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Ask the publishers to restore access to 500,000+ books. edit descriptions of this character edit descriptions of this character In the late 1920s, Erich Maria Remarque published All Quiet on the Western Front, which follows a group of disillusioned German soldiers navigating the horrors of World War I. The novel gave voice to a generation of young veterans on both sides of the conflict who had struggledand were still struggling, even a decade after the armisticeto reacclimate to civilian life. Nearly a century later, its still considered one of the most searing war (or, rather, anti-war) stories ever written. Here are eight facts about its history and legacy.1. Erich Maria Remarque based the novel on his own experiences in World War I.Erich Maria Remarque circa 1930. | brandstaetter images/GettyImagesErich Paul Remark was born in Osnabrck, Germany, on June 22, 1898, to Anna Maria and Peter Franz Remark. (He would later replace Paul with Maria as a tribute to his mother and adopt his French ancestors spelling of his surname: Remarque.) The future writer was an 18-year-old student when, in November 1916, he was drafted into the Imperial German Army. He spent about six weeks at the front in the early summer of 1917 before a shrapnel injury landed him in the hospital, and those harrowing memories eventually inspired All Quiet on the Western Front.Remarque experienced depression in the decade following the war, and it wasnt until 1928 that he finally linked his malaise to military trauma. I could observe a similar phenomenon in many of my friends and acquaintances, he said in a 1929 interview. The shadow of war hung over us, especially when we tried to shut our minds to it. The very day this thought struck me, I put pen to paper, without much in the way of prior thought. Six weeks later, the novel was finished.2. All Quiet on the Western Front isnt a direct translation of the books German title.The Berlin newspaper Vossische Zeitung printed Remarques story in serial form in 1928; and the Ullstein Verlag, a German publisher, released it as a book the following January. But it wasnt called All Quiet on the Western Front: The German title was (and is) Im Westen nichts Neues, meaning Nothing New in the West.That line is the army report from the day of protagonist Paul Bumers death shortly before the end of the war. In the English-language edition, however, Australian translator Arthur Wesley Wheen rendered it in the novel as All quiet on the Western Front, which also became the title. Like Remarque, Wheen fought for his home country and was wounded in the war, and he readily admitted that it was these parallel experiencesmore than his grasp of German, which I had but imperfectlythat made him understand the story. In short, Wheen was generally less concerned with direct translation than capturing the essence of Remarques words.3. Early American editions were censored.German soldiers in a trench, circa 1917. | Kirn Vintage Stock/GettyImagesAfter Little, Brown and Company bought the rights to publish Wheens translation in the U.S. in 1929, editors made some updates for two reasons: to abide by obscenity laws, and also to help ensure that the Book of the Month Club would choose it as a future book pick. Little, Brown went so far as to accept edits suggested by the clubs judges, a decision ethically dicey enough to set off a modest media hubbub in which the publisher tried to downplay the revisions.So what were the revisions? Literature scholar Sarah Eilefson found that most were small phrasal omissions involving sex or bodily functionsplus two pretty significant deleted scenes. One is a description of the public outdoor latrine where the soldiers would pass hours playing cards and reading letters.The soldier is on friendlier terms than other men with his stomach and intestines. Three-quarters of his vocabulary is derived from these regions, and they give an intimate flavour to expressions of his greatest joy as well as of his deepest indignation, Remarque wrote in part. We feel ourselves for the time being better off than in any palatial white-tiled convenience. There it can only be hygienic; here it is beautiful.In the other passage that was removed, Paul and his fellow hospital patients make a great clatter and play skat noisily in their communal room so their bedridden friend can enjoy a conjugal visit with his wife. We now feel ourselves like one big family, the woman is rather quieter, and Lewandowski lies there sweating and beaming. We call [the woman] Mother, she is pleased and shakes up our pillows for us.4. Remarque wrote a sequel.In All Quiet on the Western Front, the soldiersthe young ones in particularstruggle to imagine returning to regular life after the war, and Paul has a tough time just being home on leave. Remarque explored the difficulties of reassimilation more fully in his sequel, Der Weg zurckThe Way Back, or, in Wheens original and better-known translation, The Road Back. The novel was first serialized in Vossische Zeitung in late 1930 to early 1931 and published as a book later that year.According to Christine Barker and R.W. Lasts biography, Erich Maria Remarque, the author intended for the sequel to be hopeful. We want to begin once again to believe in life, he said. He who has pointed out the danger must also point out the road onward. It still ended up being pretty bleak. The story follows several of Pauls surviving contemporariesmostly new characters, though the ever-ravenous Tjaden from All Quiet is among themin their troubled attempts to reintegrate into a society that they no longer understand (and that no longer understands them).5. The 1933 Nazi book burnings included All Quiet on the Western Front.Books burned in Berlin. | brandstaetter images/GettyImagesOn May 10, 1933, far-right German college students congregated in nearly three dozen towns and cities to burn some 25,000 books deemed un-German. The piles included works by Ernest Hemingway, Helen Keller, Albert Einstein, Bertolt Brecht, and Sigmund Freud. Though Remarque had maintained that All Quiet on the Western Front was unpolitical, it, too, was burned, along with The Road Back.That wasnt the extent of nationalist efforts to discredit Remarque: The Nazi newspaper Vlkischer Beobachter actually claimed that the author was Jewish, and had changed his name from Kramer (Remark in reverse). Other detractors insisted that Remarque had never even fought at the front. The general feeling among German nationalists was that All Quiet on the Western Front was damagingly unpatriotic and disrespectful to the German military. Shortly after the Nazi takeover in 1933, Remarque fled to Switzerland, and he relocated to the U.S. during World War II.6. But two Nazi newspapers were tricked into publishing excerpts as true accounts.Nazis also tried to undermine the veracity of Remarques work by publishing true stories from the front lines that clashed with those of Remarques characters. After all the lies told by people like Remarque, we now bring to you the experience of a soldier who took part in the war, of which you will say at once: that is what it was really like, read a 1936 issue of Vlkischer Beobachter.But the account that came after that somewhat smug message was literally just an excerpt from All Quiet on the Western Front. And it wasnt even the first time Nazis had fallen for the trick: Someone had previously sent an excerpt from the novel to Der Angriff, a newspaper founded by Joseph Goebbels himself, and its editors had printed it as a