The Telegraph

INSIDE THE

Sunday, March 2, 2014

FIRST WORLD WAR

PART SEVEN: THE CULTURAL FRONT

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WELCOME



▮ he First World War saw the arrival of a new type of middle-class, welleducated soldier who could ably and graphically chronicle his experiences on the battlefield through music, literature or painting.

It was a conflict linked like no other to the poetry and literature of its age, writes Imperial War Museum's Anthony Richards, telling of the influential role of war poet Siegfried Sassoon over his contemporaries. Sassoon, like fellow poets Robert Graves and Charles Sorley, experienced trench warfare firsthand - and the grittily realistic works of such writers marked a distinct shift away from old-guard writers who romanticised war.

Also, we look at key works of literature, art and music written by those who fought for their country and shaped the artistic climate that was to follow. Among them was the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, whose Pastoral Symphony was written as a direct response to the death he saw as a stretcher-bearer.

Many other soldiers felt inspired, and compelled, to commit their artistic endeavours to paper, as we see in this issue's letters sent to us by readers. Please keep them coming.

Zoe Dare Hall Series editor

WEST STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE

⋙ A POETS' WAR

Anthony Richards explains how Siegfried Sassoon and others transformed literature's landscape.

→ PAINTINGS,

MUSIC AND BOOKS
Patrick Bishop selects 12 key works by artists, composers and writers who fought on the front.

₩ WAR POEM

Nigel Jones analyses Wilfred Owen's 'The Dead-Beat'.

₩ Q-SHIP HERO

Michael Ashcroft tells the story of Ernest Herbert Pitcher VC.

> LETTERS HOME

Second Lieutenant Bernard Wilfrid Long and his ventures into no-man's-land

MUSIC OF WAR

Ralph Vaughan Williams didn't have to join up, but he did and it deeply affected his composing, says **Zoe Dare Hall**. P14-15

POST BOX

A call to stop the rum ration that inspired a poem, and the Lancashire coal miner and soldier who became a well-known artist in Australia. P14-15

IWM PODCAST

Hear IWM's Voices of the First World War podcasts at www.1914.org/ podcasts

Left: American soldiers listen to a fellow doughboy playing the organ inside a ruined church in Exermont. France, in the Argonne region, October 1918.

Front cover: British soldiers at Arras Cathedral, writing on stones in March 1918

THE SPONSOR

Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC

Inside the First World War, a 12-part series, is sponsored by Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC, an international businessman, philanthropist and military historian. Lord Ashcroft is sponsoring the monthly supplements because he wants to promote a greater understanding of the First World War and

to remember those who gave their lives in the conflict.

Lord Ashcroft has established himself as a champion of bravery, building up the world's largest collection of Victoria Crosses (VCs), Britain and the Commonwealth's most prestigious award for courage in the face of the enemy. He has also written four books on bravery: Victoria Cross Heroes, Special Forces

Heroes, George Cross Heroes and Heroes of the Skies. In each of the Ashcroft tells the incredible stories behind First World War VCs from his collection.

Lord Ashcroft purchased his first VC in 1986 and currently owns more than 180 of the decorations. Three years ago, he began collecting George Crosses (GCs), Britain and the Commonwealth's most

prestigious award for courage not in the face of the enemy. He currently Ashcroft's VC and GC collections are on display in a gallery that bears his name at IWM London, along with VCs and GCs in the care of the museum. The gallery, built with a £5 million donation from Lord Ashcroft, was opened by HRH The Princess Royal in 2010. Lord Ashcroft has been a successful entrepreneur

for the past four decades, launching, buying, building and selling companies – both private and public in Britain and overseas.

He is a former Treasurer and Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party. In September 2012, he was appointed a member of the Privy Council and was made the Government's Special Representative for Veterans' Transition. He is Treasurer of the International Democratic

Union (IDU) and one of Britain's leading experts

on polling. Lord Ashcroft has donated several millions of pounds to charities and good causes

He founded Crimestoppers (then the Community Action Trust) in 1988.

He is the founder of the Ashcroft Technology Academy and Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University. His numerous other charity roles

include being Vice Patron of the Intelligence Corps Museum, a Trustee of Imperial War Museum, an Ambassador for SkillForce and a Trustee of the Cleveland Clinic in the U.S.

•For information about the Lord Ashcroft Gallery. visit www.iwm.org.uk/ heroes. For information on Lord Ashcroft, visit www.lordashcroft.com Follow him on Twitter: @LordAshcroft





o conflict has ever been so closely linked with the poetry and literature of its age than the First World War. When





How poetry reflected the true face of war

8, 1886. His parents separated when he was four and his early life was spent with his mother in Kent. Educated at Marlborough, he read history at Cambridge but left in 1907 without a degree and spent the next few years living off a private income inherited after his father's death, which allowed him to live modestly while indulging his passions of cricket, fox-hunting and romantic poetry.

Along with many others, Sassoon was affected by

we consider the writers who emerged from this era, one of the most prominent is Siegfried Sassoon. His poetry is remembered for the satirical edge of its criticism of the military high command and disdain for unquestioning patriotism, with the anger and indignation present in much of his verse characteristic of remume who conved in the trenches.

He also won acclaim for his biographical prose, describing military service on the Western Front in his *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*. He served with distinction in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. But Sassoon's influence extended far beyond his own work, with his journey through the conflict and the friendships he made reflecting the wider explorition of posters and

made reflecting the wider evolution of poetry and literature associated with the First World War. Siegfried Loraine Sassoon was born on September

of many men who served in the trenches

Along with many others, Sassoon was affected by patriotic fervour at the outbreak of war and enlisted immediately as a trooper in the Sussex Yeomanry.



POET SIEGFRIED SASSOON WAS ONE OF MANY WHO TRANSFORMED LITERATURE'S LANDSCAPE, SAYS ANTHONY RICHARDS

After convalescing from a riding injury, Sassoon applied for a commission and was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Welch Fusiliers in May 1915. Six months later, he joined the 1st Battalion in France, where he would not only experience trench

warfare, but also meet a fellow poet with whom his life would be inextricably linked.

Despite his higher rank, Captain Robert Graves was younger than Sassoon by nine years and had already gained considerable front-line experience with the 1st Royal Welch Fusiliers, having been on active conviceing Expressing April 1015 active service in France since April 1915.
When Sassoon met Graves for the first time in the

company mess, the two officers soon discovered a shared love of literature. Sassoon offered his opinion on the poetry that Graves was preparing for publication; initially he disliked what he regarded as the gritty realism of Graves's work in comparison with his own more traditional poetic imagery and language. In return, Graves introduced Sassoon to the poems of Charles Sorley, an officer who had been killed during the battle of Loos. Sorley's verse, both unsentimental and critical of "jingoism", would greatly influence both men. Sassoon and Graves shared a public school background and a love of sport (Graves was a boxer), were both homosexual and, perhaps most notably, had a joint aspiration to establish themselves as published poets.

The beginning of Sassoon's friendship with Graves was also marked by his introduction in 1915 to the true horrors of the First World War. Front-line service



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Sassoon to autograph his copy of the recently published *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*. Sassoon obliged and agreed to meet Owen again in order to look through his own draft poetry, which Sassoon felt showed promise. He advised Owen to "sweat your guts out" on further poems. What began as hero worship developed over the following weeks into a firm friendship, with Sassoon inspiring Owen who, in a letter to his mother, described the older noet as "the greatest friend I have"

poet as "the greatest friend I have".

