



All Is Calm

The Christmas Truce of 1914

by Peter Rothstein

with musical arrangements by
Erick Lichte and Timothy C. Takach

HISTORY, PERSPECTIVE, OPINIONS; SUPPLEMENTAL READING AND CONTEXT
for Theater Latté Da's production of All Is Calm

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Creating All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914

I studied World War I in high school and college, but I don't remember reading about the Christmas Truce in any of my textbooks. If I had, I certainly would have remembered. This extraordinary event took place in 1914, the first year of the war, and was never repeated. Thousands of men put down their guns and left their trenches to meet their enemies in No Man's Land. They exchanged gifts of tobacco, rum and chocolates; even photographs of loved ones. They sang songs, played a game of soccer, and buried each other's dead. Upon orders from above, they eventually returned to their trenches and re-instigated a war that would last four more years.

So why did I not learn of this remarkable event? The propaganda machine of war is powerful, and news of soldiers fraternizing across enemy lines humanize the Germans and readily undermine public support for the war. The heroes of this story are the lowest of the ranks — the young, the hungry, the cold, and the optimistic — those who acted with great courage to put down their guns, overcoming a fear that placed a gun in their hands in the first place. Their story puts a human face on war, and that's the story I hope to tell.

In 2005, I attended a Cantus Christmas concert. I was struck by not only their remarkable sound, but also how their work was pushing the boundaries of chamber music in the ways Theater Latté Da was pushing the boundaries of musical theater. I approached Cantus about collaborating on a piece about the Christmas Truce. They immediately said yes, and our work began.*

I am interested in creating performance where the content dictates the form. In the creative process I continually ask myself, "If the characters were left to their own devices, how would they tell their story? What language, what tools were available to them?" There was our answer — radio. Radio was critical to military operations; it was the primary means of mass communication and mass entertainment. Our piece would be a radio musical drama, using only the tools of radio: music and text. The music ranges from trench songs to patriotic and sentimental tunes, as well as Christmas music from the participating countries. The text is taken from a wide range of sources including letters, journals, official war documents, poetry, grave stone inscriptions — even an old radio broadcast.

One of the reasons I love working in theater, versus film or television, is because the theater is a two-way street. It asks the audience to engage their imagination in order to complete the story. So, here are the words and songs of these remarkable men. Completing the story, putting a human face on war — well, that's up to you.

To the thousands of men who changed history, thank you. May we do your story justice.

— Peter Rothstein

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* Hennepin Theatre Trust joined our collaboration in 2008 with the first presentation of *All Is Calm* at the Pantages Theatre.

A HISTORY OF THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE OF 1914

Peace on the Western Front Goodwill in No Man's Land — The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce

BY MIKE DASH FROM HIS BLOG "PAST IMPERFECT" WRITTEN FOR THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

EVEN AT THE DISTANCE OF A CENTURY, no war seems more terrible than World War I. In the four years between 1914 and 1918, it killed or wounded more than 25 million people—peculiarly horribly, and (in popular opinion, at least) for less apparent purpose than did any other war before or since. Yet there were still odd moments of joy and hope in the trenches of Flanders and France, and one of the most remarkable came during the first Christmas of the war, a few brief hours during which men from both sides on the Western Front laid down their arms, emerged from their trenches, and shared food, carols, games and comradeship.



Riflemen Andrew and Grigg (center)—British troops from London—during the Christmas Truce with Saxons of the 104th and 106th Regiments of the Imperial German Army.

Their truce—the famous Christmas Truce—was unofficial and illicit. Many officers disapproved, and headquarters on both sides took strong steps to ensure that it could never happen again. While it lasted, though, the truce was magical, leading even the sober *Wall Street Journal* to observe: “What appears from the winter fog and misery is a Christmas story, a fine Christmas story that is, in truth, the most faded and tattered of adjectives: inspiring.”

The first signs that something strange was happening occurred on Christmas Eve. At 8:30 p.m. an officer of the Royal Irish Rifles reported to headquarters: “Germans have illuminated their trenches, are singing songs and wishing us a Happy Xmas. Compliments are being exchanged but am nevertheless taking all military precautions.” Further along the line, the two sides serenaded each other with carols—the German “Silent Night” being met with a British chorus of “The First Noel” — and scouts met, cautiously, in no man’s land, the shell-blasted waste between the trenches. The war diary of the Scots Guards records that a certain Private Murker “met a German Patrol and was given a glass of whisky and some cigars, and a message was sent back saying that if we didn’t fire at them, they would not fire at us.”

The same basic understanding seems to have sprung up spontaneously at other spots. For another British

soldier, Private Frederick Heath, the truce began late that same night when “all down our line of trenches there came to our ears a greeting unique in war: ‘English soldier, English soldier, a merry Christmas, a merry Christmas!’” Then—as Heath wrote in a letter home—the voices added:

‘Come out, English soldier; come out here to us.’ For some little time we were cautious, and did not even answer. Officers, fearing treachery, ordered the men to be silent. But up and down our line one heard the men answering that Christmas greeting from the enemy. How could we resist wishing each other a Merry Christmas, even though we might be at each other’s throats immediately afterwards? So we kept up a running conversation with the Germans, all the while our hands ready on our rifles. Blood and peace, enmity and fraternity—war’s most amazing paradox. The night wore on to dawn—a night made easier by songs from the German trenches, the pipings of piccolos and from our broad lines laughter and Christmas carols. Not a shot was fired.

Several factors combined to produce the conditions for this Christmas Truce. By December 1914, the men in the trenches were veterans, familiar enough with the realities of combat to have lost much of the idealism that they had carried into war in August, and most longed for an end to bloodshed. The war, they had believed, would be



A German trench in December 1914. Workmanship was far less sophisticated than it became later in the war, and the muddy conditions were unbearable.



Men from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers meet their German counterparts in no man's land somewhere in the deadly Ypres Salient, December 26, 1914.

over by Christmas, yet there they were in Christmas week still muddied, cold and in battle. Then, on Christmas Eve itself, several weeks of mild but miserably soaking weather gave way to a sudden, hard frost, creating a dusting of ice and snow along the front that made the men on both sides feel that something spiritual was taking place.

Just how widespread the truce was is hard to say. It was certainly not general—there are plenty of accounts of fighting continuing through the Christmas season in some sectors, and others of men fraternizing to the sound of guns firing nearby. One common factor seems to have been that Saxon troops—universally regarded as easygoing—were the most likely to be involved, and to have made the first approaches to their British counterparts. “We are Saxons, you are Anglo-Saxons,” one shouted across no man’s land. “What is there for us to fight about?” The most detailed estimate, made by Malcolm Brown of Britain’s Imperial War Museums, is that the truce extended along at least two-thirds of British-held trench line that scarred southern Belgium.

Even so, accounts of a Christmas Truce refer to a suspension of hostilities only between the British and the Germans. The Russians, on the Eastern Front, still adhered to the old Julian calendar in 1914, and hence did not celebrate Christmas until January 7, while the French were far more sensitive than their allies to the fact that the Germans were occupying about a third of France—and ruling French civilians with some harshness.

It was only in the British sector, then, that troops noticed at dawn the Germans had placed small Christmas trees along parapets of their trenches. Slowly, parties of men

from both sides began to venture toward the barbed wire that separated them, until—Rifleman Oswald Tilley told his parents in a letter home—“literally hundreds of each side were out in no man’s land shaking hands.”

Communication could be difficult. German-speaking British troops were scarce, but many Germans had been employed in Britain before the war, frequently in restaurants. Captain Clifton Stockwell, an officer with the Royal Welch Fusiliers who found himself occupying a trench opposite the ruins of a heavily shelled brewery, wrote in his diary of “one Saxon, who spoke excellent English” and who “used to climb in some eyrie in the brewery and spend his time asking ‘How is London getting on?’, ‘How was Gertie Millar and the Gaiety?’, and so on. Lots of our men had blind shots at him in the dark, at which he laughed, [but] one night I came out and called, ‘Who the hell are you?’ At once came back the answer, ‘Ah—the officer—I expect I know you—I used to be head waiter at the Great Central Hotel.’”

Of course, only a few men involved in the truce could share reminiscences of London. Far more common was an interest in “football”—soccer—which by then had been played professionally in Britain for a quarter-century and in Germany since the 1890s. Perhaps it was inevitable that some men on both sides would produce a ball and—freed briefly from the confines of the trenches—take pleasure in kicking it about. What followed, though, was something more than that, for if the story of the Christmas Truce has its jewel, it is the legend of the match played between the British and the Germans—which the Germans claimed to have won, 3-2.

The first reports of such a contest surfaced a few days



A faded photo of the 133rd Royal Saxon Regiment's pre-war football team was one of the souvenirs presented to Lieutenant Ian Stewart of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. Stewart remembered that the Saxons were "very proud" of their team's quality.

afterward; on January 1, 1915, *The Times* published a letter written from a doctor attached to the Rifle Brigade, who reported "a football match... played between them and us in front of the trench." The brigade's official history insisted that no match took place because "it would have been most unwise to allow the Germans to know how weakly the British trenches were held." But there is plenty of evidence that soccer *was* played that Christmas Day—mostly by men of the same nationality, but in at least three or four places between troops from the opposing armies.

The mist was slow to clear and suddenly my orderly threw himself into my dugout to say that both the German and Scottish soldiers had come out of their trenches and were fraternizing along the front.

The most detailed of these stories comes from the German side, and reports that the 133rd Royal Saxon Regiment played a game against Scottish troops. According to the 133rd's *War History*, this match emerged from the "droll scene of *Tommy und Fritz*" chasing hares that emerged from under cabbages between the lines, and then producing a ball to kick about. Eventually, this "developed into a regulation football match with caps casually laid out as goals. The frozen ground was no great matter. Then we organized each side into teams, lining up in motley rows, the football in the center. The game ended 3-2 for Fritz."

Exactly what happened between the Saxons and the Scots is difficult to say. Some accounts of the game bring in elements that were actually dreamed up by Robert Graves, a renowned British poet, writer and war veteran, who reconstructed the encounter in a story published in 1962. In Graves's version, the score remains 3-2 to the Germans, but the writer adds a sardonic fictional flourish: "The Reverend Jolly, our padre, acted as ref [and showed] too much Christian charity—their outside left shot the deciding goal, but he was miles offside and admitted it as soon as the whistle went."

The real game was far from a regulated fixture with 11 players a side and 90 minutes of play. In the one detailed eyewitness account that survives—albeit in an interview not given until the 1960s—Lieutenant Johannes Niemann, a Saxon who served with the 133rd, recalled that on Christmas morning:

The mist was slow to clear and suddenly my orderly threw himself into my dugout to say that both the German and Scottish soldiers had come out of their trenches and were fraternizing along the front. I grabbed my binoculars and looking cautiously over the parapet saw the incredible sight of our soldiers exchanging cigarettes, schnapps and chocolate with the enemy. Later a Scottish soldier appeared with a football which seemed to come from nowhere and a few minutes later a real football match got underway. The Scots marked their goal mouth with their strange caps and we did the same with ours. It was far from easy to play on the frozen ground, but we continued, keeping

rigorously to the rules, despite the fact that it only lasted an hour and that we had no referee. A great many of the passes went wide, but all the amateur footballers, although they must have been very tired, played with huge enthusiasm.

For Niemann, the novelty of getting to know their killed opposition matched the novelty of playing soccer in no man's land:

Us Germans really roared when a gust of wind revealed that the Scots wore no drawers under their kilts—and hooted and whistled every time they caught an impudent glimpse of one posterior belonging to one of “yesterday’s enemies.” But after an hour’s play, when our Commanding Officer heard about it, he sent an order that we must put a stop to it. A little later we drifted back to our trenches and the fraternization ended.

The game that Niemann recalled was only one of many that took place up and down the Front. Attempts were made in several spots to involve the Germans—the Queen’s Westminsters, one private soldier wrote home, “had a football out in front of the trenches and asked the Germans to send a team to play us, but either they considered the ground too hard, as it had been freezing all night and was a ploughed field, or their officers put the bar up.” But at least three, and perhaps four, other matches apparently took place between the armies. A sergeant in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders recorded that a game was played in his sector “between the lines and the trenches,” and according to a letter home published by the *Glasgow News* on January 2, the Scots “won easily by 4-1.” Meanwhile Lieutenant Albert Wynn of the Royal Field Artillery wrote of a match against a German team of “Prussians and Hanovers” that was played near Ypres. That game “ended in a draw,” but the Lancashire Fusiliers, occupying trenches close to the coast near Le Touquet and using a ration-tin “ball,” played their own game against the Germans, and—according to their regimental history—lost by the same score as the Scots who encountered the 133rd, 3-2.

