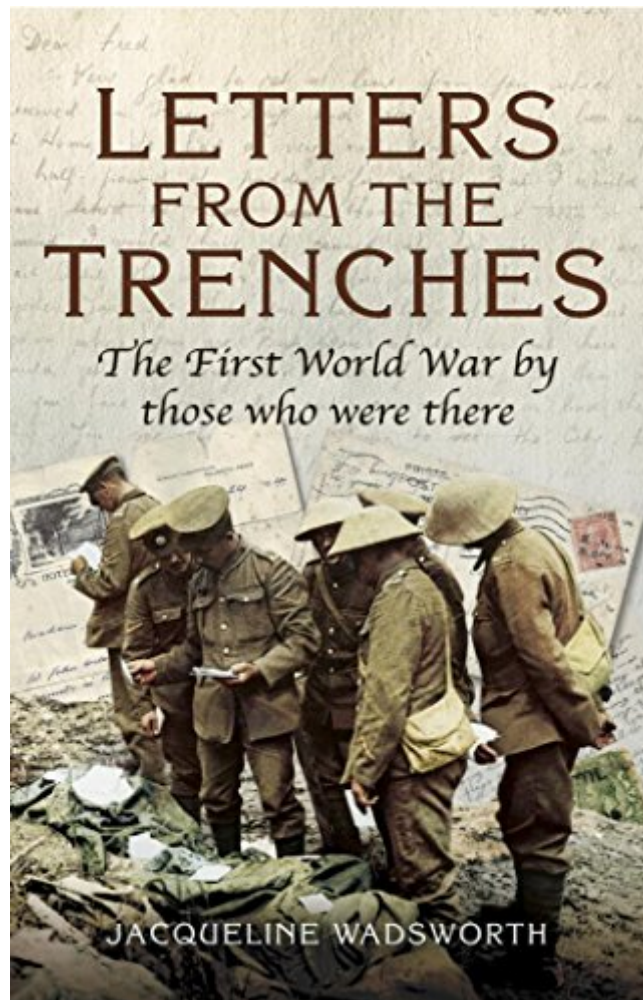


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Letters From The Trenches: The First World War By Those Who Were There



Synopsis

A history of the First World War told through the letters exchanged by ordinary British soldiers and their families. Letters from the Trenches reveals how people really thought and felt during the conflict and covers all social classes and groups – from officers to conscripts and women at home to conscientious objectors. Voices within the book include Sergeant John Adams, 9th Royal Irish Fusiliers, who wrote in May 1917: 'For the day we get our letter from home is a red Letter day in the history of the soldier out here. It is the only way we can hear what is going on. The slender thread between us and the homeland.' Private Stanley Goodhead, who served with one of the Manchester Pals battalion, wrote home in 1916: 'I came out of the trenches last night after being in 4 days. You have no idea what 4 days in the trenches means...The whole time I was in I had only about 2 hours sleep and that was in snatches on the firing step. What dugouts there are, are flooded with mud and water up to the knees and the rats hold swimming galas in them...We are literally caked with brown mud and it is in all our food, tea etc.' Jacqueline Wadsworth skilfully uses these letters to tell the human story of the First World War – what mattered to Britain's servicemen and their feelings about the war; how the conflict changed people; and how life continued on the Home Front.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This genre brings war to life. This particular book was well-written and had gut-level emotion. It's a shame they don't make such books required reading in schools.

"Letters from the Trenches" gives readers the opportunity to learn about World War I in a first-hand manner. The author pencils an outline of the world events, then fills in the color with the stories of people and allows us to experience what they lived through. There are at least 70 people who are part of this story, soldiers, doctors, nurses, wives, mothers; residents of England, Australia, America, India; folks who survived the war and years and those who unfortunately did not. The author has collected their letters, diaries, and photographs (all volunteered by family members), and put together a chronological outline of WWI. We experience their joys, heartaches, tears, and triumphs from the early war years until the aftermath. No matter what is going on in the world, real life still goes on. This book captures the years when people were separated by continents, when love and marriage were tested on a constant basis. It also details the friendships and romances that were found, and how each handled the specter of death, both its coming as well as its departure. Ms. Wadsworth captures the emotions of these people in an entertaining, easy to read format. Five stars.

