truism. Defeated nations tend to accept the verdict of history and adapt their own histories to match the accepted view of things. But in the arts, you can find differing views.

Erich Maria Remarque's classic "All Quiet on the Western Front" (1929) is one such work. The book follows Paul Bäumer, a German soldier who—urged on by his jingoistic schoolteacher—enlists in the early days of World War I alongside many of his friends. We follow his transformation from a starry-eyed, idealistic recruit through the brutality of training, his first sight of casualties, finally to the harsh brutality of the trenches. We see through Paul's eyes how the war is nothing more than random death, boredom, and stress that prematurely ages these under-trained soldiers.

In the book battles are never named. Instead, the reader never knows why this particular fight is happening. Is it a major push? A diversion? A mistake that

> “This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war.”

both sides stumbled into? Much like in reality, Paul sees the war only as his tiny slice of it. This is what makes the book great, for it isn’t about war, but about soldiers.

Perhaps the strongest scenes come when Paul is granted leave and returns home. He sees his former school teacher not as an inspired patriot, but as a man clueless about the realities of war. His former friends and neighbors are strangers now. His only solace is with his dying mother, with whom he sits, both concealing secrets from the other.

The tale ends with Paul, last survivor of his little group, back on the front. In the movie he notices a butterfly and reaches for it; only to be shot and killed by a sniper. Back at German headquarters, a simple report reads “All quiet on the Western Front.”

“All Quiet” has been long hailed as a masterpiece of anti-war fiction. But is it really anti-war, or just honest about war. Remarque himself was a veteran of the war, and wrote honestly about the soldier’s journey. He never spoke of the novel as being anti-war, just based on what he saw.

Which leads to the question, is there such a thing as an anti-war work in the arts? Or does openly and honestly portraying the horror and carnage serve as an anti-war message on its own? General William Sherman famously said: “You don’t know the horrible aspects of war. I’ve been through two wars and I know. I’ve seen cities and homes in ashes. I’ve seen thousands of men lying on the ground, their dead faces looking up at the skies. I tell you, war is Hell!”

What is interesting is that the trend recently has been towards more honesty in depictions of war in various media. Whereas WWII was largely whitewashed for years, and the Korean war mostly a basis for humor, today we get more and more works that examine the harsh effects of war on people, rather than big explosions and nobility.

“All Quiet on the Western Front” is a classic, both in book form and the 1930 film.

ENLIST

LAURA BREY

WORLD WAR 1 AND COMICS BY JAMES BACON

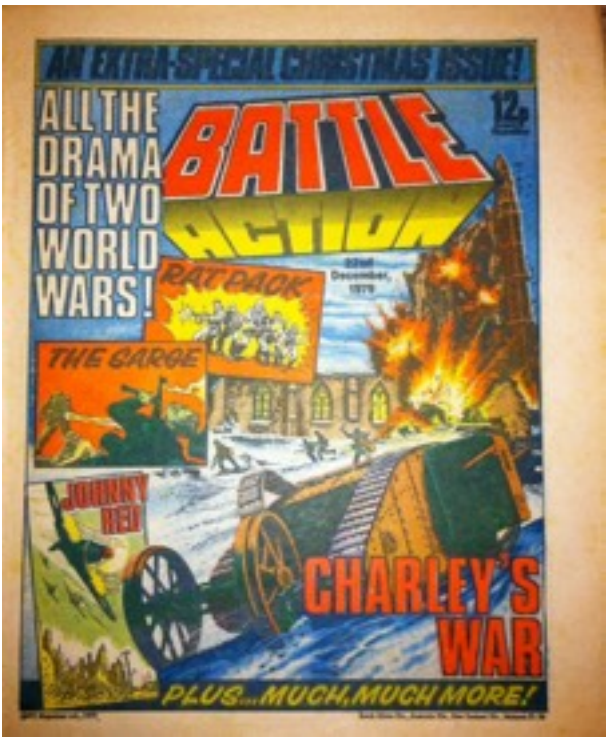
Comics as story telling medium are my favourite form of art, they visualise for the reader, exactly what the writer wanted, while still allowing a piece of literary craft to be told. There are comics on all subjects and indeed, in the last 20 years, there has been a rapid expansion of genres and issues being portrayed in comics. I was enthralled by comics, and the horror of the First World War as a small boy, with *Charley's War* in the weekly *Battle* comic. My fascination and appreciation of War comics was born from this childhood experience, and I will always be grateful to Pat Mills for his brutally honest and historically accurate story telling. Here are a selection of pieces on war comics that.

Charley's War By Pat Mills and Joe Colquhoun, Ten Volumes a reflection.

...the real trouble with writing about WW1 is that you can't go very far without running into- *Charley's War,* which is simply so good that it makes the very prospect of tackling the conflict extremely daunting... Garth Ennis.

In Britain we are celebrating the centenary of the First World War. That is sometimes how it feels, when politicians tell us their interpretation of history, or how it should be seen, a celebration in all but words. In Germany, there is no such joyous remembrance, and there one wonders is the shame of the aggressor the reason why it is a less celebratory affair or have they a clearer understanding of hubris.

Yet even historians cannot agree on the true cause of the First World War (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-26048324) , and amongst those who ask deeper less loyal questions, a name frequently appears: Sir Edward Grey. Recently Grey was described as 'enlightened' by a national broad sheet, and there is no end of praise (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/charlesmoore/10094817/An-enlightened-man-for-the-darkest-times.html) for the foreign secretary and ultimately head diplomat of pre-war Britain.



Fortunately, in the world of comics, my reckoning is that we have been occasionally blessed with a more questioning approach. I am used to a sober, calm and in many cases eminently researched formulation of work about historical subjects in the pages of comics. Pat Mills has a way of putting things to the reader which just stop one in one's tracks, as he recently said to me in some correspondence:

'And at the heart of it, hard evidence that Britain - not Germany - deliberately created the war with Sir Edward Grey as a war criminal equal to any in WW2.' Pat Mills.

Mills does in one sentence what he did every week for six years. He makes one question, makes one think, ask what one knows, and understands, and ultimately makes the reader do some research and form their own opinion.

With the anniversary of the first modern war that mechanised the process, that industrialised death, that involved civilians indiscriminately or even purposely as targets, that slayed ten million people, that was horrific on a scale that can barely be comprehended it is important that we have independent views of the war. Ten minutes in a trench under shelling, let alone ten hours or ten days, must have been torturous bloody mayhem. The pressure of duty, the fear for one's nation, and then the fight, across a no man's land, or in a muddy hole on the ground, bitter hand-to-hand fighting with tools of death fashioned like medieval weapons, the knowledge that there was only one way, and that was forward, for one of your own would be behind if you turned.

It is nearing the end of 2016 and there have been some excellent works on the war, and I expect there will be no shortage to come. Yesterday I received *Stray Lines,* an anthology work, of some considerable standing, from Ireland edited by Paddy Lynch and the first story was brilliantly done, by Alan Dunne, entitled *The Perfect Trust* about a Chaplin in the trenches, 6 pages, tightly told and stylistically drawn.

Personally I am looking forward to learning more. I feel that the five years of the First World War can indeed be utilised for stories, angles, truths and fiction that we are not aware of and of course, help enlighten people on its realities and I hope this continues now for another 3 years.

There is not a lot to celebrate. Yet commemorating this war, a war that involved so many nations, and was truly pointless - what was achieved, what was lost - is important, but this is no celebration in the literary imaginations brought to life in the reader's mind through sequential art. It is a time for questions, to do what great comics do: make one think.

There is one piece of work that certainly succeeds in this: *Charley's War.*

I loved Charley Bourne. I loved him like a pal, and I say honour with all seriousness. The few pence at the time was not at a small amount of money, and so my Dad, who for some godforsaken inspired reason spent his hard earned cash on a comic, light hearted, an ephemeral time passer.

Maybe it was the stickers, or something about *Battle* that meant it was the one he ordered, but Charley was my favourite. I would leave him to last, the best to last, with Johnny always second last. I would fret and fear for Charley, for the brutality of various characters, name sakes, or personifications of more than just an individual. Even as a boy, a child, one could see the good and the bad. Mills was able to craft a depth to his characters, so one could feel the broader conflict, and see the horrors in individuals, and it was clear they were part of an overall system, driven by class and a pox on the ordinary soldier. The writing captures a broader perspective for the reader, bringing elements that are unknown in my case, or less known to bear, and the treatment of soldiers so horrible, and yet as a boy I could understand that sometimes the enemy is not the coal scuttle helmeted stormtrooper, who occasionally would be portrayed as just as hapless as some of Charley's buddies, but the officer class, the system, the cowardice within and how empathy for humanity is something that friends understand but the class system wants to destroy.

The subversive nature of this story is unmistakable now as I read it. It is actively getting children in the late 1970s and early 1980s to understand the true horror of war, and to question authority and the class system, as it applies a very seriously analytical view of the war. Many weeks I hated Snell more than any German. Hated.

There was an incredible harshness, the brutality of war, the meanness and evil of men, the misuse of authority, the sacrosanct nature of that authority, that overrode everything else, the violence and fear, it was all captured every week in this comic that Dad would collect and bring home.

Now one can read it and recognise the phenomenal research and the perspective, distinctly that of a writer who is intelligently portraying situations and characters that give genuine insight into more than the immediate action. As an adult who has read some works about The First World War, one can only appreciate the metaphorical elements to the work, and of course the breadth that it takes.

These are some of the reasons why it is the greatest fictional First World War work.

Mills uses a number of techniques to introduce us to other elements of the war, be it in the air with Charley's brother Wilf, at sea with tales from Charley's cousin Jack, the German side, the rebellious French or the black American troops, of the Harlem Hellfighters and the British involvement after the war in the Russian Civil War on the White side.

As the comic would have four or so pages each week, it needed to be paced really smartly, the reader needing quite a lot, but also a pressure on the writer to hold attention and now, I look at the level of depth and detail. Charley would write to his ma, and this would form some of the narration, while Mills's superb research and knowledge educated with each episode.

The artist, Joe Colquhoun, must have used real First World War pictures as reference, as the accuracy and intimacy of detail give the story an unusual familiarity. Weaponry, the trenches, the clothing, the accessories, the reactions to things we take for granted, all are portrayed on the paper with considerable brilliance. The action scenes posses a sense of alacrity and movement that really get across to the reader the instantaneousness of what is happening, while the fear and upset, usually in Charley's eyes, haunting.

Colquhoun knew how to draw, or would have the material he needed to draw it right, and it is an incredibly hard standard to surpass. One looks at a Lewis Gun, or a Mark IV tank and it is perfectly proportioned and accurately drawn. This is vital to any reader who wants to submerge themselves into the story, an inaccurate element can wrench one from the story, and this never happened.

"...something that sounds so counter to everything around us about the First World War that we are forced to ask questions."

Colquhoun's steady and clear line, the skilled way in which the characters maintain a consistency, even through time as we watch Charley age and grow war weary, Oiley put on weight as his greed and criminality fatten him, Snell become the true monster that he always is. It is all brilliant penmanship of the highest order.

