

**RECLAIM**

# ARMISTICE DAY

**1918-2018**



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# A Peace to End All Wars

By David Swanson

November 11 is Armistice Day/Remembrance Day. One hundred years ago, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, fighting ceased in the “war to end all wars.” People went on killing and dying right up until the pre-designated moment, impacting nothing other than our understanding of the stupidity of war.

Thirty million soldiers had been killed or wounded and another seven million had been taken captive during World War I. Even more would die from a flu epidemic created by the war. Never before had people witnessed

*Thirty million soldiers had been killed or wounded and another seven million had been taken captive during World War I. Even more would die from a flu epidemic created by the war. Never before had people witnessed such industrialized slaughter, with tens of thousands falling in a day to machine guns and poison gas.*

such industrialized slaughter, with tens of thousands falling in a day to machine guns and poison gas. After the war, more and more truth began to overtake the lies, but whether people still believed or now resented the pro-war propaganda, virtually every person in the



**SOLDIERS CELEBRATE** the news of the Armistice.

United States wanted to see no more of war ever again. Posters of Jesus shooting at Germans were left behind, as the churches, along with everyone else, now said that war was wrong. Al Jolson wrote in 1920 to President Harding:

*The weary world is waiting for  
Peace forevermore*

*So take away the gun  
From every mother's son  
And put an end to war.*

Mass slaughter and war-created famines and disease epidemics have now become almost routine, but we don't have to stand for it. World Beyond War is organizing events all over the world on November 11, 2018. So is Veterans For Peace. So is Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. And RootsAction.org and many other organizations.

Believe it or not, November 11 was not made a holiday in order to celebrate war, support troops, cheer the 17th year of occupying Afghanistan, thank anybody for a supposed “service,” or make America great again. This day was made a holiday in order to celebrate an armistice that ended what was, up until that point in 1918, one of the worst things our species had thus far done to itself, namely World War I.

World War I, then known simply as the World War or the Great War, had been marketed as a war to end war. Celebrating its end was also understood as celebrating the end of all wars. A 10-year campaign was launched in 1918 that in 1928 created the Kellogg-Briand Pact, legally banning all wars. That treaty is still on the books, which is why war-making is a criminal act and how Nazis came to be prosecuted for it.

“[O]n November 11, 1918, there ended the most unnecessary, the most financially exhausting, and the most terribly fatal of all the wars that the world has ever known. Twenty millions of men and women, in that war, were killed outright, or died later from wounds. The Spanish influenza, admittedly caused by the War and nothing else, killed, in various lands, one hundred million persons more.”—Thomas Hall Shastid, 1927



**ALLIED OFFICERS CELEBRATE** at a captured German canteen.

*continued on page 14 ...*

# Reclaim Armistice Day

By Tarak Kauff

Why, after 64 years of being replaced by “Veterans Day,” are veterans still pushing for Armistice Day (as opposed to Veterans Day) to be reinstated as a federal holiday on November 11th?

Armistice Day was first observed in 1920 with parades and public gatherings celebrating the peace that came two years earlier while solemnly remembering those millions who perished during that war.

Six years later, Congress passed a resolution that the “recurring anniversary of November 11, 1918, should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace between nations.”

It took 12 more years, but finally, on May 13, 1938, November 11 became a legal federal holiday, “dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be hereafter celebrated and known as Armistice Day.”

Armistice Day as a day “dedicated to the cause of world peace” lasted only 16 years. In 1954, in the wake of the Korean War, the powers that be thought it more fitting to honor the living veterans and glorify their sacrifice for country. Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day in 1954, changing the essence of the holiday from one dedicated to peace to one celebrating and honoring patriotism, the warriors, and the wars.

World War I was both horrific and unnecessary, an exercise in imperialism by England, France, Russia, the United States, and Germany that cost an estimated 40 million casualties, with some 15 to 19 million deaths and about 23 million wounded military personnel. The 1918 flu pandemic, occurring while prisoners of war were still held, caused about one third of total military deaths for all belligerents.

***‘Lots of our fellow citizens won’t know the difference between Armistice Day and a good mattress sale on Veterans Day. Many won’t know how Armistice Day came to be called something else. Even most military veterans themselves will not understand the difference. Most churches won’t think to ring bells on 11/11 at 11:00 am. But if nothing else on this day, just look at the pictures, read just one poem by Wilfred Owen, then for just five minutes be quiet and imagine peace. That’s the least and maybe the most you can do on the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day.’—Mike Ferner***

Many of the wounded were horribly disfigured for life. When the war ended, unfortunately and mistakenly called the “War to End All Wars,” which it was not, people all over the world both rejoiced at the arrival of peace after such massive bloodshed and grieved for many years for those sons, daughters, fathers and mothers needlessly sacrificed. The wounded and disfigured were constant reminders of the horror.

British, French, Russian, U.S., and German imperialism was among the main causes of World War I. Since “history is always written by the victors,” of course Germany was much maligned and punished rather severely at Versailles for being the main protagonist. But as Napoleon once said, “What is history, but a fable agreed upon?”

Subsequent historians put more of the blame for the conflict on England, France, and Russia.

In the years leading up to the war, major European military powers expanded their empires by establishing new colonies and territories in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. The competitive friction for resources, land, wealth,



**BRITISH AND GERMAN WOUNDED, Bernafay Wood, July 18, 1916. Photo: Ernest Brooks.**

and power deepened the divide between countries such as Britain and Germany and strengthened alliances between other countries such as Great Britain, France, and Russia.

By the beginning of WWI, Great Britain controlled close to one-quarter of the world and was looking to increase its holdings. British nationalism and pride was expressed and fortified by the idea that “the sun never sets on the British Empire.” Nationalism and a warped patriotism fueled imperialism, as did the need for raw materials and cheap labor to increase market capitalism and profit. Germany, which had become a military super power by the early 1900s, wanted to create an empire that would rival Britain’s.

In the decades leading up to World War I, countries in Europe had formed mutual defense alliances. If not for these alliances, WWI might have remained a minor conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia.

In 1878, Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia and Her-

Technology brought in new and ever more destructive weaponry, hence a huge increase in military power by many of the European countries, along with the willingness to use this military power to promote their interests. New technology and industrially enhanced militarism would be a primary feature of WWI.

This “advance” in technology led to carnage the likes of which had never before been witnessed. New weapons included moveable machine guns, chlorine gas, flame throwers, zeppelins, planes, and torpedoes. Submarines, tanks, and planes reached new levels of destructive capacity.

When the war ended on November 11, 1918, the common people of the world, including war weary soldiers, who gained nothing, but as always lost much, rejoiced. This was the “war to end all wars”—or so the world hoped.

Veterans, many of whom have seen the futility and inhumanity of war and militarism, do not want wars for empire and profit, nor do we need to be glorified, honored, or put on pedestals for killing or being prepared to kill.

Former Veterans For Peace President Mike Ferner, a Navy Corpsman during Vietnam, said, “Lots of our fellow citizens won’t know the difference between Armistice Day and a good mattress sale on Veterans Day. Many won’t know how Armistice Day came to be called something else. Even most military veterans themselves will not understand the difference. Most churches won’t think to ring bells on 11/11 at 11:00 am. But if nothing else on this day, just look at the pictures, read just one poem by Wilfred Owen, then for just five minutes be quiet and imagine peace. That’s the least and maybe the most you can do on the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day. You’ll be touched deeply and ultimately glad that you did.”

What we veterans really need is for society to reclaim the spirit of Armistice Day and unite in the common desire of the human spirit for peace.

*Former Army paratrooper Tarak Kauff is the managing editor of the Veterans For Peace quarterly newspaper Peace in Our Times and a former member of the Veterans For Peace national board of directors.*

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# The Tragically Misnamed Paris Peace Conference

By Mike Ferner

Nineteen-nineteen gave the world the Treaty of Versailles, formally ending World War I and in the eyes of many, laying the foundation for World War II. Historians will continue to argue to what extent that is true, but there can be little doubt that the treaty ending the “War to End All Wars” continues to be a major factor in our ongoing “War Without End.”

Europe lay exhausted and nearly bled dry. Just months before the war ended on November 11, 1918, fresh, motivated U.S. troops entered the fight and assured an Allied victory. As a result, President Woodrow Wilson played an oversized role in the fateful redrawing of borders across half the globe.

Wilson was the primary proponent of American Exceptionalism, an idea with many international adherents, particularly among the dispossessed, and he took to his messianic mission with paternalistic fervor. But as the record later showed, crass imperialism was not limited to the European powers. It influenced America’s advocate of self-determination and author of the “Fourteen Points,” into which whole nations poured their hopes for a better life.

True, there was a stated effort to rise above the centuries-old tradition of “to the victor goes the spoils” by introducing plebiscites and theoretically grounding decisions more frequently in justice. However, plebiscites were omitted when troublesome and justice often morphed into “just us.”

What about the big Versailles question: did it impoverish and humiliate Germany to the point that Hitler could succeed?

The horrors of WWI did not visit German soil, nor did Germans see occupying troops except in the Rhineland. Few people back home knew that after the Allied advance of August 8, 1918, 16 German divisions disappeared within a few days and the remaining troops fell back miles at a

in gold marks, apportioned 52 percent to France, 28 percent to Britain, and the rest divided between Belgium, Italy and others.

The United States had loaned Britain and France over \$7 billion, plus another \$3.5 billion from U.S. banks. At Versailles, Britain proposed and the United States vetoed the idea of cancelling all inter-Allied debts.

Between 1924 and 1931, Germany paid 36 billion marks to the Allies, 33 billion of which was borrowed from investors who bought German bonds issued by Wall Street firms. Germany then used that money to pay reparations to England and France, which in turn used it to repay U.S. loans. Anthony C. Sutton, writing in *Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler*, observed, “The international bankers sat in heaven, under a rain of fees and commissions” made by lending other people’s money to Germany.

## Complicity of U.S. Corporations

One can hardly consider factors that led to Hitler’s rise without including some of the most important: the complicity of U.S. corporations.

The Dawes Plan, created to rebuild German industry after World War I and provide reparations to England and France, had on its board Charles Dawes, first director of the U.S. Budget Bureau, and Owen Young, president of General Electric Co.

By 1944, German oil (85 percent synthetic, produced with Standard of NJ technology) was controlled by IG Farben, a German company created under the Dawes Plan and financed by Wall Street loans. An internal IG Farben memo, coincidentally written on D-Day, 1944, said Standard’s technical expertise in synthetic fuels, lubricating fluids, and tetra-ethyl lead was “most useful to us,” without which “the present methods of warfare would be impossible.”

Between the two world wars, John Foster Dulles, later Eisenhower’s secretary of state, was CEO of Sullivan and Cromwell (S&C), at which his brother, Allen, later Eisenhower and Kennedy’s CIA chief, was a partner.

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time. They didn’t know a week later General Ludendorff told the Kaiser to consider negotiating with the Allies and the next month demanded peace at any price. Few Germans regarded the armistice for what it basically was, a surrender.

Hitler’s promises to undo the Treaty of Versailles and the myth of how the High Command supposedly stabbed Germany in the back found ready listeners.

Superseding any concerns about what was owed was the Allies’ most important question of all: how much could Germany afford without bankruptcy and chaos, handing it over to the Bolsheviks?

Initially, Britain wanted \$120 billion, France \$220 billion and the United States \$22 billion. They later submitted much smaller bills, and the final calculation in 1921 ordered Germany to pay \$34 billion

Foster Dulles structured deals that funneled U.S. investments to German companies like IG Farben and Krupp. S&C “was at the center of an international network of banks, investment firms, and industrial conglomerates that rebuilt Germany after WWI.”

Even after Hitler took power in 1933, Foster Dulles continued to represent IG Farben and refused to shut down S&C’s Berlin office until partners, tired of having to sign letters, “Heil Hitler,” rebelled in ’35. Throughout the war, Foster protected the U.S. assets of Farben and Merck from confiscation as alien property. Arthur Goldberg, who served with Allen in the OSS, the CIA’s forerunner, and later served on the Supreme Court, claimed both Dulles brothers were guilty of treason.