It is left to a fourth recollection, given in 1983 by Ernie Williams of the Cheshire Regiment, to supply a real idea of what soccer played between the trenches really meant. Although Williams was recalling a game played on New Year’s Eve, after there had been a thaw and plenty of rain, his description chimes with the little that is known for sure about the games played on Christmas Day:

[A] ball appeared from somewhere, I don’t know where, but it came from their side... They made up some goals and one fellow went in goal and then it was just a general kickabout. I should think there were a couple of hundred taking part. I had a go at the ball. I was pretty good then, at 19. Everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves. There was no sort of ill-will between us.... There was no referee and no score, no tally at all. It was simply a mêlée—nothing like the soccer that you see on television. The boots we wore were a menace—those great big boots we had on—and in those days the balls were made of leather and they soon got very soggy.

Of course, not every man on either side was thrilled by the Christmas Truce, and official opposition squelched at least one proposed Anglo-German soccer match. Lieutenant C.E.M. Richards, a young officer serving with the East Lancashire Regiment, had been greatly disturbed by reports of fraternization between the men of his regiment and the enemy and had actually welcomed the “return of good old sniping” late on Christmas Day—“just to make sure that the war was still on.” That evening, however, Richards “received a signal from Battalion Headquarters telling him to make a football pitch in no man’s land, by filling up shell holes etc., and to challenge the enemy to a football match on 1st January.” Richards recalled that “I was furious and took no action at all,” but over time his view did mellow. “I wish I had kept that signal,” he wrote years later. “Stupidly I destroyed it—I was so angry. It would now have been a good souvenir.”

In most places, up and down the line, it was accepted that the truce would be purely temporary. Men returned to their trenches at dusk, in some cases summoned back by flares, but for the most part determined to preserve the peace at least until midnight. There was more singing, and in at least one spot presents were exchanged. George Eade, of the Rifles, had become friends with a German artilleryman who spoke good English, and as he left, this new acquaintance said to him: “Today we have peace. Tomorrow, you fight for your country, I fight for mine. Good luck.”

Fighting erupted again the next day, though there were reports from some sectors of hostilities remaining suspended into the New Year. And it does not seem to have been uncommon for the resumption of the war to be marked with further displays of mutual respect between enemies. In the trenches occupied by the Royal Welch Fusiliers, Captain Stockwell “climbed up on the parapet, fired three shots in the air and put up a flag with ‘Merry Christmas’ on it.” At this, his opposite number, Hauptmann von Sinner, “appeared on the German parapet and both officers bowed and saluted. Von Sinner then also fired two shots in the air and went back into his trench.”

The war was on again, and there would be no further truce until the general armistice of November 1918. Many, perhaps close to the majority, of the thousands of men who celebrated Christmas 1914 together would not live to see the return of peace. But for those who did survive, the truce was something that would never be forgotten.

Sources: Malcolm Brown & Shirley Seaton. The Christmas Truce: The Western Front December 1914. London: Papermac, 1994; The Christmas Truce 1914: Operation Plum Puddings, accessed December 22, 2011; Alan Cleaver and Lesley Park (eds). Not a Shot was Fired: Letters from the Christmas Truce 1914. Whitehaven, Cumbria: Operation Plum Puddings, 2006; Marc Ferro et al. Meetings in No Man’s Land: Christmas 1914 and Fraternization in the Great War. London: Constable & Robinson, 2007; “The Christmas Truce – 1914.” Hellfire Corner, accessed December 19, 2011; Thomas Löwer. “Demystifying the Christmas truce.” The Heritage of the Great War, accessed December 19, 2011; Stanley Weintraub. Silent Night: The Remarkable Christmas Truce of 1914. London: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: RECOLLECTIONS OF THE TRUCE

Soldiers remember the Christmas Truce of 1914

COMPILED BY THOMAS VINCIGUERRA, FOR *THE NEW YORK TIMES* 2005

THE TRUCE BROKE OUT SPONTANEOUSLY IN MANY PLACES.

Pvt. Albert Moren of the Second Queens Regiment recalled the scene on Christmas Eve near the French village of La Chapelle d'Armentières:

It was a beautiful moonlit night, frost on the ground, white almost everywhere; and about 7 or 8 in the evening there was a lot of commotion in the German trenches and there were these lights -I don't know what they were. And then they sang "Silent Night" — "Stille Nacht." I shall never forget it, it was one of the highlights of my life. I thought, what a beautiful tune.

Rifleman Graham Williams of the Fifth London Rifle Brigade recalled how the mood spread:

Then suddenly lights began to appear along the German parapet, which were evidently make-shift Christmas trees, adorned with lighted candles, which burnt steadily in the still, frosty air! ... First the Germans would sing one of their carols and then we would sing one of ours, until when we started up "O Come, All Ye Faithful" the Germans immediately joined in singing the same hymn to the Latin words *Adeste Fideles*. And I thought, well, this is really a most extraordinary thing - two nations both singing the same carol in the middle of a war.

The shared carols inspired Capt. Josef Sewald of Germany's 17th Bavarian Regiment to make a bold gesture:

I shouted to our enemies that we didn't wish to shoot and that we make a Christmas truce. I said I would come from my side and we could speak with each other. First there was silence, then I shouted once more, invited them, and the British shouted "No shooting!" Then a man came out of the trenches and I on my side did the same and so we came together and we shook hands - a bit cautiously!

The enemies quickly became friends, as Cpl. John Ferguson of the Second Seaforth Highlanders recalled:

We shook hands, wished each other a Merry Xmas, and were soon conversing as if we had known each other for years. We were in front of their wire entanglements and surrounded by Germans - Fritz and I in the center talking, and Fritz occasionally translating to his friends what I was saying. We stood inside the circle like street corner orators. ... What a sight - little groups of Germans and British extending almost the length of our front! Out of the darkness we could hear laughter and see lighted matches, a German lighting a Scotchman's cigarette and vice versa, exchanging cigarettes and souvenirs.

On Christmas Day, some Germans and British held a joint service to bury their dead. Second Lt. Arthur Pelham Burn of the Sixth Gordon Highlanders was there:

Our Padre ... arranged the prayers and psalms, etc., and an interpreter wrote them out in German. They were read first in English by our Padre and then in German by a boy who was studying for the ministry. It was an extraordinary and most wonderful sight. The Germans formed up on one side, the English on the other, the officers standing in front, every head bared.

According to several accounts, soccer games were played in no man's land with makeshift balls that Christmas. Lt. Kurt Zehmisch of Germany's 134th Saxons Infantry Regiment witnessed a match:

Eventually the English brought a soccer ball from their trenches, and pretty soon a lively game ensued. How marvelously wonderful, yet how strange it was. The English officers felt the same way about it. Thus Christmas, the celebration of Love, managed to bring mortal enemies together as our friends for a time.

Second Lt. Bruce Bairnsfather of the First Warwickshires saw an even more unusual fraternization:

The last I saw of this little affair was a vision of one of my machine gunners, who was a bit of an amateur hairdresser in civilian life, cutting the unnaturally long hair of a docile Boche, who was patiently kneeling on the ground while the automatic clippers crept up the back of his neck.

Not everyone was so charitable. Cpl. Adolf Hitler of the 16th Bavarians lambasted his comrades for their unmilitary conduct:

Such things should not happen in wartime. Have you Germans no sense of honor left at all?

When Gen. Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, commander of the British II Corps, learned of the consorting, he was irate:

I have issued the strictest orders that on no account is intercourse to be allowed between the opposing troops. To finish this war quickly, we must keep up the fighting spirit and do all we can to discourage friendly intercourse.

Inevitably, both sides were soon ordered back to their trenches. Capt. Charles "Buffalo Bill" Stockwell of the Second Royal Welch Fusiliers recalled how the peace ended early on Dec. 26:

At 8:30, I fired three shots into the air and put up a flag with "Merry Christmas" on it on the parapet. He [a German] put up a sheet with "Thank You" on it, and the German captain appeared on the parapet. We both bowed and saluted and got down into our respective trenches, and he fired two shots into the air, and the war was on again.



Corbis 1914-1918: German soldiers decorating a Christmas tree at the front lines.

AMAZING ARMISTICE!

The historic Christmas Truce of 1914

by Capt. Sir Edward Hulse, Bart.

Despite the bitter fighting which had been going on for over four months, a remarkable armistice was observed in many sectors on Christmas Day 1914, and English and German soldiers ceased killing each other for one day and fraternized in a most genuine manner. In the following chapter a Captain of the Scots Guards describes the extraordinary scenes enacted between the lines during this highly unofficial truce. The author held a regular commission in the Scots Guards in 1914 — he was killed in action, France, March 12, 1915, aged 25.



My Dearest Mother,

Just returned to billets again, after the most extraordinary Christmas in the trenches you could possibly imagine. Words fail me completely, in trying to describe it, but here goes! On the 23rd we took over the trenches in the ordinary manner, relieving the Grenadiers, and during the 24th the usual firing took place, and sniping was pretty brisk. We stood to arms as usual at 6.30 a.m. on the 25th, and I noticed that there was not much shooting; this gradually died down, and by 8 a.m. there was no shooting at all, except for a few shots on our left.

At 8.30 a.m. I was looking out, and saw four Germans leave their trenches and come towards us; I told two of my men to go and meet them, unarmed (as the Germans were unarmed), and to see that they did not pass the halfway line.

We were 350–400 yards apart at this point. My fellows were not very keen, not knowing what was up, so I went out alone, and met Barry, one of our ensigns, also coming out from another part of the line. By the time we got to them, they were half of the way over, and much too near our barbed wire, so I moved them back.

They were three private soldiers and a stretcher-

bearer, and their spokesman started off by saying that he thought it only right to come over and wish us a happy Christmas, and trusted us implicitly to keep the truce. He came from Suffolk, where he had left his best girl and a 3 h.p. motor-bike! He told me that he could not get a letter to the girl, and wanted to send one through me. I made him write out a postcard in front of me, in English, and I sent it off that night. I told him that she probably would not be a bit keen to see him again. We then entered on a long discussion on every sort of thing. I was dressed in an old stocking-cap and a man's overcoat, and they took me for a corporal, a thing which I did not discourage, as I had an eye to going as near their lines as possible.

I asked them what orders they had from their officers as to coming over to us, and they said none; that they had just come over out of goodwill.

They protested that they had no feeling of enmity at all towards us, but that everything lay with their authorities, and that being soldiers they had to obey. I believe that they were speaking the truth when they said this, and that they never wished to fire a shot again. They said that unless directly ordered, they were not going to shoot again until we did.

They think that our press is to blame in working up feeling against them by publishing false "atrocities reports." We had a heated, and at the same time, good-natured argument, and ended by hinting to each other that the other was lying!

I kept it up for half an hour, and then escorted them back as far as their barbed wire, having a jolly good look round all the time, and picking up various little bits of information which I had not had an opportunity of doing under fire! I left instructions with them that if any of them came out later they must not come over the half-way line, and appointed a ditch as the meeting place. We parted, after an exchange of Albany cigarettes and German cigars, and I went straight to H.-qrs. to report.

On my return at 10 a.m. I was surprised to hear a hell of a din going on, and not a single man left in my trenches. I heard strains of "Tipperary" floating down the breeze, swiftly followed by a tremendous burst of "Deutschland über Alles," and I saw, to my amazement, not only a crowd of about 150 British and Germans at the half-way house which I had appointed opposite my lines,

Archduke Franz Ferdinand heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and his wife are assassinated in Sarajevo.

JUN 28

Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia.

JUL 28

Germany mobilizes her armed forces and declares war on Russia.

AUG 1

Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia.

AUG 6

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

WWI, 1914

pbs.org/greatwar/timeline/time_1914.html

JUL 31

As an ally of Serbia, Russia announces full mobilization of her armed forces.

AUG 3

Germany declares war on France.

