

A. *The Redeemer* - Siegfried Sassoon (1918)

Siegfried Loraine Sassoon, (September 8, 1886 – September 1, 1967) was an English poet and author. He became known as a writer of satirical anti-war verse during World War I, but later won acclaim for his prose work.

DARKNESS: the rain sluiced down; the mire was deep;
It was past twelve on a mid-winter night,
When peaceful folk in beds lay snug asleep;
There, with much work to do before the light,
We lugged our clay-sucked boots as best we might
Along the trench; sometimes a bullet sang,
And droning shells burst with a hollow bang;
We were soaked, chilled and wretched, every one;
Darkness; the distant wink of a huge gun.

I turned in the black ditch, loathing the storm;
A rocket fizzed and burned with blanching flare,
And lit the face of what had been a form
Floundering in mirk. He stood before me there;
I say that He was Christ; stiff in the glare,
And leaning forward from His burdening task,
Both arms supporting it; His eyes on mine
Stared from the woeful head that seemed a mask
Of mortal pain in Hell's unholy shine.

No thorny crown, only a woollen cap
He wore-- an English soldier, white and strong,
Who loved his time like any simple chap,
Good days of work and sport and homely song;
Now he has learned that nights are very long,
And dawn a watching of the windowed sky.
But to the end, unjudging, he'll endure
Horror and pain, not discontent to die.

B. *Dulce et Decorum Est* - Wilfred Owen (1917)

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) Owen, a British soldier, was killed in the last days of the war. His mother learned of his death as the victory bells tolled in his hometown.

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 floundering 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.* *

**It is sweet and right to die for your country*

C. *All Quiet on the Western Front* - Erich Maria Remarque (1928)

All Quiet on the Western Front is a novel by Erich Maria Remarque, a German veteran of World War I, about the horrors of that war and also the deep detachment from German civilian life felt by many men returning from the front. Hitler banned and burned this book as unpatriotic.

Our faces are encrusted, our thoughts are devastating, we are weary to death; when the attack comes we shall have to strike many of the men's with our fists to awaken them and make them come with us-- --our eyes are burnt, our hands are torn, our knee bleed, our elbows are raw.

How long has it been? Weeks-- -months- -- -years? Only days. We see time pass in the colorless faces of the dying, we cram food into us, we run, we throw, we shoot, we kill, we lie about, we are feeble and spent, still more helpless ones there who, with staring eyes, look upon us as god that escaped death many times.

In the few hours of rest we teach them. "There, see that waggle top? That's a mortar coming. Keep down, it will go clean over. But if it comes this way, then run for it. You can run from a mortar."

We sharpen their ears to the malicious, hardly audible buzz of the smaller shell that are not easily distinguishable. They must pick them out from the general din by their insect-like hum-- - we explain to them that these are more dangerous than the big ones that can be heard long beforehand.

We show them how to take cover from aircraft, how to simulate a dead man when one is overrun in an attack, how to time hand-grenades so that they explode half a second before hitting the ground; we teach them to fling themselves into holes as quick as lightning before the shells with instantaneous fuses; we show them how to clean up trench with a handful of bombs; we explain the difference between the fuse-length of the enemy bombs and our own; we put them wise to the sound of gas shells; - show them all the tricks that can save them from death.

They listen, they are docile – but when it begins again, in their excitement they do everything wrong. Haie Westhus drags off with a great wound in his back through which the lung pulses at every breath. I can only press his hand; "It's all up, Paul," he groans and he bites his arm because of the pain.

We see men living with their skulls blown open; we see soldiers run with their two feet cut off, they stagger on their splintered stumps into the next shell-hole; a lance-corporal crawls a mile and a half on his hands, dragging his smashed knee after him; another goes into the dressing station - in his clasped hands bulge his intestines; we see men without jaws, without faces, we find one man who has held the artery of his arm in his teeth for two hours in order not to bleed to death.

The sun goes down, night comes, the shells whine, life is at an end.

Still the little piece of convulsed earth in which we lie is held. We have yielded no more than a few hundred yards of it as a prize to the enemy. But on every yard there lies a dead man.