An open secret through the ’20s was Henry Ford’s financial support for Hit-

ler. A December 20, 1922, *New York Times* story claimed links between new uniforms and side arms for 1,000 young men in Hitler’s “Storming Battalion” and Ford’s portrait of and books by the Fuehrer prominently displayed in his well-staffed Munich office. In 1938, Ford received the Grand Cross of the German Eagle award.

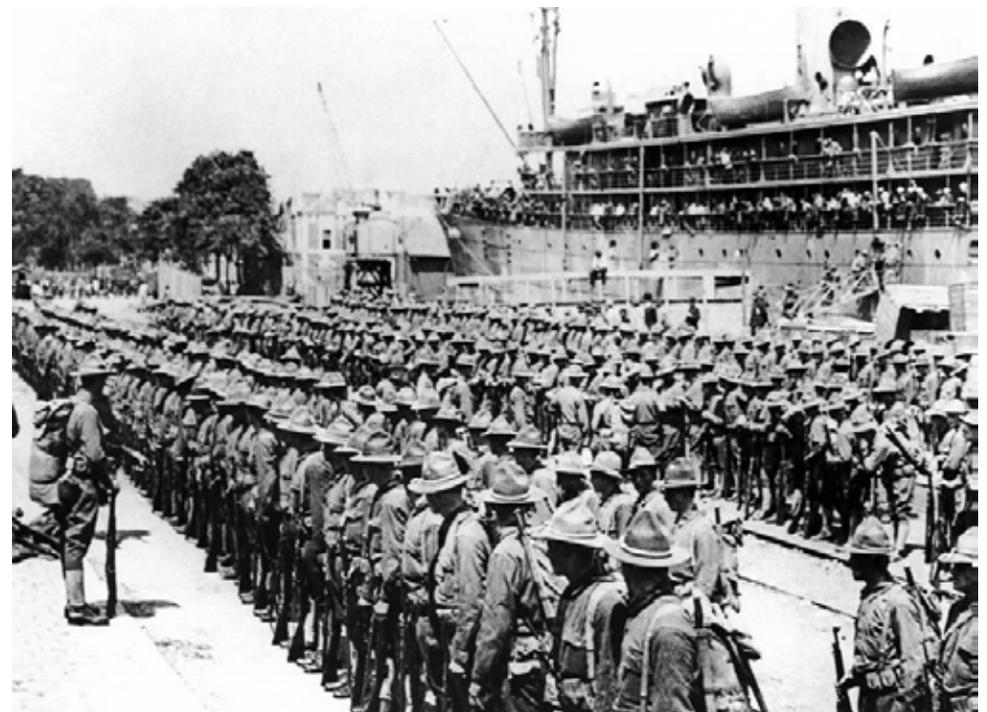
In February 1933, Hermann Goering held a fundraiser at his home for the National Trusteeship, a front group from which Rudolf Hess paid Nazi Party election campaign expenses.

Industrialists and financiers pledged 3,000,000 marks (\$648,000, equal to over

the entente in the struggle of civilization against barbarism.

“While waiting for the principle of national self determination to pass from ideal to reality through the effective recognition of the sacred right of all peoples to decide their own destiny, the inhabitants of the ancient empire of Annam, at the present time French Indochina, present to the noble governments of the entente in general and in particular to the honorable French government the following humble claims.”

The list contained such basics as freedom of the press and of assembly and school construction, not even demanding



THE FIRST TROOPS OF THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE land at the French port of St. Nazaire in June 1917.

\$12 million in 2018), including 400,000 marks from IG Farben and 60,000 marks from General Electric Corporation’s subsidiary, AEG. On the board of IG Farben’s U.S. subsidiary were Edsel Ford; Walter Teagle, board member of the New York Federal Reserve and Standard Oil of New Jersey; and Carl Bosch, on the board of Ford’s German subsidiary, Ford AG. One week after that massive infusion of funds, the Reichstag was burned.

A week later, national elections swept the Nazis into power.

In a 1936 memo, William Dodd, U.S. ambassador to Germany, reported that I.G. Farben gave 200,000 marks (\$67,000) to a public relations firm “operating on American public opinion.”

## Consider Vietnam in 1919

Ho Chi Minh, working in Paris as a kitchen hand and a photographer’s assistant, appealed unsuccessfully in 1919 to the U.S. delegation on behalf of the people of Annam (Vietnam). Ho wrote to U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing with a list of eight demands from the “Annamite People.” He introduced his politely worded list of demands with the following:

“Since the victory of the Allies, all the subjects are frantic with hope at prospect of an era of right and justice, which should begin for them by virtue of the formal and solemn engagements made before the whole world by the various powers of

freedom from the French, but only a “delegation of native people elected to attend the French parliament in order to keep the latter informed of their needs.”

It finished by saying:

“The Annamite people, in presenting these claims, count on the worldwide justice of all the Powers, and rely in particular on the goodwill of the noble French people who hold our destiny in their hands and who, as France is a republic, have taken us under their protection.

“In requesting the protection of the French people, the people of Annam, far from feeling humiliated, on the contrary consider themselves honored, because they know that the French people stand for liberty and justice and will never renounce their sublime ideal of universal brotherhood. Consequently, in giving heed to the voice of the oppressed, the French people will be doing their duty to France and to humanity.”

“In the name of the group of Annamite patriots...

“Nguyen Ai Quoc [Ho Chi Minh]”

As we know now, that request was not honored or even given a response. And the wars continue.

*Mike Ferner is a former Toledo, Ohio, city councilmember, former president of VFP, a Vietnam-era veteran, author, and peace activist. He is a coordinator of Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie and has lived on Erie’s shore in Toledo for 35 years.*

# The Original Antiwar Mother's Day

In 1870—140 years ago—the disastrous human consequences of the American Civil War were becoming increasingly apparent, especially to the mothers of sons and the wives of husbands who had watched as these men proudly and patriotically marched off to “glorious” war a decade earlier.

Some of these women had probably (and regretfully) participated in the pre-war flag-waving fervor that war planners and profiteers cunningly elicit from the poor and working classes who will be doing the dirty work.

Everything changed, however, when the killing and maiming started and the permanent war wounded struggled back home with desperate needs for medical and mental health care.

Julia Ward Howe was a life-long abolitionist and therefore probably a reluctant supporter of the Union Army's anti-slavery rationale for going to war against the pro-slavery Confederate South.

A compassionate and well-educated middle child of an upper-class family, Howe was also a poet who, in the early days of the Civil War, wrote “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” using many biblically-based lyrics.

Though she later became a pacifist and a famous antiwar activist, her fervent anti-slavery attitudes inspired her to write that still famous song; and she did it in one sitting, in the pre-dawn darkness of November 18, 1861.

Originally, Howe had thought of her song as an abolitionist anthem. However, because of some militant-sounding lyrics and the eminently marchable tune, the song soon was adopted by the Union Army as its most inspiring war song.

At the time, the Civil War also had not yet degenerated into the wholesale mutual mass slaughter made possible by the advances in weaponry that were destined to make obsolete the cavalry, the bayonet, and the sword.

## Grim Images

In part because of the relatively uncensored battlefield journalism of the time and the grim images of dead soldiers made possible by the invention of the camera, it didn't take too long for peace-loving, justice-oriented activists to recognize that war was the equivalent of hell on earth.

By the time the Civil War ended in 1865, 600,000 American soldiers were dead, with no accurate count of the likely much larger number of soldiers wounded, disabled, or missing in action.

Women saw their sons and husbands returning home broken in body and spirit—definitely not as heroes, as had been the pre-war hope—and the minds of Howe and other women were changed about the lie that war is glorious.

The families of the returning Civil War veterans, both North and South, also discovered that many of the soldiers who had no visible scars were emotionally disabled, a problem that actually grew worse after they were home and out of “harm's way.”



WOMEN'S PEACE PARADE, an antiwar protest in 1914.

The healing effect of time didn't work like it was supposed to with these psychologically wounded veterans. The so-called “unwounded ones” often suffered melancholy, had nightmares, couldn't function in society and turned suicidal, homicidal, and/or antisocial.

Many of the most infamous train and bank robbers and serial killers of the late 1800s got their start as Civil War soldiers, most famously the members of the James gang.

Because of normal society's inability to deal with massive numbers of war-traumatized veterans, the first “veterans homes” were constructed for the long-term care of the tens of thousands of invalided ex-soldiers who otherwise might have died homeless, hungry, and helpless.

Many of these unfortunates were diagnosed as having “Soldiers' Heart,” also

is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded, who cry aloud for more blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is Hell.”

By 1870, Julia Ward Howe had been deeply affected both by the ongoing agonies of Civil War veterans and the carnage occurring overseas in the Franco-Prussian War. Though very short, that war resulted in almost 100,000 killed in action, plus another 100,000 lethally wounded or sickened.

## The First Mother's Day

So, as a humanist who cared about suffering people—as well as a feminist and a suffragette who advocated social justice—Howe penned her “Mother's Day Proclamation” in 1870 as an appeal to mothers to spare their sons and the sons

**Many of these unfortunates were diagnosed as having ‘Soldiers' Heart,’ also known in the Civil War era as ‘Nostalgia,’ a commonly incurable malady better known today as ‘combat-induced PTSD’ (post-traumatic stress disorder).**

known in the Civil War era as “Nostalgia,” a commonly incurable malady better known today as “combat-induced PTSD” (post-traumatic stress disorder).

The horrors of the Civil War even changed those the conflict made famous. Speaking to a graduating class of military cadets years later, Union General William Tecumseh Sherman uttered his famous truth about the nature of warfare as part of a rebuke to the era's “chicken-hawks,” people who call for war without having experienced it.

“I confess without shame that I am tired and sick of war,” Sherman said. “Its glory

of others from the depredations of war.

The Mother's Day Proclamation was partly a lament for the useless deaths and partly a call to action to stop future wars. The call was directed, not to men, many of whom may have felt proud for their “service,” but to women, who often have proved more thoughtful and humane about issues of human suffering.

Then, on June 2, 1872, in New York City, Julia Ward Howe held the first “Mother's Day” as an antiwar observance, a practice Howe continued in Boston for the next decade before it died out.

The modern Mother's Day, with its

apolitical message, emerged in the early 20th century, with Howe's original intent largely erased from the mainstream consciousness. Howe's vision of an antiwar mother's call to action was watered-down into an annual expression of sentimentality.

Like most other holidays (including religious ones), Mother's Day in capitalist America has been transformed into just another expectation of gift-buying and gift-giving.

What was originally a call to mobilize outraged mothers to keep their sons and husbands from going off half-cocked to kill and die for some corporate war profiteer or other, became just another opportunity to market non-essential consumer goods.

Note in Howe's proclamation below how strongly she felt that wives and mothers should never have to be put in the position of comforting or applauding their soldier-husbands or soldier-sons when they come home from war “reeking of carnage.”

In her view, the prevention of such “reeking” was so much simpler than the attempt to reverse the consequences of the “carnage” of war.

Howe also felt that mothers should never allow war-making institutions to make killers out of their sons, whom they had raised to be ethical, humane people with love for humankind.

One must wonder, too, what Howe meant when she referred to “irrelevant agencies.” One can only assume that the same American military, governmental, corporate, and bureaucratic agencies that have been messing things up in Iraq, Afghanistan, New Orleans, the Gulf of Mexico, and all over the world were also operating in the last half of the 1800s.

Wall Street and the military/industrial/congressional/media complex—the entities that dominate U.S. policymaking today—were probably in operation then, too, though surely with less exorbitant salaries, bonuses, contracts, and cost overruns.

Given the ongoing horrors of war, perhaps it's finally time for people of good will to recall Julia Ward Howe's peace-making vision.