Sassoon proved a profound influence on Owen's poetry and offered amendments to many of his most poetry and offered amendments to many of his most famous works such as "Anthem for Doomed Youth" (a title suggested by Sassoon). The graphic language and direct questioning used by Sassoon was adopted by Owen, who arguably surpassed his mentor in both style and effect. After leaving Craiglockhart, both officers continued to correspond until Owen's death in action seven days before the Armistice.

The period of Sassoon's convalescence in late 1917 saw him become something of a celebrity among the

saw him become something of a celebrity among the artistic crowd in London. However, the greatest critical admiration that year was reserved for Robert Nichols's collection Ardours and Endurances. Sassoon met Nichols at a poetry reading on November 15,

66 Sassoon helped promote the works of poets WHO FAILED TO SURVIVE THE WAR

> 1917, where they shared a mutual admiration for Sorley. Nichols's service as an artillery officer at the front had been relatively brief before he was invalided out suffering from shell shock, which may have distanced him from the still-serving Sassoon, but they became firm friends. Both men had taken their wartime trauma and anger as inspiration for their poetry and by the end of the war, Sassoon, together with Graves, Nichols and other contemporaries, were regarded as the leading poets of the age.
>
> Peace meant the anger and satire which characterized Sassoon's writing was diluted and be

> characterised Sassoon's writing was diluted and he returned to the pre-war world in a series of biographies, starting with *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting* Man in 1928. The events of the whole war could now be portrayed within a wider context, and the memoirs, novels and verse of Sassoon and others reflected an increased public antipathy to war and the growth of pacifist organisations. Appearing the same year was *Undertones of War*, a memoir written by a former infantry officer, Edmund Blunden. Blunden's background was not dissimilar to that of Sassoon: an idyllic childhood in Kent before leaving school with a scholarship to Oxford in July 1915; commissioned into the Royal Sussex Regiment and arriving in France in early 1916, he too won the Military Cross.

> Robert Graves's Goodbye To All That followed in 1929, although the self-confessed sensationalist nature of the memoir and looseness with historical truth led many of Graves's contemporaries, notably Sassoon and Blunden, to decry it as an unfaithful depiction of events. *Testament of Youth* (1933), written by the former VAD nurse Vera Brittain, was heavily influenced by these earlier memoirs and reflected upon the deaths of the author's fiancé Roland Leighton, her brother and other close friends.

> Sassoon's influence extended to helping promote the work of poets who had failed to survive the war and witness the wider appreciation of their verse. He and witness the wider appreciation of their verse. He would prove instrumental in the posthumous publication of Owen's collected poetry in 1920, and that of Isaac Rosenberg in 1937. While Sassoon shared with Rosenberg the literary patron Eddie Marsh, they never met before Rosenberg's death in action on April 1, 1918. Sassoon's foreword to Rosenberg's *Collected Works* revealed that he hoped to gain for him "the full recognition of his genius which has hitherto been delayed". By the Sixties, both Rosenberg and Owen had emerged as among both Rosenberg and Owen had emerged as among the most important of all the war poets.

> The era of the First World War had seen a distinctive mood change among writers. Inspired by first-hand experience of the trenches, poets such as Sassoon distinguished themselves from the "old guard" of Conan Doyle, Kipling and Hardy who had traditionally portrayed war in a lyrical, romantic way. The nature of war itself had changed dramatically and it was this gritty realism which Sassoon and his contemporaries embraced and which would directly influence future literature and poetry of the 20th century

Clockwise from top left: Siegfried with his brother Hamo and other students at Cambridge; a soldier offers a helping hand to another as he carries a wounded comrade across a trench, the Battle of Ginchy, 1916; Robert Graves; Wilfred Owen

was significantly different from the warfare expected

fatal, a shoulder wound led to Sassoon's evacuation for convalescence in England in April 1917.

Back in Blighty, Sassoon's bitterness became even more obvious; he had fully expected to die in the trenches but had returned home a military hero something he never expected or wanted. This "survivor's guilt" was instrumental in influencing his decision on June 15, 1917, to make a formal statement in wilful defiance of military authority, questioning the Government's motives for continuing the war and refusing to fight further.

Graves, also in England serving as a military instructor, supported a medical board's decision to classify Sassoon as suffering from "shell shock". On July 23 he arrived at Craiglockhart War Hospital, near Edinburgh, far enough away from London to remove

the troublesome poet from public attention.

Much has been written of the famous meeting at
Craiglockhart on August 18, 1917, of Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. An aspiring poet influenced by the work of Keats, Owen had been serving as a subaltern with the 2nd Manchester Regiment in France since December 1916, and had suffered several particularly bad instances of being bombarded while in flooded dugouts. In March 1917 he fell into a collapsed cellar and suffered concussion for some time before being rescued, while the following month he was blown off his feet by a shell explosion. Beginning to develop signs of nervous exhaustion, Owen was evacuated home for treatment at the beginning of May. Timidly visiting his hospital room, Owen asked

POETS TOGETHER

changed both his and Graves's attitude to the war.

The futility and bitterness at the fighting felt by
Sassoon was typical of those who had been exposed to the brutality of trench warfare. The anger and despair instilled in him by Thomas's death led Sassoon to become increasingly unconcerned with personal welfare, earning him the nickname "Mad Jack" and, ultimately, the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry. Before further heroics proved

by many young men brought up on Victorian tales of

dashing military heroes and masculine bravery and

tashing initially infoces and masseamic bravery and honour characterised by well-organised cavalry charges and gleaming uniforms.

The reality of the Western Front for the average soldier could not have been more different.

Purposeful activity with a clear objective was replaced

by confusion and apparent chaos, cowering in muddy trenches for no obvious reason other than to avoid death, with death itself seldom heroic but rather

random and deeply unpleasant. Awakened by this first taste of trench warfare and affected by the

appalling conditions and constant danger, Sassoon's poetry became much harder in both language and tone, with his earlier romantic verse forgotten in

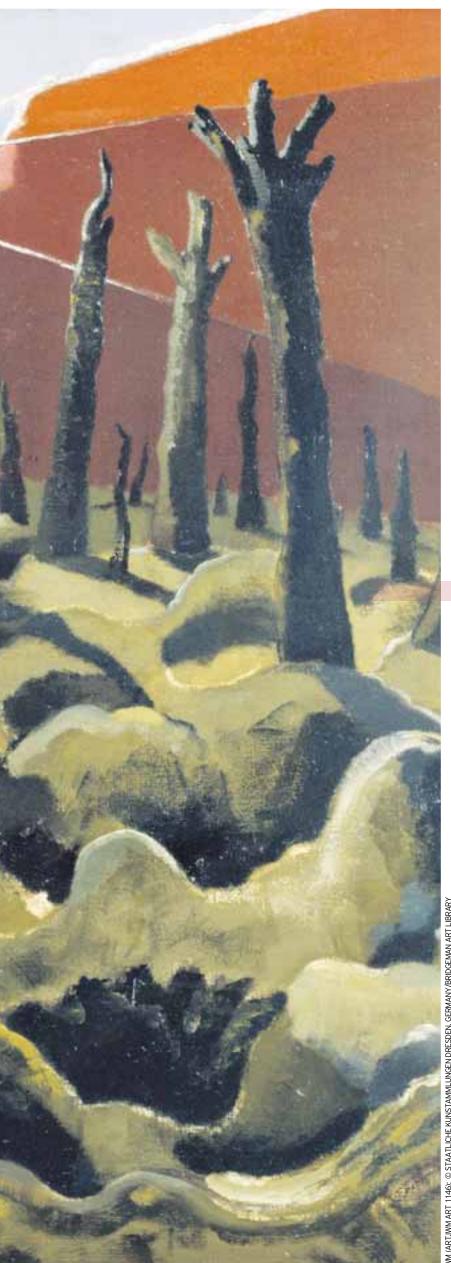
favour of the ugly reality he was now experiencing.