genuine tale from the front line.7. All Quiet on the Western Front inspired three film adaptations The first and most famous film adaptation of Remarques magnum opus hit theaters in 1930 and won Oscars for Best Picture (then called Outstanding Production) and Best Director (Lewis Milestone). In 1979, CBS aired a TV movie starring Richard Thomas as Paul and Ernest Borgnine as Katczinsky, Pauls middle-aged mentor and closest friend at the front. It, too, was well received, earning a handful of Emmy nominations and one win for film editing.The 2022 Netflix movie, helmed by German director Edward Berger, is the first German-language adaptation. With nine Oscar nominations, its yet more evidence that the story of Paul and his ill-fated comrades is just as moving on the silver screen as it is on the page (or at least that awards voters are suckers for war movies).8. And one Elton John song.The novel also inspired an Elton John song called All Quiet on the Western Front, the last track on his 1982 album Jump Up! Longtime collaborator Bernie Taupin wrote the lyrics, though the Rocket Man did ask him to replace one line: thin white men in stinking tents. According to Elizabeth J. Rosenthals biography, His Song: The Musical Journey of Elton John, the superstar felt it wasnt an attractive line to sing.Even without it, the song failed to make a splash. Its the worst-selling single in Phonograms history, but we like it, John said before performing the song at Londons Eventim Apollo (then the Hammersmith Odeon) in December 1982.Jump to ratings and reviewsOne by one the boys begin to fallIn 1914 a room full of German schoolboys, fresh-faced and idealistic, are goaded by their schoolmaster to troop off to the glorious war. With the fire and patriotism of youth they sign up. What follows is the moving story of a young unknown soldier experiencing the horror and disillusionment of life in the trenches. 13201 people are currently reading357129 people want to readErich Maria Remarque was a German novelist best known for All Quiet on the Western Front (1929), a landmark anti-war novel based on his experiences in World War I. The book became an international bestseller, defining a new genre of veterans literature and inspiring multiple film adaptations. Its strong anti-war themes led to condemnation by the Nazi regime, which banned and burned his works.Born Erich Paul Remark in 1898, he adopted the surname Remarque to honor his French ancestry. He served on the Western Front during World War I, where he was wounded, and later pursued various jobs, including teaching, editing, and technical writing. After the massive success of All Quiet on the Western Front, he wrote several other novels addressing war and exile, such as The Road Back, Three Comrades, and Arch of Triumph. His outspoken opposition to the Nazi regime forced him into exile in Switzerland and later the United States, where he became a naturalized citizen in 1947.Remarques personal life included high-profile relationships with actresses Marlene Dietrich and Paulette Goddard, the latter of whom he married in 1958. In 1943, his youngest sister, Elfriede, was executed by the Nazis for anti-regime remarks, an event that deeply affected him. He spent his later years in Switzerland, where he continued writing. His final completed novel, The Night in Lisbon (1962), was another bestseller.He died in 1970 at the age of 72, leaving behind a literary legacy that continues to shape discussions on war and its consequences.AKA: (Russian)Displaying 1 - 30 of 21,462 reviewsJuly 18, 2014Man, I need a break. I've been reading about the First World War solidly since December and I've had enough now. There's only so many times you can go through the same shit, whether they're English, French, German, Russian oh look, another group of pals from school, eagerly jogging down to the war office to sign up. Brilliant. Now it's just a matter of guessing which horrible death will be assigned to them: shrapnel to the stomach, bleeding to death in no-man's-land, drowning in mud, succumbing to dysentery, shot for deserting, bayonetted at close range, vaporised by a whizz-bang, victim of Spanish flu. It's like the most depressing drinking game ever.I wish, after spending many months reading around this subject, that I could pick out some obscure classic to recommend (and perhaps I will still find some, because I intend to keep reading about 191418 throughout 201418), but I have to say that this novel, famously one of the greatest war novels, is in fact genuinely excellent and left quite an impression on me, despite my trench fatigue. Remarque has the same elements as everyone else because pretty much everyone in this war went through the same godawful mind-numbingly exhausting terror but he describes it all with such conviction and such clarity that I was sucker-punched by the full horror of it all over again.The story is studded with remarkable incidents that linger in the mind: roasting a stolen goose in the middle of a barrage, for instance, or stabbing a Frenchman to death in a fit of panic while sheltering in the same shell-hole. The arrangements made to allow a hospital inmate to enjoy a marital visit with his wife, while the rest of the patients in the room concentrate on a noisy game of cards. I loved the moment where our narrator and his friends swim across a river to have a drink with some local French girls, arriving naked because they couldn't risk getting their uniforms wet. And back in the trenches, an infestation of huge rats, with evil-looking, naked faces, is described with more than Biblical loathing:They seem to be really hungry. They have had a go at practically everybody's bread. Kropp has wrapped his in tarpaulin and put it under his head, but he can't sleep because they run across his face to try and get at it. Detering tried to outwit them; he fixed a thin wire to the ceiling and hooked the bundle with his bread on to it. During the night he puts on his flashlight and sees the wire swinging backwards and forwards. Riding on his bread there is a great fat rat.There is also a fair bit of philosophising. While guarding a group of Russian prisoners-of-war, our narrator is overcome by the arbitrariness of the whole situation:An order has turned these silent figures into our enemies; an order could turn them into friends again. On some table, a document is signed by some people that none of us knows, and for years our main aim in life is the one thing that usually draws the condemnation of the whole world and incurs its severest punishment in law. How can anyone make distinctions like that looking at these silent men, with their faces like children and their beards like apostles? Any drill-corporal is a worse enemy to the recruits, any schoolmaster a worse enemy to his pupils than they are to us. [] I don't want to lose those thoughts altogether, I'll preserve them, keep them locked away until the war is over. [] Is this the task we must dedicate ourselves to after the war, so that all the years of horror will have been worthwhile?I found this quote and this resolution very moving, because Germany's post-war history rendered it so utterly futile. When the Nazis came to power in 1933 just four years after this was published they set about burning the book, which tended to be their first response to any problem. While Ernst Jnger's vision of a German people purified and hardened by the war was venerated (poor guy), Remarque's text was denounced as an insult to the German soldier. He took the hint, and sailed to the US in 1939. The