Julia Ward Howe's Mother's Day Proclamation of 1870:

*Arise then, women of this day! Arise, all women who have hearts, whether your baptism be that of water or tears!*

*Say firmly: “We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies.*

*“Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.*

*“Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have taught them of charity, mercy and patience.*

*“We women of one country will be too tender of those of another to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.”*

*From the bosom of the devastated earth, a voice goes up with our own. It says, “Disarm, disarm!”*

*The sword of murder is not the balance of justice. Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor does violence indicate possession.*

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# The Women's Peace Party and Pacifism in WWI

By Marissa Dever

Two years before the United States entered World War I, women in Washington were gathering to protest the practice. As the *Washington Post* put it, “War was declared on war.”

The Women's Peace Party was formed January 10, 1915, at a conference at the Willard Hotel. Speakers included Jane Addams, a pioneer of social work and feminism; Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the International Alliance for Women's Suffrage; and other representatives from throughout the country, including two delegates from the District's branch of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Over 3,000 attendees unanimously agreed on a “peace program,” to end the war practically. The plan was detailed in 11 clauses, including:

“Education of the youth on the ideals of peace ...

“The further humanizing of governments by the extension of the franchise of women ...

“Action towards the gradual organization of the world to substitute law for war ...

“Removal of the economic causes of war ...

“The appointment by this government of a commission of men and women with an adequate appropriation to promote international peace.”



**AMERICAN DELEGATES TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF WOMEN** which was held at the Hague, the Netherlands in 1915. The conference adopted much of the platform of Women's Peace Party, which Jane Addams and others had organized few months earlier in Washington. Photo: Library of Congress.

continually reminded Americans “He Kept Us Out of War.”

The WPP conference's message was condensed into pamphlets distributed to Washington suffragists and others. The literature claimed the group's purpose was

branch of the Women's International Committee for Permanent Peace, which Jane Addams served as president.

Pacifist groups remained active over the next two years and continued to push President Wilson to adopt their plan for neutral and peaceful mediation of the conflict in Europe. Ultimately, however, the President began to see American involvement in the war as the only way to “make the world safe for democracy.” He made his case before a joint session of Congress on April 2, 1917, as pacifists and pro-war preparedness advocates held counterdemonstrations outside. Four days later, Congress voted to declare war on Germany.

In the aftermath, many pacifists were attacked for being unpatriotic. Jane Addams would turn from “Saint Jane,” a pioneer of social work, to “The Most Dangerous Woman in America,” as she spoke of hindering the war effort and propaganda. After World War I, the Women's International Committee for Permanent Peace would become the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which is still in operation today.

Marissa Dever is a senior at the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs, majoring in journalism and mass communications.

**‘Roosevelt likes to charge up San Juan Hill and then he likes to prosecute for libel anybody who says he didn't charge up San Juan Hill. There are all kinds of fighting. War people fight for war and peace people fight for peace. ... That's the way I like to fight.’—Max Eastman**

The plan also called for the mobilization of international governments and emphasized the role of women throughout the country to advocate for peace. Organizers explicitly included women's suffrage as one of the clauses and, according to the *Washington Post*, argued that “it was the inherent right of a mother to have a say in the blotting out of her son's life.”

The convention not only proposed plans for peace, but rebuked the very concept of war and those that took part in it. Emmaline Pethwick-Lawrence, a representative from London, “described war as made by ‘international gamblers, and degenerates.’ She forcibly epitomized it as ‘murder, rape, pillage, cruelty, waste, and degeneracy.’” Pethwick-Lawrence also praised the current president, Woodrow Wilson, as being a man of “peace and goodwill towards men.” President Wilson had previously declared neutrality in the case of World War I, a stance he would keep through his 1916 reelection campaign, which

“to enlist all American Women to arousing the nation to respect the sacredness of human life and to abolish war.” Additionally, the party decided to keep a presence in Washington after the conference, opening an office at 1388 F St., NW.

While some supported the pacifists' efforts, they garnered criticism from preparedness advocates, including former president Theodore Roosevelt. According to press outlets, Roosevelt wrote a highly critical letter to the leaders of the movement. Addams wanted to publish the letter, but eventually decided against it, taking the advice of party members who felt that the publicity would please Roosevelt. Reports of the contents of the letter claimed that Roosevelt called the pacifists “a menace to the future welfare of the United States.”

Author and activist Max Eastman fired back at the former President at a New York meeting:

“Roosevelt likes to charge up San Juan Hill and then he likes to prosecute for libel anybody who says he didn't charge up San Juan Hill. There are all kinds of fighting. War people fight for war and peace people fight for peace. ... That's the way I like to fight.”

Early on, the party understood the necessity of the coordination from women around the world. Dr. Neena Hamilton Pringsheim would later say at a WPP meeting, “I think the great duty that is laid upon the people of all nations is to learn to think and feel internationally.” As such, WPP representatives traveled to The Hague in the Netherlands, where Jane Addams served as the presiding officer at the International Congress of Women held April 28–May 1, 1915. Following the conference in The Hague, the Women's Peace Party would become the U.S.

## Mother's Day

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As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel.

Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar but of God.

In the name of womanhood and of humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women without limit of nationality may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace.

Dr. Gary G. Kohls is a retired physician who writes about issues of war and peace.



# Conscientious Objection During World War I

By Anne M. Yoder

When war broke out in Europe in 1914, there were immediately dissenters who would not cooperate with the military. In Great Britain and its empire, men were conscripted by the tens of thousands; out of these approximately 16,000 became

*COs who refused to drill or carry out any noncombatant service were sentenced to many years of hard labor in federal prison ... , often suffering persecution, manacling, and solitary confinement.*



**CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS IN PRISON** 'Lined Up on a Saw Horse' (l-r): 'Big Fritz', Russell Keadle, Johnson, Horlacher, Strosbaugh, Watts, Stine. Photo: William Kantor Collected Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

conscientious objectors to war. They were often greatly mistreated. Their stories were told on this side of the Atlantic and provided inspiration to American conscientious objectors (COs) when the United States entered the war in 1917. In many other European countries conscientious objectors were imprisoned or, in some cases, even executed.

In the United States, church denominations with long histories of peace witness (Mennonite, Amish, Hutterite, Dunkard/

Church of the Brethren, Religious Society of Friends/Quaker) produced many American objectors; these men were joined by members of pacifist sects from the newer waves of immigrants, such as the Molokans and the Doukhobors, who had come from Russia after 1903 to escape service

in the czar's army. There were also many Jehovah's Witnesses, who claimed religious exemption from military service (all Jehovah's Witness adult male were considered "ministers"). In addition there were political objectors such as the Socialists, humanitarians, and members of the Industrial Workers of the World, and those who simply did not believe in war or in that particular war.

The COs in World War I were sent to military camps where they had to convince officers and other officials that they were sincere in their conscientious objection to war, which, at times, resulted in abuse from the enlisted men. One unofficial source states that 3,989 men declared themselves to be conscientious objectors when they had reached the military camps: Of these, 1,300 chose noncombatant service; 1,200 were given farm furloughs; 99 went to Europe to serve with the Friends Reconstruction Unit; 450 were court-martialed and sent to prison; and 940 remained in the military camps until the Armistice was fully enacted in 1918. Recent scholarship, though, has revealed that the number was closer to 5,500 (at least), not counting the men who immediately signed up to go into the non-combatant branches of the military rather than declaring themselves to be conscientious objectors.

The absolutist COs who refused to drill or carry out any noncombatant service were sentenced to many years of hard labor in federal prison at Alcatraz Island or Ft. Leavenworth U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, often suffering persecution, manacling, and solitary confinement. Most COs who had been imprisoned were released by May of 1919, though some of those thought to be the most recalcitrant

were kept until 1920. At least 27 COs died, mostly while in prison.

The stories of COs during the Great War were kept alive over the next decades, especially by members of the Mennonite Church and other peace churches. This engendered a desire to find a way to keep their young men from the same ill treatment when drafted for World War II. The lobbying done with the War Department led to the creation of Civilian Public Service and to I-W Service, alternatives for conscientious objectors to military service that existed in various forms through the end of the Vietnam War.

*Anne M. Yoder is the archivist at the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.*



**TOP: IRISH CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS** in a British confinement camp.  
**BOTTOM: SOME CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS** were executed.



**SOLITARY CONFINEMENT CELL** at Fort Leavenworth for COs. Photo: William Kantor Collected Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

# Remembering Eleven Eleven

By Jack W. London

Once, in the days before corporate sponsor naming rights, we named our sports fields "Memorial Stadium." When the national anthem was played, it was in honor of those Americans in whose memory the memorial stadium had been built. And, in that time, the national day of recognition that honored them was a day to honor peace, not war, nor even warriors.

At 11 in the morning, on the 11th day of the 11th month, the guns that had destroyed Europe fell silent. For four years trenches had crossed France and Belgium from Italy to the English Channel, where the flower of the world's youth killed each other in lines that moved little from the first day of war to the last. In the Great War, considered by all but the highest commanders and politicians as a mad folly, the foot soldiers marched to battle singing "We're all here 'cause we're not all there." Until the very end, each of them assumed that they would die going over the top. Vast numbers of them did.

A few days before the end, however, and in the uncanny way of armies everywhere, troops in the line knew sooner than their officers that something was up. For example, on November 9, 1918, air crewman Alex Dickie of Breckenridge, Texas, wrote his parents cryptically that "I am seeing and learning some interesting dope up here" and "you will know all about it long before you get this letter." Other letters from other soldiers, British, American, even German, had the same hints that peace was coming.

When, two days later, the war to end all wars did end, America began to count her losses. Our farms, factories, cities, towns, and universities—our families—had suffered 117,000 deaths and over 200,000 severely wounded. America also counted her gains—while our entry in the war may have been the straw that broke the German camel's back, we believed our boys had been decisive, and said so. President Wilson was a celebrity at the Versailles peace negotiations, his Fourteen Points calling boldly for a League of Na-

tions to insure peace forever. That was what the armistice meant: war had failed, peace had won. America stood for peace.

One year to the day after the guns fell silent, President Wilson proclaimed an Armistice Day for November 11, 1919. "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations."

The armistice may have been celebrated, but entangling America in the councils of nations was not. Just eight days later, on November 18, the Senate rejected the League of Nations treaty. For the next two decades, America stood at a remove from the world's only diplomatic body that might have effected peace.

The Senate may have said humbug to Wilson's sentiments but the country did not. Throughout the 1920s stadiums named "Memorial" were built in every state. Public universities honored their lost graduates and cities their martyred sons in

**SAN DIEGO'S STEADY GROWTH**  
 Official Census Figures for the City of San Diego for the last 10 years are as follows:

|      |         |
|------|---------|
| 1901 | 24,700  |
| 1910 | 32,000  |
| 1920 | 42,000  |
| 1930 | 52,000  |
| 1940 | 62,000  |
| 1950 | 72,000  |
| 1960 | 82,000  |
| 1970 | 92,000  |
| 1980 | 102,000 |
| 1990 | 112,000 |
| 2000 | 122,000 |

**FREE ORGAN RECITAL TODAY**

|                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. March, La Marseillaise   | Organist |
| 2. National Anthem          | Organist |
| 3. The Star-Spangled Banner | Organist |
| 4. The Star-Spangled Banner | Organist |
| 5. The Star-Spangled Banner | Organist |
| 6. The Star-Spangled Banner | Organist |

## TROOPS DRIVE VETS FROM CAPITAL

ONE DEAD, SCORES HURT AS BULLETS, BRICKBATS AND TEAR GAS ARE USED

N. Y. Mayor Demands Roosevelt Clear Him

**Bonus Army Retreats From Washington as Camps Set Fire by Soldiers; Hoover Calls Out Military After Civil Authorities Fail to Attempt to Evacuate Men From U. S. Property; R. E. F. to Concentrate in Johnston, Pa.**

WASHINGTON, July 28 (AP)—The bonus army retreated tonight from the national capital.