The death of his brother Hamo at Gallipoli was another important factor in changing Sassoon's outlook, although the death in 1916 of David Thomas,

a fellow officer with whom Sassoon had developed a deep affection, had an enormous effect on him and

• Anthony Richards is the IWM's head of documents





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Four artists, writers and composers whose work defined the war

he First World War was the first conflict to spawn a wealth of artistic output from those who fought on its battlefields. The Somme alone saw more writers take part than any other battle in history, including Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, JRR Tolkien and Edmund Blunden. There, and on other fighting fronts, a new breed of well-educated soldier vividly chronicled their first-hand experiences through words, art and music.

Some were killed in action, bright lights of their generation such as the composer George Butterworth – another Somme casualty – whose creative promise would never be fulfilled. The "luckier" ones were left forever with a survivor's guilt that darkly permeated their future work. All leave an invaluable legacy, whether through poetry, memoirs, fiction or art, that helps future generations to understand the reality of war.

Here, Patrick Bishop selects four artists, composers and writers (and their key works) who experienced the

Here, Patrick Bishop selects four artists, composers and writers (and their key works) who experienced the conflict first-hand and whose works have not only come to define the war; they changed what came after.

ARTISTS

Otto Dix: Trench Warfare (1932)

Dix was a 23-year-old art student in Dresden when the war broke out and he enlisted enthusiastically in the German Army. He fought as a machine-gunner on the Eastern and Western fronts, took part in the Battle of the Somme, won the Iron Cross and left the trenches only after being shot in the neck a few months before hostilities ended. His experiences were to haunt him for the rest of his life and inform some of his darkest and most brilliant work. The results are exemplified

by his 1932 painting *Trench Warfare* (below), whose macabre imagery and charnel-house palette evoke a medieval atmosphere of suffering and evil. Dix was determined to confront the public with the reality of the war, but his honesty was unwelcome and the picture caused an outcry when first shown in Cologne. The "unpatriotic" message of pointlessness was not lost on the Nazis, who included it in their 1937 exhibition of degenerate art.



Paul Nash: We Are Making a New World (1918)

No human figure inhabits this 1918 landscape (left). Nash seems to be saying that they are all gone, subsumed in the churned, polluted earth, stagnant water and shattered tree stumps, which the rising sun will never restore to life.

Nash was a public schoolboy, the son of a successful London lawyer. In 1914 he was at the Slade School of Art, one of a brilliant batch of students that included Stanley Spencer, Ben Nicholson and CRW Nevinson. He volunteered first for the Artists Rifles and arrived as a subaltern on the Western Front in February 1917. He was sent home after injuring himself in

an accident but returned that autumn as an official war artist. His work did little to popularise the cause. As he declared in a letter to his wife, he was "no longer an artist, interested and curious", there to observe and record, but a "messenger" bent on bearing witness to the horrors of trench life. He succeeded triumphantly. Over the years, the flat colours and bold shapes of his wartime paintings have embedded themselves in our consciousness. When the next war broke out, Nash served once again as an official artist, creating images that are perhaps less bleak but equally unforgettable.



Wyndham Lewis: A Battery Shelled (1919)

Wyndham Lewis perhaps knew more than any of his artistic contemporaries about the business of war.

He was in his thirties when the conflict began; and had already established himself as a leading light of the avant garde as the founder of the cubism-inspired Vorticist school and the author of its short-lived but hugely influential journal, Blast.

As an gunnery officer, he was intimately engaged in the artillery duels that did most of the killing on the Western Front. As well as commanding a battery, he acted as spotter,

operating from exposed forward observation posts to call down fire on the enemy.

A Battery Shelled (above) is a mysterious construct. A group of soldiers, one of them apparently Lewis, look out with seeming indifference over a sterile landscape of bunkers and geometric trench lines peopled by robotic stick men.
Vorticism did not survive the war and subsequently Lewis

applied his questing energy to writing and criticism, much of it contentious.

COMPOSERS

George Butterworth

The Banks of Green Willow (1913) Shot through the head by

a sniper on the Somme in August 1916, Butterworth is a symbol of the budding talent that was burned up in the holocaust of the war.

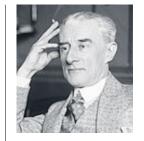
Born into the Victorian upper-middle classes, he went to Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, and was a friend of Ralph Vaughan Williams, He made his name with settings of AE Housman's A Shropshire Lad and an interpretation of a folk song, The Banks of Green Willow - often played during commemoration ceremonies on the Somme. This "idyll" summons up a prelapsarian image of the English countryside, evoking birdsong, a stream dimpled by rising trout and the scent of fresh-cut hav.



Few of his comrades knew of his musical accomplishments. He was thought of instead as an outstandingly brave soldier. By the time of his death aged 31, he had been mentioned in dispatches and won the Military Cross.

Maurice RAVEL

Le tombeau de Couperin (1914-17)Ravel was established as



one of France's leading composers when the war began through such works as the score for *Daphnis* et Chloé, written for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. He hoped to do his bit for his country as an aviator, but was considered too old (39) and too short (5ft 3ins). Instead, he served as a driver on the Verdun front. The appalling toll that the war took of French manhood hit everyone and Ravel was no exception. He memorialised six of his dead friends in Le tombeau de Couperin, a suite for solo piano in six movements. The final part is dedicated to the husband of his favourite pianist. Marguerite Long.

Arnold Schoenberg

Variations for Orchestra (1926-28)

Initially, at least, the brilliant Austrian-born composer and musical theorist saw the war as an opportunity to overthrow what he regarded as the bourgeois decadence of established



French music. The German military assault would also be a symbolic attack on the "mediocre kitschiness" of the likes of Ravel. The mood did not last long. Drafted into the Austrian Army at 42, Schoenberg resented the disruption to his work, which was already well advanced on its revolutionary journey away from traditional tonality and musical organisation. Variations for Orchestra produced a storm of controversy when premiered by the Berlin Philharmonic under the baton of Wilhelm Furtwängler in December 1928. With the arrival of the Nazis in power, Schoenberg's Jewishness and the perceived "decadence" of his music forced him to move to America, where he settled in Los Angeles and taught at American universities. He died there in 1951.