Again, this only cements my opinion of the comic.

The Imperial War Museum underwent a total refurbishment, but before it closed, I wandered through the trench, simple and clean, no mud and water, but a good impression of what a trench was, stood next to the Mark IV tank 'Devil' and I browsed through actual photographs of the trenches in their archive (looking for some Tank activity in Ireland in Cork in 1919) and yet I have to admit that nothing else can give me the real palpable vivid sensations of the First World War that *Charley's War* could and does give me.

Men hoping for a blighty, the stink of rat infested trenches, the whipping of soldiers on a wheel as part of court martial and the humour, the laughter and little successes, the friendship and comradeship but most importantly it is the view of the war from the ordinary guy's perspective. Seeing everything that is rotten, everything that was just horrid about the war, the vulgarity of the officers, the behaviour that is shocking towards men who believe, have been convinced they are doing their duty. The honour and kindness of some juxtaposed against the heinous inhumanity and inappropriate belligerence of others.

The ability to neatly have the cynical but brutally honest reality slipped in neatly in a frame, as immoral acts occur, or fierce wrongs are committed, makes one think. And I loved Charlie's pals, Lieutenant Thomas, Mad Mick, Alf, Smith 70, Blue an especially interesting character and of course Ginger, who Charley buries. Death happens frequently around Charley, and of course this helped me as a reader understand that curtailing of what one has, not just Charley's friend, but a friend in the pages of a comic that I had come to care for. Mills was especially good at creating characters who engaged the reader in short order.

Charley's War ran from the 6th of January 1979 up until the 26th of January 1985, and many readers, like me, felt there was an ending with the closing of the First World War . Of course there was a twist even in the final moments, and Charley and Old Bill end up in Russia, fighting with the While Russians and thousands of British soldiers in the civil war, an element that most people have no idea about. After some 300 episodes, Pat Mills the writer left the story, and Scott Goodhall took over. Charley's War continued, and Joe Colquhoun still drew the comic, but it went towards the Second Wolrd War with less earnestness than I had hoped, and then in a moment that made me put Battle down, as Charley reminisces about the First World War, the story restarted.

Titan Books have reprinted the Pat Mills stories in ten volumes and two compendiums and they are to be applauded. Each one has an interesting introduction, and commentary, contextual essays and photos and reference, and it really is a lovely package, with Pat Mills taking time and care to write about the comic that as a fan is superb to read.

One should also mention Neil Emery who ran The Charley's War web site on a Tripod site, and tirelessly sought re-publication by keeping the great story in peoples mind. The Charley's War website that contains considerable information continues, as Neil passed away at the age of 39, but for some fans, he left behind a legacy. http://charleyswar.sevenpennynightmare.co.uk

While it is nice to have a quote that inspires, something that sounds so counter to everything around us about the First World War that we are forced to ask questions, I thought, I should ask Pat Mills why he felt that way about Sir Edward Grey, so one can

see that this writer bases his thoughts on research and independent thinking:

'The book that opened my eyes to Grey is... Hidden History by Gerry Docherty and Jim Macgregor.'

'Their book is not unique, but goes further in describing what World War One was really about. Paxman's apologies for Empire - he's clearly a government asset. Grey was part of the Milner faction who deliberately instigated war with Germany. (There are several other books which make this very serious and verifiable allegation) There's no doubt Grey was a war criminal and should have stood trial for the slaughter of all those soldiers who died in vain.'

'The way he did it had much in common with the way Blair did it with Iraq. Because that's how these things are done. ' Pat Mills.

Charley's War is not just a comic about the First World War. Right now, as I write this, it is the greatest fictional work about the war. A huge statement.

All Quiet on the Western Front, War in the Trenches, The Great War, War Horse, these are all magnificent works, amazing, enjoyable, heart breaking. Yet, it is Charley's War, a four or five page comic story, that was published every week in a war comic, that I consider to the pre-eminent piece of work, that I had the incredible honour to read and it is a story that reminds me to think and feel. Pure brilliance.

For more information on Pat Mills: https://patmills.wordpress.com/

Beyond the Wire by Alys Jones. An Interview.

Beyond the Wire is a series of illustrations, linked by a poetic set of narratives that manages to capture with the care and imagination, the terrible tragedy that were the trenches on the western front in the First World War.

The book itself is a real artefact, it feels special as soon as you pick it up, the brown light card-board cover feels of the time and the unusual size means that it feels like someone's personal book, of photo's or sketch's.

The narrative is poignant, and deeply respectful of the history, while there is a sadly sinister element played out, as one sees images of good and bad officers, and Tommy's treated very poorly.

Added to this, there is an ingenious artistic element, that really adds to the work, there are holes in the pages, which allow previous images to continue into a new scene or setting. The holes create a consistency and select images are chosen, faces and eyes especially looking through and yet the context surrounding these suddenly familiar elements are drastically altered, telling it's own story.

There is a sequence to the images, one leads to another, while the opposing pages depict complementary images but are distinct. There is a pleasure in exploring this work yet there is a harsh reality, as the privatisations of the trench soldier is put in sharp contrast with the excesses of some officers. The inking is clever too, with two differing tones in use.

The poetry style narrative, with characters speaking is partial, yet clearly explains the situation, less words allowing the striking imagery to take greater hold of the reader.

I was so impressed with this work, that I sought out the artist Alys Jones and interviewed her,

as I felt that this work must be reflective of the artist and there is more than a simple illustrated book.

James: The book begins with a poem by David Jones, but you created the narrative yourself, how did you go about that, and what were you trying to do here?

Alys: I was attempting to articulate my own response to the poetry and art of World War One, rather than inform or educate, neither of which I feel qualified (or have any desire) to do. It is set within an unfinished poem, the landscapes composed from many different sources, so there is no attempt to depict real historical events as fact. However, I did feel a responsibility, out of respect to the subject matter, to try and give the book as much accuracy of detail as I possibly could. I couldn't have produced it without carrying out quite a bit of research, although I'm sure it still has plenty of inaccuracies! The central character in the book is an Officer poet, and strongly inspired by those famous figures such as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves. So I wanted the text to echo the cadence of a poem without seeming like a parody (the imagery is as much an attempt to achieve this as the text). David Jones's *In Parenthesis* is incredibly rich with detail and description that influenced both my writing and artwork hugely. The passage of text I chose is very atmospheric, and felt like it led perfectly into the story I wanted to tell.

James: Do you have any connections yourself to the First World War?

Alys: My Grandfather fought in World War One, but I never met him and know next to nothing about his experiences. I don't feel at all that this qualifies me to comment on or plunder unimaginable experiences. Despite book's setting, it is most definitely a contemporary work, dealing with my own modern day engagement with literature, history and imagination.

James: What was the motivation to look at the First World War?

Alys: When I started my Masters (in Illustration: Authorial Practice at Falmouth University) I felt quite lost and stuck for ideas. I was making little sketches and strips featuring recognisable, archetypal characters from literature, who had been left unwritten, edited out, or were out of print. They were lost in a sort of narrative limbo, some were quite resentful towards their authors! *Beyond the Wire* started as one of these quick little doodles, but after discussing it with tutors it seemed like it had some potential to develop it further. Once I had decided to base the story in World War One, the

research became central to the project, and it felt important to show respect to the subject in my representation of it.

James: What do you find interesting about it during your research, and how did you feel, and was this important as a message in your work?

Alys: I found photographs from the War very moving, actually pretty hard to look at a lot of the time. I really wanted to try and recreate the closed, ambiguous facial expressions of the (now anonymous) soldiers within them. Quite often a character will take on an expression quite different from the one I originally intended, and far more interesting. Sometimes I would incorporate this and allow it to dictate and alter the rest of the drawing. It is overtly a piece of fiction, and quite personal, so I don't see any need for it to be neutral or unbiased. However I wouldn't say I had an intended message or point to make, but it's impossible for my responses to my research not to inform the narrative and overall tone. I made several visits to the Imperial War Museum to look in detail at things like uniforms, equipment and signage, but was also influenced by the work of painters like Otto Dix and Paul Nash. The more I looked at and read, the more aware I became of the need to avoid any sense of glorification or nostalgia, I realised I would need to depict horrible things if I really wanted to tell a story in this setting.

James: Can you tell me what media you used, the mix of black and sepia is interesting, and I wondered what you used to get that effect?

Alys: I used quink ink for the black pages, and my own mixture of black and brown calligraphy inks for the sepia. I wanted the colours to bring to mind old photographs and newspaper cuttings, and I like the variation in tone you can achieve with calligraphy inks. I also find it a nice medium for creating subtle and interesting brush marks, and it reacts nicely against different types of paper. In a way the illustrations more closely resemble a series of static snapshots in an album, than cells in a comic (which often form a more fluid sequential narrative). This is probably because my research involved looking at so much photographic material.
http://forbiddenplanet.co.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/beyond-the-wire-alys-jones-01.jpghttp://forbiddenplanet.co.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/beyond-the-wire-alys-jones-01.jpg

James: I understand you drew these images as A2 originally, was that the stage that you did the cutting?

Alys: Yes the holes were part of the original drawings. So there is a full A2 version of the book, made up of the original artworks. When it came to reproducing the book for publication, I had to make sure everything was nicely lined up and add templates to cut around. It was quite a fiddly proc-

ess! It works nicely on a smaller scale, I think, as it is easier to handle and looks more like a notebook or photograph album of the time.

James: How did the idea of cutting holes come about?

Alys: In the very early stages of the project I made a mistake in a drawing which had been going quite well, so I cut part of it out. I then began to experiment with laying images over each other in various formations, to see how that could be used as a narrative device. Because of the setting and subject matter, the holes began to take on an unexpected significance and became quite central to my project. They started to raise all kinds of questions relating to missing memories and trauma, injury and amputation, and a blasted landscape. They also began to reflect the unfinished nature of the poem in which the story takes place, as well as allowing an unusual way to progress the narrative and create unusual shifts and jumps from place to place. They can take you through a series of events, allow you to see through a dugout into the trench, and shift the viewer's position within the narrative.

James: It works very well, changing the perspective and interpretation with the turn of a page, and it feels like the idea developed during the process, did it?

Alys: It definitely developed alongside the two major strands of my research which were concerned with meta-fiction and 'author conscious narratives' and the First World War. Each time I produced a new page I was forced to incorporate the shape of the holes on both sides, this was quite challenging and frustrating at times but it actually forced me to come up with new ideas and images that I wouldn't have come up with otherwise. I also think the sense of chaos and confusion created by the layering of some of the pages, is in keeping with the setting of the book.

James: Is this a machine or hand cut process?

Alys: It's all hand cut, so each copy has had quite a lot of time and attention. I had lots of help cutting out before the launch last year at Daunt Books, but I think I will be making them for quite some time!

James: The photographs at the end, are they fictitious or based on real images?