The veterans' camp, they abandoned their chief camp in Anacostia flats, southeast Washington, at 10:30 o'clock tonight when federal troops advanced to get the men out of their tents and shacks and makeshift shelters at three other downtown camps had been quieted and then rained by fire earlier in the day.

Taking the veterans' leaders words that the evacuation would be complete, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, army chief of staff, halted the major attack against the bonus expedition.

Gen. MacArthur's secretary of War, Mr. Hoover, went to the White House to report to President Hoover.

The President ordered one of the United States army to clear the veterans' camps from federally-owned property in Washington in the afternoon after police had been unable to control the former soldiers.

One death—a veteran, shot through the heart by a soldier—resulted in the clashes between the police and the bonus army on Pennsylvania avenue, three short blocks from the capital.

Scores of others—police, soldiers, veterans, bystanders—were injured or wounded before hostilities ceased tonight.

The veterans planned to march to the navy yard, where they had their rule shelters and then apply the torch to everything remaining.

Highlights of Air Celebration as Seen With Camera's Eye



**PREJUDICE IS CHARGED BY WALKER**

Denies Allegations in Move To Oust Him and Reports He Has Been Made Political Football by Enemies.

ALBANY, N. Y., July 28 (AP)—Prejudice in every sense that he had been made a "political football" and a "target of hostility and intimidation" were the charges J. Walker tonight demanded of Governor Roosevelt's committee of charges on which his removal is sought.

This was his reply to the case brought against him by Robert F. Wagner, chairman of the committee appointed to investigate charges of prejudice against Walker.

The charges against Walker were "prejudice against the negro race," "prejudice against the Jewish race," "prejudice against the Irish race," "prejudice against the Italian race," "prejudice against the German race," "prejudice against the Polish race," "prejudice against the Russian race," "prejudice against the American race," "prejudice against the human race."

**General Douglas MacArthur interpreted the order to mean he should wipe out the camps the old veterans had set up across the Potomac, and he attacked the men he had led in battle 14 years earlier, routing their tent and cardboard box city with cavalry, tanks, and machine guns.**

new stadia on whose walls were inscribed the names of Americans who had died for peace in obscure places such as St. Mihiel and Belleau Wood. Rhode Island erected a 115-foot-high fluted column designed by an architect who had fought in France. In 1931 President Herbert Hoover spoke of peace to dedicate the national temple of Armistice Day that our nation erected in a quiet grove near the Lincoln Memo-

rial. And, each year, the sitting President re-proclaimed November 11 as a day of remembrance.

Poppies were worn in buttonholes. Names were read. Graves were visited.

America was at peace with peace, but not with itself. After a decade of Coolidge and Hoover austerity, the burdens of the Great Depression and high unemployment fell on the shoulders of the men who had survived the war to end all wars. Having been promised by Congress that they would get a pay bonus for their military service, the unemployed, hungry, and homeless veterans came to Washington, D.C., in 1932 to lobby for their promised pay—and were turned away. On July 28, Hoover ordered that they clear

to the Philippines.

In 1938, the Congress that wanted nothing more to do with European wars made the 11th of November a legal holiday, "a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as 'Armistice Day.'" For the first time, the United States honored formally the end of a war rather than the day a war had begun, such as the battles of Lexington and Concord, the firing on Fort Sumter in 1861, the sinking of the *Maine*.

Peace then was urgent; even we isolated Americans knew that the Axis had used Spain as a military test tube and that Neville Chamberlain had cowered before Hitler while claiming that he had bought "peace in our time." On November 11 we attended services and taught our children that, while we had not asked to be dragged into World War I, we had ended it and believed that our future was safe within our shores. It was not to be. In 1940 Hitler marched the French chief of staff back into the very rail car in which Germany had signed the Armistice in 1918, then forced him to sign France's capitulation.

We honored Armistice Day in 1940 anyway, and again in 1941, a month before Pearl Harbor. For the next four years we still celebrated Armistice Day, even while the world heaved under bombs, guns, and battleships. The date didn't change but America did: by the end of World War II we had proved our might by refusal to accept anything less than the unconditional surrender of every Axis power. Peace was no longer a matter of walking away from war; in our eyes, it was the result of American arms.

Then, along came Korea. After Korea, the average American no longer thought "armistice" meant peace. It now meant "a miserable line drawn between northern and southern Korea that marked the place where in July 1953 poorly trained, equipped, and led Chinese and Korean communists had forced American soldiers into a stalemate." Armistice now meant humiliation, and its holiday was at an end.

Without saying so, a campaign was commenced to stop honoring Armistice Day and to begin to honor our warriors. Within weeks of the Korean armistice, a Kansas shoe repairman lobbied his congressman to change Armistice Day. In 1954 Congress changed the name to Veterans Day. Without debate or protest, 35 years of nominally celebrating the laying down of arms passed into history.



THE BONUS EXPEDITIONARY FORCES CAMP on Anacostia Flats, Washington, D.C. Photo: Library of Congress.

# Armistice—The End of World War I

The final Allied push towards the German border began on October 17, 1918. As the British, French, and American armies advanced, the alliance between the Central Powers began to collapse. Turkey signed an armistice at the end of October, Austria-Hungary followed on November 3.

Germany began to crumble from within. Faced with the prospect of returning to sea, the sailors of the High Seas Fleet stationed at Kiel mutinied on October 29. Within a few days, the entire city was in their control and the revolution spread throughout the country. On November 9 the Kaiser abdicated; slipping across the border into the Netherlands and exile. A German Republic was declared and peace feelers extended to the Allies. At 5 a.m. on the morning of November 11 an armistice was signed in a railroad car parked in a French forest near the front lines.

The terms of the agreement called for the cessation of fighting along the entire Western Front to begin at precisely 11 a.m. that morning. After over four years of bloody conflict, the Great War was at an end.

Colonel Thomas Gowenlock served as an intelligence officer in the American 1st Division. He was on the front line that November morning and wrote of his experience a few years later:

On the morning of November 11 I sat in my dugout in Le Gros Faux, which was again our division headquarters, talking to our Chief of Staff, Colonel John Greely, and Lieutenant Colonel Paul Peabody, our G-1. A signal corps officer entered and handed us the following message:

*Official Radio from Paris—6:01 A.M., Nov. 11, 1918. Marshal Foch to the Commander-in-Chief.*

1. Hostilities will be stopped on the entire front beginning at 11 o'clock, November 11th (French hour).

2. The Allied troops will not go beyond the line reached at that hour on that date until further orders.

[signed] MARSHAL FOCH

5:45 A.M.

"Well—fini la guerre!" said Colonel Greely.

"It sure looks like it," I agreed.

"Do you know what I want to do now?" he said. "I'd



**A TWO-WEEK BOMBARDMENT OF 4.5 MILLION SHELLS** preceded a British attack on July 31, 1917, at Passchendaele, Belgium. Ending on November 6, it became a synonym for military failure. Some 520,000 casualties on both sides is at the low end of estimates. Here, seven stretcher bearers, likely for hours, carry one wounded British soldier to an aid station, demonstrating why wounding is 'better' in war than outright killing.

like to get on one of those little horse-drawn canal boats in southern France and lie in the sun the rest of my life."

My watch said nine o'clock. With only two hours to go, I drove over to the bank of the Meuse River to see the finish. The shelling was heavy and, as I walked down the road, it grew steadily worse. It seemed to me that ev-

impulse after their years of war, but unfortunately many fell after eleven o'clock that day.

All over the world on November 11, 1918, people were celebrating, dancing in the streets, drinking champagne, hailing the armistice that meant the end of the war. But at the front there was no celebration. Many soldiers be-

***As night came, the quietness, unearthly in its penetration, began to eat into their souls. The men sat around log fires, the first they had ever had at the front. They were trying to reassure themselves that there were no enemy batteries spying on them from the next hill and no German bombing planes approaching to blast them out of existence. They talked in low tones. They were nervous.***

ery battery in the world was trying to burn up its guns. At last eleven o'clock came—but the firing continued. The men on both sides had decided to give each other all they had—their farewell to arms. It was a very natural

believed the armistice only a temporary measure and that the war would soon go on. As night came, the quietness, unearthly in its penetration, began to eat into their souls. The men sat around log fires, the first they had ever had at the front. They were trying to reassure themselves that there were no enemy batteries spying on them from the next hill and no German bombing planes approaching to blast them out of existence. They talked in low tones. They were nervous.

After the long months of intense strain, of keying themselves up to the daily mortal danger, of thinking always in terms of war and the enemy, the abrupt release from it all was physical and psychological agony. Some suffered a total nervous collapse. Some, of a steadier temperament, began to hope they would someday return to home and the embrace of loved ones. Some could think only of the crude little crosses that marked the graves of their comrades. Some fell into an exhausted sleep. All were bewildered by the sudden meaninglessness of their existence as soldiers—and through their teeming memories paraded that swiftly moving cavalcade of Cantigny, Soissons, St. Mihiel, the Meuse-Argonne, and Sedan.

What was to come next? They did not know—and hardly cared. Their minds were numbed by the shock of peace. The past consumed their whole consciousness. The present did not exist—and the future was inconceivable."

*Colonel Gowenlock's account appears in Thomas R. Gowenlock's Soldiers of Darkness (1936).*



# At the State Capitol, Bells Toll for Peace

By Roger Ehrlich

One-hundred years ago, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, bells tolled around the world, and people poured into public squares to celebrate the end of what was called The War to End All Wars. For many years, Armistice Day was observed as a day to remember the dead of WWI and rededicate ourselves to never letting war happen again.

Last year, aided by a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council, a bell has been tolling from the 24-foot-Swords to Plowshares Memorial Belltower, a touring memorial that has been erected, for the fourth consecutive year, on the lawn of our State Capitol in Raleigh. The public has been adding inscriptions to the monument to bear witness to how war has affected their lives. These silver plaques, fashioned from recycled cans and glistening in the wind, bear heart-rending inscriptions in many different languages.

The Belltower was dedicated on Memorial Day 2014 by the Eisenhower Chapter of Veterans For Peace with former North Carolina State University alumni director and Air Force veteran Bob Kennel presiding. Its inspiration was the bronze door on the NCSU Belltower, which bears the inscription “And They Shall Beat Their

Swords into Plowshares.” This Old Testament passage, sacred to Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others, is a reminder of the original spirit of Armistice Day.

In 1953, President Eisenhower said, “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies ... a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.” But one year later, he signed a proclamation renaming Armistice Day as Veterans Day. Since WWI, with the day’s original intent forgotten, we have seen the rise of fascism in Europe, the horrors of WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam War and our endless “wars on terrorism.” The War on Poverty didn’t stand a chance.

What makes the Belltower memorial unusual, besides its mobility, is its dedication “to all veterans and victims of war, regardless of race, faith, or nationality.” Conventional commemorations are not as inclusive and democratic. Instead of being invited into honest dialogue about war’s costs and causes, we are told to silently remember those who “gave their lives for our freedom.” But many lives, both military and civilian, were taken involuntarily. My grandfathers, British and Austrian, fought on opposite sides in WWI. Did they each believe they were fighting for freedom?

On the west side of the Capitol, around



THE AUTHOR RINGS THE BELL in the Memorial Belltower. Photo: Ellen Davidson.



the corner from where we have set up our Belltower, stands a controversial memorial “To Our Confederate Dead.” I agree they should be remembered. But, like most war memorials, it was erected by a powerful few with only partial remembrance of who sacrificed, or got sacrificed, in that war. What about the thousands of North Carolinians, white and black, who fought for the Union? The civilians who were killed or died of wartime deprivations? The mothers and fathers and children? Or those never able to recover from physical and psychological wounds and those who took their own lives? Their stories, too, deserve to be told, and you will find them in the inscriptions that have been added to

our Belltower.