Gustav Holst Ode to Death (1918-19)

Before the war, the English

composer Gustav Holst was a scholar at the Royal College of Music, a professional musician and teacher, Aged 40 when war broke out, he was rejected as unfit for military service and felt frustrated that friends and family were doing their bit, including his wife, who became an ambulance driver, and his close friend Ralph Vaughan Williams, on active service in France. But in the final months of war, Holst had his chance to serve – as a volunteer working with British troops in Europe awaiting demobilisation. Having been told his surname. Von Holst, looked too Germanic, he changed it by deed poll to Holst and became the

YMCA's musical organiser



in Salonika. His most famous work, *The Planets*, was written in 1914 before the war had made its cataclysmic impact, but it included a portraval of the reality of warfare in Mars and became a huge international success after the First World War. On his return from Salonica, he wrote his choral work, Ode to Death, a contemplation on the waste and futility of war, inspired by a Walt Whitman poem.

Under Fire was based on three months of combat and gave an early view of the reality of life in the trenches. Subtitled "the story of a squad", it describes a world of tangled wire, dank earthworks and random death in which the fighters live surrounded by the stinking corpses of their comrades. After his discharge in 1917, Barbusse became a vigorous anti-war campaigner. He also adopted communism and, after visiting Moscow in 1918, married a Russian, becoming an uncritical admirer of the Soviet Union and Joseph Stalin.

Jünger first saw action as a 20-year-old with the 73rd

Hanoverian Regiment on the Western Front in April 1915. By the end, he had been wounded at least seven times and won the Iron Cross and the Pour le Mérite (Blue Max). Jünger's artistic response to combat was unusual. Soldiering was "a good and strenuous life". Far from a ghastly ordeal, he celebrates a quasi-mystical experience and "an incomparable schooling of the heart" These conclusions reached in Storm of Steel seemed



to make him a natural supporter of Hitler and Nazism. Yet he kept his distance from them and, despite his fierce nationalism and antidemocratic convictions, defied easy categorisation. His work is an eloquent and stylish expression of a rarely acknowledged truth war was not hell for everyone. For some it was thrilling and fulfilling, the high point of their existence. He died aged 102, garlanded with

Vera Brittain

Testament of Youth (1933)

The consequences of the slaughter of their menfolk on the lives of the women were immense. Vera Brittain, 20 years old and a middle-class bluestocking



WRITERS



HENRI Barbusse

Under Fire (1916)

The son of a French father and an English mother, Barbusse had a minor reputation as a poet and novelist when the war began. He joined the French Army, serving until the end of 1915, when he was moved to a clerical job after his health collapsed. His grimly realistic, Prix Goncourt-winning novel

Ernst Jünger Storm of Steel (1920)



SAPPERS AT Work (1918-19)

David BOMBERG:

Bomberg was the son of working-class Polish-Jewish immigrant parents and one of the most precocious talents of his generation. He was another product of the prewar Slade but left after disagreements with the surgeon-turned-teacher Henry Tonks, the school's presiding genius who disapproved of his avantgarde approach. Bomberg drew inspiration from cubism, futurism and Vorticism, employing an angular, machine-age aesthetic.

He joined the Royal Engineers in 1915 and his first-hand experience of the most mechanised war in history was to have a profound effect on his artistic development. By the time he painted this picture of Canadian tunnellers burrowing under Hill 50 at Saint Eloi, south east of Ypres, he was moving back to the more naturalistic style that he would employ for the rest of his working life.

Bomberg lost his brother

and his friend, the poet Isaac Rosenberg, to the war. His subsequent preoccupation with the colours and shapes of nature can be seen as a response to his own

harrowing experiences.

WAR POEM

'The Dead-Beat': a reflection of Wilfred Owen's own despair

he life and work of Wilfred Owen, the iconic poet of protest and pity of the Great War, is too well-known to need much introduction. Of Welsh descent, Owen grew up in the Shropshire Marches, the eldest son of a minor railway official and an over-doting mother.

Sensitive and delicate, he covertly rejected his mother's evangelical Christianity and escaped to France, where the outbreak of war found him tutoring in a French family near Bordeaux. Returning to Britain in 1915, he enlisted and was posted as a junior officer to the Somme in 1917.

A vicious "blooding" in no-man's-land (recorded in his poem "The Sentry") and other horrors induced a break-

down for which he was treated at Craiglockhart hospital, Edinburgh. Here, in the decisive breakthrough of his literary life, he sought out and was patronised by Siegfried Sassoon, and accepted his hero's suggested changes and improvements to his first "war poems".

Soon, however, Owen surpassed Sassoon in depth and technical virtuosity, and in a year of

sustained poetic production as he recovered his nerves, wrote the dense, complex but painfully humane verse which has made him the most renowned of all the war poets.

Gay like Sassoon, he also felt compelled to return to the trenches to be with the men he commanded. Despite his passionate pacifism, in his second stint at the front Owen proved a courageous, even ferocious, soldier, winning an MC for turning a captured machine gun on the enemy. Poignantly, he was killed just a week before the Armistice, on November 4, 1918, leading his men in the sort of suicidal attack he had implicitly

protested about in his incomparable poetry.

"The Dead-Beat", one of Owen's less well-known poems, was based on a real incident he had witnessed in France, and was the first he wrote after meeting his mentor Sassoon at Craiglockhart. The poem therefore has a strong Sassoonian influence, with a directness and bitterness untypical of Owen's later and more subtle



THE DEAD-BEAT

HE DROPPED, - MORE SULLENLY THAN WEARILY, LAY STUPID LIKE A COD, HEAVY LIKE MEAT, AND NONE OF US COULD KICK HIM TO HIS FEET;

JUST BLINKED AT MY REVOLVER, BLEARILY;

- Didn't appear to know a war was on,

OR SEE THE BLASTED TRENCH AT WHICH HE STARED.

'I'LL DO 'EM IN,' HE WHINED, 'IF THIS HAND'S SPARED,

'I'LL MURDER THEM, I WILL.'

A LOW VOICE SAID,

'It's Blighty, p'raps, he sees; his pluck's all gone,

Dreaming of all the valiant, that *aren't* dead:

BOLD UNCLES, SMILING MINISTERIALLY;

Maybe his brave young wife, getting her fun

IN SOME NEW HOME, IMPROVED MATERIALLY. It's not these stiffs have crazed him; nor the Hun.'

WE SENT HIM DOWN AT LAST, OUT OF THE WAY. UNWOUNDED; - STOUT LAD, TOO, BEFORE THAT STRAFE. Malingering? Stretcher-Bearers winked, 'Not half!'

NEXT DAY I HEARD THE DOC'S WELL-WHISKIED LAUGH: THAT SCUM YOU SENT LAST NIGHT SOON DIED. HOORAY!

First coined by British troops in India, "Blighty" means Britain, the longed-for homeland representing safety from the war. A non-lethal wound was called "a Blighty one", meaning it necessitated going home.

As an officer, Owen carried a revolver Ironically he is threatening with his gun a man suffering what he himself would suffer: what was then called "shell shock" or "neurasthenia", which we call "post-combat stress disorder".

A double meaning: a trench could be literally blasted by shellfire, or iust cursed, as in "this blasted toothache".

A touch of misogyny? Owen's poetry has several resentful references to women's sexuality, far from the suffering of men in the trenches.