Alys: I looked at a lot of photographs, and sometimes borrowed clothing, backgrounds, and compositions. As much as possible I made changes, or made the faces up completely because it felt somehow prurient and exploitative to copy them exactly. I would say they are visual historical fiction, there are strong elements of both real sources, and imagination combined.

James: I understand you drew a life size mural, and it is incredible looking, can you tell me a bit about that please?

Alys: I made a life sized painting of characters from the book, on the wall of my M.A. exhibition space, it was intended to act as an extension of the book itself. I wanted the viewer to really feel like they were part of the narrative, inside one of the pages. I placed a copy of the book on a plinth painted to look like a crate, with one of the painted figures looking at it. Throughout the book, one of

the characters speaks out of the page, directly to the reader, in order to bring them into the narrative. So the mural was an attempt to take the idea one step further. It's also quite rare for an illustrator to get the opportunity to make paintings on that scale and I really wanted my show to have impact, and draw visitors in to look at the book. Sadly I had to paint over it after a couple of weeks, but it was nice while it lasted, and I'd love to do more work on that scale! Alongside the mural I had a wall of paintings, drawings and etchings, which was a nice way to show the development of the project and create a sense of atmosphere.

As you can see, there is indeed a depth to the creation of the work that is staggering.

There must be something about the First World War, that sparks the creative spirit in a terribly respectful and honest way. For me it joins pieces like *Charley's War,* and *It Was the War of the Trenches - C'était la guerre des tranchées* by Jaques Tardi. It is amongst works of that calibre that I would put Beyond the Wire, it has a unique way of showing the story of the trenches and is quite superb, in a very unique way. 0

At the moment The book is available from Alys Jones Wesbite:

http://alysjonesillustration.weebly.com/

And Atlantic Press:

http://www.atlanticpressbooks.com/

To End All Wars Edited by Jonathan Close and John Stuart Clark with an Introduction by Pat Mills

Consideration, reflection and thought about human loss and the terrible, preventable tragedy that occurred seems to be the theme of this comic. This collection is an honest and genuine testament to the creative abilities possessed by some who can poignantly place the reader in the mire, filth and sorrowful deaths that occurred in that war.

You will appreciate that all comic stories about the First World War stand in the shadow of *Charley's War*, which for me, as explained, is the greatest work of fiction on the subject, fantastically researched and brutally honest. So the challenging and engaging introduction from Pat Mills is an imprimatur of the highest order.

I trust Pat Mills. He says it as it is and speaks passionately about the way the First World War is portrayed, how the spin that makes it look like a good fight allows further allowances with life, and gives some staggering quotes. This is a start to a comic that is just right and Mills feels that the medium of comics is delivering.. The stories need to be honest. I need there to be light shined into the history of what happened, how a war between cousins could so easily start and so brutally continue, a consideration of the actual loss, both in breadth and to individuals. I did not want to find some jingoistic championing of the mincemeat machine that was this war. I was not disappointed.

There is a pleasant diversity amongst the 27 short tales in this collection. The styles sufficiently differ to allow favourites, the stories range widely, encompassing quite a variety of subjects from an unusual number of viewpoints, some with a menacing air, that the stories are not pleasant. I was taken by a number of them, which I will focus on.

'Go Home and Sit Still' by Selina Lock and Arthur Goodman is one that I really enjoyed. The artwork is nice; a mix of strong, fine, line work, clean with space but yet capturing the scene, cartographic detail, and excellent character work. This only enhances what is a fine story wrapped around excellent research and fact that takes us on a journey

with two nurse volunteers to Russia. I really enjoyed this story, it was fresh in its perspective and gave one a sense of place.

'The Hunter' by Sean Fahey, Borja 'Borch' Pena and Kel Nuttall is a grim yet focused look on an inevitability of war, the killing of humanity in a person, the consumption of the mind and soul in the fight itself. Werner Voss was an Ace and friend of Von Richtofen, who flew as his wingman and in his squadron, and then under his command and scored a tally of 48 kills as a pilot. Richtofen considered him to be on his level, they stayed at one another's family homes and were, as Voss was rather unusual for an officer, consorting and working with mechanics, always looking after his machine. This story offers an incredible glimpse into a pilot such as Voss and makes the reader question what was going on in his mind. The artwork is rich, using blacks greys and flashes of white to give this a very classic feel. Voss died in a Fokker Dr.I Dreidecker and the attention to detail of the mechanical elements, the airplanes and the motorcycle all enhance this interesting story.

'Between the Darkness' by Petri Hanninen, Neil McClements and Brick is a snapshot into an incident; a moment for men caught in an ironclad, in trouble, dying, losing everything they have. The story, although brief, gives the flavour of the horror of the seconds that must seem like forever and that are then gone, and one sees what wonders, joys and normality is lost. I was again taken by the artwork here. Black is the predominant colour on the pages showing the inside of a Renault FT 17, representing the darkness within aptly. This revolutionary tank was the first modern looking tank, with crew forward, engine at the rear and a rotating turret on top. In this story it is actually Beutepanzer, a captured Tank being used by the German Imperial Army, and its diminutive size is aptly shown as it passes a AV7 Sturmpanzerwagen, which is six times its weight, but despite the incredible accuracy, it is the sadness of what could not be, or what once was which is the most poignant part.

'Dead in the Water' by Ian Douglas and SM is an incredible story, considering what may have been going through the mind of U-Boat Commder Otto Weddigen. Kapitänleutnant Weddigen commanded U-9 and on the morning of September 22, 1914, sank three old Cruisers, HMS Aboukir, Cressy and Hogue, in less than two hours and some 1459 sailors were killed. On the 15thof October U-9 struck again and the HMS Hawke was sunk, with the loss of 524 officers and men and only 70 survivors. Weddigen died six months later in command of U-29, on the 18 March, rammed by the British battleship HMS Dreadnought in the Pentland Firth after a failed attempt to sink HMS Neptune. The comics medium really shows its own here, as the writing injects a level of imagination into a story that makes one reflect on how a commander must feel, how loss of life can effect a leader and how being responsible for so many deaths must play on one's mind. It is an excellent story and the artwork is very nice, a hint of manga feel to it, subtle while detailed.

My friend Joe Gordon penned a piece, an empathising essay of consideration, taking a few pages to allow deep thoughts to permeate and draw conclusion about who is truly left behind by the human losses in wars. The observation of a headstone of a fallen soldier triggering quite a stream of consciousness that gives a very different and often forgotten perspective. The lettering, clean and in a comic style, fills the pages. The beautifully sad images accompanying this piece by Kate Charlesworth, toy soldiers and knitted babies booties, add a normality and intimate edge to the words that make one wonder. A beautiful ending to this collection.

Finally a return to Pat Mills. Hatty Patch, in 'The Last Fighting Tommy', wrote that "politicians who took us to war should have been given the guns and told to settle their differences themselves, instead of organising nothing better than legalised mass murder". He also had the courage to tell Tony Blair to his face on the 6th June 2006 that "War is organised murder".

The artists, historians and critics that are presenting the fact that the First World War was not a glorious and good fight, but rather a totally preventable mess that killed millions are not cynical, or anti-patriotic, they are honest. In actual fact, it is those who 'celebrate' and wish to use such wars to their advantage who are truly cynical and cowardly. It is important to take on board as many perspectives as possible, and this collection truly does that.

I found this collection brilliantly thoughtful, heart felt and honest, and in no way paying lip service to a propaganda that hides the realities or ignores questioning of the causes of the Great War.

Black Scorpion By Robert Curley and Stephen Downey from Atomic Diner. Stand Alone issue.

Running with two mausers blasting, looking up through barbed wire, the beautiful fully painted image of The Black Scorpion on the cover aptly illustrates the action inside this comic, and in one moment speaks out 'First World War.'

This is indeed a First World War comic, Robert Curley has been sharp about his historical elements, and we join the action at the Battle for Messines Ridge in June 1917, Tom a Belfast man, sees a man in black, with a gas mask, just before passing out. We then join Tom and two other soldiers as

they sit at a make shift table, over a game of cards as they convalesces in a tented forward hospital. Liam and Jim both have Black Scorpion stories, and in the truest story telling style, we get to hear them.

It's a great comic. It's not *Charleys War,* rather its about placing a Super Hero into the first world war, and adding a new dynamic to this time in history. I was really impressed with some of the lovely detailed elements, the narrow gauge railway leading to the front for instance and the lack of recruitment that plagued the British army in early 1917. I decided to speak to Robert Curley on this accuracy.

'All the historical elements are accurate from the place names down to General Plummer. I think when your writing something based in history like *Black Scorpion* that for the story to have a sense of authenticity it needs to be as realistic as possible.' explained Robert.

Regarding research into the First World War, he continued; 'I bought some books on WW1 and the Somme in particular as so many Irish men lost there lives there. And of course there is the wonder of the Internet which is great for doing quick checks. The great thing about writing the *Atomic Diner* books is the research. I'm finally getting the history lessons I missed in school. Its a great excuse to really delve into our history and see the country from different perspectives.'

The Great War is of course a War that many Irishmen fought and died in, being at the time part of the United Kingdom, and Ireland having a long history of providing Britain with Soldiers, it is often eclipsed by the 1916 Rising, so I asked Robert how he addressed that?

'The rising is mentioned in passing in the third soldiers story of seeing the Scorpion as a parallel to what was happening at home while the battle raged in Europe. The fact of the matter is over two hundred thousand Irish men fought on the British side during the first world war and they were considered heroes by most people when they left, by the time they came back the rising had occurred, which for the most part was unpopular with people. It was only after the British military took the hard line of executing the participants that the tide of opinion began to change and the people were out raged.'

'I try to be respectful to both sides of the argument as I know people have strong opinions with regard to these events but its all part of our history so if were going to tell stories based around these events they have to be acknowledged.'

One of the things that really caught my eye, was the Legion Britannia consisting of The Blue Flame, Lady Durga, Bulldog, Royal Agent, Queen Bee and Black Scorpion. A special limited cover sports this group, I asked Ron if we'd see more of Legion Britannia

'I would like to do something with the Legion especially Royal Agent. I see him as a cross between Flash Gordon and James Bond and I think he would be great fun to write. Hopefully we will at least see a one shot over the next year or so.'

Black Scorpion, is a lovely set of 3 stories, set as it is, in one of the most brutal conflicts of the twentieth century, and it gives not just a great back ground to the character, Black Scorpion but opens up many more possibilities in this unusual setting for comics.

http://www.atomicdiner.com/products/view/?id=27

Variant with the Legion Britannia Cover, limited to 150 issues

http://www.atomicdiner.com/products/view/?id=28

Harlem Hellfighters by by Max Brooks and Caanan White

In 1984, a Doughboy called 'Pig Iron' entered, like so many characters, briefly, into the world of Charleys War. Pig Iron was a corporal, like Charley Bourne and built of courage and honour, but like Bourne obviously downtrodden. In a few issues of Battle I had learned that there were a group called The Harlem Hellfighters who had come from America to fight in the First Wolrd War.