AUG 4

Germany declares war on neutral Belgium and invades in a right flanking move designed to defeat France quickly. As a result of this invasion, Britain declares war on Germany.

but six or seven such crowds, all the way down our lines, extending towards the 8th Division on our right. I hustled out and asked if there were any German officers in my crowd, and the noise died down (as this time I was myself in my own cap and badges of rank). I found two, but had to talk to them through an interpreter, as they could neither talk English nor French. I explained to them that strict orders must be maintained as to meeting half-way, and everyone unarmed; and we both agreed not to fire until the other did, thereby creating a complete deadlock and armistice (if strictly observed). Meanwhile Scots and Huns were fraternizing in the most genuine possible manner. Every sort of souvenir was exchanged, addresses given and received, photos of families shown, etc. One of our fellows offered a German a cigarette: the German said, "Virginian?" Our fellow said, "Aye, straight-cut." The German said, "No thanks, I only smoke Turkish!" It gave us all a good laugh.

A German N.C.O. with the Iron Cross, gained, he told me, for conspicuous skill in sniping, started his fellows off on some marching tune. When they had done I set the note for "The Boys of Bonnie Scotland, where the heather and the bluebells grow," and so we went on, singing everything from "Good King Wenceslaus" down to the ordinary Tommies' song, and ended up with "Auld Lang Syne," which we all, English, Scots, Irish, Prussian, Wurtembergers, etc., joined in. It was absolutely astounding, and if I had seen it on a cinematograph film I should have sworn that it was faked. From foul rain and wet, the weather had cleared up the night before, to a sharp frost, and it was a perfect day, everything white, and the silence seemed extraordinary, after the usual din. From all sides birds seemed to arrive, and we hardly ever see a bird generally. Later in the day I fed about 50 sparrows outside my dug-out, which shows how complete the silence and quiet was. I must say that I was very much impressed with the whole scene, and also, as everyone else, astoundingly relieved by the quiet, and by being able to walk about freely. It is the first

time, day or night, that we have heard no guns, or rifle-firing, since I left Havre and convalescence!

It was now 11.30 a.m. and at this moment George Paynter arrived on the scene, with a hearty "Well, my lads, a Merry Christmas to you! This is damned comic, isn't it?" George told them that he thought it only right that we should show that we could desist from hostilities on a day which was so important in both countries; and he then said, "Well, my boys, I've brought you over something to celebrate this funny show with," and he produced from his pocket a large bottle of rum (not ration rum, but the proper stuff). One large shout went up, and the above-mentioned nasty little spokesman uncorked it, and in a heavy, ceremonious manner, drank our healths, in the name of his "camaraden;" the bottle was then passed on and polished off before you could say knife.

During the afternoon the same extraordinary scene was enacted between the lines, and one of the enemy told me that he was longing to get back to London, I assured him that "So was I." He said that he was sick of the war, and I told him that when the truce was ended, any of his friends would be welcome in our trenches, and would be well-received, fed, and given a free passage to the Isle of Man!

Another courting meeting took place, with no result, and at 4.30 p.m. we agreed to keep in our respective trenches, and told them that the truce was ended. They persisted, however, in saying that they were not going to fire, and as George had told us not to, unless they did, we prepared for a quiet night, but warned all sentries to be doubly on the alert.

During the day both sides had taken the opportunity of bringing up piles of wood, straw, etc., which is generally only brought up with difficulty under fire. We improved our dug-outs, roofed in new ones, and got a lot of very useful work done towards increasing our comfort. The Border Regiment were occupying this section on Christmas Day, and Giles Loder, our Adjutant, went down there with a party that morning on hearing of the friendly demonstrations in front of my Coy., to see if he could come to

an agreement about our dead, who were still lying out between the trenches. The trenches are so close at this point, that of course each side had to be far stricter. Well, he found an extremely pleasant and superior stamp of German officer, who arranged to bring all our dead to the half-way line. We took them over there, and buried 29 exactly half way between the two lines. This officer kept on pointing to our dead and saying, "Les Braves, c'est bien dommage." When George heard of it he went down to that section and talked to the nice officer and gave him a scarf. That same evening a German orderly came to the half-way line, and brought a pair of warm, woolly gloves as a present in return for George.

Well, all was quiet, as I said, that night, and next morning, while I was having breakfast, one of my N.C.O.s came and reported that the enemy were again coming over to talk. I had given full instructions, and none of my men were allowed out of the trenches to talk to the enemy. I had also told the N.C.O. of an advanced post which I have up a ditch, to go out with two men, unarmed, if any of the enemy came over, to see that they did not cross the half-way line, and to engage them in pleasant conversation. So I went out, and found the same lot as the day before; they told me again that they had no intention of firing, and wished the truce to continue. I had instructions not to fire till the enemy did; I told them; and so the same comic form of temporary truce continued on the 26th, and again at 4.30 p.m. I informed them that the truce was at an end. We had sent them over some plum puddings, and they thanked us heartily for them and retired again.

Many thanks for your letters, which amused me greatly with the various anecdotes. Please wish Gramps very many happy returns of to-day, and tell him that I have instructed you to hand this letter to him, as Birthday Wishes, as I have not a minute to write any others. Very Best Wishes for the New Year to you and O., and all at home.

Ever your loving
Ted

German army, led by Erich Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg achieves its greatest victory of the war on the Eastern front against Russia at the Battle of Tennenberg.

AUG 26-30

First trenches of the Western front are dug.

SEP 15

Trench warfare begins to dominate the Western Front.

NOV

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

AUG 22

"The Battle of the Frontiers" 27,000 French soldiers die on this single day in an offensive thrust to the east of Paris, towards the German borders.

SEP 5-10

First Battle of the Marne halts German invasion in France.

OCT 19

First Battle of Ypres begins.

DEC 25

Unofficial Christmas Truce declared by soldiers in the trenches along the Western Front.

LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

FOR FOUR LONG YEARS THE WARRING PARTIES SAT DUG INTO A MOTIONLESS WAR OF POSITIONS.



An aerial view of the extensive trench system

'The trenches'—there can be little doubt that that phrase was the most emotive to emerge from the vocabulary of the Great War. For the generation of 1914-1918—as indeed for every generation since—the words had and have a unique ring. To have been 'in the trenches' put a permanent mark on a man: he had been admitted to a special, private world, the reality of which, as many were aware at the time, could only be fully understood by those who had been part of it. (Brown, 1978)

-Nearly half a million Allied soldiers lived and fought in the dreary trenches on the Western Front. There were three lines of trenches: the front line (closest to the enemy), the support line, and the reserve line. Men moved about between the three lines through communicating trenches, and through tunnels dug by men called "sappers". (Granfield, 2001)

-No soldier spent all the war years at the front. A spell in the front-line trenches generally did not last more than four days, except when relief was late coming. After that, the men spent two or three days on guard in the second line, where they did light duties and could, if needed, send reinforcements to the front lines. After guard duty, the men had the right to two to four days' rest in their quarters. The men returning from the front were exhausted. The first thing they did was sleep. After that, they went off in search of hot water, clean clothes and a good meal. (In Flanders Fields)

-Trenches were at least six feet deep and could be lined with sandbags or corrugated metal. At the far end of the trench was the firing step on which the soldiers stood to fire across "No Man's Land", the 300 feet of battlefield that separated them from the enemy's trenches. Wooden duckboards on the ground were meant to keep the men's feet out of the mud and could be used as portable ladders and bridges. (Granfield, 2001)

-Trenches were generally laid underground but in the flooded Yser landscape where the water had brought the Germans to a halt, that same water prevented the construction of such

trenches in some areas. In certain regions, even the highest points were under water: railways, bridges, isolated farms; they could only be used as observation points. (De Gryse & Van Everbroeck (ed.))

-An hour before dawn every morning soldiers received the order to 'Stand To'. Half asleep and frozen, the men climbed on to the fire-step, rifles clutched with numb fingers and bayonets fixed. The half-light of dawn and at dusk was when an attack was most expected, and both sides had their trenches fully manned at those times. Sometimes nothing happened. Often there was a furious exchange of rifle and machine-gun fire to discourage any attack through the gloom. This was known as 'morning hate'. After an hour or so the order was given to 'Stand Down'. Only the sentries remained on the fire-step and the rest of the men enjoyed what breakfast they could get among the rats, blood-red slugs and horned beetles that infested the trenches. (Foreman, 1997)

-The enemy trenches were so close that whenever the fighting died down, each army could hear the other's voices and could sometimes even smell their breakfast. They all knew that they were sharing the same terrible conditions. Singing in the trenches was common in 1914, and songs from one front line floated to the other on the quiet evening air. Occasionally during a quiet period a British Tommie would put a tin can on a stick and hold it above the parapet to give the Germans some shooting practice. The Germans would do likewise and a shooting match would develop accompanied by cheers and boos. (Foreman, 1997)

Sources: *In Flanders Fields, Museum Guide, In Flanders Fields Museum*; Linda Granfield, *Where Poppies Grow, A World War I Companion*, Markham, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2001; Piet De Gryse and Christine Van Everbroeck (ed.), *1914-1918 The Great War, Brussels, Openbaar Kunstbezit in Vlaanderen*; Michael Foreman, *War Game*, London, Pavilion Books Limited, 1997; Malcolm Brown, *Tommy Goes to War*, London JM Dent & Sons Ltd, 1978





"Poetical appreciation is only newly bursting on me." Isaac Rosenberg

For many of the young men who donned uniforms in 1914, the war was a noble adventure, a chance to emulate the chivalrous knights of old. The brutal reality of conflict—more hellish than any previously imagined hell—transformed this early idealism into an intense disenchantment, which found expression in a body of powerful literature.

The Western Front was especially conducive to poetry. Soldier-poets found themselves, as never before, in the very thick, or stalemate, of battle. In poems jotted down on the backs of envelopes and letters, they immortalized the tribulations of their comrades and the desolate landscape of corpses, churned mud, gaping shell-holes, barbed wire, splintered trees, and smashed buildings. Writing home from his first tour of duty on the Somme, 24-year old Wilfred Owen wrote of “everything unnatural, broken, blasted, the distortion of the dead, whose unburiable bodies sit outside the dug-outs all day, all night, the most execrable sights on earth.” His poems, not published until after his death, raged against the human cost of the war. Yet after being invalided home, he chose to return to the front line and was killed a week before the signing of the Armistice. Another casualty was Isaac Rosenberg. A frail and diminutive young man, he enlisted partly in the hope that his army separation allowance would benefit his mother, and was killed on a night patrol at the beginning of April 1918.

Like other English soldier-poets, notably Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves, Owen and Rosenberg expressed the gulf of understanding between the brotherhood of “those who were there” and civilians at home. A similar theme—intense suffering alleviated by comradeship—runs through *Le Feu (Under Fire)*, the war novel written by French writer Henri Barbusse, which contains many harrowing passages. In some cases, the bond of shared suffering was so strong it

extended to the “enemy” on the other side of No Man’s Land. This attitude pervades *All Quiet on the Western Front (Im Westen nichts Neues)*, a novel written by twice wounded German veteran Erich Maria Remarque. First published in 1929, Remarque’s pacifist message led to his work being publicly burned by the Nazis, and cost him his German citizenship. Elsewhere, *All Quiet on the Western Front* was a huge success, contributing to a retrospective perception of the war as a tragic catastrophe.

However, not all writers were antiwar. While poets such as Owen and Sassoon were deeply critical of the war machine, and heedless politicians and generals, they did not consider the war itself to be futile. They would not have taken issue with the last verse of *In Flanders Fields*, in which the dead call upon the living to “take up our quarrel with the foe”. First published anonymously in 1915, *In Flanders Fields* was written by John McCrae, a Canadian doctor tending to Allied soldiers near Ypres. It remains of the most famous and popular poems of the war. (Willmott, 2007)

In Flanders Fields; “The Poppy Poem”

John McCrae was profoundly moved by the enormous losses suffered during the Second Battle of Ieper. As the battalion doctor at the Essex Farm Advanced Dressing Station, he knew precisely how the soldiers were suffering and felt a profound bond with them. During a lull in the fighting on the night of May 2nd 1915, he wrote the poem *In Flanders Fields* as a consolation for them and for himself.

