

# Horrors of war – all quiet on the western front essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



War stories before Erich Maria Remarque's times still leaned toward themes of glory, adventure, and honor. In presenting his realistic version of a soldier's experience, Remarque stripped that from war novels in his antiwar novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Remarque accurately depicts both the physical and mental hardships of war. This novel should be read by all soldiers thinking of enlisting in the army for several reasons.

First, the novel describes in detail the worst case scenarios associated with war. Soldiers would be able to make better decisions when enlisting. Second, those soldiers who enlist would be better prepared for the mental horrors that arise post-war. Finally, the novel sets a standard for the patriotism needed to serve one's country and the honor that comes with that patriotism.

The novel depicts war as it actually is. Remarque describes a moment of war by writing, " Everywhere wire-cutters are snapping, planks are thrown across the entanglements. . . the earth shudders, it crashes, smokes, and groans, we stumble over slippery lumps of flesh, over yielding bodies" (pg. 117). By reading *All Quiet on the Western Front* before enlisting, a person would have a better opportunity to decide if they are prepared to face the horrors of war. Remarque's main character, Paul Baumer insists that he was not fully prepared for war. While on leave, he says, " I imagined leave would be different from this. Indeed, it was different a year ago. . . There lies a gulf between that time and to-day. At that time I still knew nothing about the war" (pg. 168).

During war, unprepared men often cannot cope with the horrors of war. Remarque tells of one man momentarily going crazy. Remarque writes, “ Suddenly little Kropp throws his cigarette away, stamps on it savagely, and looking around him with a broken and distracted face, stammers ‘ Damned shit, the damned shit!’ We walk on for a long time. Kropp has calmed himself; we understand, he saw red; out there every man gets like that sometime” (pg. 18). Although Kropp’s insanity was in fact only temporary, men must be prepared to face such temporary insanities before they enter war.

The novel not only accurately describes the horrors that occur during war, but it also describes the horrors that continue post-war. Paul tells of what will happen after the war has ended by saying, “ Now if we go back we will be weary, broken, burnt out, rootless and without hope. We will not be able to find our way anymore.” After war, many men are plagued with flashbacks of war. Some men are unable to get past the horrors of war. Remarque expresses a fear of being unable to get the war out of his mind when he writes, “ What do they expect of us if a time ever comes when the war is over? Through the years our business has been killing; — it was our first calling in life. Our knowledge of life is limited to death. What will happen afterwards? And what shall come of us?” (pg. 264). Remarque describes the bond that exists between all men that fought in World War I. He writes, “ All men of my age, here and over there, throughout the whole world see these things; all my generation is experiencing these things with me” (pg. 263).

Lastly, *All Quiet on the Western Front* describes the needed patriotism to serve one's country and the honor that comes with that patriotism. The soldiers in the novel say that their reason for fighting the war is to defend their country. Kropp, says, " We are here to protect our fatherland" (pg. 203). Generally, people view veterans as heroes. Countless memorials have been dedicated to those who have died for their country. In *All Quiet*, Remarque tells of an " old buffer" who describes the veterans as "' young heroes'"

(pg. 50). Remarque also describes women's viewing soldiers with pity. One of the female characters in Remarque's novel says, " La guerre - grand malheur - pauvres garçons (French for: the war - very bad - poor boys)" (pg. 148). Often, people enjoy being pitied and being showered with affection. The men in Remarque's novel delight in the affection that the women show them.

Erich Maria Remarque's novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* accurately describes both the horrors and honors of war. If the army would require this novel to be read before enlistment, more men would be better prepared for the feelings that await them in the military. By telling of the negative aspects of war, Remarque's novel could successfully rid the army of those soldiers that are, or will ever be unfit for war. By telling of the positive aspects of war, Remarque's novel could encourage more men to join the military. Whether a man decides to join or not to join, Remarque's novel can provide guidance in making the choice.