D. *Who's for the Game* - Jessie Pope (1915)

Jessie Pope (1870 - 1941) was an English poet best known for her poems about World War I. Her critics accused her of writing pro-war propaganda that was untruthful about the war. She used of simple rhyme schemes (similar to those in nursery rhymes) and allusions to sports, games and heroism.

Who's for the game, the biggest that's played,
The red crashing game of a fight?
Who'll grip and tackle the job unafraid?
And who thinks he'd rather sit tight?

Who'll toe the line for the signal to 'Go!'
Who'll give his country a hand?
Who wants a turn to himself in the show?
And who wants a seat in the stand?

Who knows it won't be a picnic—not much—
Yet eagerly shoulders a gun?
Who would much rather come back with a crutch
Than lie low and be out of the fun?

Come along, lads—
but you'll come on all right—
For there's only one course to pursue,
Your country is up to her neck in a fight,
And she's looking and calling for you.

Who'll earn the Empire's thanks-
Will you, my laddie?
Who'll swell the victor's ranks-
Will you, my laddie?

When that procession comes,
Banners and rolling drums-
Who'll stand and bite his thumbs-
Will you, my laddie?

E. Gassed - John Singer Sargent (1919)

In May 1918, American painter John Singer Sargent was one of several painters commissioned by the British War Memorials Committee of the British Ministry of Information to create a large painting for a planned Hall of Remembrance.



F. Over The Top - Arthur Empey (1922)

Arthur Empey was an American living in New Jersey in 1914. Enraged by the sinking of the Lusitania and loss of the lives of American passengers, he expected to join an American army to combat the Germans. When America did not immediately declare war, Empey boarded a ship to England, enlisted in the British Army (a violation of our neutrality law, but no one seemed to mind) and was soon manning a trench on the front lines.

Gas travels quietly, so you must not lose any time; you generally have about eighteen or twenty seconds in which to adjust your gas helmet.

A gas helmet is made of cloth, treated with chemicals. There are two windows, or glass eyes, in it, through which you can see. Inside there is a rubber-covered tube, which goes in the mouth. You breathe through your nose; the gas, passing through the cloth helmet, is neutralized by the action of the chemicals. The foul air is exhaled through the tube in the mouth, this tube being so constructed that it prevents the inhaling of the outside air or gas. One helmet is good for five hours of the strongest gas. Each Tommy (soldier) carries two of them slung around his shoulder in a waterproof canvas bag. He must wear this bag at all times, even while sleeping. To change a defective helmet, you take out the new one, hold your breath, pull the old one off, placing the new one over your head, tucking in the loose ends under the collar of your tunic.

For a minute, pandemonium reigned in our trench, - Tommies adjusting their helmets, bombers running here and there, and men turning out of the dugouts with fixed bayonets, to man the fire step.

Reinforcements were pouring out of the communication trenches.

Our gun's crew was busy mounting the machine gun on the parapet and bringing up extra ammunition from the dugout.

German gas is heavier than air and soon fills the trenches and dugouts, where it has been known to lurk for two or three days, until the air is purified by means of large chemical sprayers. We had to work quickly, as Fritz (the Germans) generally follows the gas with an infantry attack. A company man on our right was too slow in getting on his helmet; he sank to the ground, clutching at his throat, and after a few spasmodic twistings, went West (died). It was horrible to see him die, but we were powerless to help him. In the corner of a traverse, a little, muddy cur dog, one of the company's pets, was lying dead, with his two paws over his nose.

It's the animals that suffer the most, the horses, mules, cattle, dogs, cats, and rats, they having no helmets to save them. Tommy does not sympathize with rats in a gas attack.

At times, gas has been known to travel, with dire results, fifteen miles behind the lines.

A gas, or smoke helmet, as it is called, at the best is a vile-smelling thing, and it is not long before one gets a violent headache from wearing it.

Our eighteen-pounders were bursting in No Man's Land, in an effort, by the artillery, to disperse the gas clouds. The fire step was lined with crouching men, bayonets fixed, and bombs near at hand to repel the expected attack.

Our artillery had put a barrage of curtain fire on the German lines, to try and break up their attack and keep back reinforcements. I trained my machine gun on their trench and its bullets were raking the parapet. Then over they came, bayonets glistening. In their respirators, which have a large snout in front, they looked like some horrible nightmare.