The famous first stanza is beautiful and elegiac. In the second, McCrae revolts against the taking of so many lives. An obvious conclusion would be for the poet to condemn the war responsible for all this death. John McCrae, however, calls for even more war and hence more death, arguing that the earlier losses must not have been in vain. When the poem appeared in *Punch magazine* in 1915, it provided recruiting officers with the perfect bait with which to entice even more young men to come in search of glory and to prepare them for ‘the old lie’. So it was that Ieper and the Flanders Fields around it became the graveyard they remain to this day. (In Flanders Field Museum Guide)

Sources: H.P. Willmott, *World War I*, New York, DK Publishing, 2007; *In Flanders Fields*, Museum Guide, In Flanders Fields Museum

In Flanders Fields
 In Flanders fields the poppies grow
 Between the crosses, row on row
 That mark our place: and in the sky
 The larks still bravely sing, they
 Scarce heard amid the guns below.
 We are the Dead. Short days ago
 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
 Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
 In Flanders fields.
 Take up our quarrel with the foe:
 To you from failing hands we throw
 The torch; be yours to hold it high!
 If ye break faith with us who die
 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
 In Flanders fields.
 John McCrae

SOLDIER POETS

The First World War provides one of the seminal moments of the twentieth-century in which literate soldiers, plunged into inhuman conditions, reacted to their surroundings in poems reflecting Wordsworth's "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."

"POETRY," Wordsworth reminds us, "is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," and there can be no area of human experience that has generated a wider range of powerful feelings than war: hope and fear; exhilaration and humiliation; hatred – not only for the enemy, but also for generals, politicians, and war-profiteers; love – for fellow soldiers, for women and children left behind, for country (often) and cause (occasionally).

The poetry offered here is fine literature. If literature should not only indicate how mankind thinks, but also how mankind feels, then the poems of the First World War succeed on both counts.

– Dr. Stuart Lee, 1996

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE, 1887–1917



Ledwidge was a war poet born on August 19, 1887 in the village of Slane, County Meath, Ireland. The eighth of nine children of an evicted tenant-farmer, Patrick Ledwidge, he would later claim to be "of a family who were ever soldiers and poets." Leaving school at the age of 14, he worked in various manual labor positions while developing a love for and honing his own poetical talents, writing wherever he could,

sometimes even on gates or fence posts. Though a strong nationalist, he enlisted in Dunsany's Regiment, the 10th (Irish) Division, Inniskilling Fusiliers in October 1914 — to serve in France and Flanders during World War One. Sometimes known as the "poet of the blackbirds," he was killed in action in Flanders, at Boezinge, on 31 July, 1917 during the Third Battle of Ypres, at the age of 29.

A Soldier's Grave

Then in the lull of midnight, gentle arms
Lifted him slowly down the slopes of death,
Lest he should hear again the mad alarms
Of battle, dying moans, and painful breath.
And where the earth was soft for flowers we made
A grave for him that he might better rest.
So, Spring shall come and leave it sweet arrayed,
And there the lark shall turn her dewy nest.

–Francis Ledwidge

PATRICK MACGILL, 1889–1963



MacGill was born in Glenties, Donegal, Ireland on January 1st 1889. He was the eldest of eleven children born into a poor farming family. He attended Mullanmore National School until the age of 10, after which, at age 12, he went to the hiring fair in Strabane, where he was hired to a County Tyrone farmer. MacGill was later employed as an itinerant 'navvy'. The term 'navvy' originated from the word Navigator. Navvies worked as labourers building

roads, railways, tunnels and dams. During his years as a navvy, MacGill became a member of the many circulating libraries and educated himself. During WWI, MacGill served with the London Irish Rifles ($\frac{1}{18}$ th Battalion, The London Regiment) and was wounded at the Battle of Loos on October 28, 1915. He was recruited into Military Intelligence, and wrote for MI 7b between 1916 and the Armistice in 1918. MacGill wrote a memoir-type novel called *Children of the Dead End*.

A Lament From The Trenches

I wish the sea was not so wide that parts me from my love;
I wish the things men do below were known to God above!
I wish that I were back again in the glens of Donegal,
They'd call me a coward if I return but a hero if I fall!
Is it better to be a living coward, or thrice a hero dead?
It's better to go to sleep, m'lad, the colour-sergeant said.

–Patrick MacGill

OF WORLD WAR I

WILFRED OWEN, 1893–1918



Owen was born near Oswestry, Shropshire on the 18th of March, 1893. Owen graduated from Shrewsbury Technical School in 1911 at the age of 18. Owen attended University College, Reading, and is known to have studied the diverse subjects of botany and poetry. Owen returned to England in autumn 1915 and enlisted in the Artists' Rifles. His training was completed in Hare

Hall Camp in Essex, but this allowed him time to make trips to London, notably to the Poetry Bookshop run by Harold Monro who he met. On 4th June 1916 Owen was commissioned as a second lieutenant with the Manchester Regiment. Owen composed nearly all of his poems in slightly over a year, from August 1917 to September 1918. His shocking, realistic war poetry on the horrors of trenches and gas warfare was heavily influenced by his friend and mentor Siegfried Sassoon, and stood in stark contrast both to the public perception of war at the time and to the confidently patriotic verse written by earlier war poets. In November 1918 he was killed in action at the age of 25, one week before the Armistice.

1914

War broke: and now the Winter of the world
With perishing great darkness closes in.
The foul tornado, centred at Berlin,
Is over all the width of Europe whirled,
Rending the sails of progress. Rent or furled
Are all Art's ensigns. Verse wails. Now begin
Famines of thought and feeling. Love's wine's thin.
The grain of human Autumn rots, down-hurled.
For after Spring had bloomed in early Greece,
And Summer blazed her glory out with Rome,
An Autumn softly fell, a harvest home,
A slow grand age, and rich with all increase.
But now, for us, wild Winter, and the need
Of sowings for new Spring, and blood for seed.

—Wilfred Owen

SIEGFRIED SASSOON, 1886–1967



Sassoon was born at Weirleigh outside of the village of Matfield in Kent on September 8, 1886 to a wealthy Jewish merchant family. He lived the leisurely life of a cultivated country gentleman before the First World War, pursuing his two major interests, poetry and fox hunting. Following the outbreak of the First World War, Sassoon served with the Royal Welch Fusiliers, seeing action in France in late 1915. Sassoon is

best remembered for his angry and compassionate poems of WWI, which brought him public and critical acclaim. Avoiding the sentimentality and jingoism of many war poets, he wrote of the horror and brutality of trench warfare and contemptuously satirized generals, politicians, and churchmen for their incompetence and blind support of the war. He published a series of volumes containing poems inspired by the war: *The Old Huntsman* (1917); *Counter-Attack and Other Poems* (1918); and *Picture-Show* (1919).

Trench Duty

Shaken from sleep, and numbed and scarce awake,
Out in the trench with three hours' watch to take,
I blunder through the splashing mirk; and then
Hear the gruff muttering voices of the men
Crouching in cabins candle-chinked with light.
Hark! There's the big bombardment on our right
Rumbling and bumping; and the dark's a glare
Of flickering horror in the sectors where
We raid the Boche; men waiting, stiff and chilled,
Or crawling on their bellies through the wire.
'What? Stretcher-bearers wanted? Some one killed?'
Five minutes ago I heard a sniper fire:
Why did he do it? ... Starlight overhead—
Blank stars. I'm wide-awake; and some chap's dead.

—Siegfried Sassoon

ART FOREVER CHANGED BY WORLD WAR I

From the fiction of Hemingway to the savagely critical paintings of Otto Dix, WWI reshaped the notion of art, just as it forever altered the perception of war

BY REED JOHNSON, *LOS ANGELES TIMES*, 2012

ALONG WITH MILLIONS OF IDEALISTIC YOUNG MEN who were cut to pieces by machine guns and obliterated by artillery shells, there was another major casualty of World War I: traditional ideas about Western art.



A scene from "All Quiet on the Western Front" from 1930. (Universal Pictures, Universal Pictures)

The Great War of 1914-18 tilted culture on its axis, particularly in Europe and the United States. Nearly 100 years later, that legacy is being wrestled with in film, visual art, music, television shows like the gauzily nostalgic PBS soaper "Downton Abbey" and plays including the Tony Award-winning "War Horse," concluding its run at the Ahmanson Theatre.

"It created an epoch in art," said Leo Braudy, a USC professor of English and author of "From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity." "The question is, what was on one side and what was on the other?"

The simple answer as to what lay on the near side of World War I is Modernism, that slippery but indispensable term denoting a wide range of new sensibilities and aesthetic responses to the industrial age. Modernism took shape decades before World War I, but its clamorous arrival was vastly accelerated by the greatest collective trauma in history to that point.

From the fiction of Hemingway, Virginia Woolf and John Dos Passos to the savagely critical paintings and etchings of George Grosz and Otto Dix, World War I reshaped the notion of what art is, just as it forever altered the perception of what war is. Although World War II racked up more catastrophic losses in blood and treasure, World War I remains the paradigmatic conflict of the modern age, not only politically but also culturally.

"Of all the wars, that is the one that seems to explain us best," said Michael Morpurgo, the English author of the novel "War Horse," about a Devonshire farm boy's death-defying bond with his noble steed Joey, on which the National Theatre of Great Britain's production is based.

Particularly in his country, he said, World War I resonates louder than the even greater cataclysm that followed it 20 years later. "The First World War for British people is very much a part of who we are," Morpurgo said during a visit to Los Angeles. "It's so deep in us; the poetry, the stories, the loss, the suffering is there in every village churchyard."

During and after World War I, flowery Victorian language was blown apart and replaced by more sinewy and R-rated prose styles. In visual art, Surrealists and Expressionists devised wobbly, chopped-up perspectives and nightmarish visions of fractured human bodies and splintered societies slouching toward moral chaos.

"The whole landscape of the Western Front became surrealist before the term surrealism was invented by the soldier-poet Guillaume Apollinaire," Modris Eksteins wrote in "Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age."

Throughout Western art, the grim realities of industrial warfare led to a backlash against the propaganda and grandiose nationalism that had sparked the conflagration. Cynicism toward the ruling classes and disgust with war planners and profiteers led to demands for art forms that were honest and direct, less embroidered with rhetoric and euphemism.

"Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene besides the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates," Ernest Hemingway wrote in "A Farewell to Arms," his 1929 novel based on his experiences in the Italian campaign.

Other artists clung to the shards of classical culture as a buffer against nihilistic disillusionment. "These fragments I have shored against my ruins," T.S. Eliot wrote in "The Waste Land" (1922).

In "The Great War and Modern Memory," Paul Fussell argued that the rise of irony as a dominant mode of modern understanding "originates largely in the application of mind and memory to the events of the Great War."

Irony and dissonant humor permeated the music of classical composers such as Alban Berg and Benjamin Britten, a pacifist who parodied marching-band pomposity in his Piano Concerto in D. In his 1989 film "War Requiem," based on Britten's non-liturgical Mass, British director Derek Jarman suggested a parallel between the indifferent slaughter of World War I and the neglect of AIDS-infected young men in the 1980s.

The fear that powerful new machines invented to serve humanity might instead destroy it also took root around World War I, later spreading into science fiction and the debates surrounding today's aerial drone warfare. "World War I definitely gives a push forward to the idea of dystopia rather than utopia, to the idea that the world is going to get worse rather than better," Brady said.

When war broke out in summer 1914, artists were among its biggest cheerleaders. Britain and France, Europe's dominant 19th-century military and cultural powers, saw the war as necessary for reinforcing the continental status quo, while Germany viewed it as an opportunity for "purging" Europe of political stagnancy and cultural malaise.

"War! We felt purified, liberated, we felt an enormous hope," Thomas Mann wrote in 1914. Only years later would the German author renounce his support of the war in his novels "The Magic Mountain" and "Dr. Faustus," which depicted wartime Europe gripped by a mass psychosis.

Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg initially drew analogies "between the German army's assault on decadent France and his own assault on decadent bourgeois values" and music, as the New Yorker music critic Alex Ross writes in "The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century." "Now comes the reckoning!" Schoenberg wrote to Alma Mahler. "Now we will throw these mediocre kitschmongers into slavery, and teach them to venerate the German spirit and to worship the German God."

For Morpurgo, the essence of how World War I stamped modern consciousness can be found in the works of a generation of English poets and writers such as Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon, all of whom served in uniform.

In the conflict's opening months, Brooke penned the wistfully patriotic "The Soldier," expressing hope that if he should die in combat he would be laid to rest in "some corner of a foreign field/ That is forever England." Three years later, Owen, who like Brooke would not survive the war, wrote with blunt fury about the horrors of gas attacks and the obscene futility of battle in "Dulce et Decorum Est."