German state, in what amounted to a fit of pique, cut his sister's head off instead and then billed what was left of his family for wear and tear to the blade.So as can't be said enough fuck them. The insights that Remarque and Barbusse and Sassoon and Genevoix and Manning found in extremis of the essential commonality of human beings are, we like to think, now accepted by society over the alternatives, despite what we sometimes have to infer from the content of our newspapers.With all of that said, this is a novel. It is not a memoir. Remarque only spent a month on the front lines (whereas Jnger, who apparently had the time of his life, was there for years).This 1994 translation from Brian Murdoch is excellent and reads entirely naturally; he also contributes a thoughtful and unassuming essay which finally, a publisher that gets it! is helpfully placed as an Afterword so as not to spoil the novel itself. All in all a very powerful and moving piece of writing: if I had to recommend just one contemporary novel from the First World War, so far this is probably it.fiction first-world-war france May 15, 2022There are already thousands of reviews for this deeply moving and heartbreaking book here on Goodreads, and I don't know that I could add anything new. It simply broke my heart. However I do feel really strongly that I should describe the vivid imagery that I'm left with. Bright red poppies in bloodied fields Where death stalked its victims. It cared not for age, creed, or nationality What would they have achieved in life, These young men, with so much yet to experience, So many dreams to fulfil If duty hadn't called, and they hadn't answered When the sun set for one final time It set on the lives they never livedAugust 29, 2024I don't know why it took me so long to get to "All Quiet on the Western Front," but I'm glad I finally read it and am grateful to my friend Rose for recommending it. The book, first published in the late 1920s, is an absolutely heartbreaking, wonderfully written novel about the permanent damage done to those who fight in wars. Few anti-war novels written since have matched Erich Maria Remarque's unsettling book, and I doubt any have surpassed it.Given how famous "All Quiet" is, there's little need for me to say much about it here. (Plus, it's so much easier to write negative reviews than positive ones, and I have absolutely nothing bad to say about this book.) There are several heart-rending passages that I expect will stick with me for a long time, though, and that I feel the need to mention: Paul Bumer's leave, during which he finds it nearly impossible to relate normally to his family after his experiences on the front; Paul's time in a shell hole with French soldier Grard Duval; the brief interlude Paul and his comrades spend with a group of French girls, and how the gal with whom he'd been paired treats him in the end; and, of course, the scene near the book's end involving Stanislaus Katczinsky, easily "All Quiet"'s most interesting character. (I won't say anything about the scene with Kat so as not to spoil it for those who haven't read the book yet.)One final thought, which I bring up because of Logan's comment that he didn't like "All Quiet," which he last read in high school. I've talked about this before, most recently in my review of "The Sea Wolf," and I feel the need to bring it up again: Many American readers, it seems, have bad memories of great works of literature they were made to read in school. That they were forced to read the books is, of course, part of the problem, but I also think schoolchildren often are assigned books they're not yet ready for. I don't mean that they're not smart enough to read and understand the books, but rather that they're not mature enough to have the books resonate properly with them. This would definitely be true of "All Quiet." It would be the most unusual of high school students -- one in a hundred, perhaps, if that many -- who could truly appreciate the issues raised in this book.I would encourage anyone who hasn't read "All Quiet" yet to check it out. And for those who read it in school and were left with a bad taste in their mouths, it's probably time to revisit the book. That means you, Logan.August 23, 2024Futile!I was just beginning to reach the age when you become critical of the world around you, when I first read this book. You know, a teenager on her high-horse.But re-reading this book still makes me feel the same. The futility of war. The utter waste of life. What a shame. Why cant the generals go down into the trenches? Let them fight it out!Would not be a lot of wars.Five stars. books-i-want-to-read-again classic history October 18, 2020They were young. They were twenty-year-old. The war has stolen their youth.To me the front is a mysterious whirlpool. Though I am in still water far away from its centre, I feel the whirl of the vortex sucking me slowly, irresistibly, inescapable into itself.From the earth, from the air, sustaining forces pour into usmostly from the earth. To no man does the earth mean so much as to the soldier. When he presses himself down upon her long and powerfully, when he buries his face and his limbs deep in her from the fear of death by shell-fire, then she is his only friend, his brother, his mother; he stifles his terror and his cries in her silence and her security; she shelters him and releases him for ten seconds to live, to run, ten seconds of life; receives him again and often for ever.The war has changed the values and priorities in mans life instead of learning the art of love and living one had to learn the skill of staying alive for however a short while longer.Erich Maria Remarque was a humanist who could vividly portray the atrocity of war in all its terrors.I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. I see how peoples are set against one another, and in silence, unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another. I see that the keenest brains of the world invent weapons and words to make it yet more refined and enduring. And 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. What would our fathers do if we suddenly stood up and came before them and proffered our account? 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 out of us?The rich, for whom its All Quiet on the Western Front, get filthily richer while the young and innocent and able pay with their lives for the riches of those who wield power.August 18, 2024All Quiet on the Western Front is a book about a 20-year-old German boy named Paul. He is serving in World War I this is hand-to-hand combat, trench warfare, barbed wire, bayonets, and gas.All Quiet on the Western Front is about the devastation of war, and that no one survives even if the soldier returns from war. Personally, this book is okay. It is very character driven (not plot driven), and I dont usually enjoy character driven books. The narrator is a bit detached, but maybe that is supposed to show that to survive the soldier has to become desensitized. All Quiet on the Western Front is a relatively short book, 160 pages, and it does raise some good points. Pauls schoolteacher encouraged his classmates to enlist. While the schoolteacher is patting himself on the back, most of the new recruits have perished. On his journey, Paul runs into someone while on leave. This is a person who has not served in the military (let alone the front lines); however, this person has big opinions and doesnt mind sharing them (no matter how improbable or unrealistic his plans).All Quiet on the Western Front reminded me a great deal of Nick by Michael Farris Smith where Nick also serves in World War I and has a very similar detached narrator vibe.2025 Reading ScheduleJanA Town Like AliceFebBirdsongMarCaptain Corelli's Mandolin - Louis De BerniereAprWar and PeaceMayThe Woman in WhiteJunAtonementJulThe Shadow of the WindAugJude the ObscureSepUlyssesOctVanity FairNovA Fine BalanceDecGerminalConnect With Me!Blog Twitter BookTube Insta My Bookstore at PangoDecember 20, 2018The greatest war novel?Maybe.This was one of the first books that made me think that even though I wanted to be a writer someday, maybe I did not have what it takes. This was a sharp, swift kick in the gut; a none too subtle reminder that there are somber, very real and poignant moments captured in literature that escape petty categorization and cynicism, there are real moments that cannot be trivialized and placed on a genre specific bookshelf. Powerful.