Perhaps the most radical but most healing aspect of our Belltower is the inclusion of inscriptions memorializing the suffering of our “enemies.” I added inscriptions for both my grandfathers. Another memorial plaque was dedicated by U.S. Marine Corps veteran Mike Hanes to “The Iraq citizen who died in one of our raids. Died in my buddy’s arms. An image I will never forget.”

This Armistice Day, let us—at long last—beat our swords into plowshares.

*Roger Ehrlich is an associate member of Eisenhower Chapter 157 Veterans For Peace and co-creator of the Swords to Plowshares Memorial Belltower.*

## Eleven Eleven

... continued from page 7

Until 1971, America still closed for the day. Then, in the division over the Viet Nam War, Congress dismissed even the semblance of November 11 as a day to give peace a chance; the holiday moved to the fourth Monday of October to assure a three-day weekend. In 1978, Congress restored the date but not the occasion or even the honor, continuing under the name Veterans Day. Since then the only certain celebrants are federal employees and banks and the relentless advertisers

of holiday sales for tires and televisions.

A century after the peace that gave birth to Veterans Day, the end of the war to end all wars is a mote in the dustbin of history. Our collective memory of the guns going silent around the world at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month has failed us. The Armistice Memorial in Washington is thoroughly decayed and rarely visited.

There are, to be sure, parades, flags, salutes. Marchers march. Bands play. Politicians bleat. Children wave. A grateful nation does honor the men and women who have left civilian life to serve us. But the speeches, the opinion articles and talk

shows, the notion of what it is that we are honoring on 11/11 now carry the unmistakable message that our pride no longer comes from a continual search for peace but from our military might. Regrettably, too many of us hurry through the parades and speeches, or skip them altogether, to use this free day to shop for the tires and televisions advertised at special prices on this special day.

But there are no new Memorial Stadiums, built in honor of the peace that followed the war to end all wars, on whose walls where once were the plaques of names of our soldiers who fought for that world peace. We don’t even call them sta-

diums any more, but arenas, as if they were the sites of gladiator bouts. And we no longer name them for heroes, or even ideas, but for our colossuses of commerce, airlines, phone companies, and others, none of whom paid as much for naming rights as our real heroes paid for peace.

*Pax vobiscum* (peace be with you).

*Jack W. London is the author of the acclaimed French Letters novels Virginia’s War and Engaged in War, for which he was named Author of the Year 2011–2012 by the Military Writers Society of America. You can read Private Dickie’s letters, and many more, at JWLBooks.com.*

# Honor the Real Heroes

By Arnold "Skip" Oliver

More than a few veterans, Veterans For Peace among them, are troubled by the way Americans observe Veterans Day on November 11.

It was originally called Armistice Day, and established by Congress in 1926 to "perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations, (and later) a day dedicated to the cause of world peace." For years, many churches rang their bells on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month—the time that the guns fell silent on the Western Front by which time 16 million had died.

To put it bluntly, in 1954 Armistice Day was hijacked by a militaristic congress, and today few Americans understand the original purpose of the occasion, or even remember it. The message of peace seeking has vanished. Now known as Veterans Day, it has devolved into a hyper-nationalistic worship ceremony for war and the

putatively valiant warriors who wage it.

News flash. Most of what goes on during wartime is decidedly unheroic, and heroes in war are few and far between.

When I was in Vietnam, I was no hero, and I didn't witness any heroism during the year I spent there, first as a U.S. Army private and then as a sergeant.

Yet, there was heroism in the Vietnam War. On both sides of the conflict there were notable acts of self-sacrifice and bravery. Troops in my unit wondered how the North Vietnamese troops could persevere for years in the face of daunting U.S. firepower. U.S. medical corpsmen performed incredible acts of valor rescuing the wounded under fire.

But I also witnessed a considerable amount of bad behavior, some of it my own. There were widespread incidents of disrespect and abuse of Vietnamese civilians including many war crimes. All units had, and still have, their share of criminals, con artists, and thugs. Most unheroic



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: A hero worth honoring.

of all were the U.S. military and civilian leaders who planned, orchestrated, and profited greatly from that avoidable war.

The cold truth is that the U.S. invasion and occupation of Vietnam had nothing to do with protecting American peace and freedom. On the contrary, the Vietnam War bitterly divided the United States and was fought to forestall Vietnamese independence, not defend it.

Unfortunately, Vietnam wasn't an isolated example. Many U.S. wars—including the 1846 Mexican-American War, the Spanish-American War in 1898, and the Iraq War (this list is by no means exhaustive)—were waged under false pretexts against countries that didn't threaten the United States. It's hard to see how, if a war is unjust, it can be heroic to wage it.

But if the vast majority of wars are not fought for noble reasons and few soldiers are heroic, have there been any actual heroes out there defending peace and freedom? And if so, who are they?

Well, there are many, from Jesus down to the present. I'd put Gandhi, Tolstoy, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the list along with many Quakers and Mennonites. And don't forget General Smedley Butler, who wrote that "war is a racket."

In Vietnam, Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson stopped the My Lai massacre from being even worse.

Another candidate is former U.S. Army

specialist Josh Stieber, who sent this message to the people of Iraq: "Our heavy hearts still hold hope that we can restore inside our country the acknowledgment of your humanity, that we were taught to deny." Ponder a million Iraqi deaths. Chelsea Manning sat behind bars for exposing those and other truths.

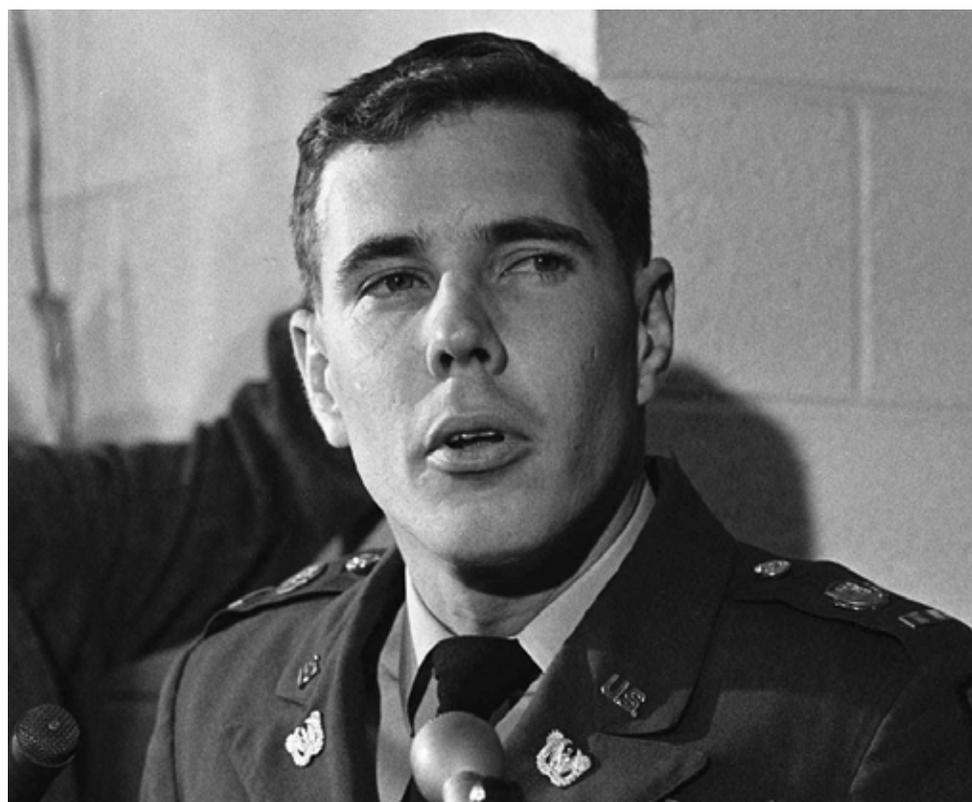
The real heroes are those who resist war and militarism, often at great personal cost.

Because militarism has been around for such a long time, at least since Gilgamesh came up with his protection racket in Sumeria going on 5,000 years ago, people argue that it will always be with us.

But many also thought that slavery and the subjugation of women would last forever, and they're being proven wrong. We understand that while militarism will not disappear overnight, disappear it must, if we are to avoid economic as well as moral bankruptcy.

This year on November 11, Veterans For Peace will bring back the original Armistice Day traditions. Join them and let those bells ring out.

Arnold "Skip" Oliver is professor emeritus of political science at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio. A Vietnam veteran, he is a member of Veterans For Peace and can be reached at [soliver@heidelberg.edu](mailto:soliver@heidelberg.edu).



HELICOPTER PILOT HUGH THOMPSON speaks with reporters at the Pentagon on December 4, 1969, after testifying about the My Lai massacre in South Vietnam. Photo: Associated Press.

## Why doesn't the U.S. observe Armistice Day? *We're more comfortable with war than peace*

Rory Fanning

Get angry and frustrated with each Veterans Day because it's less about celebrating veterans than easing the guilty conscience of warmongers

The United States should be celebrating Armistice Day, pausing as a nation to think about the terrible costs of war—including the loss of so many lives. Unfortunately, we replaced it with a very different holiday.

On June 1, 1954, less than a year after America exited the Korean War in defeat, Congress got rid of Armistice Day and started Veterans Day. In place of what had been a celebration of peace, Congress instituted an annual veneration of those who fought in war. America would ever after celebrate not the beauty of peace, but its purveyors of state violence in World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Lebanon, Grenada,

Kosovo, Somalia, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and more.

Governments had meant to do the opposite in 1919: If you read the newspapers of the time closely enough, you can almost hear the collective sigh of relief and jubilation on the first Armistice Day. Millions celebrated peace and renounced war on that November day, a year after the violence in Europe had ended: after the mustard gas stopped burning off soldiers' skin; after Gatling guns stopped mowing down young boys from mostly poor and working-class families; after fighter planes stopped streaking the sky; and after bloody bayonets were wiped clean. In the wake of so much carnage, it was then clear to millions of people that wars were not about valor or romantic ideals, but about empire.

It took only two more wars fighting for empire before Americans buried that day's history as a celebration of peace.

Kurt Vonnegut, a World War II veteran, wrote in 1973: "Armistice Day has become Veterans' Day. Armistice Day was sacred. Veterans' Day is not. So I will throw Veterans' Day over my shoulder. Armistice Day I will keep. I don't want to throw away any sacred things."

Armistice Day was sacred because it was intended to evoke memories of fear, pain, suffering, military incompetence, greed and destruction on the grandest scale for those who had participated in war, directly and indirectly. Armistice Day was a hallowed anniversary because it was supposed to protect future life from future wars.

Veterans Day, instead, celebrates "heroes" and encourages others to dream of playing the hero themselves, covering themselves in glory. But becoming a "hero" means going off to kill and be killed in a future war—or one of our government's current, unending wars.

I am more angry and frustrated with each passing Veterans Day—since leaving the U.S. Army Rangers in 2003 as a conscientious objector—because it gets clearer and clearer that Veteran's Day is less about honoring veterans

*continued on next page ...*

# On Armistice Day, Let's Celebrate Peace

By Kathy Kelly

Wilfred Owen, an English poet who was killed in action exactly one week before the Armistice that finally ended World War I was signed, wrote about the horrors of living in trenches and enduring gas warfare.

In "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young," he revises the Biblical narrative about Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Believing God willed the slaughter, Abraham prepared to bind Isaac and slay him. Owen transforms Abraham into the European powers who were willing to slaughter youthful generations in the trenches of World War I.

Only in this telling, Abraham refuses to heed the angel who urges that the son be spared. The old man "slew the son, and half the seed of Europe, one by one."



**THOUSANDS MASED ON ALL SIDES** of the Statue of Liberty replica in Philadelphia cheered unceasingly on November 11, 1918. Photo: U.S. National Archives.

Thirty million soldiers were killed or wounded and another seven million taken captive during World War I. Some 50 to 100 million perished from a flu epidemic created by the war. "Never before," writes author and activist David Swanson, "had people witnessed such industrialized slaughter, with tens of thousands falling in

a day to machine guns and poison gas."