The ruinous carnage of the War to End All Wars has come to be regarded as emblematic of all misguided military action and the societies that support it. George Bernard Shaw's 1920 play "Heartbreak House" and films such as Jean Renoir's classic "The Grand Illusion" (1937) and

Peter Weir's "Gallipoli" (1981) dramatize the class-based interests and divisions that drove the war. Other movies such as Stanley Kubrick's "Paths of Glory," the peace-and-love hippie ethos of the 1966 "King of Hearts" and the grotesque music-hall choreography of the Vietnam-era "Oh, What a Lovely War!" (1969) underscore the notion that wartime signifies the taking over of the asylum by the lunatics.

But possibly the war's most enduring legacy, and one of its few positive ones, was to emphasize not the strategies of kaisers and field marshals but the personal stories of the nontitled individuals who actually fought and died in it.

The impulse to remember and honor the hardships endured by the ordinary foot soldier creates a direct link between Charles Sargeant Jagger's Royal Artillery Memorial at London's Hyde Park Corner, with its bronze figure of a dead soldier covered by a blanket, and Maya Lin's abstract, quietly dignified Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Amy Lyford, a professor of art history and visual arts at Occidental College, said that Surrealism developed partly from artists' desires to depict the massive traumas the war inflicted on individual human beings. Meanwhile, she said, the ruling classes after World War I were trying to "paper over" those wounds with plastic surgery, both literally in the case of mutilated veterans, who were fitted with newfangled prosthetics, and culturally.

"There was a kind of aestheticization of trauma," said Lyford, author of "Surrealist Masculinities: Gender Anxiety and the Aesthetics of Post-World War I Reconstruction in France."

Today, Lyford said, some contemporary artists are exploring how "stories of reparation and therapy" are being used to paper over the actual and metaphoric wounds of 21st-century warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. "The fragmentation is real," Lyford said. "It's not just something you sew up with stitches and move on."



Otto Dix 'Sturmtruppe geht unter Gas vor [Stormtroops advancing under gas]' 1924 etching, aquatint, drypoint Collection of the National Gallery of Australia

MUSIC AS WAR PROPAGANDA

Did Music Help Win The First World War?

ESSAY BY K. A. WELLS FOR THE PARLOR SONGS ACADEMY, 2004

THROUGHOUT WORLD WAR I, music was a prominent feature on the home fronts and the battlefields. Most homes had a piano, and at least one member of each family knew how to play it, providing a common form of entertainment and socialization. Popular music, therefore, saturated the citizenry and reached into all of its corners, forming a great medium for conveying messages. Recognizing this capability, governments often used it as an effective means for inspiring fervor, pride, patriotism and action in the citizens in order to gain manpower, homeland support and funds. Composers and publishers readily cooperated and adopted these new musical motifs with which to earn money from a large population rallied by war and eager to respond to the sentiments by purchasing the pro-war music.

Besides these incentives, composers and publishers often wrote music to promote their personal wartime sentiments. Dramatic graphics and additional messages printed on sheet music provided extra inspiration to the messages expressed by the lyrics and melodies, markedly increasing their capabilities as propaganda vehicles. Music during World War I was often used to inspire passion and voluntary compliance in the listeners and, occasionally, shame in those who didn't support the war. Much of the music distributed during World War I greatly influenced social and political attitudes, thereby serving as an effective propaganda tool for private citizens and governments.

Propaganda is defined as "doctrines, ideas, arguments, facts, or allegations spread by deliberate effort through any medium of communication in order to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause" and as "a public action or display having the purpose or effect of furthering or hindering a cause." (Webster's, 1817, defs. 2 & 3) Oxford's American Dictionary defines propaganda as "publicity intended to spread ideas or information that will persuade or convince people." (Ehrlich, 718) Effective propaganda, therefore, relies on its ability to be transmitted to large numbers of recipients in order to achieve its goal of attitude manipulation. The idea it contains must be received in such a way that the recipient feels as though his response to it is based entirely on his own thinking.

response in support of their causes, as is seen in political campaign songs and the protest songs of the 1960s and 1970s. In this way, music provides a weapon of social change which can be used to achieve specific goals because the lyrics, together with the melody and rhythms, take on different and more significant meanings than those that appear on the surface. Music permeates the spirit in ways that written words alone cannot do. It is readily retained in memory; therefore people who seldom engage in reading can be reached by music. This is especially evident in advertising and political campaigns when listeners go through their daily routines humming and singing catchy melodies that incorporate the praises of products and candidates. Songs published with the direct intent of improving morale, gaining support, collecting money or encouraging recruiting are, therefore, propaganda. Propaganda is not always lies or distortion - even truths and facts can be considered propa-ganda if they are used for the purpose of promoting a cause.

Music is adaptable, so the melodies, beats, and dynamics can be adjusted to reflect its message and enhance its impact on the listener.

Based on these definitions, music is a highly effective propaganda vehicle. The widespread use and familiarity of popular songs enables them to function effectively as mediums for messages, and the context and conditions, such as the emotional climate during wartime, can be used for further enhancement. Music is adaptable, so the melodies, beats, and dynamics can be adjusted to reflect its message and enhance its impact on the listener. For example, politicians use musical fanfare at public rallies to build the momentum of the crowd and generate an emotional



The value of music as propaganda, particularly for patriotic causes, is described well in the following quote:

“America’s war songs and sea songs have played their part as incentives to patriotism, to enlistment in the ranks, to valor in the field and on the sea, and have served to inspire and cheer the fighting forces of the Republic. People of every nationality are moved to speech or to song by that which permeates the thoughts or appeals to the emotions in times of political excitement. Love of country, together with a pride in its institutions, be the latter of a primitive or more cultured form, smolders in the breast of all mankind. This latent spark when fanned into a blaze of fervor finds vent in speech and in song, which in turn inspires to action. Such is the birth of patriotic music. No country, as history proves, can afford to ignore the patriot-ic force capable of being brought into play through the power of music, either in song or in instrumental form, both of which performed their part in inciting to action. (Hubbard, 101)

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– HUBBARD, 101

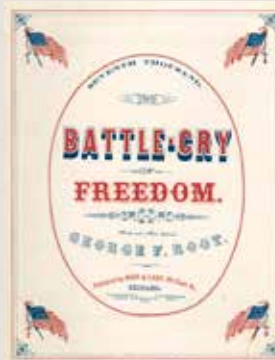
In the 1930s and 1940s, the arts held a prominent place in the ideology and propaganda of National Socialism. In 1933, shortly after Hitler became chancellor, Schott published the "Badonviller Marsch," Hitler's "official entrance music" (similar in meaning to the American President's "Hail to the Chief") and put together a group of "hearth and home" songs with the title "German Homeland." In 1934, Hermann Blume's "Adolf Hitler Fanfare" was published in a collection of marches. (Kowalke, 4-5) During the summer of 1942, Hitler suggested that propaganda broadcasts aimed at Britain and America should contain musical styles that appealed to those audiences, resulting in the use of popular music to deliver messages to other cultures. (Morton, 3) For instance, after the first regularly-worded verse of a song, a voice came on saying: "Here is Mr. Churchill's latest song." The melody was the familiar tune of "The Sheik of Araby," a song enjoyed during the wartime by both British and American listeners, but the words that followed were different:

*“I’m afraid of Germany, her planes are beating me.
At night, when I should sleep, into the Anderson
I must creep.
Although I’m England’s leading man,
I’m led to the cellar by ten.
A leader in the cellar each night,
that’s the only damned way I can fight.”*

Using these altered lyrics, German government employees attempted to broadcast propaganda messages to their enemies using the language and musical style of those enemies. (Morton, 2) In 1944, a collection of fourteen songs published in Germany displayed a prominent dedication to Adolph Hitler and contained songs entitled "Praise to the Fuhrer" and "One Fuhrer, People, and Reich." (Kowalke, 15-16)

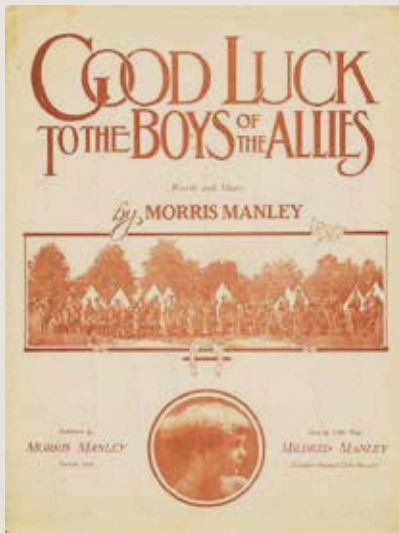


During World War II, popular music served as American government propaganda by helping to support preexisting cultural assumptions about the Japanese. Government officials understood the power of music and used it to mobilize the American people in support of the war against Japan. Images in the lyrics presented the contrast of an inferior Japan with a civilized and progressive United States. Music composers and publishers, challenged to produce an enemy, used lyrics to dehumanize the Japanese during WWII. They sang of the struggle of the good (meaning Christian) Americans against an evil enemy, the "heathen" Japanese, referring to the attack at Pearl Harbor as a "sin" against both the United States and God.



In 1914, with the beginning of hostilities in Europe, war became a major theme in both professional and amateur musical compositions, and the possibilities for the promotion of propaganda and fund-raising for this new cause were heavily pursued. Songs became overwhelmingly patriotic, heroic and jingoistic. Predictably many

songs, (such as "Canadian Forever" and "The Pride of the World is the British Navy") were written to glorify the navy, the army, and the new flying corps. The American Legion, which was the Canadian 97th Battalion made up of American volunteers eager to serve prior to America's entry into the war, was given a special boost in musical compositions. (Songs, such as "Give the Grand Old Flag a Hand;" a "British Song,") lauded the British Empire, Great Britain and Ireland's initial promise to give up its internal struggle for Home Rule during the war. Instrumental marches, recruiting songs, flag songs and songs praising women's efforts on the home front were abundant in the new repertoire of compositions. *The Canadian Weekly* of January 5, 1918, wrote about Mrs. Florence Ballantyne, the daughter of the Speaker of the Ontario Legislature and wife of a



university professor. As described in *The Canada Weekly*, January 5, 1918, she wrote her song "The Call We Must Obey" when recruiting lagged, to hearten her sons already overseas. (An additional recruitment song, "You Bet Your Life We All Will Go," was written by The Rev. J. D.

Morrow, the pastor of Dale Church, Toronto.) True to this message, the cover of his third composition, "Memories of Home" bears a picture of him in military uniform, described as "Chaplain to our Canadian Overseas Forces." (Music on the Home Front Canadian Sheet Music of the First World War, Norman, Barbara, p.1, quoted passages used with kind permission of Library and Archives Canada) Among the many great war songs to come out of Canada was Morris Manley's "Good Luck to The Boys of the Allies," published in 1915.