** 2018 - This book, as a war novel, is cautionary. No doubt there are those novels that glorify and even romanticize battles, and there are others whose goal it is to revel in the martial experience. Remarque, though, has crafted a simple story that focuses instead on the individual and how this ugly time affects his life. In doing so Remarque declares the value of that individual life, in all life, and shines a discerning, damning light on war.November 12, 2022Its been over a century since Remarques Paul Bumer went through the meatgrinder of the senseless brutal war, and not a single fragging thing has changed except for better weapons. Its still the perceived offense of one country over whatever seems so important to those idiots in charge - the ones who are safe and whose families are safe no matter what happens, and who will benefit from the senseless slaughter - that sends a bunch of regular people to slaughter other regular people, the violence begets violence, and the wheel turns grinding everyone under its relentless trudge. Kropp had it right: Kropp on the other hand is a thinker. He proposes that a declaration of war should be a kind of popular festival with entrance-tickets and bands, like a bull fight. Then in the arena the ministers and generals of the two countries, dressed in bathing-drawers and armed with clubs, can have it out among themselves. Whoever survives, his country wins. That would be much simpler and more just than this arrangement, where the wrong people do the fighting. How long has it been? Weeksmonthsyears? Only days. We see time pass in the colourless faces of the dying, we cram food into us, we run, we throw, we shoot, we kill, we lie about, we are feeble and spent, and nothing supports us but the knowledge that there are still feebler, still more spent, still more helpless ones there who, with staring eyes, look upon us as gods that escape death many times.Simple but poignant, without a shred of overwriting and overwroughtness, without descending into misery porn, without moralizing, without dropping anvil messages, in compact couple of hundred pages Remarque does what is not easy to achieve. He gets his point through in the way that is so effectively unsettling that those final two paragraphs - just four short lines - make the world sway for just a minute. And thats more than I can say about 99% of literature out there. At once a new warmth flows through me. These voices, these quiet words, these footsteps in the trench behind me recall me at a bound from the terrible loneliness and fear of death by which I had been almost destroyed. They are more to me than life, these voices, they are more than motherliness and more than fear; they are the strongest, most comforting thing there is anywhere: they are the voices of my comrades.I am no longer a shuddering speck of existence, alone in the darkness;I belong to them and they to me; we all share the same fear and the same life, we are nearer than lovers, in a simpler, a harder way; I could bury my face in them, in these voices, these words that have saved me and will stand by me.The youth spent on satisfying others need for violence. Survival and camaraderie borne of that. The intersection of cynicism and idealism. The clear-headed realism too tired to be angry. Tjaden reappears. He is still quite excited and again joins the conversation, wondering just how a war gets started.Mostly by one country badly offending another, answers Albert with a slight air of superiority.Then Tjaden pretends to be obtuse. A country? I dont follow. A mountain in Germany cannot offend a mountain in France. Or a river, or a wood, or a field of wheat.Are you really as stupid as that, or are you just pulling my leg? growls Kropp, I dont mean that at all. One people offends the otherThen I havent any business here at all, replies Tjaden, I dont feel myself offended.Remarques book is the work of genius.5 stars.Buddy read with Dennis.(Review courtesy of a very delayed plane flight). He fell in October 1918, on a day that was so quiet and still on the whole front, that the army report confined itself to the single sentence: All quiet on the Western Front.He had fallen forward and lay on the earth as though sleeping. Turning him over one saw that he could not have suffered long; his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come.Also posted on my blog.2022-reads favorites war-s-inhuman-faceOctober 23, 2022Padziernik 2022:Udao mi si. Po trzech podejciach skoczyam. Przesuchaam audiobooka w wykonaniu Krzysztofa Gosztyy i nie mogabym wyobrazi sobie lepszego lektora. Praktycznie do koca mylaam, e obni ocen, bo jednak nie mogam przej przez jej pocztek, ale ostatnie zdanie, ktre tak naprawd tumaczy sens tytuu doprowadzio mnie do paczu. Zostawiam 5 gwiazdek i mocno polecam. Pocztek 2022:40% DNF Miaam do niej ju podejcie w 2021, ale po roku musz j ponownie odoy. To nie jest na ni czas.January 8, 2019"Its unendurable. It is the moaning of the world, it is the martyred creation, wild with anguish, filled with terror, and groaning."This slim novel about the horror of the World War I trenches and the senselessness of war was published in 1929. If you open this book up today, it is absolutely just as relevant now as it was decades ago. It is powerful and breathtaking. I finished my second reading of this last month and barely a day goes by without me thinking about it. I had read All Quiet for the first time ages ago and the haunting feeling I had then has stayed with me all these years. If you have not ever read this book, you must do so. It is that meaningful."Shells, gas clouds, and flotillas of tanks shattering, corroding, death. Dysentery, influenza, typhus scalding, choking, death. Trenches, hospitals, the common grave there are no other possibilities."This is a story of a German soldier, Paul Bumer, and his comrades. Since the book is so widely known and reviewed here on Goodreads, I wont go into plot details. But I want to make note of some portions that affected me quite deeply. For instance, Remarque so clearly reflects the feeling of camaraderie that these men, most of them not even twenty years old, experienced in the field and on the front. These were some of the most moving passages of the novel. "These voices, these quiet words, these footsteps in the trench behind me recall me at a bound from the terrible loneliness and fear of death by which I had been almost destroyed. They are more to me than life, these voices, they are more than motherliness and more than fear; they are the strongest, most comforting thing there is anywhere; they are the voices of my comrades." Ive never read