The poem's central tenet is about the unsympathetic military attitude to mental breakdown under the stress of war, which was often seen as cowardice or shirking. Owen's presence at Craiglockhart meant there were doubts about his own "moral writing about himself.



when the war began, lost her brother, three close male friends and the man she loved. Roland Leighton. who died in France in December 1915. Brittain, who worked as a Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse in London, Malta and France, described the impact on her life in a cathartic memoir, Testament of Youth. Its message was of grief and loss as she struggled to remake the life she had imagined for herself before disaster struck. It became a

classic that resonated down the rest of the 20th century. Despite her fame and success, she never quite escaped from the shadows of the war. When she died in 1970, her ashes were scattered on her brother's grave in Italy.

Erich Maria REMARQUE

All Quiet on the Western Front (1929)

Remarque said his aim in All Quiet on the Western Front was "simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war". Based on his experiences in Flanders in 1917, it became an international bestseller and was made into an Oscar-winning film. Its extraordinary appeal

may stem from Remarque's success in universalising the soldiers' experience - that the war was the same for all who fought. It also articulated the alienation felt by combatants from the societies they were supposedly defending.
The Nazis burned the book and forced Remarque into exile. Unable to lay hands on him, they turned on his found guilty of defeatism and put to death in 1943.



VC BRAVERY

He stood by his gun as shells started major fires



MICHAEL ASHCROFT ON ERNEST HERBERT PITCHER VC

s the son of a coastguard and having been born in the Cornish harbour village of Mullion, Ernest Herbert Pitcher's chosen profession would not have surprised anyone. Pitcher, who have surprised anyone. Pitcher, who was born on New Year's Eve, 1888, joined the Royal Navy, aged just 14 and, by the outbreak of the First World War, he was serving in the super-dreadnought, HMS King George V. The following year, he volunteered for service in the expanding fleet of secret "Q-ships", at one stage Britain's only "answer" to the U-boats, German submarines that were causing such terrible damage to the Allies' merchant fleets.

Allies' merchant fleets.
Throughout the first two years

of the war the Royal Navy was unable to halt the massive loss and damage to merchant ships caused by the U-boats. Depth charges, mined nets, deep minefields, hunter destroyers and special patrols of submarines were among the tactics used to target the U-boats but all proved to be largely ineffective. In his book VCs of the First World War: The Naval VCs, Stephen Snelling spelled out the scale of the problem: "In six months [during 1916] the monthly losses of British and foreign vessels had more than trebled to 368,521 tons. By contrast, U-boat losses during the whole of 1016 months.

during the whole of 1916 amounted to just 25, of which five were due to accidents and a further four to action by our Russian ally. The unpalatable truth was that the Royal Navy was not merely failing to check the submarine campaign, it was actually in danger of losing it, and with it, the war itself."

As U-boat numbers steadily increased, they became the supreme maritime threat to Britain's survival. To preserve costly torpedoes and allow them to plunder their target's valuables, U-boats would often surface close to a merchant ship, bring it under fire from their deck-mounted gun and force the soft target to surrender. The merchant crew would then leave their ship to the German submariners, who would take any valuables that took their fancy before scuttling it. The Q-ship was a gunship disguised to look like a merchant ship and developed to combat this practice. As soon as the U-boat surfaced to collect its booty, the ship's gun would be revealed and it would try to blow the U-boat out of the water. Pitcher served on the ex-collier Loderer, also known as HMS Farnborough,

or Q-5.

Loderer, which had been built in 1904, was fitted out with the typical devices of a Q-ship: five 12-pounder guns variously concealed by a "steering house" aft, hinged flaps on the main deck and dummy cabins on the upper deck; two six-pounder guns hidden at either end of the bridge; and a Maxim gun in a dummy hencoop amidships. There were 11 officers and 56 men on board, with Pitcher one of the few regular Royal Navy ratings. Loderer was few regular Royal Navy ratings. Loderer was commissioned under her original name on October 21, 1915, but was renamed Farnborough after the Admiralty received an anonymous tip-off that her new role as U-boat "bait" had been leaked to the Germans. On March 22, 1916, Farnborough made the fourth Q-ship U-boat "kill" of the war when she sank Kapitänleutnant Guntzel's U-68 with all hands. This success led to the Q-ship's captain, Lieutenant

Commander Gordon Campbell, being promoted to Commander. On February 17, 1917, to the west of Ireland, Farnborough accounted for her second "kill", U-83, which was sunk with the loss of all

hands bar an officer and one seaman.

The following month, Pitcher and most of the rest of Q-5's crew elected to follow Commander Campbell, who by this point had already been awarded the VC, to his next Q-ship: another former callier which was represent Persent Sho had collier which was renamed Pargust. She had improved equipment and armaments, including a four-inch gun, and went to sea in May, but she was

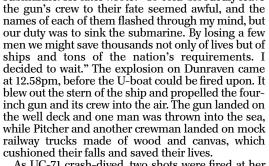
torpedoed a month later by Kapitanleutnant Rose's UC-29. The decoy "panic party" left the ship and when the U-boat surfaced the remaining crew fired 38 shells at it, causing it to blow up and sink. Pargust, which had been damaged in the attack, was towed into a nearby port the next day but her crew survived

the attack. Under the 13th rule of the VC's Royal Warrant, an officer and a rating were each awarded the VC on behalf of the whole crew. Other decorations were also awarded including to Commander Campbell, who received a bar to the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) that he had won for his second "kill", and to Pitcher, who was awarded one of eight Distinguished Service Medals (DSMs).

Most of Pargust's crew now followed Campbell on to Dunraven. At 10.58am on August 8, 1917, their new ship, disguised as a British merchant vessel, was zigzagging some 130 miles off Ushant in the Bay of Biscay when a U-boat was sighted on the horizon. Dunraven maintained

her course as the U-boat, UC-71, closed. At 11.17am, the enemy submarine dived, then resurfaced 5,000 yards away on the starboard quarter. The U-boat opened fire at 11.43am and Campbell, acting in the manner of a panicking merchant captain, sent out a distress signal giving the ship's position. He also fired off some token rounds from the ship's little two-and-a-half-pounder gun, as if it were the only weapon he possessed. The U-boat closed again and, when a tornede almost hit Dunrey on the graph. when a torpedo almost hit Dunraven, the crew generated a cloud of steam to simulate boiler trouble. At the same time, Campbell dispatched a "panic party" to make it look as if the ship

was being abandoned.



submarine. He later wrote: "To cold-bloodedly leave

As UC-71 crash-dived, two shots were fired at her but without any telling effect. Pitcher and the other wounded men were now removed to the cabins, where they stayed for the rest of the action with where they stayed for the lest of the action while stayloding all around them". As Campbell was preparing a torpedo attack, Dunraven was shelled behind the engine room. Then the U-boat resurfaced and for 20 minutes shelled the Q-ship until diving again at 2.50pm. Campbell responded by firing two torpedoes. Both missed but, fortunately for Durray or growths LI boat had now or housted its Dunraven's crew, the U-boat had now exhausted its own supply of torpedoes and fled the scene. A British destroyer, Christopher, towed the battered Q-ship towards Plymouth but, as the weather deteriorated, she sank at 3am.