A stunned and exhausted West greeted November 11, 1918, the day the war ended, as its delivery from horror.

In 1938, Congress declared Armistice Day a legal holiday dedicated to the cause of world peace. In 1954 the holiday was renamed Veterans Day and morphed into an occasion for flag waving and military parades.

Veterans for Peace is working to recover the original purpose of Armistice Day—calling for adequate psychological and material support for veterans, and above all to abolish wars.

Now, members of the group Veterans for Peace are working across the U.S. to recover the original purpose of Armistice Day. They are using it to call for adequate psychological and material support for veterans, to help them cope with the terrors they have been forced to endure. Above all, they work to abolish wars.

"This event is more than just a historical remembrance," says Ed Flaherty, a member of the Iowa City Chapter of Veterans For Peace. "It is about today, about our pressing need to reverse the war-momentum and to take up the sweet burden of creating lasting peace."

This year on November 11, at 11 a.m., VFP chapters will ring bells, recalling that minute in 1918 when, as Kurt Vonnegut wrote, "millions upon millions of human beings stopped butchering one another."

Writing on behalf of the group's Tom Paine chapter in Albany, N.Y., John Amidon explains that the veterans will be "purposefully walking" in the local Veterans Day parade because "we ain't marching anymore."

The tragically stubborn "old man" in Owen's poem rejected the angel's intervention urging him to choose life over death. We do not have to keep making that same mistake.

Armistice Day gives us an opportunity to acknowledge the brutal futility of armed conflict, the wastefulness of our military spending, and the responsibility we share to abolish all wars.

*Kathy Kelly co-coordinates the group Voices for Creative Nonviolence.*

## U.S. and Armistice Day

... continued from previous page

than it is about easing the guilty consciences of those who have sent and continue to send others to kill and die for reasons that have nothing to do with democracy or freedom.

The Armistice-turned-Veterans Day celebrations will be held in a country that has over 800 military bases around the globe. They will be held in a country that has conducted military operations in two-thirds of the world's countries since 9/11. They will be held in a county that spends three quarters of a trillion dollars each year on its military—more than the next 13 countries combined. They will be held in a country that has taken hundreds of thousands of lives around the world and which shows no sign of slowing down.

What do the millions of people in Afghanistan, Iraq and many other countries that have lost loved ones to America's wars think of these celebrations? What should veterans coping with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, dealing with traumatic injuries or struggling with chronic unemployment think of these events? What do the families of those soldiers and veterans who have taken their own lives feel?

Many soldiers are beginning to question America's wars and their tolls at home and abroad. According to journalist Matt Kennard, more than 40,000 U.S. soldiers have declared their own personal Armistice Days by becoming conscientious objectors since 9/11—and I was one of them.

Once I left the military as a conscientious objector and



began speaking about it, the personal "thank-yous" from strangers started to dry up—apparently, it's more heroic to kill people under orders than to demand that you be allowed to stop. But there are many ways to cover yourself in valor and act the hero, even if there's only one way sanctioned by a federal holiday.

If we really wanted to honor veterans, we would abolish Veterans Day and replace it with a day that celebrates peace, not war. Peace is a better way to honor the sacrifice of veterans like me than a day designed to recruit the next generation of soldiers we'll have to thank for their service in yet another war.

*Rory Fanning is a two-tour veteran of the U.S. war and occupation of Afghanistan with the Seventy-Fifth Ranger Regiment. He is the author of Worth Fighting For: An Army Ranger's Journey Out of the Military and Across America,*



## Dulce Et Decorum Est

**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.**

—Wilfred Owen

Thought to have been written between  
October 8, 1917, and March 1918

The Latin words "Dulce et decorum est" are taken from an ode by Horace. They mean "It is sweet and right" and were often quoted at the start of the First World War. The full saying ends the poem: "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori"—"It is sweet and right to die for your country."



BRITISH AND GERMAN SOLDIERS TALK during the famous World War I Christmas truce in 1914.

# 100 Christmas Truces Ago

## *World War I No Excuse for Militarism*

The following article was written in 1914, the 100th anniversary of the Christmas Truce.

By Nick Megoran

The British government is unveiling commemorative paving stones laid in the birthplaces of those members of the British Empire forces in World War I who received the Victoria Cross for their bravery. The government's stated aims are to "provide a lasting legacy of local heroes" and "honour their bravery." All 627 Victoria Cross recipients will be so honored over the next four years, with the promise that "no hero will be forgotten."

This represents the most radical remaking of Great War commemoration for decades. It turns the emphasis from grief at a costly tragedy to lionization of the warrior. It is a move that has more to do with the contemporary politics of militarism than with any genuine attempt to honor the memory of those who lost their lives between 1914 and 1918. The prime minister, David Cameron, candidly revealed his politics when, in unveiling plans in 2012 for the centenary commemorations, he said he wanted: "A commemoration that captures our national spirit in every corner of the country ... like the Diamond Jubilee."

What, you may ask, is wrong with celebrating heroes in this way?

### **War to End All Wars**

It is an attempt to rewrite the history of the war as somehow glorious and necessary. The war was an ugly clash of imperial rivalries, marked by the unspeakable horrors of trench warfare. Far from proving "the war to end of all wars," it scarred a nation whose sons would be sent to die against the same enemy within a generation.

Veterans also tend to balk at their lauding as "heroes," explaining themselves more humbly as men just doing their jobs and looking out for their comrades. Great War memorials rarely record either rank or medals, but are starkly simple alphabetical lists of all those who had their lives taken from them. By singling out only those men who received the top military award, the government is tearing up a century of practice.

Why has the government taken this radical departure? The answer is in part a reaction to the public skepticism about military operations that has become mainstream with the failures of the "War on Terror." The unprecedented antiwar demonstrations against the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars in the early 2000s may represent a sea change in public attitudes to foreign wars. This has alarmed conservative politicians of all parties and the military top brass, who have been scrambling to regain ground ever since.

This began in earnest with then Prime Minister Gordon Brown's 2008 report on the National Recognition of Our Armed Forces. It identified a supposed lack of

public understanding of the military due to decreased "familiarity." The response to this perceived malady was to recommend a range of measures including celebratory home-coming parades, encouraging soldiers to wear uniforms in public and greater military presence in secondary schools and national sporting events. This was a grievous misdiagnosis: the real reason for the supposed disconnect was a reaction to the deceits and failures of Tony Blair's Iraq invasion.

Cameron shared Brown's concern about the increasing drift of British public opinion towards pacifism. The commemorative paving stones must be interpreted as a further attempt to rehabilitate the military. But Cameron has been cannier than Brown—whereas it was easy to decry the bogus logic in Brown's initiative, it is hardly tasteful to protest at the unveiling of monument to a dead soldier.

### **They Also Served ...**

So how can we counter this shameless use of World War I to remilitarize the present? By celebrating and commemorating those who, in their foresight, opposed or questioned the industrial slaughter of World War I. These included women activists, Christians, and political radicals who strove to recapture visions of a unified and pacific Europe—as well as the many workers who went on strike and soldiers who mutinied. These men and women exhibited great bravery, facing scorn, impoverishment, prison, and death. Although they were widely reviled at the time, history has vindicated their opposition to a catastrophic conflict that

decimated Europe and need never have been fought.

Of course, no British government will lavish funds on those types of commemorations. It falls to citizens and scholars to recover and retell these histories—as indeed they are doing up and down the country through books, talks, exhibitions, music, drama, and art.

But these activities usually require substantial effort, particularly in researching their background. Here's an easier suggestion: Help your community celebrate the centenary of the December 1914 Christmas truces.

The truces commonly began with German soldiers putting up Christmas trees, shouting or writing Christmas greetings, and singing carols recognizable to their British counterparts. Troops met in no-man's land to bury their dead, exchange gifts and souvenirs, share festive food and drink, sing and entertain each other, swap names and addresses, pose for photographs, conduct joint religious services, and play football.

These were not isolated incidents but were widespread right down the Western Front. Although the most famous, the 1914 Christmas truces weren't one-off events. Throughout the entire war many combatants managed, through a "live-and-let-live" system, to reduce risk of discomfort and death by complicated local truces and tacit understandings that enraged the high commands of both sides and discredited the jingoistic propaganda that they peddled.

The extraordinary events of 100 Christmas-mases ago are easy to celebrate this year,  
*continued on page 15 ...*

## **To The Warmongers**

**"I'm back again from hell  
With loathsome thoughts to  
sell;  
secrets of death to tell;  
And horrors from the abyss.**

**Young faces bleared with  
blood  
sucked down into the mud,  
You shall hear things like this,  
Till the tormented slain**

**Crawl round and once again,  
With limbs that twist awry  
Moan out their brutish pain,  
As the fighters pass them by.**

**For you our battles shine  
With triumph half-divine;  
And the glory of the dead  
Kindles in each proud eye.**

**But a curse is on my head,  
That shall not be unsaid,  
And the wounds in my heart  
are red,  
For I have watched them die."**

—Siegfried Sassoon

# The Truth About the Christmas Day Football Match

*The Germans provided the beer and singing, while officers from both sides struggled to prevent the troops from fraternizing. Tales of troops downing their guns to play football at Christmas are some of the most enduring—and poignant—of the First World War.*



The Great War was supposed to have been over by Christmas. Instead, by the end of 1914, it had become a voracious monster, beyond the control of politicians, commanders, and kings. All that was terrible in the world was contained within that monster, a beast feeding on nations. Yet beneath the carnage, a tiny flicker of humanity still glowed. On Christmas Day 1914, that humanity provided a moment of warmth that would live forever.

The Christmas Truce, with its famous football match, is one event from the Great War that almost everyone knows about. Our remembrance has been stimulated by the extra attention paid to the war during the centenary year. My own research for a new book has revealed a slightly different account from the one that is commonly told, one that gives more credit to the Germans as initiators. The net effect of this revisionism, however, is to make an event of immense beauty even more wonderful.

The truce was, first and foremost, an act of rebellion against authority. In the trenches, though peace on earth seemed a ridiculous fantasy, impromptu ceasefires had been occurring as early as December 18. The British High Command, alarmed that the holiday might inspire goodwill, issued a stern order against fraternization. Officers were warned that yuletide benevolence might “destroy the offensive spirit in all ranks.” Christmas, in other words, was to be a killing time.

The Germans, however, were stubbornly festive. In an effort to bolster morale, truckloads of Christmas trees were sent to the Kaiser’s forces. All along the line, Germans were acting in bizarrely peaceful fashion. Guns fell silent. Candles and lanterns taunted British snipers. Late on Christmas Eve, Germans singing “Stille Nacht” echoed across no man’s land. The British, initially perplexed, soon joined in. Then came shouted messages—in English—from the German trenches. “Tomorrow is Christmas; if you don’t fight, we won’t.”

Dawn usually brought a chorus of rifle and artillery fire. On Christmas Day, however, an eerie quiet persisted, as if the war itself had evaporated. As the sun rose, the Germans called to the British to meet them in no-man’s land. The latter at first suspected a devious plan for yuletide slaughter, but suspicion soon gave way to trust.

“It was one of the most curious Christmas Days we are ever likely to see,” wrote Captain C.I. Stockwell of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Intent on obeying orders,

much discussion, the two agreed not to fight until the following morning. As Stockwell turned toward his trench, the German called out: “You had better take the beer. We have lots.” In response, Stockwell gave the German a plum pudding. For the rest of the day, not a shot was fired.

