

Edited by **MICHAEL  
MORPURGO**

A black silhouette of a soldier in profile, wearing a helmet and carrying a child in his arms. The soldier is holding a rifle upright in his right hand. The background is a light blue gradient.

**ONLY  
REMEMBERED**

Powerful words and pictures about the war that changed our world.

Illustrated by **Ian Beck**



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## About the Book

One hundred years have passed since the outbreak of the First World War.

To mark the centenary, this beautiful anthology collects favourite words and images from some of the UK's leading figures.

Poems, short stories, personal letters, newspaper articles, scripts, photographs and paintings are just some of the elements of this unique and seminal collection - each introduced by the person who selected it.



# ONLY REMEMBERED

Compiled and  
Edited by **MICHAEL  
MORPURGO**



Illustrated by **Ian Beck**

RHCP DIGITAL

## **WHO'LL SING THE ANTHEM? WHO WILL TELL THE STORY?**

Some years ago I came across the grave of a young British soldier in France, one of thousands, one of hundreds of thousands. I had stopped to look, I think, because there was a wreath of poppies lying there. I read on the gravestone that this was a private killed in 1918, only two weeks before the end of the First World War. He was aged just twenty-one. On the wreath was written: *To my Grandpa. I never knew you, and I wish I had.* Out of the ten million soldiers who were killed on all sides, many were young, some barely out of school. Most never grew old enough to know and be known by their children or their grandchildren. This book is made for them; for all of them.

In my small village of Iddesleigh, in deepest Devon, there lives the last surviving widow of any of the soldiers who marched off from this country to the First World War. Her soldier was called Wilf Ellis. I knew him when he was an old man. And thereby hangs a tale, the terrible tale of the ten million soldiers, and of the ten million horses, all killed in the First World War.

Dorothy Ellis, now ninety-three, has lived quietly, and spent much of her life looking after the village church, keeping it clean and bright. Wilf now lies in the churchyard, as do other old men I once knew: Captain Budgett and Albert Weeks. But before they died they told me their stories.

When he came back from the war, Wilf Ellis played in dance bands on transatlantic liners before becoming an

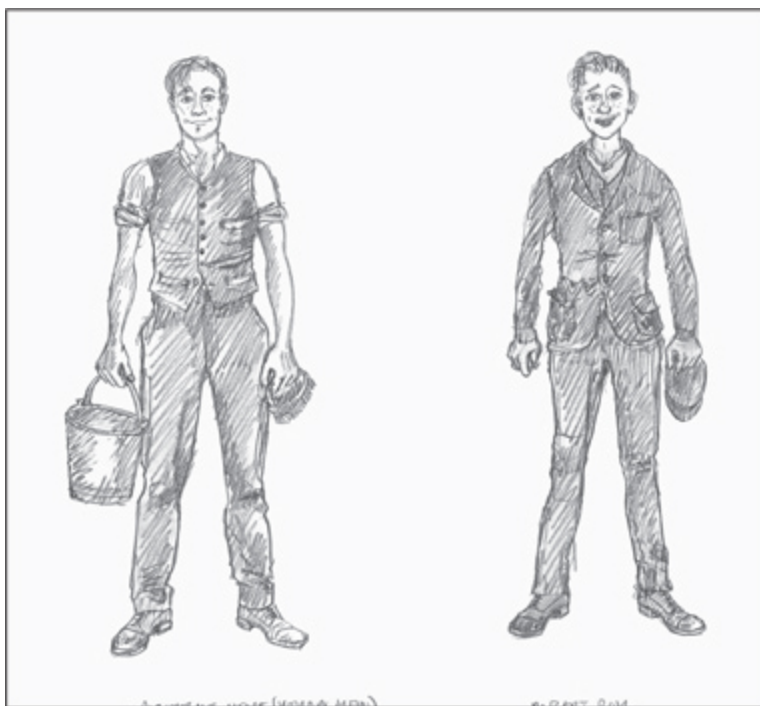
antique dealer in the village, 'a knocker'. I bought a picture from him once, an old oil painting of a racehorse standing in a stable. The horse was called Tophorn. Tophorn, as you will see, was later to play a part in this tale.