such stirring words about the soldiers intimacy with not a woman, but rather with the very earth itself. The writing is truly remarkable. "To no man does the earth mean so much as to the soldier. When he presses himself down upon her long and powerfully, when he buries his face and his limbs deep in her from the fear of death by shell-fire, then she is his only friend, his brother, his mother; he stifles his terror and his cries in her silence and her security; she shelters him and releases him for ten seconds to live, to run, ten seconds of life; receives him again and often forever."When Paul goes home on leave, he finds that the life he once knew and loved no longer has the same meaning. His books, his case of butterflies and his piano no longer bring him the joy they once had. He cannot speak of what he has seen; he feels that those that have not been on the front and mired in the trenches can truly understand him. He feels alone. I was heartbroken when he cried out for his lost childhood."Ah! Mother, Mother! You still think I am a child why can I not put my head in your lap and weep? Why have I always to be strong and self-controlled? I would like to weep and be comforted too, indeed I am little more than a child; in the wardrobe still hang short, boys trousers it is such a little time ago, why is it over?"I dont know if a book exists that so effectively conveys the meaninglessness of war. If there is another, I have yet to read it. I suspect that Remarque had a marked influence on many authors writing about the topic since, but I dont think this one can be beat in its simple yet passionate and well-expressed message. There were moments of fleeting pleasures and true companionship that allowed me to intermittently rejoice along with Paul and dream of a future when the war would be ended. But I also keenly felt his moments of hopelessness and despair. I nodded my head when he recognized in the enemy a man much like himself. His sense of humanity truly shined at these times. Something as basic as the sharing of cigarettes with the Russian prisoners was very telling."I take out my cigarettes, break each one in half and give them to the Russians. They bow to me and then light the cigarettes. Now red points glow in every face. They comfort me; it looks as though there were little windows in dark village cottages saying that behind them are rooms full of peace."Ah, if only this book could be read everywhere by everyone. Perhaps then we could all see the reflection of ourselves, our mothers, our fathers, our brothers and sisters, and our lovers in the face of another human being. Could we then avoid the devastation of war? This book deserves a place on your bookshelf. Grab a copy if you havent already. Mine is sitting on my all-time favorites shelf."I think it is more of a kind of fever. No one in particular wants it, and then all at once there it is. We didnt want the war, the others say the same thing and yet half the world is in it all the same."book-i-own classics-shelf favorites March 27, 2023A man cannot realize that above such shattered bodies there are still human faces in which life goes its daily round. And this is only one hospital, a single station; there are hundreds of thousands in Germany, hundreds of thousands in France, hundreds of thousands in Russia. How senseless is everything that can ever be written, done, or thought, when such things are possible. It must be all lies and of no account when the culture of a thousand years could not prevent this stream of blood being poured out, these torture chambers in their hundreds of thousands. A hospital alone shows what war is.2023 20th-century favourites February 20, 2023I am young, I am twenty years of age; but I know nothing of life except despair, death, fear, and the combination of completely mindless superficiality with an abyss of suffering. I see people being driven against one another, and silently, uncomprehendingly, foolishly, obediently and innocently killing one another. I see the best brains in the world inventing weapons and words to make the whole process that much more sophisticated and long-lasting..All wars create heroes, all heroes have they own stories, and all brilliant stories have words that illicit powerful emotions, inspire future generations, and in the process, immortalise those who gave so much. Yet the needless loss of life is best explored in this daring book, where freedom was dispensed with for force and the costly effect of war is told through the eyes of one German soldier and his young army friends.The plot unfortunately feels very real and grim, but the messaging and characterisation was outstanding. The irony of the story exists in the lives of four young nave soldiers who went to war with a sense of adventure only to find there was no glory in war, only death, anger, and despondency. Best expressed in a quote that is so powerful and heart wrenching.This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war.Although the characterisation in the book was superb, one of the most unlikely heroes in this story was not a book character but the author himself for writing this novel that no doubt will continue to take its rightful place in literary history. Considering the period, this book was brave, but it was also dangerous for the author to have written such an anti-war story. The messages are universal and provides an opportunity to reflect on the many lives lost through the ambitions of small men who learn nothing from history. I have read so many war time stories both fictional and non-fictional but this one got to me, and the tears flowed, perhaps heightened because of the needless deaths in our world today, and perhaps because it was so affecting to have heard the trauma that most young lads (everyone really) would have faced in the trenches, regardless of which side they were on. Yet for me it was the writing style that cannot be overlooked because this was persuasive writing at its best and when it mattered. To have had these glimpses into the thoughts, memories, and emotions of the people on the front line was dramatic and overwhelming at times when they talk about the onslaught of oblivion, abyss of isolation, I am so alone and so devoid of any hope that I cannot confront them without fear.Incredibly emotional, sobering, and effective. Also raw, authentic, and terrifying with the lens on the vulnerable and largely innocent people who if given the opportunity would have chosen not to go to war. My thoughts go to the innocent lives lost in the world wars and to the people of Ukraine, including the innocent people on all sides who have been forced into war against their will. And for the people that know something of fighting in pointless wars.While they went on writing and making speeches, we saw field hospitals and men dying: while they preached the service of the state as the greatest thing, we already knew that the fear of death is even greater. Only a military hospital can show you what war isThese vintage classic novels are proving a great find. This is one of many I have been collecting and enjoying because they are unique, works of art, evocative, and timeless. Incidentally many were originally banned but censored is probably a more fitting description. I will start to list these because they are less well known but certainly do deserve to be up there on the podium with other literary giants._____Other 'Vintage Classics' titles worthy of a 5 star rating Wide Sargasso Sea, by Jean Rhys Ballad of Sad Cafe by Carson McCullersThe Heart's