All along the line, Christmas Day was shaped by the willingness to disobey orders. Granted, in some places killing continued, but in many places, delightful chaos reigned. Hundreds of soldiers subsequently recalled meet-

***The truce was, first and foremost, an act of rebellion against authority. In the trenches, though peace on earth seemed a ridiculous fantasy, impromptu ceasefires had been occurring as early as December 18. The British High Command, alarmed that the holiday might inspire goodwill, issued a stern order against fraternization. Officers were warned that yuletide benevolence might ‘destroy the offensive spirit in all ranks.’ Christmas, in other words, was to be a killing time.***

he tried desperately to ignore German good cheer. But then, around midday, his sergeant reported that Germans were standing on their parapet, unarmed and in full view. “Permission to shoot them, sir,” the sergeant asked. Stockwell was troubled: “The Saxons were shouting, ‘Don’t shoot. We don’t want to fight today. We will send you some beer.’ My men were getting a bit excited.”

In an attempt to assert control, Stockwell shouted that he wanted a chat with his German opposite number. An officer emerged and walked across no-man’s land. Stockwell met him halfway. He told the German that he was not allowed to fraternize and warned that his men might open fire at any moment. The German responded: “My orders are the same as yours, but could we not have a truce from shooting today? We don’t want to shoot, do you?” After

ing their enemies, shaking hands, singing songs, exchanging presents. “We were with them about an hour and everybody was bursting laughing,” wrote one private. One Englishman by coincidence met his German barber, who provided a shave and haircut. “What a sight; little groups of Germans and British extending along the length of our front,” wrote Corporal John Ferguson of the Seaforth Highlanders. “We were laughing and chatting to men whom only a few hours before we were trying to kill.”

Fraternization led inevitably to football. Men who could not otherwise communicate shared a common language in the game. “After a short while somebody punted across a football,” one subaltern recalled. “The ball landed amongst the Germans and they immediately kicked it back at our men ... it was a melee. It wasn’t a

question of 10-a-side, it was a question of 70 Germans against 50 Englishmen.” That scenario was repeated all along the line. The locations of these matches remain obscure, in part because few soldiers subsequently admitted taking part.

On January 1, 1915, an anonymous major wrote to *The Times* that an English regiment “had a football match with the Saxons, who beat them 3–2.” That score echoes through the accounts. Yet since the stories originate from various parts of the front, this suggests either incredible consistency in the results, or a remarkable willingness to remember the event in exactly the same way. Equally possible, all recollections might relate to a single mythical encounter that never actually took place. In truth, it matters not if a match ending 3–2 actually occurred, since myths are often more powerful than facts. The “match” is universally celebrated, even by the English who might otherwise prefer to forget another defeat to the Germans. At least it did not end in penalties.

Playing football rudely exposed the contrived nature of wartime animosity. For that reason, it was quickly quashed. Gustav Riebenschahm, an officer in the 2nd Westphalian regiment, immediately complained to his commanders that “the whole thing has become ridiculous and must be stopped.” Near Ypres, a corporal named Adolf Hitler voiced the view that fraternization “should not be allowed.” General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien echoed that sentiment, reminding his subordinate commanders that “friendly intercourse with the enemy ... [is] absolutely prohibited.” An even sterner directive was issued by the 1st Army commander, General Douglas Haig, who warned that soldiers caught fraternizing could face a firing squad.

In truth, there was never any danger that goodwill would endure. Everyone accepted that the moment of compassion was just that—a moment. At 8:30 on Boxing Day morning, Stockwell fired three shots in the air, then hoisted a flag with “Merry Christmas” on it. The German captain appeared on the parapet, bowed and fired two shots in reply. “The War was on again,” wrote Stockwell. The guns resumed their murderous cacophony; slaughter resumed. The footballs were put away.

The Christmas Truce is significant precisely because it happened only once. It was a last, desperate act of humanity before the war imposed its tyrannical will upon combatants, erasing their individuality and turning them into automatons of death. It figures prominently in the video of Paul McCartney’s “Pipes of Peace,” in an episode of *Blackadder*, in the play *Oh What a Lovely War!* and in scores of books about the war. Yet remembrance is based on scattered, often contradictory recollections. In truth, however, it is not the match itself that is important, but the desire to believe in it. We worship a golden moment of fellowship that arose out of the suffering and the shattered ideals of war. The truce, like Christmas itself, seems miraculous.

For a brief moment, football provided a ritual of commonality, a reminder to the British and Germans that what they shared was more important than what divided them. It was fitting that it should be so, since football was the common man’s game, a shared culture every nation could understand. This war had made every single infantryman exactly the same—not hero but victim, a tiny piece of fuel fed into the furnace of war. Yet for one glorious hour, a football match in no-man’s land offered an opportunity for these faceless soldiers to assert themselves, to kick back at the monster.

The act was futile, but futility is often beautiful. By spontaneously playing football on Christmas Day, these men gave notice that something precious, noble, and decent still survived amidst the carnage. At that moment, they were neither British nor Germans, but lovers of a game. Whether imagined or not, that match was an assertion of civility on a landscape of hatred and waste.

*Gerard DeGroot is a professor of history at the University of St Andrews and the author of Back in Blighty: The British at Home in World War I.*

# Peace to End War

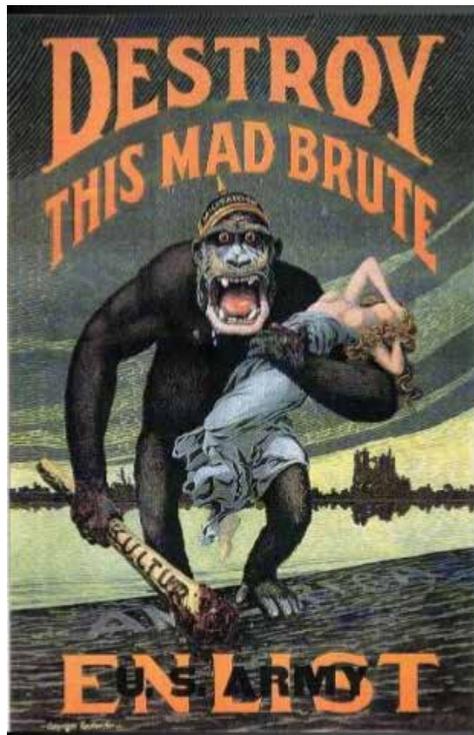
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According to U.S. Socialist Victor Berger, all the United States had gained from participation in World War I was the flu and prohibition. It was not an uncommon view. Millions of Americans who had supported World War I came, during the years following its completion on November 11, 1918, to reject the idea that anything could ever be gained through warfare.

Sherwood Eddy, who coauthored *The Abolition of War* in 1924, wrote that he had been an early and enthusiastic supporter of U.S. entry into World War I and had abhorred pacifism. He had viewed the war as a religious crusade and had been reassured by the fact that the United States entered the war on a Good Friday. At the war front, as the battles raged, Eddy writes, “we told the soldiers that if they would win we would give them a new world.”

Eddy seems, in a typical manner, to have come to believe his own propaganda and to have resolved to make good on the promise. “But I can remember,” he writes, “that even during the war, I began to be troubled by grave doubts and misgivings of conscience.” It took him 10 years to arrive at the position of complete Outlawry, that is to say, of wanting to legally outlaw all war. By 1924, Eddy believed that the campaign for Outlawry amounted, for him, to a noble and glorious cause worthy of sacrifice, or what U.S. philosopher William James had called “the moral equivalent of war.” Eddy now argued that war was “unchristian.” Many who a decade earlier had believed Christianity required war came to share that view. A major factor in this shift was direct experience with the hell of modern warfare, an experience captured for us by the British poet Wilfred Owen in these famous lines:

*If in some smothering dreams you too  
could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,*



WWI PROPAGANDA posters portrayed the enemy as subhuman and barbaric.

*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.*

The propaganda machinery invented by President Woodrow Wilson and his Committee on Public Information had drawn Americans into the war with exaggerated and fictional tales of German atrocities in Belgium, posters depicting Jesus Christ in khaki sighting down a gun barrel, and promises of selfless devotion to making the world safe for democracy. The extent of the casualties was hidden from the public as much as possible during the course of the war, but by the time it was over many had learned something

of war's reality. And many had come to resent the manipulation of noble emotions that had pulled an independent nation into overseas barbarity.

However, the propaganda that motivated the fighting was not immediately erased from people's minds. A war to end wars and make the world safe for democ-

**When 17,000 veterans plus their families and friends marched on Washington in 1932 to demand their bonuses, Douglas MacArthur, George Patton, Dwight Eisenhower, and other heroes of the next big war to come attacked the veterans.**

racy cannot end without some lingering demand for peace and justice, or at least for something more valuable than the flu and prohibition. Even those rejecting the idea that the war could in any way help advance the cause of peace aligned with all those wanting to avoid all future wars—a group that probably encompassed most of

the U.S. population.

As Wilson had talked up peace as the official reason for going to war, countless souls had taken him extremely seriously. “It is no exaggeration to say that where there had been relatively few peace schemes before the World War,” writes Robert Ferrell, “there now were hundreds and even thousands” in Europe and the United States. The decade following the war was a decade of searching for peace: “Peace echoed through so many sermons, speeches, and state papers that it drove itself into the consciousness of everyone. Never in world history was peace so great a desideratum, so much talked about, looked toward, and planned for, as in the decade after the 1918 Armistice.”

Congress passed an Armistice Day resolution calling for “exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding ... inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples.” Later, Congress added that November 11 was to be “a day dedicated to the cause of world peace.”

While the ending of warfare was celebrated every November 11, veterans were treated no better than they are today.



THE BONUS ARMY on the steps of the Capitol in 1932.

When 17,000 veterans plus their families and friends marched on Washington in 1932 to demand their bonuses, Douglas MacArthur, George Patton, Dwight Eisenhower, and other heroes of the next big war to come attacked the veterans, including by engaging in that greatest of evils with which Saddam Hussein would be endlessly charged: “using chemical weapons on their own people.” The weapons they used, just like some of Hussein's, originated in the U.S. of A.

It was only after another world war, an even worse world war, a world war that has in many ways never ended to this day, that Congress, following still another now forgotten war—this one on Korea—changed the name of Armistice Day to Veterans Day on June 1, 1954. And it was six-and-a-half years later that Eisenhower warned us that the military-industrial complex would completely corrupt our society. Veterans Day is no longer, for most people, a day to cheer the elimination of war or even to aspire to its abolition. Veterans Day is not even a day on which to mourn or to question why suicide is the top killer of U.S. troops or why so many veterans have no houses at all.

It's not even a day to honestly, if sarcastically, celebrate the fact that virtually all the victims of U.S. wars are non-Americans, that our so-called wars have become one-sided slaughters. Instead, it

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# Peace to End War

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has become a day on which to believe that war is beautiful and good. Towns and cities and corporations and sports leagues call it “military appreciation day” or “troop appreciation week.”

The environmental destruction of World War I is ongoing today. The new weapons developed for World War I, including chemical weapons, still kill today. World War I saw huge leaps forward in the art of propaganda still plagiarized to-

college, and still enough left over to buy every piece of property in Germany and Belgium. And it was all legal. Incredibly stupid, but totally legal. Particular atrocities violated laws, but war was not criminal. It never had been, but it soon would be.

We shouldn't excuse World War I on the grounds that nobody knew. It's not as if wars have to be fought in order to learn each time that war is hell. It's not as if each new type of weaponry suddenly makes war evil. It's not as if war wasn't already the worst thing ever created. It's not as if people didn't say so, didn't re-



**FRENCH SOLDIER SMOKES A CIGARETTE**, standing near the bodies of several soldiers, apparently Germans, near Souain, France.

## The first step was taken in 1928 with the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which banned all war.

day, huge setbacks in the struggle for economic justice, and a culture more militarized, more focused on stupid ideas like banning alcohol, and more ready to restrict civil liberties in the name of nationalism, and all for the bargain price, as one author calculated it at the time, of enough money to have given a \$2,500 home with \$1,000 worth of furniture and five acres of land to every family in Russia, most of the European nations, Canada, the United States, and Australia, plus enough to give every city of over 20,000 a \$2 million library, a \$3 million hospital, a \$20 million

ist, didn't propose alternatives, didn't go to prison for their convictions.