*** LANGUAGE *** Plain English. Most of the terminology is straightforward, but it is important to bear in mind the writers conversed in UK English, not USA. Also, terminology 100 years ago was a bit different than that used today. If this were a film it would be rated G for language. Quick Overview The technique used is similar to that used by the Burns brothers regarding the American Civil War, letters home from the battlefield. This is probably the best method to let people understand what the fighters actually felt and understood as they lay down their lives for ideals and actions taken by people governing their country. I would say that more exposure to these thoughts and emotions could lead to less frequent war. However, I don't believe that to be the case. Regardless of this, I believe this is a vital book that every student and every adult should read. Note that since many of the letters were written by non-writers, the bar for evaluating the prose differs from many other texts. The effectiveness of the writing, though, is far more potent than even

the most elegant, skillfully crafted novel one could ever hope to read. Length: Print, 176 pages. Q - Target Audience/Genre and is it marketed as Nonfiction or Fiction: A Nonfiction, History, WWI Q - How was this book obtained? A Bought on . Q - Are there a lot of typos/misspellings, grammatical errors or other editing failures? A No. To give a feel for the editing, and the style and flow of this work, I am posting a brief excerpt below.

Another volunteer who couldn't wait to write home about his adventures was Fred Silvester, who landed in France in March 1915 with the First Surrey Rifles, a Territorial battalion. Lance Corporal Silvester came from the south London suburb of Herne Hill and left his job as clerk to a ship-owner to join up. A single man in his early twenties, he kept in touch with his cousin Maggie Silvester, who lived in Wallasey, and six months later was keen to tell her about the part he had played in the Battle of Loos, one of the major British offensives of 1915: 21 October 1915.

After reading about the big advance and the capture of Loos, no doubt you wondered if our regiment took part in it. Yes we did. The Territorials led off the attack and our own division, namely the 47th and three lines of German trenches were captured, also many prisoners and guns, before being held up. Our battn [battalion] did not go forward at first but gave covering fire to protect those going forward and draw the enemy fire on ourselves. We went into Loos two days after the advance to relieve some of the Guards and found the village a mass of ruins, death and destruction being everywhere.

Silvester, too, told of waterlogged conditions in the frontline: When it came to our turn to be relieved we had been about 30 days in the trenches and part of this time the weather was very bad, raining continually and sometimes the water was up to our thighs in the communication trenches so you can guess we were glad to get out for a while.

He made no secret of the fact that he was dreading the approach of winter, with the prospect of long hours on watch in the dark and bitter cold. But still it was in all parts this great work and we must not grumble. Thank God it is not in.

Fred Silvester was killed during a German assault at Vimy Ridge in May 1916.

Wadsworth, Jacqueline. Letters from the Trenches: The First World War by Those Who Were There (Kindle Locations 707-716). Pen and Sword. Kindle Edition.

Wadsworth, Jacqueline. Letters from the Trenches: The First World War by Those Who Were There (Kindle Locations 702-706). Pen and Sword. Kindle Edition.

Bottom Line: Powerful writing that gives insight that even the most skillful, evocative professional wordsmith would give his/her right arm to match. The words uttered within this volume make one shudder in gratitude for not having suffered the perils of the heroes on both sides of the first world war. No generation

before or since, in uniform for any country, or for any political or religious ideology, would excel over those serving in the trenches in Europe, or besieged in Mesopotamia, or elsewhere, during the Great War. Comments regarding your opinion of this book or of my review, whether favorable or unfavorable, are always welcome. If you buy the book based on my review and become disappointed, especially, I do want to know that and I want to understand how I can improve as a book reviewer. Just please be polite. Thank you.

I had not read anything about "The Great War" and this book brought it to life. Quite a revelation that brought to kind sing lyrics: "...war, what is it good for? Absolutely nothing!"

Grim. Just like the war itself. But very interesting, and a bit creepy too. I highly recommend this book as a primary source for the first world war.

A Birdseye view of the horror and grief of WW1

The nature and implications of World War I are fascinating. There is no better way to understand "the war to end all wars" then reading the words of those who participated in it. This book goes beyond the battlefield and reminds us just how difficult war is on the people that we love the most.

Powerful story of what trench warfare was all about and how many soldiers, both German and allied, were killed because of machine guns, artillery, and incorrect orders from higher ups to "go over the top" into the hail of machine guns while only carrying gold action .303 rifles.

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