a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers For EsmeWith Love and Squalor, by SalingerThe End of the Affair by Graham Greene (4 Stars)best-reads-2023 vintage-classicsFebruary 8, 2023This truly is a masterpiece. The author draws on his frontline experiences during World War 1 to bring the honest brutality and inhumane face of war to light and at what cost war is fought. The book follows Paul Bumer, where after a few years in the trenches he has become a hardened veteran and has lost all his enthusiasm for fighting, but also does not know what he will do without it. He is surrounded by his comrades from many battles where they have become like a family, and then he starts losing them which leaves him with strange emotions as he deals with everything around him, from going on leave, killing an enemy face-to-face to being wounded. The ending is apt for the book as it shows how a generation was lost, for all humankind, not just the Allies or Central Powers.Written in the 1920's, it shows what the horrors of the trenches was like for the young soldiers that had to do the fighting, and what horrendous wounds they suffered and all they had to give up of their lives. The book was banned by the Nazis in the 1930's and you can see why. Great book and highly recommended reading to all.May 5, 2022I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. From its opening in the trenches with the German Army in WWI to an end replete with utter hopelessness, Erich Maria Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front presents a devastating picture of a soldier at war. What's clear is that our protagonist, Paul, could be a soldier of any country; his concerns and emotions could be those of a soldier of this century rather than the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, despite the images we associate with WWI (such as the gas attacks and brutal conditions in the trenches), there is something very modern about All Quiet on the Western Front. It may well have to do with Remarque's attitude toward war. From the outset, we are warned that this is not an adventure; even those who manage to escape the war unscathed are damaged. In effect, a generation is destroyed by the war.In trying to make sense of the war, Remarque explores the powerlessness of soldiers on the front lines. From a belief in their government's rationale in going to war, soldiers increasingly focus on their own deliverance. The end is utterly bleak. All the promise of youth is destroyed by disease, starvation and ultimately death. Those who come back from this war are still damaged; there is no way they can go through the horrors of war without the scars.January 5, 2020This is the best war novel I've ever read! I'm not sure how much that's saying about me or the book, since I haven't exactly read a great many war novels. I've been on a World War I jag lately, which should not be misinterpreted as READING a great many books about World War I. All Quiet on the Western Front is a book I've owned about 25 years and this was actually my second try at reading it. The only reason I know this is that I noticed upon reading that it had passages underlined ending on page 64. I remembered nothing of what I'd read couldn't recall ever trying to read the novel. Senescence is a cruel affliction!Why was this the best war novel I've ever read? Well, the book told the truth. It was the truth of the author but, I suspect, it is a truth shared by many infantry soldiers who've been engaged in trench warfare or any close combat. There are exceptions to this. Ernst Junger fought in the trenches much longer than Erich Remarque and was wounded nine times--yet he wrote an account of The Great War very different, in some ways, than Remarque's. Remarque survived the war, but came away with a damaged psyche and horrific memories that, fortunately, he was able to rise above to become a successful novelist. I think his writing actually helped exorcise his demons from the war. Junger saw the war as a patriotic struggle and a test of his mettle. That is, he saw (or created) a purpose for the war, with the ultimate purpose being victory for Germany and personal victory which required that he stay alive. Interestingly, Adolph Hitler was another who apparently enjoyed the perils of fighting in The Great War. This is not an indication, though, that Junger and Hitler were similar men. Junger despised Hitler from all accounts I have read.Remarque has courage even while admitting to being scared, as anyone would be while being fired upon by artillery, shells, mustard gas and aerial bombardments. But his view of The Great War is far different. He views the war as pointless and futile and the work of a group of old men who won't have to fight who decide based on shaky or spurious pretexts that, suddenly, this nationality is our enemy, another is our friend. Remarque's thinking was more in line with the Bob Dylan song, "Only a Pawn in their Game." Soldiers were cannon fodder, and when they died, as they frequently did, other recruits were brought in as more cannon fodder--young boys of 19, many who enlisted at the urging of their schoolmasters--men who would not have to sleep standing up in a trench as bombs dropped around them and lice ate them and rats battled for their bread. When/if the war ended, it was because these same gray eminences met again in some far-off city and signed pieces of paper saying that, despite all the carnage, the nations were once again friends.Human instinct propelled survival and experience in battle and taught one the skills to survive; though in Remarque's world, even survival skills were often trumped by sheer luck. Old heads could talk of duty to the "Fatherland" but all war really meant to the combatants was a fight for reasons they could not understand, created by powerful men in faraway rooms who signed documents allowing men to commit atrocities that under normal circumstances would have led them to the gallows or the firing squad. I'm a bit torn over whether Remarque's war experiences are universal or whether they reflect his particular personality or the particular war he was fighting? WW I was a gruesome, protracted conflict. It probably could have been fought at the negotiation table, as internecine European squabbles are settled nowadays. No doubt it was easy for the common foot soldier on all sides to forget that the war started because an heir apparent to the throne of a dying empire was shot by a Bosnian youth who wanted his country free from the yoke of this decaying empire. Ironically, he killed a man and his wife who were sympathetic to his cause.Perhaps, as General Sherman said, "War is hell" and is hell under any conditions but especially hell for a soldier on the front lines in a ground war. I have heard interviews with fighter pilots and Navy SEALS, among other elite forces, where the retired soldiers said they missed the war and there was never a time when they felt more alive than when fighting in battle. It appears that some revel in the conflicts and get a thrill from combat, though I'm guessing that a great many more, upon reflection, might hold a view closer to Remarque's, and a great many, if you got them under the hot lights, might allow that war has its downsides, too.Perhaps in wars like WW II, where soldiers on the allied side had a real sense of purpose, such dissonance as Remarque felt was far less common? Perhaps if soldiers can be convinced of the necessity of the war then doubts a combatant might harbor can be dispelled. I suspect, though, that combatants in most