At the onset of World War I, songs were written urging men to join the military, and popular vocalists were hired to perform these songs at public recruiting rallies. A good example of a recruiting song used this way was "Your King and Country Want You." Men who did not respond to this song by enlisting at the rally were publicly humiliated as they left by being handed white chicken feathers by children who had been assigned this task. The lyrics of this propaganda song were written as though they expressed the feelings of British women who were stoically urging their sweethearts to military service for protection of their homes and country. This one song, therefore, represents multiple propaganda messages beyond recruiting, such as producing shame in those who don't respond favorably to its patriotic message, and convincing the women of the land that they must be willing to sacrifice their men for the protection of home and country. (Songs 1-2)

"Lieutenant Gitz Rice, after being wounded in 1917, became the officer in charge of military entertainment for the Canadian Army." (Norman, 1) His compositions conveyed messages related to the soldiers, such as "He Will Always Remember the Little Things You Do," written to provide encouragement to women in their war efforts, and "Keep Your Head Down," "Fritzie Boy," which was written at the Battle of Ypres in 1918. (Norman, 2) Among Rice's many battle related works was also the wonderful and patriotic song, "We Beat Them At The Marne" which directly tries to shout down the pacifists. Intense pressure was exerted by both the government and society to enlist in the military during this wartime period, therefore recruiting was one of the main themes

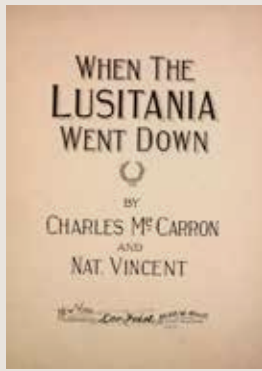
reflected in music. Non-serving young men were stigmatized as is evidenced by the following statement which composer John C. McFadden felt a need to print on his song "Liberty:" "Being unfit for the Fighting Front as my certificate shows..." (Norman, 3) Lyrics in music prompted those not enlisted to contribute money, as seen in the words of composer Walter St. J. Miller "If we cannot do the fighting we can pay." ("He's Doing His Bit - Are You?") Canada's sheet music during World War I encouraged and praised volunteering for the military in songs such as "Where are the Boys Who'll Fight for Dear Old England" and "Our Empire Boys." Conscription is rarely mentioned, with an exception being the following quote from "The Call for Soldiers:"

*"My men sign now,
For your King and country call.
Don't want to be forced to answer it,
But step up one and all."*

It's also rare to find songs opposing World War I in the National Library of Canada's collection. Songs produced in Quebec expressed the same messages and concerns as those from English Canada, except for, perhaps, less emphasis on the defense of the British Empire. The low cost of sheet music made it suitable for fund-raising, an effective way to promote support of the war, while at the same time spreading the music which contained pro-war messages. Spurred on by the war, the American public hungered for more patriotic-themed music, and composers grabbed the opportunity to write and publish their compositions to be sold for various patriotic causes. (Norman, 3)



Between mid-1914 and mid-1919, 35,600 American patriotic songs were copyrighted, and 7,300 were published, all available to stir the citizens' response to the war and the country. (Watkins, 265) In response to the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915, American music publishers put messages in songs like *When the Lusitania Went Down*, preparing the citizens for an inevitable entry into World War I. (Watkins, 246) Some songs encouraged a change in feelings in the

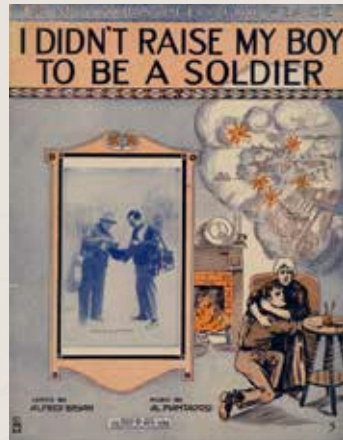


American people, such as "In Time of Peace Prepare for War" which expressed a newly aroused martial spirit. President Wilson continued to affirm that "we are too proud to fight," and in 1916, he was reelected on the slogan "he kept us out of the war." In response to the aforementioned martial songs, there were also anti-war propaganda songs, some in support of President Wilson, such as "Our Hats Off to You Mr. President." Other anti-war songs used the appeal of "the voice of motherhood," such as "Don't Take My Darling Boy Away" (Scorch version). The message came through loud and clear in the title of "I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be a Soldier" (subtitled "A Mothers Plea for Peace," respectfully dedicated to every Mother- everywhere"). The lyrics

preached to mothers worldwide that if they united in the cause, they could put an end to the fighting and save the lives of millions of young soldiers. This is especially noteworthy in this excerpt from the lyrics:

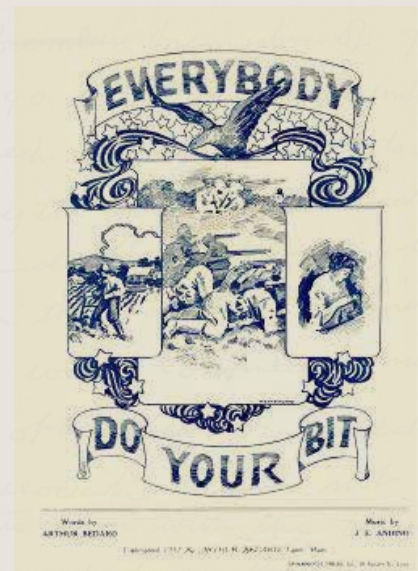
*"There'd be no war today
If mothers all would say,
'I didn't raise my boy to be
a soldier'."*

The cover of the sheet music portrays exploding shells bursting around an old gray-haired woman protecting her son. This song adapted easily to a ragtime form (popular music style then) played by popular pianists, which enabled it to become widely disseminated, an important aspect of effective propaganda. In fact, the publisher Leo Feist "boasted that more than 700,000 copies were sold in the first eight weeks." An equally pacifist song entitled "Stay Down Here Where You Belong" was written by the famous composer Irving Berlin. To create a stronger message for pacifism, these two anti-war songs were released on a single recording in March of 1915, and they met with high sales success until the United States entered the war in 1917. Since the dissemination of this anti-war music was being handled by those in the business of making money from their music, the reduction in sales caused by the unacceptability of being anti-war after April, 1917 caused the Victor Talking Machine Company to withdraw the recording. (Watkins, 248-249)



Political leanings determine much of a population's reaction to a genre, such as how they perceive it and are affected by it. With a major European war (1914-1918) stimulating a renewal of patriotism and national pride in the warring countries, there was a great opportunity for music to become the catalyst for governments to recruit

soldiers, maintain enthusiasm among those in the military, encourage sacrifice from the population, and gain homeland support for the war effort. Encouragement of homeland morale was urged in songs like, "Everybody Do Your Bit" (Scorch). Propaganda messages in the music project the power of involvement in a cause, the respect that others will have for your courage, power and determination, and the self-respect that you will feel. Successful propaganda songs make you feel that you have no limits if you keep fighting for the right things as set forth in the songs, and they often stress that you are not alone in your fight. The emotions and body language of the performers add another element of persuasion to the message. This music was written to encourage action and support for causes. The dynamics, harmony and rhythms of the music also play a big part in its effects. Some music was written to cheer up the citizens and the soldiers in order to help them cope with or even overlook the horror and pain of war. Most World War I song lyrics did not clearly depict the realities of the war, but instead they gave the impression that everyone would be fine and that the war would end soon. (WWI sheet music,.3)



After declaring on April 16, 1917 that the American troops were joining in the war, President Wilson faced the task of swaying public opinion in favor of the conscription and mobilization of troops. Anti-war sentiment was still strong among the American citizens, and had been an important part of the foundation on which Wilson was reelected. The day after Wilson's declaration of war against Germany,



George M.Cohan composed "Over There," a march containing lyrics that stressed patriotism and a sense of national identity. It was one of the most successful American pro-war propaganda songs, enthusiastically inspiring the American spirit of confidence about the ability of our troops to end the war and return home safely. Since

it was a march, it was easily sung and enjoyed, and proved to be an effective propaganda tool at the onset of the war for recruiting and homeland support. It was publicly



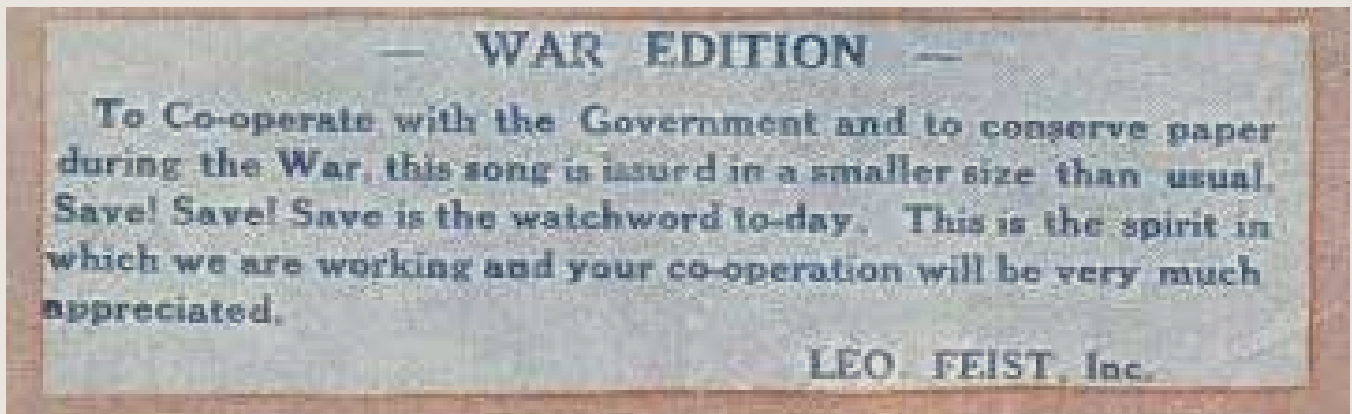
advertised that the royalties from this song were donated to war charities, so this music was of even more value as a pro-war tool. Being an all-American venture, one sheet music cover (one of several) was drawn by famous American artist, Norman Rockwell, and it showed soldiers happily joined in song, sending the positive message of the effects of song on the troops, both from the standpoint of morale and of unity by singing together. "Over There" had gained so much popularity that Enrico Caruso, a world-famous singer, recorded it in both French and English, another good propaganda move. The song sold two million copies of sheet music and one million recordings by the time the war was over. The message from "Over There" was so effective that Cohan was later awarded a special Congressional Medal of Honor. By using a variety of methods to impress its patriotic messages in the minds of the citizens, "Over There" proved to be a versatile and far-reaching disseminator of pro-war propaganda. Inspired by this new spirit of pro-war enthusiasm, Americans eagerly accepted patriotic messages portrayed in songs, allowing them to serve as strong vehicles for propaganda. Anti-war messages were replaced with songs such as "I Did Not Raise My Boy to Be a Coward," and "I'd Be Proud to Be the Mother of a Soldier." Americans heard, responded enthusiastically to, and sang, "America, I Love You."



Besides overcoming a persistent anti-war sentiment, President Wilson had to deal with a large percentage of American citizens who were from other cultures, notably Germany, against whom we were fighting in the war. High on the government's agenda was the need to win the support of the citizenry for home front support and recruiting. Among the many early "call to arms" songs written right before the war or as the US entered the war was this stirring song, "Wake Up America." In 1917 the government formed a new agency entitled the Committee on Public Information (CPI) in order to sway public opinion in favor of the war and all that it might eventually involve. This was the crux of an extraordinary propaganda campaign aimed at shaping public opinion in America in favor of the war effort. A progressive and influential journalist named George Creel was chosen to head the agency which employed 75,000 speakers ("four-minute men") hired to deliver patriotic messages to churches, music halls, schools and other public places using music as one of their main modes of transport. (Ewen, 2-3). Songs written by government composers identified only as "Army Song Leaders" centered on addressing the cultural diversity of our citizens entering the United States Army linked by the common desire to win the war against Germany. An example of one of these songs is "Good Morning, Mr. Zip-Zip-Zip" (Scorch format) in which the lyrics show how the Army takes people from diverse groups and regiments them together for the same purpose. The "Zip-Zip-Zip" in the song title means that you can insert any name (first, middle, last) of any nationality, religion, or ethnic group. They are all taken equally. This is seen in the sample of the lyrics as follows:

*"We come from ev'ry quarter, From North,
South, East, and West,
To clear the way to freedom, For the land we love the best.
We've left our occupations, And home, so far and dear,
But when the going's rather rough,
We raise this song in cheer:
Good morning, Mister Zip-Zip-Zip,
With your hair cut just as short as mine,
Good Morning, Mister Zip-Zip-Zip,
You're surely looking fine!" (America to War 1B, 2)*

Songs played an important role in this abundance of propaganda. Song writers encouraged people to spend evenings singing war songs, and it became the patriotic thing to do at this time of the war. Citizens were urged to join together in patriotic songs at home, in theaters, in arranged songfests, at community sings, and at Liberty Bond rallies. The CPI issued songbooks of patriotic music which were distributed to audiences in music halls to stimulate communal singing and build home-front morale, and special song leaders dispatched by the government visited the theaters to promote this activity. Each of the CPI's 19 domestic divisions centered its efforts on a particular type of propaganda, such as newspaper, academics, music, artists and filmmakers. The agency achieved its pro-war propaganda goals through well-planned emotional appeals and the demonizing of Germany, both successfully accomplished using musical lyrics, grotesque sketches on sheet music and anti-German messages in the lyrics of sheet music. Confirming the veracity of this approach, Harold Lasswell, a renowned



political scientist, wrote: "So great are the psychological resistances to war in modern nations that every war must appear to be a war of defense against a menacing, murderous aggressor. There must be no ambiguity about who the public is to hate." Atrocity stories about the enemy imply that war is only brutal when practiced by the enemy. (Delwiche, 2-4)