All along our trench, rifles and machine guns spoke, our shrapnel was bursting over their heads. They went down in heaps, but new ones took the place of the fallen. Nothing could stop that mad rush. The Germans reached our barbed wire, which had previously been demolished by their shells, then it was bomb against bomb, and the devil for all.

Suddenly, my head seemed to burst from a loud 'crack' in my ear. Then my head began to swim, throat got dry, and a heavy pressure on the lungs warned me that my helmet was leaking. Turning my gun over to No. 2, I changed helmets.

The trench started to wind like a snake, and sandbags appeared to be floating in the air. The noise was horrible; I sank onto the fire step, needles seemed to be pricking my flesh, then blackness.

I was awakened by one of my mates removing my smoke helmet. How delicious that cool, fresh air felt in my lungs.

A strong wind had arisen and dispersed the gas.

They told me that I had been 'out' for three hours; they thought I was dead.

G. *Enlist Today* - British Propaganda (1915)



H. *Over There* - George M Cohan (1917)

Cohan wrote the song in 1917 when the United States entered World War I and began sending troops to Europe. The song reflected Americans' expectations that the war would be short.

Johnny get your gun, get your gun, get your gun.
Take it on the run, on the run, on the run.
Hear them calling you and me,
Every Son of Liberty.
Hurry right away, no delay, go today.
Make your Daddy glad to have had such a lad.
Tell your sweetheart not to pine,
To be proud her boy's in line.

Johnny, get your gun, get your gun, get your gun.
Johnny, show the Hun you're a son-of-a-gun.
Hoist the flag and let her fly
Yankee Doodle do or die.
Pack your little kit, show your grit, do your bit.
Yankee to the ranks from the towns and the tanks.
Make your Mother proud of you
And the old red-white-and-blue

Chorus

Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word over there
That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming
The drums rum-tumming everywhere.
So prepare, say a prayer,
Send the word, send the word to beware -
We'll be over, we're coming over,
And we won't come back till it's over, over there.

I. *Johnny Got His Gun* - Dalton Trumbo - (1939)

Johnny Got His Gun is an anti-war novel by American author Dalton Trumbo. The story centers around Joe Bonham, a young American soldier serving in World War I, who awakens in a hospital bed after being caught in the blast of an exploding artillery shell. He gradually realizes that he has lost his arms, legs, and all of his face (including his eyes, ears, teeth, and tongue), but that his mind functions perfectly, leaving him a prisoner in his own body. The book takes its title from the American propaganda song Over There.

They were working on him. It took him a little while to understand this because he couldn't hear them. Then he remembered that he was deaf. It was funny to lie there and have people in the room who were touching you watching you doctoring you and yet not within hearing distance. The bandages were still all over his head so he couldn't see them either. He only knew that way out there in the darkness beyond the reach of his ears people were working over him and trying to help him.

They were taking part of his bandages off. He could feel the coolness the sudden drying of sweat on his left side. They were working on his arm. He felt the pinch of a sharp little instrument grabbing something and getting a bit of his skin with each grab. He didn't jump. He simply lay there because he had to save his strength. He tried to figure out why they were pinching him. After each pinch there was a little pull in the flesh of his upper arm and an unpleasant point of heat like friction. The pulling kept on in short little jerks with his skin getting hot each time. It hurt. He wished they'd stop. It itched. He wished they'd scratch him.

He froze all over stiff and rigid like a dead cat. There was something wrong about this pricking and pulling and friction heat. He could feel the things they were doing to his arm and yet he couldn't rightly feel his arm at all. It was like he felt inside his arm. It was like he felt through the end of his arm. The nearest thing he could think of to the end of his arm was the heel of his hand. But the heel of his hand the end of his arm was high high high as his shoulder.

Jesus Christ they'd cut his left arm off.

They'd cut it right off at the shoulder he could feel it plain now.

J. Pro Patria - Owen Seaman (1914)

England, in this great fight to which you go
Because, where Honour calls you, go you must,
Be glad, whatever comes, at least to know
You have your quarrel just.

Peace was your care; before the nations' bar
Her cause you pleaded and her ends you sought;
But not for her sake, being what you are,
Could you be bribed and bought.