I didn't know Wilf Ellis well, just enough to talk to. Thirty-five years ago now, we met by chance in the pub, the Duke of York. We got talking by the log fire. I'd heard he'd been to the First World War as a young man, so I asked him about it. It was a conversation which very soon became a monologue. He told me how his uniform had made him itch when he first put it on. He talked of the trenches, the machine guns and the snipers, and the mud, and the whizzbangs and the wire; how he was gassed and hospitalized, how his life was once spared by a German soldier, of the horses who died the same way as the soldiers, of going out on night patrols - his courage fuelled by rum - of the fear, of the joy of hot food and a communal hot bath, of the relief when it was all over.

I knew even when he was talking that he was passing his story on to me. Much of it, Dorothy later told me, he'd never spoken of before. And I was a comparative stranger. He took me to his cottage and showed me his trenching tool, some photographs of himself, of his pals. Before I met Wilf Ellis I had gleaned all I knew of the First World War from the poetry of Wilfred Owen and Sassoon and Edward Thomas and Blunden. I had seen the film and read the book of *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Remarque, and the film too of *Paths of Glory*, and the play, *Journey's End*, the musical of *Oh, What a Lovely War!* But now I had heard it face to face, from someone who had been there, who told it straight, all of it understated, with no artifice. This was simply his story.

Inspired to know more, a few days later I went to see Captain Budgett, 'the squire' of the village, ex-master of fox-hounds, my neighbour, and asked him about his time away at that war. He told me he was there 'with horses',

and spoke of his horse as his best friend – he'd talk to him in the horse-lines at night, whisper in his ear and tell him his secret hopes and fears, and his horse had listened to him. I spoke to Albert Weeks, farm worker all his life, who hadn't been to the war, being too young, but who was there when the farm horses were sold off to the army on the village green in 1914, who saw his friends march away, some never to return; and who told me how the world was never the same afterwards.



So it was, with their stories in my head, that I was able to sit down and write my story, *War Horse*, the story of Albert, the young farm worker growing up on the farm near Iddesleigh with his beloved foal Joey, how Joey was sold away to the army as a cavalry horse and taken to France, only to be captured by the Germans, along with Tophorn, his stable companion and friend, after the first cavalry charge of the war. Through Joey's eyes we live through the universal suffering of that war as he saw it and knew it; we endure his pain, feel his longing for Albert and home.

Further novels about the First World War followed, all inspired, I have no doubt, by the truth told to me by these old men: *Farm Boy*, the sequel to *War Horse*, *The Butterfly Lion* and *The Best Christmas in the World*.

It was the National Theatre that discovered *War Horse* – a book I loved but until then few had read – and turned it into a huge theatrical event, an iconic play now seen all over the world. I am pleased about that for all sorts of reasons, but mainly because indirectly, through the play and through the subsequent film, Joey's story, which is of course Wilf's story, Captain Budgett's story, Albert Weeks's story, has been passed on to millions, maybe even ten million. The anthem sung, the story told.

The title of this book, *Only Remembered*, is also the song that begins and ends the play of *War Horse*. It was written by John Tams, the great folk singer. Here is a verse of that song:

*Only the truth that in life we have spoken,  
Only the seed that in life we have sown.  
These shall pass onwards when we are forgotten.  
Only remembered for what we have done.*

Here in this book you will find truth, which comes in many guises, in history, in stories, fictional and non-fictional, in poems and songs and pictures. My deepest thanks to those who have contributed, in particular to Annie Eaton, Ruth Knowles and Rachel Mann of Random House.

As for myself, I should like to offer, as my contribution to this collection, a piece translated from the French, from the book *On les Aura*, illustrated by Barroux. It comes from the recently discovered diary of an unknown French soldier as he goes off to war and into action in 1914. It is simply told, very much as Wilf Ellis and Captain Budgett and Albert

Weeks told me their stories in the Duke of York pub in Devon all those years ago.