Max Brooks has taken that all to brief and tragic moment for me, and brought into comic form a fictionalised history, with some incredible levels of research and study, and presents the story of the 15th New York National Gaurdsmen regiment that was renamed the 369th Infantry regiment.

We follow a number of wonderful characters, as they sign up, go through training and get sent to wait, and watch on as they suffer some quite terrible indignities, for despite being patriotic enough to volunteer to fight, they were Black and in America in 1917, this was indeed an issue for some.

The 369th was made up of African-American and Puerto Rican men amongst others, although while poignant to the story, and without doubt a message to anyone today who might harbour some sort of racist attitude, especially as we witness terrible outrages in modern American society, this story brings into context that being black in America no matter what you were doing was good enough to warrant hatred and violence.

The comic made me think, wonder is there nothing a person can do to prove their value, to bigots, but of course, all human posses a value, and no one should need to prove it. The comic allows one a moment to reflect upon the Great War, and of course how people could be discriminated against, while at war or in today's world nearly one hundred years later.

The 369th get posted to France and we again see how these soldiers were treated by their own, as the men fight bravely and receive recognition from the French for their courageous acts.

The French who had been fighting on home soil for many years at this stage, gave the 369th a number of nicknames, the, Harlem Hellfighters, the Black Rattlers and the Men of Bronze, although it was the Germans who named them Hell Fighters, based on their tenacity and fierceness.

The comic takes one right into the trenches where the Hell Fighters fought, their losses and their ability to overcome and continue. It is a brutal history comic told accurately and crafted with some wonderful fictitious but utterly believable characters, and I really enjoyed following them through thick and thin.

Caanan Whites artwork, is clean, it is black and white and he uses both blocks and hatching to great effect, while ensuring the details of weapons, helmets and uniforms are all realistic, an important element to help place the reader into the First World War, there is a good flow to the comic and the interaction between characters is brilliantly portrayed.

The comic is peppered through out with a number of real characters, and notably Eugene Jaques Bullard, pilot for the French, who was American, James Renee Europe known as the 'the king of jazz' and Croix de Guerre recipient Henry Johnson all feature.

The bibliography and notes only add to the overall sense of effort and achievement that Brooks has put into this work and I think it is fitting that we have this book on the anniversary of the First World War but grateful that it reminded me of the inequality, indignity and injustice that men have faced.

Further reading:

World War I Vets, Black Soldiers (92nd & 93rd Divisions)
http://www.wwvets.com/BuffaloSoldiers.html

Art by H. Charles McBarron, for the Department of Defence, portraying the action at Séchault, France on September 29, 1918 during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Harlem_Hell_Fighters.jpg

9

THE ANGELS OF MONS BY JULIAN WEST

Arthur Machen, largely forgotten today, is one of the great seminal figures of modern fantasy and horror. He is perhaps best understood as a precursor to H. P. Lovecraft, and Lovecraft acknowledged as much. His work is informed by his views on the survival of ancient cults into the present day, and the possibility of such cults having access to real occult forces. He was one of the first investigators into the myth of the Holy Grail, and was a member of a number of mystical groups such as the Golden Dawn.

However, he is perhaps now best known for a single short story which had an amazing impact. In September 1914, Machen was inspired by reports of the British retreat from Mons to write a short story for an evening newspaper. The story was The Bowmen. Briefly summarised, it describes how a small unit of British troops, about to be overwhelmed, were rescued by ghostly bowmen from the battle of Agincourt.

The story is a long way from the best of Machen's work, which at this stage of his career was mostly behind him. Machen himself was dismissive of the story, which was clearly meant as a piece of journalism, to be consumed and forgotten.

Nobody was as surprised as Machen to find that a few months later his story was being reported as truth. He was asked for permission to republish his account, and was amazed to discover that his account was being taken as factual. Meanwhile, supposed eye-witness accounts from the front were circulating. Gradually, Machen's fantasy was being accepted as fact.

"...the consensus shifted to the idea that the Germans had not behaved badly in Belgium."

Machen himself described in detail how the story subtly changed to fulfil the requirements of its audience. A Latin prayer to St George is dropped, and the ghostly bowmen become angels. Machen was amused to find that an element he had discarded as too fantastical – a German general being informed that thousands of men had been found dead from arrow wounds – was now part of the story.

It should be noted that at this time, exaggerated stories were very much the norm. In particular, atrocities carried out in Belgium were being reported with some relish. Many accounts – the mass rape of nuns, or the crucifixion of a Canadian soldier, had very little basis in reality, but were routinely believed.

Part of the reason that Machen's story became accepted as fact was that it was presented in a semi-factual fashion, in a periodical which mixed fiction with reportage. Machen himself had authored factual articles in the same paper, and a piece of fiction in the same issue was flagged explicitly as a short story.

This leads one to remember the story of Orson Welles' infamous radio adaptation of The War Of The Worlds. Presented as a live news broadcast, the play caused chaos across the USA, as listeners became convinced that a genuine Martian invasion was underway.

Or did they? The evidence for such a mass panic is scant. A small number of people believed that some kind of invasion was taking place, or were frightened to some extent. People who suspected that the broadcast might be true did not riot or panic, but telephoned their local police to confirm that there was nothing to worry about. The true deception was not the original broadcast, but the report of its effects. The exaggeration was gleefully fostered by Welles, a brilliant self-publicist, whose expressions of regret served to build his own legend.

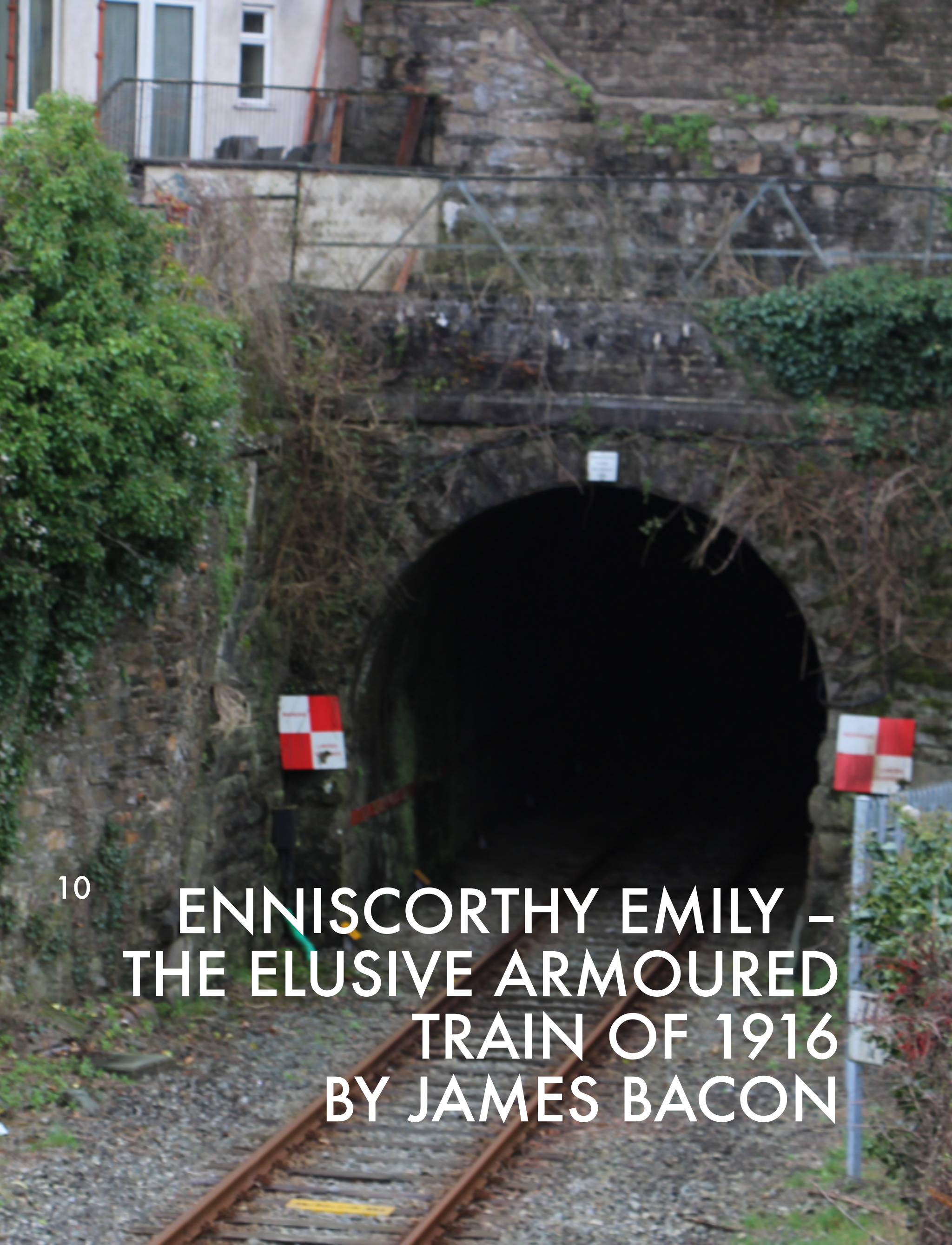
Thus in any report of such legends, such counter-factuals, one can be deceived in one's own scepticism. It is reassuring to consider oneself part of an elite immune to the effects of rumour, and to look down amusedly at the ignorant masses. One prefers not to know what those masses actually believed. The legend of the Angels of Mons is well-attested, but what we will never know is how many people genuinely believed the story to be true, and how many viewed it as a parable of good against evil.

The reports of German atrocities in Belgium became counter-productive. As it became plain that the more colourful stories had no basis in fact, the consensus shifted to the idea that the Germans had not behaved badly in Belgium. In fact, many thousands of civilians had been killed by German troops in the first months of the war, and rape was ubiquitous. The disinclination to believe such atrocity stories was to have terrible consequences twenty-five years later, when unimaginable horrors seemed to be too much to be believed.

And in the present day, legends that used to take months to promulgate can circle the world in a matter of hours. As I write, leading up to Christmas, stories of benevolent Santas have become popular. One Santa comforts a boy who dies in his arms, while another beats a child molester. The refutations of these stories always lag long behind.

Politics is a natural home for the unconfirmed story. The entire presidential campaign of Donald Trump was based around unsubstantiated legends, and the term "post-truth" was coined to describe the unwillingness of vast networks of believers to even consider the possibility that a given story – often concocted deliberately by propagandists – might be false. Indeed, the truth or falsity of a story no longer seems to matter.

Arthur Machen enjoyed a revival of interest in his work in the 1920's, but it was short-lived. His later works are of lesser interest, and he died almost forgotten outside a coterie of devoted followers. He continues to influence such disparate figures as Alan Moore and Dan Brown. The legend of the Angels continues to be believed to this day.



10

ENNISCORTHY EMILY – THE ELUSIVE ARMOURED TRAIN OF 1916

BY JAMES BACON

`Since their inception, trains have been used for warfare purposes. During the American Civil War trains were a vital element to logistics, but they were also used as weapons platforms. During the Boer War armoured trains were written about by Winston Churchill, and by the First World War trains contributed directly to increasing the intensity of battle.