Others may spurn the pledge of land to land,
May with the brute sword stain a gallant past;
But by the seal to which you set your hand,
Thank God, you still stand fast!

Forth, then, to front that peril of the deep
With smiling lips and in your eyes the light,
Steadfast and confident, of those who keep
Their storied scutcheon bright.

And we, whose burden is to watch and wait--
High-hearted ever, strong in faith and prayer,
We ask what offering we may consecrate,
What humble service share.

To steel our souls against the lust of ease;
To find our welfare in the common good;
To hold together, merging all degrees
In one wide brotherhood;--

To teach that he who saves himself is lost;
To bear in silence though our hearts may bleed;
To spend ourselves, and never count the cost,
For others' greater need;--

To go our quiet ways, subdued and sane;
To hush all vulgar clamour of the street;
With level calm to face alike the strain
Of triumph or defeat;--

This be our part, for so we serve you best,
So best confirm their prowess and their pride,
Your warrior sons, to whom in this high test
Our fortunes we confide.

K. *The Price of Glory* - Alistair Horne (1962)

An excerpt from historian Alistair Horne's, The Price of Glory, describing the battle of Verdun in France. Lasting over 9 months, the Battle of Verdun was the longest battle of the First World War.

A mile or two from the front line, troops entered the communication trenches. Though to call them this was generally both an exaggeration and an anachronism. Parapits gradually grew lower and lower until the trench became a little deeper than a roadside ditch. Shells now begin to fall with increasing regularity among closely packed men. In the darkness the columns trampled over the howling wounded that lie underfoot. Suddenly the trench became nothing more than a track hardly traced out of me at the Shell holes in the mud which the Schilling had now turned to the consistency of sticky butter troops stumbled and fell repeatedly cursing and low undertones and passive fearful of being overheard by the enemy who relentlessly pursued them with his shells at every step. Sometimes there were duck-boards around the lips of the huge shell craters, but more often there were not.

Heavily laden men falling into the water holes remained there until they drowned unable to crawl up the greasy sides. If a comrade paused to lend a hand, it often meant that two would drown instead of one. In the chaos of the battlefield, where all reference points had been obliterated, relieving detachments often got lost and wondered hopelessly all night only to be massacred by an enemy machine gun as dawn betrayed them. It was not unusual for reliefs to reach the front line with only half the numbers that set out.

L. The Battle of Verdun from the perspective of a German Soldier

A scene described by German soldier, Private William Harmans, 67th Infantry Regiment, from Peter Hart's book, The Great War, from within a fort on the outskirts of the battlefield in Verdun.

The entrance was a mere hole in the scarred battlefield and the silhouettes of cowering men constantly crawling in and out looked like huge ants in the dark. I descended on an iron ladder some 40 feet into the concrete cavern. It was an enormous place, crowded with many hundreds of soldiers. Some laying on bunks sleeping, snoring, and moaning. Some cluttered the passages between the bunks chatting or writing letters, others sat or knelt in corners, packing or unpacking their belongings. Here a flashlight, there a candle. Matches or cigarettes sparked the dark with flickering islands of light, continually shifting the brightness from the subterranean stronghold. A small patch of sky could be seen when one stood close to the iron ladder or looked through the shaft which contained the ventilator fan. A current of warm, stale air from 40 feet beneath brought to my nostrils the sickening smell of first aid medications. Every one of the chicken wire births were full with mutilated torn and befouled uniforms. A dismal sight.

There was a man with closed eyes, a blood soaked bandage around his head. Another beside him lay twisting in pain. I saw some lice ridden man who would scratch their bandages off to ease the itching. The passages between the bunks were crowded. There must've been 1000 men there. Some had been relieved but could not withdraw to the rear and some, who had come to relieve the others, could not proceed to the front lines. All were imprisoned deep within the concrete and rock entrails.

I heard the cry "poison gas", and I saw people around me putting on their gas masks. I adjusted mine which still hung over my shoulder. There it was - a yellowish gas glimmering near the iron ladder. A gas bomb must've been thrown into the entrance shaft. The cry "gas masks on" electrified the whole shelter. Soldiers ran to get their masks which they had hung on the walls and in the corners or laid on their packs.