Michael Moya  
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# **MICHAEL MORPURGO - Author**

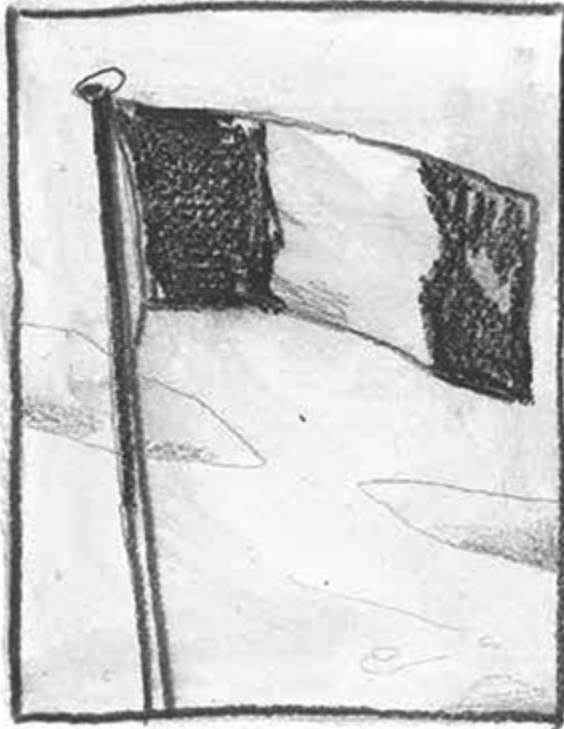
WEDNESDAY 5 AUGUST

This time, it's the great send-off. We're up at 04:00 hours because parade is at 05:00 hours. After collecting our haversacks filled with bread and a rabbit cooked the previous day, it's time for farewells.



All five of us shed a tear. After promising Madame Fernand that we'll stick together, we leave with heavy hearts, but our sense of duty makes us hold our heads high and soon we've joined the ranks, ready for the off.

*The unknown soldier heads to the trenches*



Once the regiment is on parade, the colonel has us salute the flag and he gives a rousing speech, which is met with cheers. Then we march to the station with the band playing.



07:00 hours: The train whistles and sets off in the direction of Paris. What a cruel irony! After a stop at Corbeil, the train departs again but this time heading eastwards. At the stations, the ladies from the Red Cross bring us food and drink. We pass through Montereau, Romilly and Troyes. Where are we going? Who knows.

**From *Line of Fire: Diary of an Unknown Soldier*, Barroux**

# AT WAR

*Goodbye-ee, Goodbye-ee*

*Brother Bertie went away  
To do his bit the other day,  
With a smile on his lips,  
And his Lieutenant's pips,  
Upon his shoulder bright and gay.  
As the train pulled out he said,  
'Remember me to all the birds.'  
And he wagg'd his paw  
And went away to war,  
Shouting out these pathetic words:*

*'Goodbye-ee, goodbye-ee,  
Wipe the tear, baby dear, from your eye-ee,  
Tho' it's hard to part, I know,  
I'll be tickled to death to go.  
Don't cry-ee, don't sigh-ee,  
There's a silver lining in the sky-ee,  
Bonsoir old thing, cheerio, chin, chin,  
Nap-poo, toodle-oo, Goodbye-ee.*



*If You Want the Old Battalion*

*If you want the old battalion,  
I know where they are, I know where they are,  
I know where they are,  
If you want the old battalion, I know where they are,  
They're hanging on the old barbed wire*