The insurgency in 1916 in Ireland - the Easter Rising - was a failed effort to overthrow the British by force. Due to a sequence of issues, the full weight of all those who might have rebelled was never brought to bear, and consequently misfortune doomed the actions of those rebelling.

The intensity of the street fighting was such that developments were instantaneous. For instance, an order was placed for armoured vehicles, and Guinness dray trucks had metal affixed to their bodies to make impromptu armoured cars. The Great Southern Railway depot at Inchicore in Dublin was tasked with this build, and achieved it in hours, using train engine smoke boxes, cab roofs and sheet metal to rig these vehicles for the street-to-street fighting they would engage in, and transporting troops who were protected from light fire by moving the drays up to doorways, where they reversed and unloaded.

Although armoured trains would later be used in Ireland, especially during the Civil War, I had no idea that they could have been brought into action in such a short time, the Rising having begun on Easter Monday, the 24th April, and lasted only six days.

The mention of armoured trains is also linked to the town of Enniscorthy in county Wexford, south of Dublin, towards the south-east coast of Ireland. Wexford town, south of Enniscorthy, has been a vital port since Cromwellian times. Enniscorthy was unusual, as it was one of the few places outside of Dublin itself to rise up, although the volunteers didn't do so immediately. 'Manoeuvres' - code for an insurrection - had been called for by Patrick Pearse of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, but then cancelled by a furious Eoin MacNeill, commander-in-chief of the Irish Volunteers, who had not been aware of the plan, in further newspaper announcements before the day. What information was at hand was confused.

Thus it was not an immediate rising, synchronised with events elsewhere, although that had been the initial plan. Word took time to reach Enniscorthy that a rebellion had begun, and subsequently the officers of Enniscorthy dispatched a local man called Gallaghan to accept orders. He went to see Pearse himself, as there was so much confusion, and was instructed that he and his fellow volunteers in Enniscorthy to disrupt the rail line from Wexford to Dublin.

And that would have made sense. The railway station was on the north side of the town, and as it continued it went directly over the river Slaney by viaduct and then went under-

neath the town, through a tunnel. Holding up the British reinforcements who were coming from Wexford at this location was feasible.

As I read about other matters, mentions of an armoured train seemed to crop up, and the first I read of it fascinated me no end.

From *The Irish Rebellion of 1916 and Its Martyrs*[1]:

> In County Wexford the town of Enniscorthy was seized and held for days, the insurgents finally surrendering to a large force sent from Dublin in an armoured train. In other parts of Wexford and the adjacent counties, there was scattered fighting.

The concept of an armoured train sounded very interesting, so I started to read more about Enniscorthy. The railways in Ireland in 1916 were the main routes of communication, commerce, and commuting. Finding out what happened when is tricky. There are no shortage of sources, but as I started to research, I soon realised that getting a clear picture of what happened was not as simple as a straightforward accounting of the events. My first source that mentions 'Enniscorthy Emily' nearly bowled me over.

From *A History of the Irish Rebellion of 1916*[2]:

> They made no movement southwards towards the town of Wexford, fourteen miles distant, where order was maintained with the assistance of the National Volunteers, beyond attempting, with but partial success, to blow up the bridge of Scarawalsh, which crosses the Slaney on the main road between Enniscorthy and Wexford. The signalling wires on the railway were also cut, and the instruments in the cabin destroyed. Northwards the rebels advanced on the 28th in the direction of Ferns, and at a point between Enniscorthy and that place entrenched and sent scouts forward. These reported no military forces in the vicinity. [...]

> In the meantime measures for the suppression of the rising in County Wexford had been set in motion. A military force consisting of eleven hundred foot and seventy cavalry, with a 4.7 inch gun, was organised at Wexford, and despatched northwards with a view to engaging the rebels at Enniscorthy. The force was accompanied by the first armoured train ever employed in Ireland. It was a home-made fighting machine, slung together hastily, but effectively, of materials to hand. It consisted of an ancient but still serviceable engine, to which two or three steel trucks were coupled, armoured with hastily pierced sheets of iron. Upon this contrivance, which was painted slate colour, was mounted the fifteen pounder gun, familiarly known to her crew as 'Enniscorthy Emily.' [...]

> At the approach of the military force from the south, the rebels evacuated the town of Enniscorthy, and took up their position on Vinegar Hill, an eminence rising over Enniscorthy at the opposite side of the Slaney, and the scene of the desperate encounter in the Rebellion of 1798. [...]

> At dawn on May 1st the rebels appeared to be contemplating resistance, but the negotiations for surrender were stimulated by the discharge from 'Enniscorthy Emily' of a blank shell, and white flags were promptly run up on Vinegar Hill. Some of the rebels, whose members by this time were reduced to about four hundred, attempted to escape to the hills, but were rounded up and captured with those who surrendered.

1 - *The Irish Rebellion of 1916 and its Martyrs,* various, ed Marius Devein. Adair. New York, 1916

2 - *A History of the Irish Rebellion of 1916,* Warre B Wells & N. Marlowe, Maunsel, Dublin, 1916

3 - Dail Debates, Dáil Éireann – Volume 87 – 2 July 1942, Committee on Finance. – Adjournment– Enniscorthy Military Service Pensions.

Such an exciting and interesting account of matters, while sounding quite incredible, only worked to whet my interest much more, for surely it was now at odds with the previous account. Was this the same train coming from Wexford, or another one coming from Dublin? Was it all weapons on the metals to the small town? Did the armoured train come from the North or the South? I wanted to get the details.

The Dáil (Irish Parliament) records also had mention of the matter, at a much later stage, when such things as recognition and pensions were at stake, an important matter for those involved.

From *Dáil Debates*, 2 July 1942[3]:

> **Mr. [Richard] Corish**: It is, perhaps, necessary to give an outline of what happened in Enniscorthy during that memorable Easter Week of 1916. The referee and the Departments of Finance and Defence insist that the Enniscorthy men had no contact with the enemy. The Enniscorthy men came out to establish the republic and were prepared to die for the republic, if necessary. They came out under the order of Pearse and never thought that the struggle was going to end so quickly. The enemy came from Arklow down to Camolin, which is within about ten miles of Enniscorthy, and on learning that the Volunteers were in occupation of Ferns, a few miles away from Camolin, the enemy retreated to Arklow. British troops to the number of 1,100 had arrived in Wexford town. This column was composed of cavalry, infantry, artillery and an armoured train. The Volunteers at Enniscorthy had laid their plans to attack the enemy on the march from Wexford, but unfortunately Dublin had surrendered, and that order was sent by the enemy to Enniscorthy. The Volunteers did not rely on the word that they had received from the enemy troops, and would only agree to surrender on a personal order from Pearse himself.
>
> The British permitted Captains Doyle and Etchingham to interview Commandant Pearse, who was then a prisoner in Arbour Hill. They interviewed him and received from his own lips the order to surrender. In the absence of those two officers, a column was formed by the late Commandant Séumas Rafter, to carry on guerrilla warfare against the enemy.

Here there is a direct mention of an armoured train, and made in an official capacity by a TD in the Irish Parliament. Of course, one has to be slightly doubtful. That may sound like a tragic response and indeed a slight upon Mr Corish, but I am from Ireland, where a little 'Blas' or gloss on stories is not at all uncommon. At the same time I was exceedingly excited. It corroborated some details, in regard to the existence and direction of travel of an armoured train on the metals from Wexford to Enniscorthy.

Some more modern mentions were required, I felt, and indeed John Boyle's *The Irish Rebellion of 1916: A Brief History of the Revolt and Its Suppression*[4] mentioned it:

> A small party set off for Dublin, but turned back when they met a train full of British troops (part of a 1,000-strong force, which included the Connaught Rangers) on their way to Enniscorthy...

To Balfour and his Armoured Trains[5]! This book that is the bible on the subject of armoured trains has yet to be surpassed. Although there are now a number of books on the subject, they tend to be more specific, and Balfour tells the history of the use of the weapon, and indeed, he makes mention of Enniscorthy:

> Away from Dublin, insurrection by Volunteers at Enniscorthy in County Wexford is claimed to have led to the first use of an armoured train...

4 - The Irish Rebellion of 1916: A Brief History of the Revolt and its Suppression, John F Boyle, Constable and Company, London, 1916

5 - The Armoured Train: Its Development and Usage, G. Balfour, Batsford, 1981

One would have to believe him - well, for my money, his accuracy on other matters is quite good. I wondered if all accounts were similar, if that would be corroboration.

To go back to that quote from Wells's *A History of the Irish Rebellion of 1916*, above:

> A military force consisting of eleven hundred foot and seventy cavalry, with a 4.7 inch gun, was organised at Wexford, and despatched northwards with a view to engaging the rebels at Enniscorthy.

The 4.7-inch gun is an interesting factor. This would be a QF - quick firing naval ship and coastal gun - that the British used as an artillery piece in the Boer War and elsewhere to give long range heavy artillery fire, with a range of nearly 7 miles and a projectile of 45 pounds. In context with other weapons used in 1916, the Helga, which shelled Dublin, had the smaller QF 3-inch 12-pounder gun, and the Army had 3.3-inch QF 18-pounder field guns which also did a good job of destroying parts of the city. The larger gun could be very mobile, and limber and carriage could be hauled by horses, and I have found photos of 8 horses pulling them in 1915 on the Western Front. Yet would you really take this weapon, and place it into a train wagon, thus removing all mobility? How would you aim it, and what about the 12-inch recoil? Transporting a heavy gun was difficult, one might suppose, but there are photos of artillery being pulled by horse at the time in Wexford. I find it unlikely to be train mounted.

I returned to a publication of the time: the *Sinn Féin Rebellion Handbook*[6]:

> The first armoured train used in Ireland was employed in connection with the Enniscorthy revolt. It was a homemade fighting machine, slung together hurriedly, but very effectively, of materials to hand. It consisted of an ancient, but still serviceable engine, in the proud charge of a richly humorous Hibernian. There were two or three shell trucks shackled to the engine, armoured with hastily-pierced sheets of iron, and the whole amazing contraption was painted slate colour.

The Enniscorthy rebels waited for information from their leaders that the City of Dublin had been captured, and when this information came to hand the local rebels immediately gave orders to their forces to begin action. They first seized the business houses of the town and also the railway station, and held up a train which was on its way from Wexford with 300 workmen for Kynoch's factory. The engine was detached from the train, and the men were permitted to walk back to Wexford by the railway line. The rebels then debated amongst themselves the advisability of blowing up the fine bridge at Enniscorthy, but fortunately abandoned the idea. They then attempted to blow up the bridge of Scurawalsh, which crosses the River Slaney on the main road between Wexford and Enniscorthy. Before doing so they warned the old and respected blacksmith, named Carton, who, with his family, lived in a house close to the bridge. The signalling wires on the railway were cut, and the instruments in the cabin were destroyed. Between Enniscorthy and Ferns an extensive trench was dug, and the rebel forces advanced and captured the town of Ferns, making the ancient mansion of St. Aidan's their headquarters. Then, when they thought they were firmly entrenched, they advanced a little in the Gorey direction, but just then a train which contained a few military arrived at Camolin Station. On seeing the soldiers, who were there for ordinary guard duty, and had no knowledge of the 'rising,' the rebels hastily retreated to their stronghold at Enniscorthy; Here, however, they learned to their dismay that a military armoured train, including the now famous 'Enniscorthy Emily,' a 15-pounder gun, was on the south side of the town, and only about six miles distant.