A list of awards for the bravery of the Dunraven crew was announced in the *London Gazette* on November 2, 1917. No fewer than 41 members of the crew received decorations and a further 14 were mentioned in dispatches. The VC assigned specifically to the gun crew was awarded to Pitcher after a ballot to see who should receive it. Furthermore, a second VC – a personal award – was made to the ship's First Lieutenant, Charles Bonner. In a letter to Campbell, the ship's commander, who was awarded a second bar to his DSO, the American Admiral W S Sims wrote: "I know nothing finer in naval history than the

The heroic action involving Dunraven was a turning point. Both sides came to an unofficial agreement that there was a stalemate in this form of warfare and, eventually, the Q-service was wound down. Pitcher, who always sported a dark, bushy beard, received the gun crew's VC from George V at Buckingham Palace on December 5, 1917. He was later awarded the French Médaille Militaire for the action, on top of the Creix de Cuerre the backets. action, on top of the Croix de Guerre that he already held. After the First World War, Pitcher did his best to ensure that his heroic legacy on Dunraven lived on

 he eventually named both his daughter and his house after the ship. On August 1, 1920, Pitcher was promoted to chief petty officer; seven years later he retired from the Royal Navy after a quarter of a century's service. He then worked in Swanage, Dorset, as a woodwork teacher in a Dorset, as a woodwork teacher in a boys' preparatory school. For a time, he also ran a pub, the Royal Oak in nearby Herston. However, after the outbreak of the Second World War, he rejoined the Royal Navy and served on shore for five years at Poole, Portland and Yeovilton.

After the war, Pitcher's health deteriorated and he became seriously ill with tuberculosis. He died on

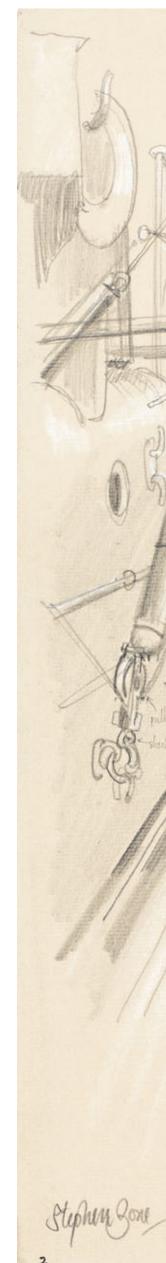
ill with tuberculosis. He died on February 10, 1946, at the Royal Naval Auxiliary Hospital in Sherborne, Dorset, aged 57. His body was brought back to Swanage, where he was buried in Northbrook Cemetery. The Commonwealth War Graves' headstone marking his grave bears the inscription: "At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them."

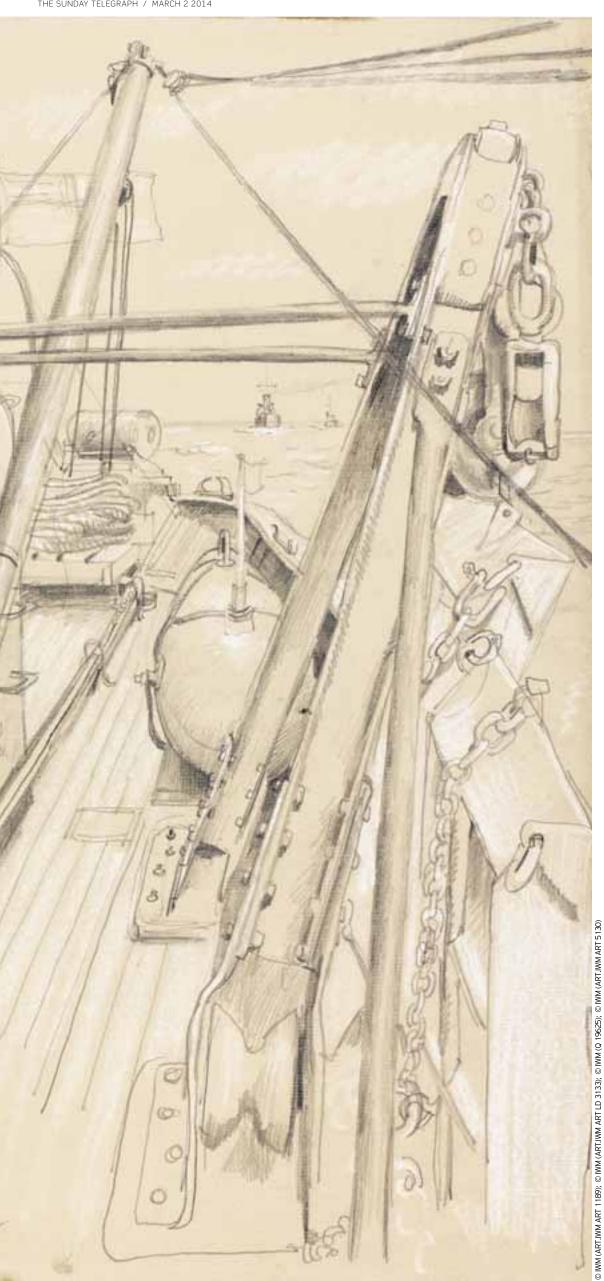
conduct of the after-gun crew.'

The submarine now scored three quick hits on Dunraven's poop. The first detonated a depth charge that wounded three men and cut communications between Pitcher, the captain of the four-inch gun crew, and the bridge. However, Pitcher's team decided not to move, as leaving their position would have given the game away. It was imperative that the Germans had to remain convinced that the ship had already been abandoned. The second and third shells started a major fire that meant Pitcher and several others were now concealed on a "red-hot deck". They lifted boxes of cordite off the deck and on to their knees in a bid to stop them exploding, but still they did not flee. At that point, UC-71 was obscured by black smoke from Dunraven's stern, which presented Campbell with a dilemma. He knew an explosion on his own vessel was inevitable, but if he delayed in giving the order to abandon ship he might get a clear shot at the



KCMG PC is a Tory peer, businessman. philanthropist and author. The story of Ernest Pitcher's life and career appears in his book *Victoria Cross Heroes.* For more information, visit www. victoriacrossheroes. com. Lord Ashcroft's VC and GC collection is on public display at the IWM, London. Visit www.iwm.org.uk/ heroes. For more information on Lord Ashcroft's work, visit www.lordashcroft. com. Follow him on Twitter: @ LordAshcroft







BATTLE READY
View of the Dunraven with mine-sweeping gear by Stephen
Bone, main picture; Petty Officer Ernest Pitcher VC DSM by
John Wheatley, far left; below, Ernest Pitcher's medal group,
including his VC on left; Ernest and his wife with King George
V and Queen Mary; Dunraven in action by Charles Pears







LETTERS HOME

'I get into mud up to my knees'

Second Lieutenant Bernard Wilfrid Long was an intelligent boy who won a scholarship to Birmingham University at 16 in 1912 and graduated with a First. At university, he joined the OTC and was commissioned in the West Yorkshire Regiment in January 1916, while his older brother, Sidney, served in East Africa and survived the war. Bernard served in France as an intelligence officer from July 1916 and recounts his experience of trench life in Festubert in a letter to his father, Daniel, on August 18, 1916:

While the battalion has been in the trenches, I have been at Battn Head Quarters in a farm at the end of the communication trench about 1 mile from the front line... Well I must say it was fairly enjoyable, at least very exciting. I have been out into NO-MAN'S-LAND 4 times (at night of course) and it has been deliciously quiet and only once were we spotted and then we got into a shell hole where they couldn't touch us... We have been using a ruined house as an observation post behind our lines and with a telescope you can see the Bosch [sic] walking about miles behind his trenches...