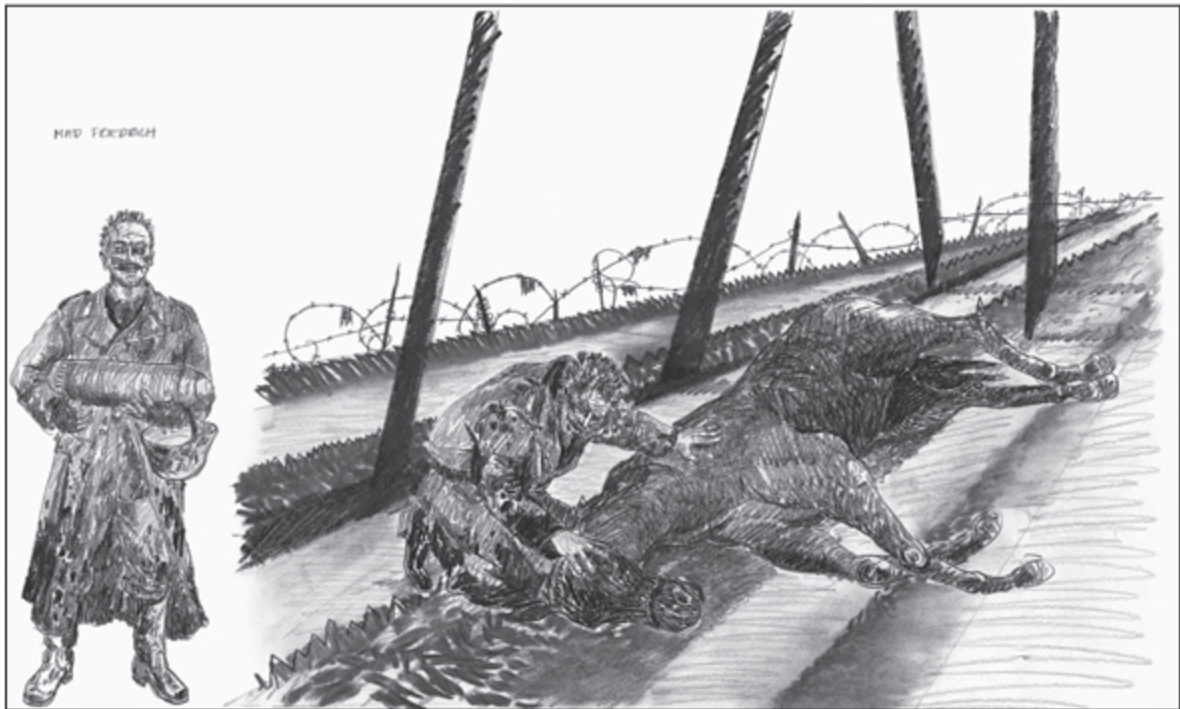
*I've seen them, I've seen them,  
Hanging on the old barbed wire  
I've seen them,  
Hanging on the old barbed wire.*

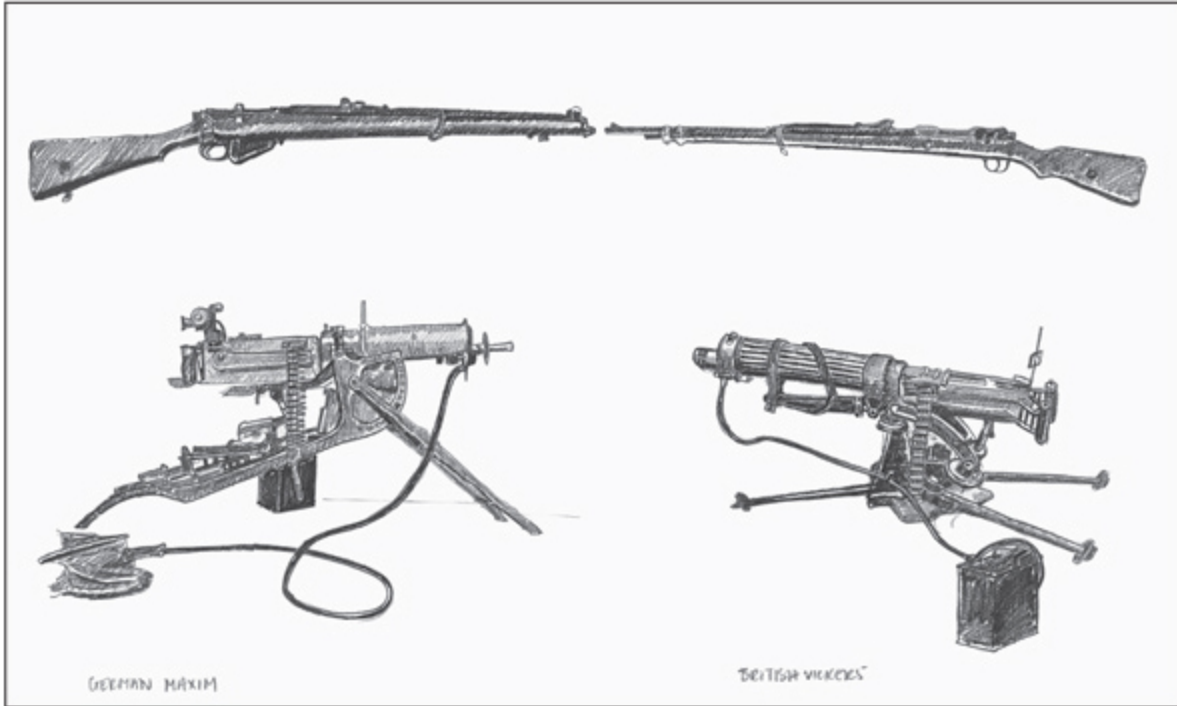
## FROM *WAR HORSE*

Like all army horses we were clipped out like hunters so that all our lower quarters were exposed to the mud and rain. The weaker ones amongst us suffered first, for they had little resilience and went downhill fast. But Tophorn and I came through to the spring, Tophorn surviving a severe cough that shook his whole massive frame as if it was trying to tear the life out of him from the inside. It was Captain Stewart who saved him, feeding him up with a hot mash and covering him as best he could in the bleakest weather.