6 - Sinn Féin Rebellion Handbook, Easter, 1916, The Irish Times, Dublin, 1917

> Some of the rebels had taken up positions on Vinegar Hill, which overlooks the town of Enniscorthy. A council of war was held, but the deliberations were brought to an abrupt conclusion by a well planted shell which the gunner of 'Enniscorthy Emily' discharged at the hill. The shell, which, it is stated, was a blank one, landed plump amongst the rebels, who hoisted white flags on the hill while 200 of the insurgents bolted for the hills. Many of the escaping rebels were captured...

Now, forgive me, but a detail like 'richly humorous Hibernian' sounds like it is absolutely accurate or totally fabricated. The description of the train seems right, sticking armour onto a train would be a quick affair. Indeed, given the ability of the railway engineers Great Southern and Western Railway (GS&WR) men in Inchicore, one would hope the Dublin and South Eastern Railway men would have risen to such a challenge.

I eventually, much later, read the *Weekly Irish Times* line for line, and this would cause me some consternation, for it was a particular line there that caused me to curse a British newspaper, and its propagandistic journalists. The *Irish Times* is liberal and sensible in Ireland today, but its political leaning in 1916 was Unionist and Protestant - indeed, the paper had called for the execution of the rebel leaders. Every week there was a weekly edition, which featured photos on the cover, and articles inside. The newspaper temporarily suspended publication, so the editions from the 28th of April and 6th & 13th of May were all in the one paper, which was a rather comprehensive and detailed and of course, a great source, you would think.

'Enniscorthy Quelled by Armoured Train' reads the second headline on page five[7]. And I soon realised that this was not what I had understood. It talks of rebels holding Vinegar Hill, and a blank shell landing in their midst. The riposte from rebels was to 'hoist white flags' (a sub header reading '40 white flags') and then reports that 'about 200 of the rebels then bolted for the hills'. Under considerable reportage on unhappiness from local businesses, under the subhead 'A Famous Armoured Train "Enniscorthy Emily"' I then found the story from the *Sinn Fein Handbook*, virtually verbatim, except for one important piece of information.

> Mr Harold Ashton writing for the *Daily Mail* under Monday's date declares that the first armoured train...

The *Daily Mail*. Was this a theatrical fabrication to make the defeat sound more resounding, a propaganda, which had infiltrated historical record? It kept turning up. I cursed him.

The 15-pounder was better than a 45-pounder. So, it would make sense that the 4.7-inch gun was with the cavalry and a 15-pounder was on the train. This would have been a gun replaced by the 18-pounder elsewhere amongst British forces, where possible. Depending on its exact type, it would have been lighter, but still a dog on a train with no way to stop the recoil. I wondered if I could find out if there were 15-pounders in Wexford at the time. Or was it all invention? I decided to continue my search for such a train. Of course, there is no shortage of reportage from the British themselves, now readily available.

Lieutenant Colonel George Arthur French was in charge of matters in County Wexford. He seems to have been wily. French was a retired British Army Officer who lived in Newbay, about three miles outside Wexford. He was contacted by telegram and instructed to take over the British Forces in Wexford. The French family had and have a long history in the British Military, and his grandson, now quite elderly, was recently recorded by Wexford Library being interviewed about the rising in Enniscorthy. A lovely piece, it was interesting to hear.

On the Enniscorthy rebels he said[8]:

7 - Weekly Irish Times, 28 April & 6 & 13 May 1916, Dublin

8 - Maj Arthur John French, grandson of Lt Col G A French, Wexford Council oral history

> They were really extraordinarily well behaved for any revolutionary organisation. They had their own ranks and command structure that you could deal with [...] respect for civilian property, writing things down about borrowing stuff and behaving in a very what you might call proper way or so I heard, so put it like this, my grandfather knew these were people with whom you could negotiate, this was an enormous difference between what was going on in Enniscorthy, and what was going on in riots in Belfast (editor's note - referring to the 60's rioting) [...] [He] couldn't really as a local, order the bombardment of Enniscorthy, unlike Dublin. No one the equivalent of my grandfather.

...which, whilst not adding vastly my understanding of the armoured train, was really quite interesting and, dare I say, rather lovely, to hear a voice that was personally connected.

The lead on Lieutenant Colonel French, though, brought me back to one of the first books I bought on the subject, some years ago when I was helping with a science fiction event in Wexford, called *County Wexford in the Rare Oul' Times*[9]. This has a copy of Col G A French's commanding officer's report of May 2nd 1916, which states:

> On May 1, accompanied by District Inspector O'Hara, RIC and Colonel Jameson Davis, Commanding National Volunteers Co. Wexford, I motored direct to Enniscorthy without molestation in any way, and there found that the armoured train was at the station.

Subsequently in the same report suggesting

> I consider that it would be advisable to retain the column despatched under Lieutenant Colonel Digan within the County of Wexford for some time (less the 4.7 gun and armoured train).

Irishmen were obviously on both sides of the Rebellion, and accounts were told in the *Royal Irish Constabulary Magazine*, although this one was anonymous:

> Enniscorthy during the Rebellion. By One Who Was There[10].
>
> On the morning of the 1st May it was observed that the large green, white, and yellow rebel flag which had been floating over the rebel headquarters had been removed, and at 9 o'clock am the good news of the arrival of a military detachment with artillery, horse and foot, was brought, and the capitulation of the rebels quickly followed. The town and vicinity of Enniscorthy, including historic 'Vinegar Hill,' were in possession of the rebels from early morning on the 27th April until the 1st May. The telegraph and telephone wires were cut, the railway line at both sides blown up, all the roads were barricaded.
>
> County Wexford and the Rebellion[11].
>
> The last scene in the rising in Wexford came when, after a couple of days of peace negotiations, Enniscorthy was entered on the 1st May by a flying column, about 1,000 strong, consisting of Cavalry, Infantry, Engineers, and Artillery, under the command of Col. G.A. French, who took the surrender of the six rebel leaders who had signed the capitulation, and handed them over to D.I. O'Hara, Wexford, by whom they were duly conveyed to Waterford Gaol, and subsequently, with nearly 100 other County Wexford prisoners, to Richmond Barracks, Dublin.

9 - County Wexford in the Rare Oul' Times, Number 4, ed Nicholas Furlong & John Hayes, Old Distillery Press, 2005

10 - 'Enniscorthy during the Rebellion. By One Who Was There.' Royal Irish Constabulary Magazine, May & June 1916

11 - County Wexford and the Rebellion, Royal Irish Constabulary Magazine, May & June 1916

12 - Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921, Witness Statement 779 (section 1)

I came across the Witness Statement of Robert Brennan[12], who was Acting Commandant in the Wexford Brigade of Irish Volunteers in 1916 , and who went on to work for the government. Brennan, in his 176-page statement, makes much mention of trains - indeed they are the source of some adventure as he jumped aboard one to evade RIC police officers who were monitoring him on the platform at Enniscorthy and who assumed that he was just sending a letter up the line, having going through the process of writing it to confound them.

He states that Cmdt Paul Galligan gave instruction to the Enniscorthy volunteers that they were not to leave the county, but were tasked with preventing any reinforcements for the British passing through the territory. When the mobilisation occurred, the RIC retreated to their Barracks.

Brennan states that 300 reported for duty, and soon took possession of a train, and kept it ready to transport them to Dublin, should they be so ordered. This was insurrection. It was organised, public houses were closed, and food tickets issued, and honoured by shop keepers. On the Thursday word arrived that 2,000 British troops had arrived in Wexford.

There is a prior witness statement by him that is bullet pointed and lists many elements, including instruction and orders:

> RAILWAYS AND SHIPPING: We were to destroy such railway lines as would hamper the enemy. We did destroy a portion of the main line between Wexford and Enniscorthy, but not before a train had arrived from Wexford. This train was the usual train intended to bring workers from Enniscorthy and other North Wexford points to Kynoch's powder factory in Arklow. We took the crew off the train and held it under steam prepared to use it in transferring our forces to Dublin if this became necessary.

A deputation of local upstanding gentlemen went to Wexford and spoke with Colonel French, the British Officer in charge, and returned with news that Pearse had surrendered in Dublin. When Brennan refused to come to terms he says 'The deputation asked me if I was willing to take the responsibility of having the town of Enniscorthy shelled.'

The second witness statement is full of incident. When armed policemen turn up under the flag of truce, Brennan connives to convince them he is going to have them court-martialled and executed, so as to protect his volunteers, which worked.

In his report Brennan takes some time to talk about 'Enniscorthy Emily.' [14]

> Perhaps here I should refer to the fantastic account of this affair published at the time in the *Irish Times* and, later, repeated in every book I have seen on the Enniscorthy Rising, even in Dorothy Macardle's usually meticulously accurate book *The Irish Republic*. It stated that the British advanced from Wexford under the cover of an armoured train which had been christened 'Enniscorthy Emily,' the rebels, outfought in the town, retreated to Vinegar Hill where they finally surrendered. The fact is that the British did not enter the town until twelve hours subsequent to our decision to give up and that we never even heard of 'Enniscorthy Emily.'

There is nothing more about armoured trains in Brennan's statement, but Brennan's description of being held, going from prison to prison, to holding barracks, to court martial, and how a

13 - Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921, Witness Statement 779 (section 1)

14 - Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921, Statement by Witness 779 (chapter 8, page 119)

15 - Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921, Statement by Witness Ref #1041, Thomas Doyle

general had a pit dug for 150 men to be dumped into following execution, is grim and hard reading, although the demeanour, humour, and spirit of his men is well portrayed. So, my inclination at that stage was that perhaps the 'Enniscorthy Emily' part was pure fabrication, but what about a train lashed with some extra plate? Or even a smaller gun, or some troops? Would I dishonour Brennan by considering that his issue may be with the tactical reportage rather than the technical?

As I continued through witness statements, I found more references, including this one[15] from Thomas Doyle, who was the officer commanding outposts, in Enniscorthy:

> That Sunday night, about 9.30, our two officers returned from Dublin with the sad news from Pearse. We had no other option but to surrender. It was Pearse's orders. Now all the Volunteers were called in and told of the order to surrender. (The flag that was flying over the Athenaeum during Easter Week was taken down on Sunday night and handed over to Father Pat Murphy, M.S.S., who still has it in his keeping.) They went into the ball alley. Rev. Fr. Pat Murphy of the Mission House, and Commandant Rafter spoke to the men. Fr. Pat told them to keep the guns and powder dry for another day. On Monday morning an armoured train arrived in Enniscorthy from Wexford. The train was built by some of the foundry workers in Wexford. About 1,000 soldiers with their big guns marched from Wexford. The town was full of troops. The first thing they did was to round up all the men they could get to remove all the obstructions on the Wexford road. The road was blocked with fallen trees and trenches dug from Edermine to near Enniscorthy. When the British troops came to Edermine they could not get their big guns any further. They then brought them on the back road to town. Commandant Rafter, Captain Etchingham, Captain Seamus Doyle, Bob Brennan, Michael de Lacey and Dick King surrendered to the British officer. They were arrested and sent to Waterford Jail. The officer told them that, if all arms were hot handed up, everyone who took part in the rising would be arrested. The arms were not handed up.