Many who had lost theirs on the battlefield began to cough the wounded in the bunks tried to climb into the upper births well beneath the graph the gas crept forward along its way extinguishing one candle after another. soon many were dying. And the bunks and floors were filled with bodies over which the living stepped in stumbled in search of air. The alarm surged like a wave from bunk to bunk. before long he had reached the farthest man 100 yards away. the panic was so great that I saw badly wounded man throw themselves onto the floor as though they wanted to drink in the gas while others tore their masks from their neighbors faces. Some had a reddish foam oozing from their mouths.

M. Letter, Charles May at the Battle of the Somme - 1916

British soldier, Charles May, 20th Manchester Regiment, writing to his wife before the first day of the Somme. Excerpt from, by Peter Hart

I must not allow myself to dwell on the personal, there is no room for it here. Also it is demoralizing. But I do not want to die. Not that I mind for myself if it be that I am to go I'm ready but the thought that I may never see you or our darling baby again, turns my heart to water. I cannot think of it with even the semblance of equanimity. My one consolation is the happiness that's been ours. Also my conscience is clear that I've always tried to make life a joy to you. I know at least that if I go you will not want. That is something. But it is the thought that we may be cut off from one another which is so terrible and that our babe may grow up without my knowing her, and with her without her knowing me. It's difficult to face. And I know your life without me would be a dull blank. Yet you must never let it become wholly so. For to you will be left the greatest charge in all the world the upbringing of our baby .God bless that child, she is the hope of life to me!

My darling, Agua it may be that you will only have to read these lines as ones of passing interest. On the other hand, they may will be my last message to you. If they are, kono through all your life that I love you and the baby with all my heart and soul and you too sweet things were just all the world to me. I pray God I'm may do my duty. For I know that whatever that might entail, you would not have it otherwise.

Charles May, the loving husband of Bessie Mae and father to his baby Pauline was killed the next day. He's buried in the Danzig Alley British cemetery.

N. *The First World War* - John Keegan (1998)

An excerpt from *The First World War*, by British historian John Keegan describing the battle of the Somme.

In all, the British had lost about 60,000. Of whom, 21,000 had been killed. Most in the first hour of the attack, perhaps the first minutes. The trenches, wrote Robert key 50 years later, were the “concentration camp of the First World War”. An though the analogy is what an academic reviewer would call un-historical, there is something Treblinka*-like about almost all accounts of the 1st of July. About these long docile lines of young men, shoddily uniformed, heavily burdened, numbered about their necks (for identification of bodies), plodding forward across a feature-less landscape to their own extermination inside the barbed wire. Accounts of the Somme produce in readers and audiences much of the same range of emotions as do descriptions of the running of Auschwitz. Guilty fascination, incredulity, horror, disgust, pity, and anger. Anger is the response which the story of the Somme most commonly evokes in professionals parentheses soldiers. Why did the command errors not do something about it? Why did they let the attack go on? Why did they not stop one battalion following the wake of another to join it in death?

*Treblinka was a Nazi extermination camp where nearly 1 million people were killed during the Holocaust.

Edith Wharton, born in New York City in 1862, settled permanently in France in 1907. A famous novelist, Wharton was living in Paris when World War I broke out in the summer of 1914. From the beginning of the war, Wharton devoted herself to the Allied cause, working with the French Red Cross and leading a committee that founded hostels and schools to serve refugees, including many children, from the German-occupied zones of northeastern France and Belgium. She was eventually awarded the French Legion d'honneur (Legion of Honor) for her work.

Since leaving Paris yesterday we have passed through streets and streets of such murdered houses, through town after town spread out in its last writhings; and before the black holes that were homes, along the edge of the chasms that were streets, everywhere we have seen flowers and vegetables springing up in freshly raked and watered gardens.

Assignment:

Write a group response

- Select a scribe or take turns writing
- Use key terms from the lecture and class materials and underline them

Prompts:

- Assess how advancements in technology impacted the battlefield in WWI.
- How were people impacted by the war?
- Discuss the messages of pro-war propaganda.

Name _____ Date _____ Per _____

World War I: Document Analysis

Document	Author and Nationality	Pro or Anti War	Evidence