And then, one ice-cold night in early spring, with frost lying on our backs, the troopers came to the horse-lines unexpectedly early. It was before dawn. There had been a night of incessant heavy barrage. There was a new bustle and excitement in the camp. This was not one of the routine exercises we had come to expect. The troopers came along the horse-lines in full service order, two bandoliers, respiratory haversack, rifle and sword. We were saddled up and moved silently out of the camp and onto the road. The troopers talked of the battle ahead and all the frustrations and irritations of imposed idleness vanished as they sang in the saddle. And my Trooper Warren was singing along with them as lustily as any of them. In the cold grey of the night the squadron joined the regiment in the remnants of a little ruined village peopled only by cats, and waited there for an hour until the pale light of dawn crept over the horizon. Still the guns bellowed out their fury and the ground shook beneath us. We passed the field hospitals and the light guns before trotting over the support trenches to catch our first sight of the battlefield. Desolation and destruction were everywhere. Not a building was left intact. Not a blade of grass grew in the torn and ravaged soil. The singing around me stopped and we moved on in ominous silence and out over the trenches that were crammed with men, their bayonets fixed to their rifles. They gave us a sporadic cheer as we clattered over the boards and out into the wilderness of no man's land, into a wilderness of wire and shell holes and the terrible litter of war. Suddenly the guns stopped firing overhead. We were through the wire. The squadron fanned out in a wide, uneven echelon and the bugle sounded. I felt the spurs biting into my sides and moved up alongside Tophorn as we broke into a trot. 'Do me proud, Joey,' said Trooper Warren, drawing his sword. 'Do me proud.'

**Michael Morpurgo**





*Sketches from War Horse, as drawn by Rae Smith*

## **DAME EVELYN GLENNIE - Percussionist**

I have read so much about the incessant and monstrous din of warfare that constantly bombarded the soldier's body with the noise and vibration of bursting shells and caused great pain to their ears. The noise was so enormously resounding that rain and thunder became pleasant and soothing in comparison.

This set me thinking about whether, in my vast collection of over 1,800 percussion instruments, any might have been used by the actual soldiers during the First World War, and for what purpose? We know that percussion instruments produce high and low sounds, resonant and short sounds, and therefore, what would be the most effective to compete with their already noise-polluted environment?

We are aware of the use of drums in warfare and how the impact of striking a drum and being moved by rhythm can propel a sense of purpose and teamwork, injecting a sense of fearless determination. However, my eyes wander to my collection of whistles.



Yes, strange though it is, the whistle is given to the percussion player rather than the wind player, so it has always belonged to the percussion family. The whistle is used worldwide in sport, music, on ships, in hunting, by train guards and much more. However, whistles were also used in various military situations, mainly to initiate a pre-set plan so that all parts would act simultaneously. For example, officers in the First World War would sometimes blow whistles to signal all troops along a broad stretch of trench to attack at the same time.

The ratchet was another instrument used by soldiers, often to warn of the presence of poison gas or other type of attack.

The whistle and ratchet are small 'hand-held' instruments, crucial for the circumstances of the soldiers, considering they were in such confined spaces, but the sounds they made spliced through their heavily noise-bombarded environment.



It's fascinating to see, touch and play the many instruments at our disposal and to think of how they may have been used in the past, saving countless lives in the process.

# **SHAMI CHAKRABARTI - Director of Liberty**

I first read this Wilfred Owen poem when a youth of fifteen or sixteen myself. I couldn't help but be touched by its special blend of beauty, anger and irony. Perhaps Owen was an original 'emo', exploring the contrast between the grand ceremony of militarism and religion, and the reality of doomed boys killed 'as cattle'.

## **ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH**

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?  
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