This seems like a more moderate - and perhaps probable - account of the armoured train I thought: no big gun, no Vinegar Hill, just a train. Of course, to add to matters, I find reference of another train from Seamus Doyle, 1st Lieutenant 'A' Company[16]:

> I issued a proclamation, proclaiming the Republic, and calling on the people to support it and defend it. The railway line was destroyed outside the town on the Wexford side and the train which used to convey workers to Kynoch's Munitions Factory in Arklow was prevented from running.

16 - Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921, Statement by Witness Ref #315, Seamus Doyle

Just when I thought that everything was getting clearer, I found that there was a train especially for the munition factory. Could this be confused with an armoured train? Could terminology be loose? Would a munitions train be confused with an armoured train?

Back to the side of the King, in the guise of an Irish Policeman - James J. O'Connor, a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary[17].

17 - ureau of Military History, 1913-1921, Document No. W.S. 1214, Witness: James J. O'Connor

> There was a Rising in Enniscorthy in Easter Week, 1916. The British War Office sent a wire to Lieutenant-Colonel G.A. French, a retired British Army Officer who then lived at Newbay about two miles outside the town of Wexford, to take over command of the British Forces in Wexford, informing him that they were sending him reinforcements from Waterford plus an ar-

> moured train with a field gun and that he was to take the town of Enniscorthy. Colonel French was a Protestant - a man whose family were very highly respected in the County Wexford. He sent up word to the Administrator of Enniscorthy, a Protestant clergyman and a Doctor Furlong suggesting that they should see the leaders of the Insurgents in Enniscorthy town, telling them that they had no hope of holding the town against the forces that he was bringing against the town, that there would be a considerable loss of life and considerable damage done.

A military man like French, who was respected by Brennan and others - who noted that he addressed rebels by their rank - was cunning. Although he never broke his word (for example the rebels had agreed to surrender to soldiers, and thus when handed over to the police, whom the rebels were concerned about being revengful, he had effectively keep his promise) he was obviously astute. Would he have over-egged the pudding about shelling?

This year has seen considerable elements related to this published. Helen Ashdown, a former teacher, journalist, editor, and currently director of the Athenaeum in Enniscorthy (which was the headquarters of the Rising in Wexford) wrote in *The Last Surrender*[18]:

> Early on Monday morning, an armoured train which had been purportedly built by foundry workers in Wexford arrived in Enniscorthy station. On board was a team of engineers whose job it was to fix the railway and the telegraph wires that had been destroyed. They were nervous of the tunnel under the town thinking that bombs could have been placed there, so they threw a power searchlight before them. One thousand soldiers with big guns marched from Wexford.... Robert Brennan dismissed the 'Enniscorthy Emily' story entirely, as did Jack Whelan, but it was a good story to tell.

In many ways, Helen, whose book is just incredibly beautiful and detailed, and a pleasure to read, gathered so much information and detail, that it put an end to the question. Helen quoted Harold Ashton from *The Times*, and the *Wexford People*[19] had two articles on the matter.

I spoke with Helen about Jack Whelan. Jack was Helen's grandfather and in his witness statement 1294 he says that the Vinegar Hill and surrender talk was all untrue. Helen heard about the Enniscorthy Emily 'hoax' from her aunt - now 91. It was she who recalled the story her dad had told her. Jack died before Helen was born, so her information comes from his eldest daughter.

This erudite and well researched local knowledge ensured that the element concerning Enniscorthy Emily was put to bed in my mind, but also confirmed that an Armoured Train had been in use. I was pleased at this stage. It offered a clarity that made sense.

Yet I had found something else. I became a member of The Irish Railway Record Society, mostly because my Dad was intent on building a model railway some years ago now, and I felt it could be useful and indeed it was, as we were later to be researching elevated signal boxes together. I have remained a member, following my fathers passing and enjoy their Journal. The society have possession of the old goods offices at Heuston Station, and it is a wonderful building, holding archives including the official archives of the Irish railway companies, a generous meeting room, reading room, and library, and absolutely crammed with railway memorabilia of the most fantastic kind.

Last time I was over the kindness and pleasant nature of the officers and my fellow society members assisted me greatly and helped me find records relating to the Rising, the War of Independence and the Civil War. There is not a vast amount, given how meticulous records were, but it was pointed out to me that the railway was often seen as a very British organisa-

18 - The Last Surrender, County Wexford 1916, Helen Ashdown, Three Sisters Press, Wexford, 2016

19 - Did an Armoured Train Help Stop the local Rising in its Tracks?, David Tucker, Wexford People, 02/04/2016

tion, and indeed at one stage the management of the Dublin South Eastern Railway were attacked. Records may have been destroyed, or otherwise disposed of.

I was handed a document case, wherein there were a variety of envelopes. One of the officers said to me 'follow the money,' and so I started to look at documents relating to the Dublin South Eastern Railway, which ran the Dublin to Wexford line, and as I did - and as a railway employee - it made me smile, for we are a breed never shy in seeking deserved payment.

In an undated transcript of a letter, Thomas Brien, of Gang 30, Edermine, DSER, wrote to Inspector Archer:

Sir, I understand that Milesmen in gangs south of Enniscorthy received £1. bonus for being loyal during the Rebellion. I have been one of the Milesmen that remained loyal and also beg to inform you it was I that piloted Military train into Enniscorthy on the morning of the surrender of Enniscorthy. You will see my case is treated in a fair way and that I will get my bonus.

Correspondence ensued and on the 21st of June an application was forwarded to the Economies Committee stating that:

I find that on the morning of the surrender of the Rebels, Brien was called on by the military at Macmine to patrol the line in front of the armoured train as far as Enniscorthy. This man no doubt ran some risk and I would suggest he get the 20/- bonus, same as the other men got.

Initially I could not make out the signature although it could be and is definitely not from Inspector Archer - it was transcribed by R D Griffith Esq. Secretary, but friends on Facebook took some guesses through which, in conjunction with the list of management of the DSER, it became clear that it was signed by S. J. Shannon, Engineer.

J Neville, accountant for DSER, confirmed that:

The Economies committee have authorised the payment of £1 to Thomas O'Brien in Permanent Way Gang No. 30 for his loyal action during the recent rebellion, on the 24th June.

And so a man was paid a pound. About a week's wage for a driver back then, so not a bad bonus.

And there you have it: Would an engineer, an inspector, and an accountant, see a man paid for a job for a train that never existed?

Dublin and South Eastern Railway

Further mentions of an armoured train, Enniscorthy Emily and Vinegar Hill have occurred in:

Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society, Vol 5, No 26, Spring 1960

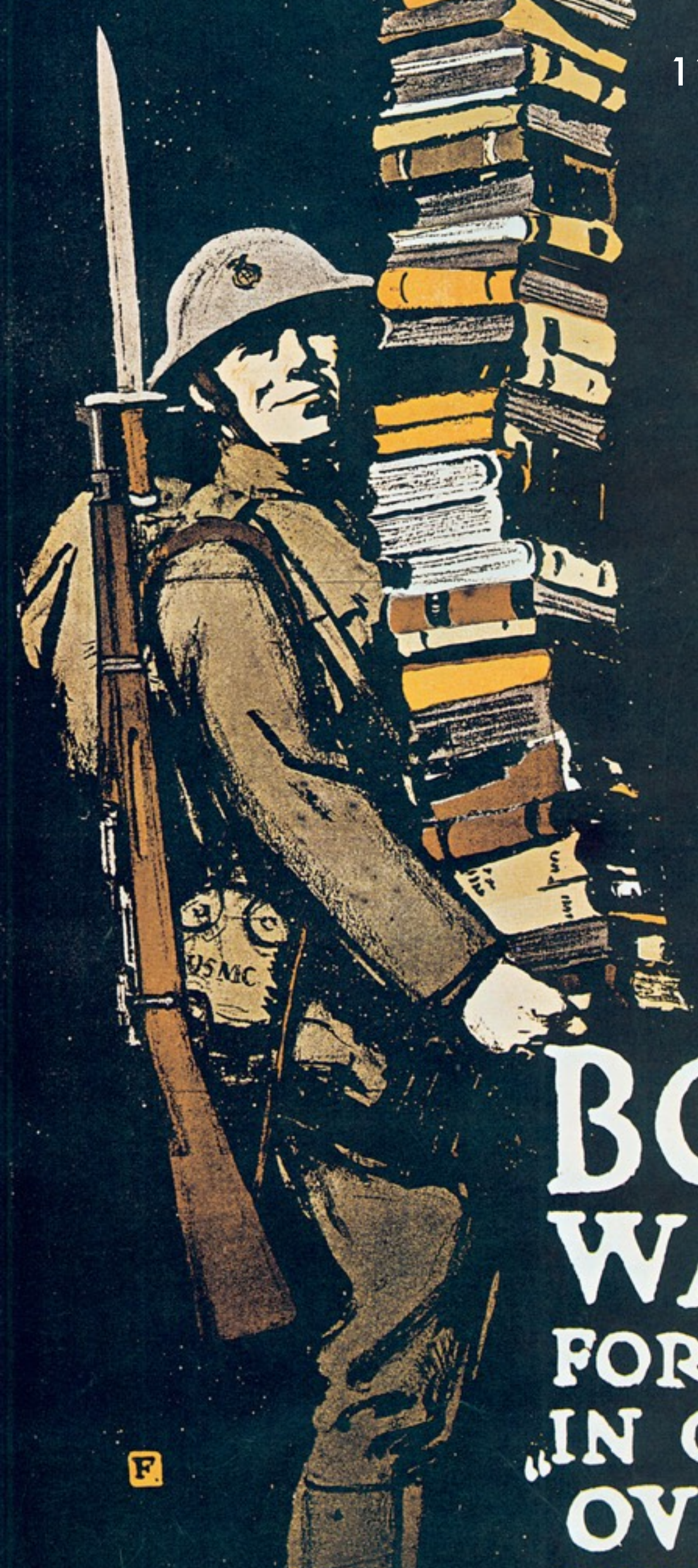
Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society Vol 27, No 190, June 2016

Railway Press in 1916, lecture by Tim Moriarty at Irish Railway Record Society, Heuston Station, Dublin, Ireland

Wexford in the Rare 'ould times Vol IV. By Nicky Furlong.