In 1915, Jane Addams met with President Wilson and urged him to offer mediation to Europe. Wilson praised the peace terms drafted by a conference of women for peace held in the Hague. He received 10,000 telegrams from women asking him to act. Historians believe that had he acted in 1915 or early in 1916 he might very well have helped bring the Great War to an end under circumstances that would have furthered a far more durable peace than the one made eventually at Versailles. Wilson

did act on the advice of Addams, and of his Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, but not until it was too late. By the time he acted, the Germans did not trust a mediator who had been aiding the British war effort. Wilson was left to campaign for reelection on a platform of peace and then quickly propagandize and plunge the United States into Europe's war. And the number of progressives Wilson brought, at least briefly, to the side of loving war makes Obama look like an amateur.

The Outlawry Movement of the 1920s—the movement to outlaw war—sought to replace war with arbitration, by first banning war and then developing a code of international law and a court with the authority to settle disputes. The first step was taken in 1928 with the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which banned all war. Today 81 nations are party to that treaty, including the United States, and many of them comply with it. I'd like to see additional nations, poorer nations that were left out of the treaty, join it (which they can do simply by stating that intention to the U.S. State Department) and then urge the greatest purveyor of violence in the world to comply.

I wrote a book, *When the World Outlawed War*, about the movement that created that treaty, not just because we need to continue its work, but also because we can learn from its methods. Here was a movement that united people across the political spectrum, those for and against alcohol, those for and against the League of Nations, with a proposal to criminalize war. It was an uncomfortably large coalition. There were negotiations and peace pacts between rival factions of the peace movement. There was a moral case made that expected the best of people. War wasn't opposed merely on economic grounds or because it might kill people from our own country. It was opposed as mass murder, as no less barbaric than duelling as a means of settling individuals' disputes. Here was a movement with a long-term vision based

on educating and organizing. There was an endless hurricane of lobbying, but no endorsing of politicians, no aligning of a movement behind a party. On the contrary, all four—yes, four—major parties were compelled to line up behind the movement. Instead of Clint Eastwood talking to a chair, the Republican National Convention of 1924 saw President Coolidge promising to outlaw war if reelected.

And on August 27, 1928, in Paris, France, that scene happened that made it into a 1950s folk song as a mighty room filled with men, and the papers they were signing said they'd never fight again. And it was men; women were outside protesting. And it was a pact among wealthy nations that nonetheless would continue making war on and colonizing the poor. But it was a pact for peace that ended wars and ended the acceptance of territorial gains made through wars, except in Palestine. It was a treaty that still required a body of law and an international court that we still do not have. But it was a treaty that in 88 years those wealthy nations would, in relation to each other, violate only once. Following World War II, the Kellogg-Briand Pact was used to prosecute victor's justice. And the big armed nations never went to war with each other again, yet. And so, the pact is generally considered to have failed. Imagine if we banned bribery, and the next year threw Sheldon Adelson in prison, and nobody ever bribed again. Would we declare the law a failure, throw it out, and declare bribery henceforth legal as a matter of natural inevitability? Why should war be different?

David Swanson is an author, activist, journalist, and radio host. He is director of *World Beyond War* and campaign coordinator for *Roots Action*. Swanson's books include *War Is A Lie*. He blogs at [DavidSwanson.org](http://DavidSwanson.org) and [WarIsACrime.org](http://WarIsACrime.org). He hosts Talk Nation Radio. He is a 2015, 2016, and 2017 Nobel Peace Prize nominee.



**ANTIWAR BRITISH POET** Siegfried Sassoon threw his war medal into the Mersey River.

# Christmas

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as a variety of non-profit organizations have produced resources to help schools, churches and civic institutions mark them—and, in so doing, critically reflect on both the legacy of World War I and the continuation of war in our world.

The tragedy of World War I needs remembering—but not in a way that reinforces militarism today. It is fitting to recall Siegfried Sassoon's verdict on an earlier government's attempt to memorialize the dead, the Menin Gate in Belgium.

Who will remember, passing through this Gate

*the unheroic dead who fed the guns?*

The poet threw his Military Cross into the Mersey River in 1917 as part of what he described as “an act of wilful defiance of military authority.” His somber verdict on what the fallen may have thought of the Menin Gate's “peace complacent stone” is worth recalling as the government of today lays paving stones around the country:

*Well might the Dead who struggled in the slime*

*Rise and deride this sepulchre of crime.*

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# The True Meaning of Armistice Day—A Commitment to Peace

*Guys Like Me: Five Wars, Five Veterans For Peace*  
2018, Rutgers University Press, 292 pages



By Susan Bell

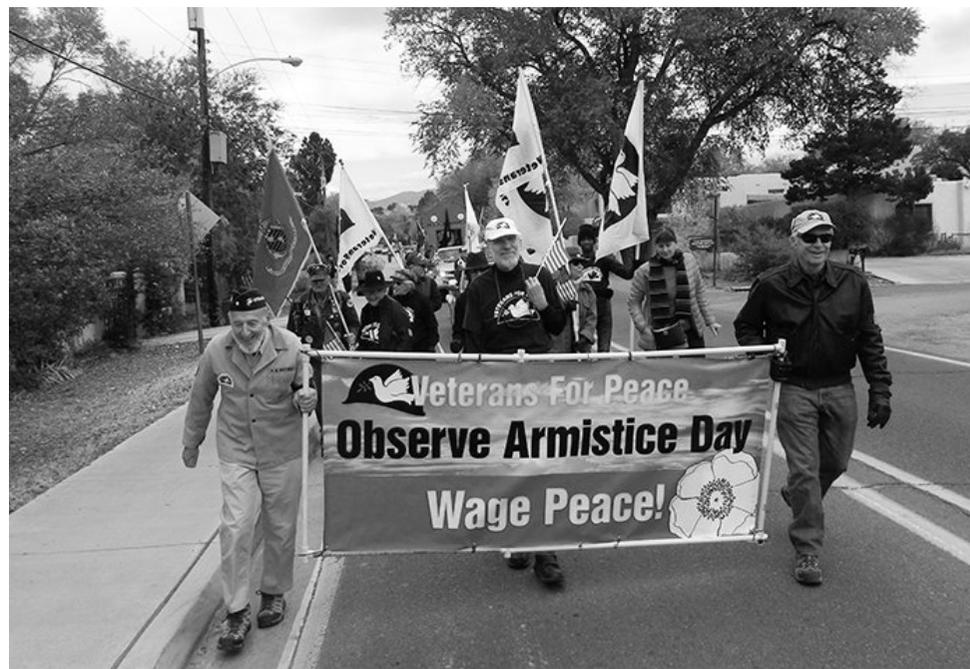
It's 2003, and World War II veteran Ernie Sanchez is watching the American-led invasion of Iraq on television when he suddenly starts shaking and sobbing uncontrollably. Later, through therapy, he learns that what he experienced is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and that his symptoms reveal his deeply repressed memories of having killed between 50 and 100 Germans during the war. As part of his healing, he now speaks of those dead Germans as sons and brothers, people who were loved by their families, thereby humanizing them.

their own personal healing from trauma and from what Messner calls “the deep moral injury” they carry from having killed other people, sometimes in great numbers.

Their life stories are bookended by a prologue focusing on Messner's grandfather, Russell Messner, a proud World War I vet, and a final vignette from Santa Fe, N.M., where members of Veterans for Peace march in a Veterans Day parade behind a banner reading “Observe Armistice Day; Wage Peace.”

Michael Messner's writing of *Guys Like Me* was triggered by his grandfather's unexpected reaction when Messner wished him “Happy Veterans Day,” 35 years ago.

“It's not Veterans Day, it's Armistice Day,” his grandfather angrily retorted. “Those damn politicians went and changed it to Veterans Day so that they could keep having more wars.”



MEMBERS OF VETERANS FOR PEACE march in Veterans Day parade in Santa Fe, N.M. Photo by Michael Messner.

with pain and traumatic experiences by maintaining a manly silence. Therapy helps some to open up—but for others it takes a failed suicide attempt.

Those who do find their voice often en-

at the weekly peace vigil in Santa Fe between a young man who thanks a group of older Veterans For Peace members for their service.

“An 81-year-old former Marine responds, saying, ‘You thanked us for our service. That was very nice of you. But you should know that the things we did when we were in the military, we did because we were told to. This work that we are doing right now—working for peace—this is our service.’”

While Messner says some might view them as weak, or as advocating weakness, he has found veterans who are peace activists to be among the strongest people he has ever met.

“They're exhibiting a certain type of bravery that to me is exemplary and I think serves as an example of a redefinition of strength, that we can be strong in advocating for justice, peace, and a world where nations treat each other as equals,” he said. “To me, that's a new form of heroism.”

*Susan Bell is a senior writer at the USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. She was a correspondent for The Times of London and has written for The Sunday Times, The Scotsman, and The Sunday Telegraph. Her work has also appeared in the Los Angeles Times and LA Weekly.*

**Michael Messner's writing of *Guys Like Me* was triggered by his grandfather's unexpected reaction when Messner wished him ‘Happy Veterans Day,’ 35 years ago. ‘It's not Veterans Day, it's Armistice Day,’ his grandfather angrily retorted. ‘Those damn politicians went and changed it to Veterans Day so that they could keep having more wars.’**

This moving anecdote is one of many contained in *Guys Like Me: Five Wars, Five Veterans for Peace* by Michael Messner, professor of sociology and gender studies at USC Dornsife. Published to coincide with the centennial of Armistice Day on November 11, the book tells the stories of five veterans from World War II through the Iraq War. All have dealt with the trauma of war and all have become lifelong peace advocates.

Their stories contain their paths to reconciliation with former enemies and to

Armistice Day—the commemoration of the truce that brought the end of WWI—became Veterans Day in 1954 in the aftermath of WWII and the Korean War. The reason, President Dwight Eisenhower said at the time, was to honor veterans of all wars, not just WWI.

“But to my grandfather and other World War I vets, that change symbolized for them a betrayal of what they felt was the promise of Armistice Day—not just the end of their war, but the end of all wars, and a commitment to peace,” Messner said.

Many years later, Messner realized that his grandfather wasn't unique: Many veterans of World War I and other wars were, and are, staunch advocates for peace.

Meetings with members of organizations like Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Veterans For Peace and About Face: Veterans Against the War spurred Messner to focus his research on their experiences.

“One of the reasons I wrote *Guys Like Me* was because I wanted to make these veterans' voices and stories more visible to the American public,” he said. “I think this is a particularly important time for their voices to be heard, especially in light of our government's efforts to radically increase our already huge military budget, as they continue drone warfare and military occupations in Afghanistan and elsewhere.”

The road to finding that voice and being able to discuss their trauma is often long and hard for war veterans, Messner notes. Many have to fight their way through societal expectations that men should deal

in helping other vets—a service to others, Messner says, that meshes with that personal healing and also with advocacy for peace.

*Guys Like Me* tells the stories of five veterans of five different wars who are all peace advocates.

Russell Messner also unwittingly supplied the book's title: Michael Messner remembers his grandfather saying, “Guys like me get sent to war. It's not those politicians who are fighting the wars.”

An echo of his grandfather's words can be found in the book's final chapter, where Messner describes an encounter



MICHAEL MESSNER'S GRANDFATHER, Private Russell Messner, pictured here in 1918. Photo courtesy of Michael Messner.

## Does it Matter?

**Does it matter?—losing your legs? ...  
For people will always be kind,  
And you need not show that you mind  
When the others come in after hunting  
To gobble their muffins and eggs.**

**Does it matter?—losing your sight? ...  
There's such splendid work for the blind;  
And people will always be kind,  
As you sit on the terrace remembering  
And turning your face to the light.**

**Do they matter?—those dreams from the pit? ...  
You can drink and forget and be glad,  
And people won't say that you're mad;  
For they'll know you've fought for your country  
And no one will worry a bit.**

—Siegfried Sassoon