wars are battling demons, with varying degrees of success, after experiencing the horrors of war.August 27, 2021 ! :)) ... ! ..! . . ! . ! ! ...September 10, 2024Dehumanization, comradely behavior under enormous pressure, spells of incredible dullness and terrible, faceless bombardments. An artificial numbness, a degeneration of humanity to survive the madness is rendered in a terrifying wayLet the months and year come, they can take nothing from me, they can take nothing more. I am so alone and so without hope I can confront them without fear.A deeply humbling and powerful read, and a still incredible relevant call against the idiocy of war and the cost it bears to normal people. In All Quiet on the Western Front 19/20 year olds dying is a normal occurrence and Paul, the main character is subject to enormous pressures amidst periods of extreme boredom. One especially visceral scene is of Paul lying to comfort people, teenage comrades, dying. In these circumstances discipline and social conditioning act as a bandage to keep people relatively sane. However of 20 of the class, 7 are dead, 4 wounded and 1 mad during the course of the book.How can a man take all that stuff serious once he has once been out here? Paul asks himself while dealing with rats that eat up his bread.The drudgery and permanent adrenaline rush act as a dampener: I soon found out this much: terror can be endured so long as a man simply ducks, but it kills if a men thinks about it.In all this there is some enjoying oneself with French women across the river who exchange sex for rations. In general the civilian population is definitely the worst off, with almost no food. The strangeness of civilian life behind the frontlines is heightened by the observation of Russian prisoners of wars: I am frightened I dare think this way no more, this way lies the abyssAnd with any respite from the front the doom of the return is there as well:But every gasp lays my heart bareBack in the trenches After all war is war people risk their lives for pancakes, running between artillery shots, while cigars, cigarettes and other food or alcohol serve as bribes to be send back home. The best one can hope for is to be discharged with a reasonably non-fatal injury.A hospital alone shows what war is however, and amputations and sickness are rampant.Paul dives deeper and deeper into this shadowy world, stripped of his agency or choice, which has profound repercussions: An artificial numbness, a degeneration of humanity to survive the madness. The occasional court marshalling of deserters make nearly no impact: We will be superfluous, even to ourselvesErich Maria Remarque wrote a remarkable book, bleak and full of horrors that resonate as much today as nearly a century ago at publication. An impressive book that deserves reading and contemplation.November 5, 2022Update 30/October/2022:Finished watching the new German-language adaptation of the book on Netflix with the fianc, a non-book reader, and it was crushing. I hate the Entente, I hate the Alliance, and I hate every single one of the powers that be for dragging us all into the stupidest of stupid wars, wasting millions of young, healthy, and handsome men's lives who will never father beautiful babies, find a cure for cancer, and make the world better than it is today. Props to Herr Remarque for this stupendous novel that is still so relevant over a century later.The fianc's review? Oh, he said: "Alright, so

near truth? Aren't they the first people who have sacrificed their lives, ambitions, hopes, and above all, their youth? If they are not the victims of war, what are they? "I'm young, I'm twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow." When they step on to the battlefield, all is lost to them forever. They may physically survive the war, but never emotionally. The scars, the ghosts will haunt them forever. Remarque gives a nightmarish account of both the physical and mental traumas the soldiers go through. It is both horrifying and heartbreaking. I also had a very disturbing sleep overnight. Imagine, if a nearly truthful account of war can disturb one thus, how disturbing it might be to those who have faced it, every day? How hopeless they might feel life would be for them, even if they be lucky enough to live through it? " We are not youth any longer. We don't want to take the world by storm. We are fleeing. We fly from ourselves. From our lives. We were eighteen and had begun to love life and the world; and we had to shoot it to pieces." And for what have they sacrificed their lives, hopes, dreams, and youth? There lies the unanswerable question? The most likely answer to be given would be through patriotism. If both factions of the war act out of patriotism, who is in the right? "We are here to protect our fatherland. And the French are over there to protect their fatherland. Now who's in the right?" Who is in the right? The answer will always be subjective, but it can never be objective.Remarque's account of the gruesomeness of war, written about the First World War nearly a century ago, speaks true for all subsequent wars, be it world war or civil wars. The horrors of it and the subsequent mental destruction they caused on those directly connected with it are all factual certainties. If we are to avoid history being repeated, these factual certainties must be accepted. I think this is what Remarque wanted to tell the world, especially its rulers. But did they listen to him? Is anyone listening even now?More of my reviews can be found at 5, 2021This is one of my favourite books, a very open, authentic account of WWI from the perspective of a German soldier. The images can really stick in your head.November 11, 2024 Please enjoy the review after my annual re-read of this classic for this time of year!LEST WE FORGETThis enthralling novel by Erich Maria Remarque provides the reader with a stellar look at a soldiers life during the Great War. Told through the eyes of a young German soldier, the story pulls the reader in and personalises events in such a way that it almost seems palatable, without justifying or downplaying the atrocities at any point. All Quiet on the Western Front is sure to stir up emotion in those readers who have an interest in military discussions, as well as those who love war-time history.This is the story of Paul Bumer, a nineteen year-old fighting for the German Fatherland in France during the middle of the Great War. Having signed up voluntarily alongside a number of his classmates, Bumer hoped things would be as exciting as they sounded. All that was dashed after the weeks of basic training, in which the young men are broken down and put through their paces before being tossed on the front lines, where the beauty of nationalism is replaced by the horrors of death. Now, these young men live in constant physical terror as explosions rock their every night.The story explores the trials and tribulations the war brings to those who witness it first-hand. Bumerl finds himself fighting to justify his presence in France and tries to survive on poor rations, barely enough for survival. He also witnesses how decimating the war can be, when only a handful of his training class survive after a short stint on the front.Bumer is also forced to sober up to the realities of life, which turns sensitivity on its head and permits pragmatism to surface. After a soldier dies in front of them, the fight is on for his supplies, something the surviving soldiers need more than the corpse. This creates a refreshing look at life and the lessons that