11

THE POETRY OF WORLD WAR I



A Soldier's Cemetery by John William Streets

Behind that long and lonely trenched line

To which men come and go, where brave men die,

There is a yet unmarked and unknown shrine,

A broken plot, a soldier's cemetery.

There lie the flower of youth, the men who scorn'd

To live (so died) when languished Liberty:

Across their graves flowerless and unadorned

Still scream the shells of each artillery.

When war shall cease this lonely unknown spot

Of many a pilgrimage will be the end,

And flowers will shine in this now barren plot

And fame upon it through the years descend:

But many a heart upon each simple cross

Will hang the grief, the memory of its loss.

"WE SOLDIERS HAVE OUR VIEWS OF LIFE TO EXPRESS, THOUGH THE BOOM OF DEATH IS IN OUR EARS. WE TRY TO CONVEY SOMETHING OF WHAT WE FEEL IN THIS GREAT CONFLICT TO THOSE WHO THINK OF US, AND SOMETIMES, ALAS! MOURN OUR LOSS."
JOHN WILLIAM STREET

The Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red by An Anonymous Soldier

The blood swept lands and seas of red,

Where angels dare to tread.

As I put my hand to reach,

As God cried a tear of pain as the angels fell,

Again and again.

As the tears of mine fell to the ground

To sleep with the flowers of red

As any be dead

My children see and work through fields of my

Own with corn and wheat,

Blessed by love so far from pain of my resting

Fields so far from my love.

It be time to put my hand up and end this pain

Of living hell, to see the people around me

Fall someone angel as the mist falls around

And the rain so thick with black thunder I hear

Over the clouds, to sleep forever and kiss

The flower of my people gone before time

To sleep and cry no more

I put my hand up and see the land of red,

This is my time to go over,

I may not come back

So sleep, kiss the boys for me

DULCE ET DECORUM EST by WILFRED OWEN

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,

Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs

And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots

But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;

Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots

Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!---An ecstasy of fumbling,

Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,

And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...

Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,

As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,

He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace

Behind the wagon that we flung him in,

And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,

His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood

Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,

Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud

Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,---

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

To children ardent for some desperate glory,

The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est

Pro patria mori.

FOR UNITED AMERICA

YWCA

DIVISION

C. HOWARD WALKER


AIR SERVICE
and
SERVE
in
FRANCE
12
DO IT
NOW
RED SKIES BY
CARDINAL COX

After the Great War, some pilots went home with their views of the world forever changed ...

Red Skies

Red skies in morning, red skies before night
Back from the battle in our box-kite

Blue skies were our tournament field
In goggles and scarf, new knights of the clouds
We would swoop as hawks 'till one would yield
Our faces to the wind, we stand proud
Old ways drove society to the edge
Hero on a Pegasus of my own
Between rich and poor, remove the wedge
And I will fight no more for any throne

Red skies in morning, red skies before night
Let us climb together to a new height

Soar so high you can see borders no more
Beneath the wings of paper, string and wood
And so you would think to swear off from war
Oh lift us to be a power for good
Now through red skies our brotherhood flies
As an order of holy knights we'll share
We fight now for truth, to defeat the lies
Search for the battle for world to be fair

Red skies in morning, red skies before night
Ours is to be the noble, just fight

The first mission was to Russia (where they absorbed such earlier radical groups as the Brotherhood of Freedom and the Invincible Army) to defend the new republic from the foreign expeditionary forces as well as the White Army. Then in 1919 they flew to Hungary to defend the republic there from the Romanian invasion. However, their allegiance to the Bolshevik cause was not to last as in 1920 they first took Makhno's side in the Ukraine and then defended Kronstadt (from their base in Finland where they had been aiding the Social Democrats) resulting in the independence of the free port of Petrograd.

The youth organisation spread slowly, teaching engineering and aeronautical theory before allowing the oldest to take gliding lessons. In some countries they were banned outright, in others limited to what they might do, only gaining official recognition in Norway following the 1927 election and in Denmark after 1929. A major publicity coup though was the Order's appearance (and the caricature of regional Knight-Commander Hans von Hammer) in the Ukraine-set comic strip Tintin in the Land of the Anarchists of 1929-1930.

Squires

Take a red paper kite up yonder hill
Watch the fun-fair toy balloon fly away
And you might follow it so high one day
You might ride clouds to fight the world's ills

Inspired by leaves blown by autumn breeze
Youngsters in school fold the swift paper dart
For every vocation there is a start
Watch the starling flock fly from the tall trees

They meet at night in back-street furtive class
Careful not to raise ire of local law
Each child has a potential that's unknown

Kids brawny or studious in glasses
They train through wet weekends, unsure what for
In so many fields the seed is sewn.

Bellerophon

Blue skies,
Sunshine on wings
Hawks, we dive out of the sun
Through
the clouds
to liberty
Sometimes sparrows mob eagles
Knights to kill chimera
Ours is the lance of truth
Silent owls glide at night
Confront all evil
Enemy blood will be spilled

Through the 1930's the strength of the Order continued to grow. Although neither power in China allowed them to aid in the war against Japan, in 1935 they successfully defended Ethiopia against the Italian invasion and then allied themselves against Franco's forces in Spain (as featured in the comic ***Tintin in Spain*** *of 1935 - 1937). Though they publicly supported Dr. von Schuschnigg in Austria, it was in Poland (where the squadron was led by Janos Prohaska, a veteran of the Spanish Civil War) they fought the Nazis to a standstill at the western boarder. It emerged decades later that the Order had been given advance knowledge of the planned invasion, thus allowing them to alert the bases in Finland and Hungary, via the Abwehr agent Erich von Stalhein.*

Chrysaor

Ancestors' forged armour for knights to wear
Now patching shot wings with prayers and hope
Some small miracles seem within their scope
They strive for others to take to the air

They are the re-fuellers, fixers, cleaners
Watching distant skies for high lone trails
And signs of 'chute should a pilot bale
In combat the eyes are ever keener

A brawny brotherhood about the tools
Silently watching the 'planes swift ascent
Ducking from bullets and crouching from bombs

All obeying their own unspoken rules
Rifles close for any needed moment
Brothers, wherever they have first come from.

In December 1941, after destroying the fleet at Vladivostok, Japan started a war with Soviet Russia on the pretext of enlarging its ally Mongolia's territory in Siberia. While that war raged in the Far East, a couple of years later, while on a state visit to Germany, the British Prime Minister Sir Oswald Mosley arranged for King Edward VIII to sign a treaty with Hitler. When peace finally came to north Asia, Stalin purged more of his generals who he blamed for the loss of territory. America exploded its first atomic bomb in 1948 and then in 1949 Nazi Germany launched the first satellite to orbit the Earth.

Knight-Commanders

Machine gun coughs five streets away
Pass by ruin, you hear a groan
Grenades make the tall park trees sway

Across the bridge are men to slay
High stripes in sky as planes are flown
Machine gun coughs four streets away

A corpse is coated in wet clay
Ignore the sound of grating bone
Grenades make the tall park trees sway

Red gardens where children would play
Would I were blossom on breeze blown
Machine gun coughs three streets away

For a few hours sweet sleep you pray
Still we march towards killing zone
Grenades make the tall park trees sway

After battle the sky turns grey
Hope blood you taste is not your own
Machine gun coughs two streets away
Grenades make the tall park trees sway

1950 saw Japanese forces land in Tibet, ostensibly to maintain the provinces neutrality in the on-going civil war in China. Elsewhere though in that decade the Japanese also provided support to guerrillas in Ceylon and Burma against the continued occupation by the British, and in Vietnam against the French. Following the assassination of Hitler by disaffected elements of the Luftwaffe, an open revolt flared between the Abwehr and the partisan groups they'd infiltrated (such as the Edelweiss Pirates) and the Gestapo and SS (most noticeably lead by the infamous Ilsa). The death of Stalin in 1954 meant the ushering of a period named perestroika and an easing of relations between Soviet Russia and it's neighbours, Anarchist Ukraine, enlarged pro-Japanese Mongolia and independent Petrograd. At the end of the decade Cuba fell to Fidel Castro, supported by Republican Spain, against the dictator Batista.

In Sleipnir Five

I burn, a meteor across the sky
Shield on fire, parachute deploy
Radio silence I strangely enjoy
I fall, fall, and yet I hope not to die

So recent shot forth from the Earth on flame
Rattling metal casket in which I breathe
World below I temporarily leave
To prick the dark sky is this arrows aim

Cross constellations without changing fate
Alone but for whispered chatter of home
Someone give this sailor a steel Argo

Passing through days without changing the date
I travel far but I seem not to roam
As a comet to solar edge would go

In 1960 the show trial of the Order's American infiltrator, known as G-8, took place that exposed the depth of unease between America and the international Order. So when they attempted to build their first base in Cuba, the resultant crisis was seen as taking the world to the brink of a new World War. At the end of the decade, following access to the German space programme, the Order launched their first permanently manned orbital station F.P.1.

Dragons Dance

Rise from sea foam
Eyes glint lightning
Breath of storm winds
Beard, rains lash

Coral palace
Sentries drowned men
Fish nest in eyes
Mouths yawn silent

Treasure of deep
Held beneath waves
Beyond men's reach
Save pearls in shells

Thunder cymbals
Ground shakes, homes lurch
High mountains sing
Dragon lords dance

At the beginning of the 1980's the Order (mistrusted equally by all sides) acted as peace brokers in the interminable Chinese civil war. Spread over several territories the three sides (the Japanese backed Imperial province, the Nationalists and the Communists) all had to accept the aircraft of the Order as peacekeepers. This allowed the Order access to the Japanese-backed Buddhist Hegemony, and those members of the Japanese military who had long admired the martial skills of the Order took the opportunity to study its philosophy at first-hand.

CARDINAL COX ("Cox is a poetic wildcard, spinning off all kinds of funny, bizarre and fanciful versa..." Neal Wilgus Small Press Review) has been having his writings published in the small-press for almost thirty years. These include reviews, articles and short stories. He is probably best known though for his poetry that has been widely published in Britain and North America.

Coda

Freedom is more than a cloud in a distant sky
Freedom is not a one-time bargain offer
Is not someone else's responsibility
Freedom is not a well-wrapped gift or easy prize
But a full week-long job with unpaid overtime
And no holidays away to the exotic sun

But it can be stolen while you are not looking
Can be co-modified, packaged and sold
Hunted to extinction, can wither up and die
Dry into the parched riverbed of tyranny

We chip pebbles of freedom
Out of the hearts of mountains
Using feathers and balloons
And while we should all fly
Our feet are wrapped in chains

During the 1990s, while a fifth regional Grand Master was created (for the Moon and orbital platforms) the Knight-Commanders of the Order reformed their council into the Aerial Board of Control that effectively held sway over two-thirds of Earth. Those parts that still held out against the Order included America, parts of the former British Empire and the fundamentalist Islamic states opposed to the secular stance of the few neighbouring countries that had embraced the Order's ethos. However, even within its' suzerainty, there were those who were discontented, and on December 31st 2000 the three original airships were destroyed by bombs in each of the museums they were held in…