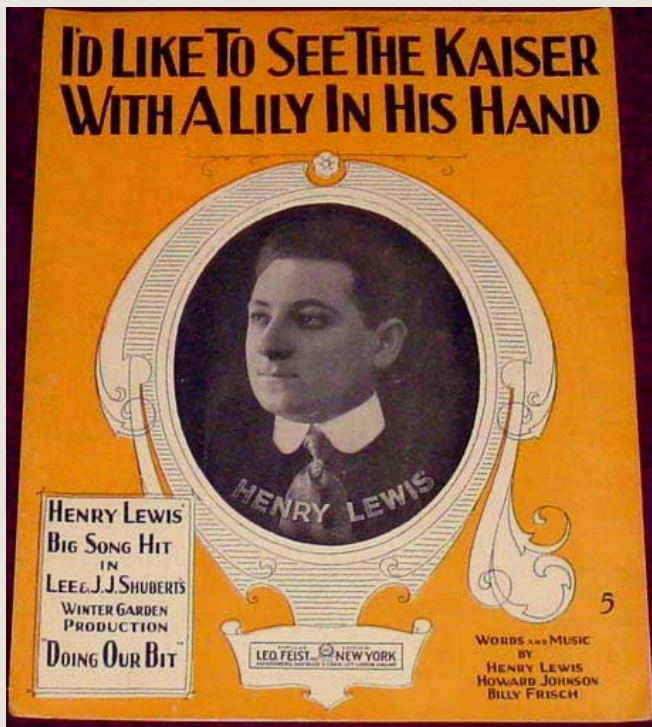
Government song leaders also paid visits to the troops and supplied them with patriotic songbooks, encouraging soldiers to sing many of the popular well-known marches and war songs. Occasionally they would update the songs with words such as *Down with the Kaiser*, to encourage a more positive morale among the soldiers. Many of those who entertained the troops attempted to alter the moods conveyed in the trench songs by making them into parodies, thus overriding their bitterness with a more carefree and optimistic attitude. John Philip Sousa, an American composer, was recruited to train young bandmen at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. After completing this stint, he continued to provide patriotic inspiration with his music at Liberty Loan rallies and Red Cross relief drives. (Watkins, 267) Besides reinforcing a sense of patriotism in the soldiers through his marches, Sousa's music was successful in inspiring home land support at these rallies and drives.

During World War I, music publishers, such as Leo Feist, claimed that music would help win the war. (WWI Sheet Music #1, 1) Many music printers were available to publish "for the composer," and professional musicians were ready, willing, and able to polish or "arrange" any piece. (Norman, 1) American, Canadian, and British sheet music covers from World War I were equally impressive in the messages they projected, often displaying blatantly obvious patriotism, hatred for the enemy, and pleas for home front support, or a combination of these. (Watkins, 268) Sheet music was promoted in daily newspapers, and samples of newly published songs were printed in Sunday supplements, allowing wider dissemination and outreach for the musical messages of patriotism and encouragement. The graphics on sheet music covers aided their sales by featuring art that gave a visual boost to the messages contained in the music. (Watkins, 268) During World War I, governmental influence was noted when music publishers issued their sheet music in a reduced format bearing the following patriotic message: "To cooperate with the government and to conserve paper during the war, this song is issued in a smaller size than usual." Leo Feist's sheet music editions influenced purchasers by declar-

ing: "Save! Save! Save is the watchword today. This is the spirit in which we are working and your cooperation will be very much appreciated." (Watkins, 261) Many other publishers acted similarly, often using entire pages to present monographs about war music and to promote public support of the war effort. Publisher Joseph W. Stern frequently printed slogans and patriotic thoughts on his sheet music, such as "Food will win the war, don't waste it!" Clearly indicating that this music was written to evoke certain reactions, Joseph Stern developed six categories for World War I music, based on their purposes: "1) Cheer-Up Type, 2) Ballad Type, 3) Stirring march Type; 4) Appealing Type (appealing for support); 5) Comic Type; 6) Victory Type." (WWI sheet music # 1, 4-5) Sheet music had thus become a formidable pro-war propaganda. With new and exciting subjects to illustrate, World War I became one of the most colorful periods of American sheet music. Images of Uncle Sam proliferated, and songs such as "Old Glory Over All" featured Uncle Sam, the Flag, and a sketch of large groups of men marching off to war. (WWI Sheet Music #2, 1) Harry Von Tilzer's "The Man Behind the Hammer and the Plow," sang about the: "Mechanic and Engineer, all honest sons of toil, the backbone of the world today, The man who tills the soil, It's up to him to win the battle now." On the back of that sheet music was a copy of President Wilson's April 15, 1917 "Proclamation to the People" seeking support of our war effort. (WWI Sheet Music # 2, 3)

Female imagery was frequently employed in pro-war propaganda music. Frequently recurring themes dealt with mothers willing to sacrifice their sons for the benefit of the country "America, Here's My Boy," and a mother's patience and support of the war ("The Little Grey Mother Who Waits All Alone"). Much musical propaganda based on motherhood, however, centered on the value of the mother as a recruitment ploy in songs like "America needs You Like a Mother" and "Would You Turn Your Mother Down?" Another important image of the female in pro-war propaganda music portrayed the single woman waiting faithfully for her sweetheart while maintaining her faith in victory, heralded in songs such as "If He Can Fight Like He Can Love" and "Good Night, Germany!" An interestingly different focus in songs centered on women's wartime efforts, relayed the



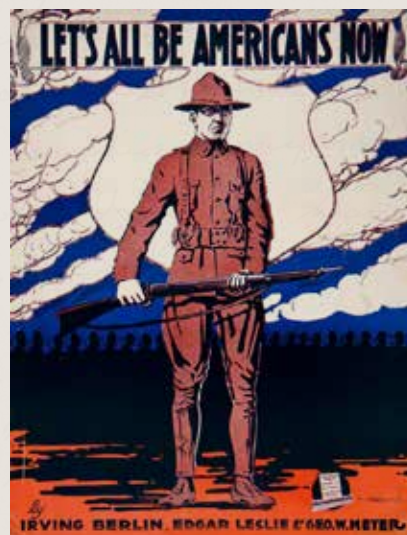


message that it was more acceptable for women to take on tasks which prior to this time were considered more masculine. As a result, this was a period when women began to acquire more freedoms, rights and responsibilities, leading to a song which delivered a message to men regarding the potential roles of women in the postwar economy: "You'd Better Be Nice to Them Now." (Watkins, 262-263)

The ranks of professional entertainers were greatly reduced because of enlistments and the draft, so theaters responded by devising new forms of public entertainment, such as song competitions in which newly written war songs were introduced by song promoters from Tin Pan Alley (the nickname given to the whole group of composers and publishers of popular music). The audience would vote for a winner from those songs. Tin Pan Alley met this increased demand for war songs with compositions covering a wide range of wartime subjects. Songs were written to stir up patriotism, arouse the fighting spirit, incite hate or contempt for the enemy, provide relief from war tensions, inspire hope and optimism, and glorify branches of the military. The Kaiser was always presented as the arch villain in this war with over a hundred anti-Kaiser songs produced by Tin Pan Alley, such as: "We Are Out for the Scalp of Mister Kaiser," "We Want the Kaiser's Helmet Now," and "We Will Make the Kaiser Wiser" (sung to the melody of John Brown's Body). Demonizing him further as the war continued, the Kaiser songs became even more savage, such as: "We're Going to Hang the Kaiser on the Linden Tree," "We're Going to Whip the Kaiser," "The Crazy Kaiser," "I'd Like to See the Kaiser with a Lily in His Hand," "We'll Give the Stars and Stripes to the Kaiser," "If I Only Had My Razor Under the Kaiser's Chin," "Shoot the Kaiser" and "The Kaiser is a Devil." The feeling ran so deep that even after the Armistice, hate songs continued about the Kaiser: "Hang the Kaiser to the Sour Apple Tree," "We've Turned His Moustache Down," "We Sure Got the Kaiser, We Did," and "The Kaiser Now is Wiser." (Ewen, 231-233)

Music composers, while entering the pro-war campaign for economic benefit, wrote songs which promoted the popular thinking aspired to by the government. Irving Berlin, (who had formerly composed pacifist music), Edgar Leslie, and George W. Meyers released the patriotic song, "Let's All Be Americans Now," which was immediately recorded by the American Quartet. The lyrics of this song reminded citizens about the ethnic diversity of the country while stressing the fact that all were joined nationally by citizenship. It encouraged all American citizens to put aside any previous loyalty to other homelands, and "fall in line/ You swore that you would,/ So be true to your vow,/ let's all be Americans now!" (Watkins, 251-252) Irving Berlin was recruited into the military in 1917, and a commanding officer requested that he write and produce an all-soldier show to raise \$35,000 for a much-needed Service Center for the soldiers. Besides starring in the review, "Yip, Yip, Yaphank," which was staged in 1918, Berlin wrote all the songs, sketches, dialogue and dance routines. In one scene he played a whiny K.P. singing, "I scrub the dishes against my wishes to make this world safe for democracy." In another scene, dragging himself out of his cot in response to revile, Berlin sang "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning," (Scorch format) which became one of the most successful comedy songs of WWI. The revue ended with a showy finale, "We're on Our Way to France," with the entire cast dressed in full military dress as they depart for overseas duty. This play received a standing ovation after the final curtain, followed by a speech made by a member of the military, General Bell, in which he remarked about the impact of Berlin's musical as follows: "I have heard that Berlin is among the foremost songwriters in the world, and now I believe it." "Yip, Yip Yaphank" continued to play to capacity houses for 4 weeks and exceeded its original goal by earning \$83,000 for Camp Upton's Service Center. The show made a short tour of Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., after which time the sum had grown to over \$250,000. This military-themed musical was enjoyed by large numbers of people, modifying their perceptions of the war through its lighthearted approach to military life, while at the same time enabling people

to feel that they were serving the war purpose by donating money for the benefit of the military. During war time, Berlin took no additional salary or royalties for anything connected with the show. After his discharge, however, he reaped great monetary rewards from the show's songs. (Ewen, 235-236)



From the beginning of America's entry into World War I, artistic forms of the Viennese operetta lost favor with the public because of Austria's alliance with the German empire. Offering an acceptable alternative, American musical theater grew rapidly to fill the void, providing another popular venue for dissemination of music with wartime messages. Opening in December, 1917, the Cohan Revue of 1918, featured a famous songstress performing "The Man Who Put the Germ in Germany," with a chorus that begins and ends with a series of patriotic puns as follows:

*"We're proud of the WILL we found in Wilson
The man who put the US in USA...
But the world is now aflame, At the HELL in Wilhelm's name,
The man who put the GERM in Germany." (Watkins, 255)*

Referring to the troops who had departed for France, *The Passing Show of 1917* had a highly emotional production number for the song, "Goodbye Broadway, Hello France," (Scorch format) which focused on repaying our debt to France for the assistance and support it had given us in the American Revolutionary War. (Watkins, 253) World War I propaganda music, was, therefore, very much a part of the Broadway musical theater with many musicals having martial titles and themes, such as *Over the Top* and *Doing Our Bit*; and the musical *The Better 'Ole* (1918), which was based on Captain Bruce Bairns' experiences in the trenches. Many of the individual production numbers in revues and musical comedies assumed a pro-war military character. *The Ziegfeld Follies of 1917* closed with a patriotic finale which began with Paul Revere's ride, included George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and ended with President Wilson doing a review of the American troops. To add to the emotional stimulation, hence the propaganda value, for this final scene Victor Herbert wrote "Can't You Hear Your Country Calling," which as Herbert's biographer, Edward N. Waters, wrote, "helped to whip the crowd to a high pitch of excitement." (Ewen, 235)

It is noteworthy that many of the songs reviewed above use "we" in the lyrics, an effective strategy that allows direct participation by those singing the song, plus the word "we" creates a group effort, a solidarity of thought and action, all goals of effective propaganda. Besides this approach, many WWI songs had a rousing martial ring accompanied by a strong patriotic message, such as: "We're Going Over," "Just Like Washington Crossed the Delaware," "General Pershing Will Cross the Rhine," "We Don't Want the Bacon - What We Want Is a Piece of the Rhine," "Keep Your Head Down Fritz Boy," "Lafayette, We Hear You Calling," "Your Country Needs You" and "Liberty Bell, It's Time to Ring Again." (Scorch format) These messages were purposefully effective in instilling the spirit of war in the consciousness of civilians. In 1918 the United States government banned "peace songs" as "comforting to the enemy," and governmental officials set up restrictions concerning which songs could be sent to overseas combatants. (Marks, 193) Restricting exposure to any specific types of music indicates that there's an expected effect from it on those who hear it, indicating that the music was clearly delivering a message which the government did not want people to hear, therefore making the deletion of the



message into a propaganda move.