We've been having it awfully wet here during the last day or two and my word talk about mud - it's simply awful. I get into mud up to my knees. Well how are you all getting on at home? I suppose you miss us a bit sometimes. I feel a bit fed up sometimes but I soon get over that and there's one good thing, I'm not funky. I can take a sporting risk as well as any of 'em and shells have got no fear for me. I suppose I may catch one sometimes, in fact it seems marvellous how you can miss them. But you seem to somehow. I suppose mother worries a bit sometimes but take her about and out dad and don't let her stay moping at home. We don't want to come back and find her old with worry because it's out here that we realise what mothers are. I've seen great big burly chaps who do nothing but curse and drink get down and pray like a child when there is a bombardment on and they don't care who sees them and no one dares to joke about it.



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BONJOUR A British soldier holding a hedgehog talks to a French girl, Rollencourt Chateau, August 1917

In a letter to his sister Ethel from Neuve Chapelle on September 13, 1916, Bernard illuminates the soldiers' ways of wooing French girls:

The little kids used to come up and use the French phrases the Tommy uses. "No bon" (no good), "Na poo" (nothing doing or finished), "Compris?" (do you understand?). The talk goes on something like this between a soldier and a girl:

Soldier Bonjour mamselle

Bonjour m'sieur

S Voos allie bon?

Tres bien m'sieur et vous?

S No compris mamselle but walk eh compris walk ce soir compris Mamselle?

Me no promenade m'sieur. Après la guerre.

S You no bon.

Bonjour monsieur.

And so the game goes on. The Tommies try hard but the girls won't have anything to do with any Anglais and they always say they will "après la guerre".

He writes a letter to his mother on the same day:

We are having a fairly nice time of it so far. The old Bosch takes things pretty steady if we do. He is sending over minnies [Minenwerfer - mine launchers] all day long, but we send 6 of our things over for one of his and he soon shuts up. I have just heard from a pal of mine from Brocton who went down to the Somme

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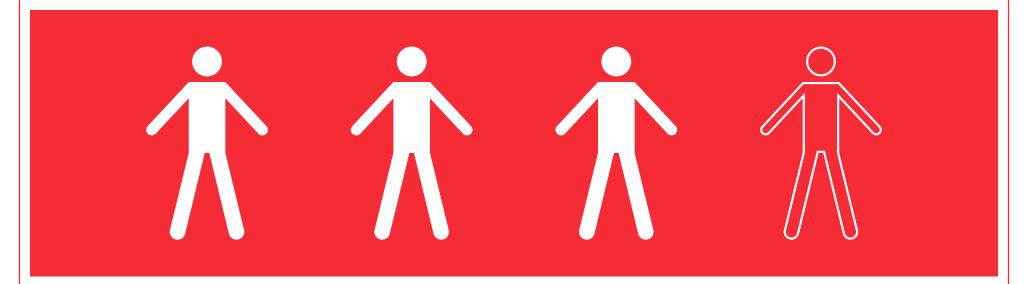
when I came here and he says he's been over the lid 7 times in attacks on the Bosch line. Pretty awful that isn't it and I marvel he's alive to tell the tale.

A week later, Bernard was wounded while inspecting a crater at Givenchy. He returned to England until July 1917 when he was passed fit for active service. Within a month he was dead, killed in action aged 21 at the Battle of Langemarck on August 16, 1917. Four hundred men from the battalion went into action. All 10 officers died along with 264 other ranks. Here is his last letter to his mother, on August 11, 1917:

I am off by an early train tomorrow for the rest billets behind the firing line where we shall be for a time to get to know our men etc. I am going up with 2 pals and we are all pleased. I shall we thinking of all of you when I'm up there and I know you won't forget me. We're fighting hard now and it's a serious game. We're all ready to lay down everything if need be, and if God wills I'm ready. So goodbye and wish me luck. Your loving son, Bern

Bernard's body was left in German hands, but recovered and interred on August 26 near Zonnebeke, then exhumed and re-interred at Buttes New British Cemetery in Zonnebeke in January 1922.

Zoe Dare Hall



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WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR?

Ralph Vaughan Williams: 'A vivid awareness of how men died'

is Pastoral Symphony evokes visions of babbling brooks and bucolic meadows, but the scenes that inspired Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1917 were not, as he put it, "lambkins frisking about" but the starkly bleak opposite – the battlefields of northern France, where the English composer served as a stretcher-bearer and ambulance driver.

He witnessed a daily toll of casualties – many of them close friends, including the young composer George Butterworth, to whom he dedicated his *London Symphony*. As his wife Ursula said: "Working in the ambulance gave Ralph vivid awareness of how men died."

But Vaughan Williams needn't have been there at all.

Having studied at the Royal College of Music and Cambridge University, he went on to study with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris. He also travelled the country to pursue his fascination for English folk songs and saw success as a

composer with his first two symphonies.

By the time war began, he was 41 – old enough to avoid it entirely. But he volunteered as a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps, serving in France, where he survived the Somme in 1916, and a malaria-infested Salonika.

Then as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Garrison Artillery in December 1917, the continual exposure to gunfire took its toll on his hearing, leaving him almost

entirely deaf in old age.

66 By the time WAR BEGAN, HE WAS 41 -OLD ENOUGH TO AVOID IT **ENTIRELY**



YOUR LETTERS





Post box

We have received a magnificent postbag and inbox of letters, documents and stories in response to our request for readers' First World War memories. Here are just a few of the many we would like to share with you. Please keep them coming.

Write to: First World War, Telegraph Media Group, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W ODT or email firstworldwar@telegraph.co.uk

WATER, WATER **EVERYWHERE**

Roy Jarred from Great Baddow in Essex writes: "I have been reading First World War memories with great interest as my father, William 'Ginger' Jarred, joined up in 1914 and spent the years to 1918 fighting in France.
"After the war, he was

a jobbing builder and a great footballer, but he never really spoke about the war and had terrible

nightmares for 15 years afterwards.'

Mr Jarred encloses a poem entitled "Water", which his father "kept in his pocket for three years and is now very fragile where he stuck it together with stamp paper.

"It reflects their feelings of how some at home viewed winter life in the trenches. "In 1920, he and a

colleague who spent the war together in France decided to visit the area where they fought.

"They completed forms applying for passports which had to be signed by the town's mayor.

"He refused to sign, telling them they would be better going on holiday to Brighton - which they did and my father never went abroad again for the rest of his life.

The poem that William Jarred so clearly treasured

I suppose we're a lot of heathens Don't live on the angel plan But we're stoking it here in the trenches And doing the best we can

While some people over in Bliahtv Who rave about Kingdom Come Ain't pleased with our ability And wanting to stop our

Water, they say, would be better Water, Great God, out here, Why, we're up to our knees Do they think we are standing in Beer?

