

"the wars" by timothy findley and "all quiet on the western front" by erich maria...

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



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The two novels, *The Wars* by Timothy Findley and *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque, have a few similarities. The two books are about the same war, but they tell the story of two very different people. Although one book is about a Canadian officer, and the other about a German soldier, there are some similarities. Both books give a narrative of the Great War, the effect it has on the soldiers fighting, and sadly, how the main characters die.

These two books were written to help educate people about World War One. *The Wars* described what it was like to live at war. It described the brutality of the trenches, the horror of shell shock, the chlorine gas and all other terrors seen while at war. The book gives accurate details of what it was like in the trenches. All of these things are seen from Robert Ross's perspective. Robert is a young man, who is a nineteen-year-old Canadian officer on the French front. Because Robert is an officer, he doesn't actually fight in the trenches like the majority of the men sent to war, but he sees them in all their glory. *The Wars* focuses more on the relationships Robert has with fellow officers, and his relationship and duties with the horses.

The book also tells the story of his relationship with Barbara d'Orsey. The novel is about World War One, but the story itself is more about Robert's personal life, rather than his life as a soldier. On the other hand, *All Quiet on the Western Front* is also about a nineteen-year-old young man gone to war. His name is Paul Baumer, and he is a soldier fighting in the trenches for the German army. His day-to-day life of living and fighting in the trenches was told in this story. Like *The Wars*, *All Quiet on the Western Front* drew a clear

mental picture in your head of what it was like to live in the trenches. Paul talks of the water, mud, rats, killing, gangrene and other grimy eye-openers to be found in the trenches. " His mouth stands half open, it tries to form words. The lips are dry. My water bottle is not there. I have not brought it with me. But there is water in the mud, down at bottom of the crater. I climb down, take out my handkerchief, spread it out, push it under and scoop up the yellow water that strains through into the hollow of my hand." (192) This demonstrates with vivid imagery, the struggle that the soldiers in the trenches had to go through for the simplest things like water. Both novels are about World War One, but the perspectives are very different.

Undeniably being part of any war can cause some serious psychological damage. Witnessing your friends and fellow soldiers die around you can have lasting effects. War also has many physical effects on a soldier. These psychological and physical damages are evident in both novels, as they both look thoroughly into the lives of the nineteen-year-old main characters. In *The Wars*, when it comes to the effects the war has on the soldiers, it only tells you how Robert is affected. His job as an officer is quite unique from the rest of the men at war. Robert rides horses all day long, and has never once fought in the trenches. The effects that the war had on him are very different from the effects the war had on most other men. He is at no risk of contracting gangrene, or suffering from " shell shock". He remains quite sane and maintains his dignity, morals and values.

He is not desensitized to all of the killing, and it's quite obvious when he sees Tattler, and old acquaintance from the past, in the hospital. He shows much

emotion and feels quite sorry for the man. Although *All Quiet on the Western Front* explores many aspects of living in the trenches. They were very unhygienic, and caused many men to become infected with gangrene. Their feet would become infected and they would need to be amputated. After having one or both legs amputated, most men would die of infections in the hospitals. The men living in the trenches also suffered from "shell shock". The constant heavy artillery of the enemy is said to be what causes "Shell Shock". Eventually the men would suffer from complete mental breakdowns and could no longer fight anymore.

It is believed that the heavy artillery of the enemy causes "shell shock". At the beginning of the war, it is seen that the men show obvious emotion when seeing their friends and fellow soldiers die around them. As the war continues on, the soldiers fighting in the trenches become desensitized to the killing and suffering going on around them. They no longer show much emotion when they see the man next to them die, because it has become a part of their everyday life. The books tell how both men were affected by the war, but in different ways. Robert's story was very unique, which makes *All Quiet on the Western Front* much more realistic.

Two young men from opposing countries, both nineteen-years-old, go off to fight in the Great War and never return. That one sentence summarizes what both books are about, young men going off to war and dying. In *The Wars*, Timothy Findley goes into great detail discussing Robert's private life. He, unlike so many other men at war, was able to maintain relationships and

make new friends throughout the war. He never fought in the trenches, so he had the opportunity to stay alive a lot longer than most men.

He lived a fairly comfortable life considering he was at war. Robert didn't actually die at war, but he pulled a crazy stunt near the end of the war to try and save 150 horses and as a result was burned very badly when he got caught in a barn that was on fire. His burns were intense, and he was sent to recover with the d'Orsey's. He died under their care in 1922, when he was only twenty-five years old. Paul Baumer died like most other men at war, on the front. He had outlived his friends, and was the last of his companions. It was a quiet day on the front when he was shot and died, dubbing the book "All Quiet on the Western Front". Both men die, and these two books show that dying was the most widespread outcome. Once again, Henry died the more common death at war, in the trenches. He fought in the trenches and died in the trenches, unlike Robert who took care of horses and died of burns trying to save them.

Both novels are similar in theory, but when analyzed further and compared, they are very different. In my opinion All Quiet on the Western Front is a much better book. I believe it to be a more accurate story of World War One. The author went into details, and really truthfully told the story of a German soldier at war. Paul fought in the trenches like the other men, and watched his friends around him get shot and killed and die of infections just like the other thousands of soldiers. The plot of The Wars differs. It talked a lot about Robert Ross and his relationships with people I've never heard of, and the author just assumed that I would know who these people are. I found it to be

a very boring book and it confused me a lot. I thought it was about a war, but it turned out to be mostly about a man, some horses and a bunch of rich people. When comparing the two books, I feel that All Quiet on the Western Front portrays the war more accurately and tells a more a common story of a soldier at war.