Throughout World War I, gigantic rallies accompanied by fanfares from marching bands and performances by famous singers urged the purchase of war bonds, providing propaganda that enabled the American mobilization effort to rely less on actual legislation and more on

passions aroused by the messages in this music that led to voluntary compliance with the government's goals. (WWI, History Ch., 3) Victory songs, beneficial to the morale of both citizens and soldiers, were written by many composers during World War I. (WWI Sheet Music, # 3, .3) Patriotic music, especially at the onset of World War I, relayed an unrealistic view of the war to our soldiers and citizens. The lyrics described how the Germans would run away from our forces with hardly any American bullets being spent in the process. These songs were so filled with patriotism and bragging that soldiers were convinced they would have an easy time in this battle. Among the many optimistic flag waving songs published during the war was this great march song, "We'll Carry The Star Spangled Banner Thru The Trenches" by Daisy M. Erd, a Yeoman in the Navy during the war. Youth and optimism ruled as the recruiting songs, especially marches, beckoned them with messages lauding the greatness of our homeland and denouncing the evil of the enemy over whom we would surely reign supreme. This military march-style music was designed to get the blood flowing and stir patriotism in these "going to war songs." (American Music, 6)

The importance of music in sending messages that boosted morale and support during the war was reflected by a writer for the *New York Evening Post* in August 1918 who addressed the subject of the proliferation of pro-war music as follows:

"New Songs of War: Vulgar and Cheap? No doubt, they are often so... We can afford to have the people singing many shabby, faulty songs, along with better ones, but we could never afford to have them singing none at all."

These "vulgar and cheap" songs were performed by many concert artists, both at bond rallies and in their more formal concert programs. Leonard Lieblich wrote in the *Musical Courier* of August, 1918 as follows: "Our nation is being stirred fundamentally at this moment, and the primitive and elemental, rather than the subtle and cultured emotions and impulses, (are) ready to react to the sentiment, written, spoken, or sung - especially sung." (Watkins, 264-265). Music was, therefore, seen as creating pro-war support and encouragement while maintaining emotional balance in the citizens, clearly goals contained in effective propaganda.

John Philip Sousa, in his memoir "Marching Along," addressed the appeal of marching music as follows:

"I think Americans (and many other nationals for that matter) brighten at the tempo of a stirring march because it appeals to their fighting instincts. Like the beat of an African war drum, the march speaks to a fundamental rhythm in the human organization and is answered. A march stimulates every center of vitality, wakens the imagination and spurs patriotic impulses which may have been dormant for years. I can speak with confidence because I have seen men profoundly moved by a few measures of a really inspired march". (Moon, 347)

Addressing the same topic, during World War II, Rep. J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey agreed with Sousa, noting that "what America needs today is a good 5 cent war song. The nation is literally crying for a good, peppy marching song, something with plenty of zip, ginger, and fire." (Moon, 347) Even further proof of the propaganda value of marches comes from Warren Dwight Allen, professor of music at Stanford University during World War II: "Marching calls for organization; a marching people must be united ... everyone must 'keep step'...and the march toward world unity is possible because of certain principles of musical organization that are closely akin to the principals of political unity." (Moon, 347)



As World War I drew toward its close, the music industry continued to churn out large numbers of patriotic songs, urging continued enthusiasm for the war in which the songs proclaimed that we would be victorious and should continue to back our brave troops, such as: "We're Going Through to Berlin," "We are Going to Whip the Kaiser," and "We Shall Never Surrender Old Glory." (Watkins, 256) "The Navy Took Them Over and

The Navy Will Bring Them Back" was a gesture to the men in blue on the high seas. (Ewen, 235) When the soldiers returned home from the war, they soon discovered that while they were overseas fighting for the rights of those at home, profiteers on the home front had become rich from the war, many through sheet music, and the number of American millionaires had increased by four thousand. (Ewen, 237) Music proliferated as a propaganda form during World War I being written and played to achieve the pro-war behaviors and responses which the government, music composers and music publishers desired from the citizens. Patriotic music was encouraged to maintain a heightened level of support throughout the war, and it also provided a new theme with which music composers and publishers could further their personal beliefs and economic goals. As shown by the vast amount of evidence in this paper, music, through its lyrics, dynamics and graphics has, throughout history, notably in World War I, instigated all of these reactions and, therefore, qualifies as an effective form of propaganda. Perhaps Leo Feist's statement that music won the war cannot be verified, but it can be said with certainty that World War I has forever changed the face of music.

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ABOUT CHRISTMAS CAROLS

THE WORD ‘CAROL’ COMES FROM THE ANCIENT GREEK ‘CHOROS’, which means ‘dancing in a circle’, and from the old French word ‘Carole’ meaning ‘a song to accompany dancing.’

-Although there are accounts of birth-of-Christ hymns being sung in second-century Rome—by order of Christian authorities, not public preference—it was not until the fourth century, when Christmas was formalized as a feast and fixed to Dec. 25, that traditional songs began to emerge.

-In the 13th century, Francis of Assisi sought to turn the celebration of Christ’s birth into a live theatrical event. He organized nativity pageants featuring real hay, real animals, and, for the first time, real music. Deviating from tradition, he allowed for narrative songs in audiences’ native languages, turning Christmas music into an opportunity for mainstream creativity.

-The songs we know specifically as carols were originally communal songs sung during celebrations like harvest tide as well as Christmas. It was only later that carols began to be sung in church, and to be specifically associated with Christmas.

-Christmas carols were banned between 1647 and 1660 in England by Oliver Cromwell who believed that Christmas should be a solemn occasion.

-Christmas caroling is one of the oldest customs in Great Britain, going back to the middle ages when beggars, seeking food, money or drink would wander the streets singing holiday songs. The traditional period to sing carols is from St. Thomas’ Day (December 21st), until the morning of Christmas day.

-The carol Silent Night was written in 1818 by Austrian priest Joseph Mohr. The day before Christmas he was told that the church organ was broken and wouldn’t be fixed in time for the Christmas Eve service. He could not think of Christmas without music, so he sat down and wrote the first three stanzas of a song that could be sung by choir to a guitar. That night the people in a little Austrian church heard ‘Stille Nacht’ for the first time.

-White Christmas by Irving Berlin is the biggest selling Christmas carol of all time. It is estimated that it’s sold approximately 350 million copies of records and sheet music. Since its release in 1940, it has become a Christmas standard and “the biggest pop tune of all time”, thanks in part to growing cultural nostalgia and the homesickness of wartime soldiers. This sort of approach grew into the norm, and a new generation of carols rose by appealing more to the Yuletide mood than to the holiday itself.

The image shows a page from a 1582 publication of the Latin carol 'Personent hodie'. It features four staves of musical notation in a square neume style on a four-line red staff. The lyrics are in Latin and are printed in a Gothic script. The first staff begins with a large, ornate initial 'P' and the lyrics 'Personent hodie voces pueru-'. The second staff continues with 'la laudantes iucunde qui nobis est natus,'. The third staff has 'summo Deo datus, & de vir i'. The fourth staff concludes with 'i gineo ventre procreatus. In mundo nascitur, pannis inuoluitur, Praesepi ponitur stabulo brutorum, Rector supernorum, perdidit spolia princeps infernorum. Munera offerunt Magi tres venerunt, paruulum inquirunt, Stellulam sequendo, ipsum adorando, Aurum, thus & myrrham ei offerendo. Omnes clericuli, pariter pueri Cantent ut angeli, aduenisti mundo, Laudes tibi fundo. Ideo gloria in excelsis Deo.'

A 1582 published version of the Latin carol *Personent hodie*

-In Austria, Belgium and Germany, Christmas is celebrated by some with children dressing as “The Three Kings”, and going from house to house carrying a star on a pole. This takes place from New Year’s Day to January 6. The children sing religious songs and are called “star singers”. They are often rewarded with sweets or money, which is typically given to a local church or charity. “C.M.B” is written in chalk on houses they have visited. Although this is sometimes taken as a reference to the three kings — Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar — it may originally have represented the words *Christus mansionem benedicat* (Christ bless this house).

Sources: Nathan Heller, *Christmas Carols, Why do we keep singing them?* Slate.com; Project Britain, *Christmas Traditions*

THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE OF 1914 may be the most well-known informal truce to happen during war time, it was not a unique occurrence in the history of war. Though it surprised people at the time – and continues to do so today – it was a resurgence of a long-established tradition.



Truce during the Boer War, 1899

Informal truces and small armistices have often taken place during prolonged periods of fighting and the military history of the last two centuries in particular abounds with incidents of friendship between enemies. In the Peninsular War British and French troops at times visited each other's lines, drew water at the same well, washed their muskets in the same stream, and even sat around the same campfire sharing their rations and playing cards. Indeed, there were so many cases of fraternization that Wellington, realizing the implications, issued the strictest orders, making it punishable by death to strike up friendly relations with the enemy. The Reverend Francis Kilvert, in his famous *Diary*, describes conversations with the old soldier Morgan, who recalled occasions in Spain on which the British and French sentries laid down their arms, met in the middle space and drank together. In the Crimean War, British, French and Russians at quiet times gathered around the same fire, smoking and drinking. In the American Civil War Yankees and Rebels traded tobacco, coffee and newspapers (on one occasion pushing them across a river on improvised boats), fished peacefully on opposite sides of the same stream and even collected wild blackberries together. Similar stories are told of the Siege of Paris, where Germans once invited the French to join them in a massive share-out of wine-bottles; of the Boer War, in which on one occasion during a conference of commanders the rank and file of both sides engaged in a friendly game of football; and of the Russo-Japanese War, in which, among numerous other incidents, opposing officers entertained each other during an armistice for the burial of the dead, the Japanese bringing brandy, sake, beer and wine, the Russians bringing champagne, brandy and claret. Later wars too have their small crop of such stories; indeed it is rare for a conflict at close quarters to continue very long without some generous gesture between enemies or an upsurge of the 'live and let live' spirit. So the Christmas truce of 1914 does not stand alone; on the other hand is undoubtedly the greatest example of its kind. (Brown & Seaton, 2001)

Here are further details about some of the mentioned truces:

BARTERING IN SPAIN

The Duke of Wellington, who led the British, Spanish and Portuguese forces against the French in the Peninsular War of 1807-1814, saw with grief the British soldiers fraternizing with the French in many instances. It was not uncommon for sentries or those stationed in outposts to come together for a smoke or a chat and to barter food and other essentials. Groups seen to be foraging in the open were generally not shot at and there were even exchanges of badly injured prisoners. Amidst the atrocities (and there were many), these informal truces offered a flicker of humanity to the embattled troops.

TRUCES IN THE CRIMEAN WAR

In an account of the Crimean War of 1854-6, published in April 1883, the *New York Times* reporter relates many instances of friendly communication between French and Russians. An informal system of white flags of truce was established so that bartering could take place between sentries. It was common for the Russian to leave a bottle of vodka to be collected by the French who left a couple of loaves of white bread in its place. On the appearance of a white flag, firing would cease and the former enemies would raise their heads and exchange smiles, nods, jokes and goods. A while later, fighting would resume as usual.

MUSIC IN CIVIL WAR AMERICA

Informal truces were widespread in the American Civil War, too. Often Yankees and Rebels occupying the opposite sides of a river would swim to meet on an island in the middle. They would exchange tobacco and coffee and swap newspapers and would chat a little before resuming shooting. When camping in the same area, Federates and Confederates would even join in concerts and play each other's favorite songs. A shout "Rats in your holes!" was a signal that everyone should take cover again.

FOOTBALL IN SOUTH AFRICA

It is reported that towards the end of Second Boer War (1899-1902) in South Africa, a game of football took place between some of the Boers and a British unit under Major Clement Edwards. Sunday truces were also common as the Boers for religious reasons abstained from fighting on a Sunday. A truce on Christmas and Boxing Day was also reported to have taken place in Mafeking in 1899.

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