A POET'S **DESPAIR**

Bernard Wynick, from Mill Hill. North London, writes of his uncle, the leading First World War poet Isaac Rosenberg, who "was on active service in France from June 1916 (he was a volunteer) until April 1918. except for 10 days home leave in September 1917 and a spell in hospital in France in October 1917, and was killed near Arras when on patrol. Besides composing poetry in appalling conditions, often on scraps of paper, the poems were sent to his sister (my mother) for typing. He was also in extensive correspondence with many people." Bernard encloses

extracts from a letter Rosenberg wrote in autumn 1916 to one of his mentors, the poet Laurence Binvon, whose poem "For the Fallen" is

recited each year on Armistice Day. Rosenberg wrote: "I am determined that this war, with all its powers for devastations, shall not master my poetry – that is if I am lucky enough to come through all right. I will not leave a corner of my consciousness covered up, but saturate myself with the strange and extraordinary new



conditions of this life and it will all refine itself into poetry later on."

Mr Wynick says: "This letter indicates his hopes for the future and contrasts with the letter dated January 26, 1918, to Edward Marsh, who was the Private Secretary to Winston Churchill during the First World War, and this shows that by that time he was in a state of despair: 'What is happening to me now is more tragic than the passion play. Christ never endured what I endure. It's breaking me completely."

Painting with HAIR AND BOOT POLISH

Bob Warwick from Newbury, Berks, writes about the experiences of his grandfather, "Lance Corporal G Warwick, 15291 1st Battalion Hants Regiment, who was taken prisoner during the Battle of the Somme on July 1. 1916, and spent the rest of the war in four different POW camps where he personally contacted 69 British prisoners and drew their cap badges on card

supplied by his captors. "There are 12 badges on each card and the largest, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, is drawn exact full size with the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, the smallest, also drawn exact size. He told me he never used an eraser. He also pulled hair from his head to make a paintbrush and using watered-down boot polish, he painted imaginary pictures. The Germans were so impressed by his work that they brought him more card and some coloured paints from which he painted flowers and scenes from postcards.

"He was repatriated into Holland on May 16, 1918, and released at 10 o'clock on November 16, 1918. The Germans wanted to keep his pictures but he managed to persuade them to let him take them home. They are now my



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In 1918, Vaughan Williams was appointed director of music, First Army, which in part eased the transition from military to musical life. Like many, he is thought to have suffered from "survivor's guilt" and struggled to return to normal life, but it didn't stunt his artistic creativity. By the time of

his death aged 85 in 1958, he had written nine symphonies and many other orchestral and choral classics, including operas, ballets, film scores and hymns.

The *Pastoral Symphony*, his third – which premiered in London in 1922 – is regarded as the most war-influenced of all his symphonies, including a passage in which a lone trumpet represents a bugler practising and constantly hitting a wrong note. "Beneath the symphony's tranquillity lies its sadness," wrote the composer's biographer, Michael Kennedy

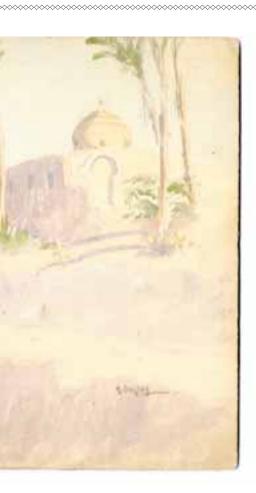
His work then took a livelier turn with his clashing harmonies a distinct departure from his gentle, "pastoral" days. He went on reinventing his style into his seventies, with his *Symphony No 6*, written in 1946, judged by critics to represent the aftermath of an atomic war (Vaughan Williams was not one for analysing his own intent), and his dark, enigmatic last symphony completed just three months

before his death.

Vaughan Williams's music is often said to embody patriotism – the same patriotism that drove a man in his forties to sign up to serve his country.

Zoe Dare Hall

Zoe Dare Hall





treasured possessions and I would like other people to see his work."

August 1914

Mrs S A Gregory from Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, has sent a remarkable, despairing poem entitled "August 1914", written by her grandfather, Hugh Gregory. The 45-verse poem, which runs over 23 pages, was published in 1916, yet as far as Mrs Gregory knows, it is the only poem her grandfather – who became a classics masters for many years at Alleyn's School in Dulwich - wrote.

"I know so little about him apart from he was an officer. It's sad, but you never bother to ask as a child. But I know that Ernest Shepard, the Winnie the Pooh illustrator, was a friend of the family and my grandfather dedicated his poem to Ernest's brother. Cyril, who, as the dedication reads, was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Devonshire Regiment and



MOVED BY MUSIC AND WORDS

From the top, Ralph Vaughan Williams, top; Arthur Barnes's Middle Eastern sketches; poet Isaac Rosenberg (left); cap badges by Lance Corporal G Warwick

died for his country at Mametz on July 1, 1916. So perhaps they fought together.

Hugh Gregory's poem begins:

The past stirs, the forgotten grave's alive; The golden future fades from yearning eyes. Unnumbered hordes of ages mobilize Their obscure legions: silently they drive A dark invasion o'er the stricken soul. I hear the clash and rumour of all years, Deafening thought, and in the spirit's ears Wind the sad clarions, beats the tragic roll, Mustering earth's springing life to its dark barren Goal.

From Coal MINER TO SUCCESSFUL ARTIST

Derek L Barnes, from Accrington, Lancashire, has sketches and cartoons drawn by his uncle, Arthur Barnes, who was a driver in both France and the Middle East in 1916. He also has a rejection letter from John Bull magazine in London, dated June 14, 1916, in which the editor tells Arthur's father that he can't accept Driver A Barnes's drawings due to "the Government restriction on the import of paper and the consequent reduction in the size of our issue"

Mr Barnes explains in his letter to *The Sunday Telegraph*: "Arthur was one of 11 children – and the oldest of six brothers who all fought in the First World War. They all served in different regiments -Northumberland Fusiliers, South Lancs, Welsh Guards, Kings Liverpool etc and all survived. Two brothers were gassed and were in hospital beds next to one another, one unable to speak, the other unable

to see. But they both recovered. "Arthur was a collier here in Accrington and had no art lessons but used to do chalk drawings on the pit tubs. He emigrated to Australia in 1909 and came back to England with the Australian Army Service Corps. "When he returned to

Australia after the war, he had numerous art exhibitions.

"When I was growing up in the 1930s, people didn't talk about the war. But my dad, Tom – who as the youngest brother had been called up in 1918 while all his elder brothers were volunteers – went back to the recruiting office in 1921 after he lost his job and become a soldier again, spending eight years in India. He would tell me all about Uncle Arthur and it seemed incredible a miner from Accrington could become an artist in Australia.

"I have five grandsons who are all students and I'm trying to introduce them to the 1914-1918 war Not even good schools are teaching it enough."

NEXT ISSUE

New Technologies: The First World War was a test-bed for technological development, from medical advances to military warfare. Read about the groundbreaking gadgetry, the advent of aerial photography and the naval battle whose technological excellence was the yardstick by which nations measured their self-worth.

OPlease write to us with your First World War photos and memories. Send your letters to: First World War, Telegraph Media Group, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W ODT or email firstworldwar@ telegraph.co.uk.

BACK ISSUES

Inside the First World War is a compelling 12-part series which will run monthly up to the centenary of the war's outbreak.

To catch up with any of the six parts published so far, visit telegraph.co.uk/ insidethewar



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HG Wells in 1934, writing to co-found, with Dr RD Lawrence, the charity now known as Diabetes UK

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