come with it, leaving manners back in Germany when every day could be your last.There are moments of harrowing action, as Bumer accompanies the others to lay barbed wire and finds himself trapped under artillery fire. Scared and pinned down, the men talk about their own thoughts about how the war could be more effectively fought, as well as what might have changed the minds of the politicians who are sitting in their ivory towers, far away from the bloodshed.When a bloody battle with enemy leads to men being blown apart with severed limbs and torsos, Bumer sees the most gruesome part of the war, something that he was not told about when first he agreed to serve. Rats feast on the dead and Bumer expresses a sense of being animalistic, trusting his instincts alone to save him. The casualty list is high and Bumer tries to erase what hes seen when he is given leave and encounters a few French girls, eager to help him forget.Bumer takes some extended leave to return home for a family visit. He feels like an outsider, unable to discuss his trauma with anyone. His mother is dying of cancer and she hopes that he can be proud of what he is doing, but wants him to come home as soon as possible. This surely pulls on his heartstrings and Bumer is left to wonder what the fighting will really do, as he cannot be with family when they need him most. After witnessing the horrors of a prisoner-of-war camp, Bumer is determined to help bring the war to an end, vowing never to be captured or enslaved by the enemy. The months push onwards and the German army begins to lose control of its fate. Bumer watches his friends die in combat, eventually leaving him as the only one left from his original class. By the fall of 1918, Paul Bumer can see the end is in sight and hears much talk about an armistice, which would bring the bloody war to an end, something hes wanted ever since arriving at the Western Front. Erich Maria Remarque does a masterful job painting the image of war and how it truly gets into the pores of those who are fighting on the front lines. It is less about strategy and troop advancement than the blood and gore faced by those young men who were pulled from their schools in order to fight for their country. While many in the West see the Germans as the evildoers (in both World Wars), Remarque offers this wonderful look at the war through the eyes of one man, to show that there was nothing but pure fear within him. No matter whose sides was right, young men perished without knowing what they were trying to do. Their task, kill or be killed. Their horror, to be maimed or brutally injured. All this comes to the surface throughout this piece, which will surely shock the attentive reader.There are many characters whose lives progress throughout the book, though I will not list them. Remarque seeks more to tell a story of the war through their experiences than to inject a deeper plot with the Great War as a backdrop. The horrors of war spill out from every page, as well as the senselessness of men who could barely shave being the pawns of an international political disagreement. This theme is echoed throughout, in twelve strong chapters. While many will likely turn away from the book because they disagree with war or have read too much about it, I would encourage everyone to give it a try to see just how deeply it affects you. Especially with November 11th just around the corner!Kudos, Mr. Remarque, for this sensational piece that had me enthralled throughout. It has stirred up some real emotions within me.In Flanders fields the poppies blowBetween the crosses, row on row, That mark our place; and in the sky The larks, still bravely singing, flyScarce heard amid the guns below.- Canadian Lieutenant-Colonel John McCraeLove/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at: Book for All Seasons, a different sort of Book Challenge: 16, 2010My copy of this was a paperback that I had picked up somewhere in my high school years. It was printed in the 50s and cost 60 cents per the cover price. The pages were yellowed and an old dog of mine (dead 20 years now) chewed on a corner of it at one point, and his teeth marks are still on it. But I held onto that copy over the years through multiple changes of residence and numerous paperback dumps to used book stores and library donations. When I was trying to organize some of my stuff packed away in the basement, I found my battered old copy and felt the immediate need to read it again. But I also decided to invest in a better edition. Frankly, I was scared the old one would fall apart, but Ive carefully packed away that copy again. Im thinking about putting it in my will that I should be buried with it. That gives you an idea of how highly I regard this book.My new copy says on the cover that its the greatest war novel of all time. Im not going to argue about that statement. Ive often thought that this book should be required reading for any politician with the power to declare war. Only a madman or Dick Cheney could send troops into combat after reading this.Paul is a 19 year old German soldier in World War I. Living though artillery shellings, gas attacks, trench warfare and seeing a generation of men blown to bits has made Paul old before his time. He has a soldiers profound weariness and cynicism. Some of the more heartbreaking parts of this are when Paul and his fellow soldiers realize that theyve been changed far too much to ever care about anything but survival again. Paul and the other soldiers try to find small comforts where they can since theres almost no chance theyll survive the war unscathed.On the very short list of books that I think everyone should read at least once.Trivial Side Note or No, I Dont Work for the Kansas City Tourism Board The National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial is something I recommend to anybody who likes this book, or has any interest at all in these types of things. (My wife is usually not interested in war stories or memorabilia at all, but she found this museum fascinating.) Its got tons of actual equipment from the war, interactive multi-media displays, and some truly eye-opening exhibits.For example, theres one room you walk into that is a recreation of what it looked like when a large shell hit a French farm house from the basement perspective. So you walk in and it feels like youre in a giant crater with house debris above you. There are also recreations of the trenches and one battlefield set done below a wide screen documentary playing that gives a vivid and eerie feeling of what a hellish landscape was created by the war. Check it out here: favorites military January 8, 2025It's World War One, it's gritty, it's dirty, it's horrible, it's terrifying. "All Quiet on the Western Front" is so much more than an "anti-war novel"; it's an assault on the romanticized notions of heroism and glory that often shroud conflict. This isn't a tale of valiant soldiers and amazing victories. Instead, it takes the reader into the suffocating reality of trench warfare: the constant, gnawing fear, the horrible injuries, the loss of innocence that turns young men into shells of their former selves. We follow a group of young German soldiers, initially driven by patriotic fervor, or guilt at not having enough patriotism, become numbed by the constant exposure to death and violence. We experience gruesome battles, loss of innocence, and psychological trauma, all in 200 short pages. "All Quiet on the Western Front" is a raw and real look at what was supposed to be the war to end all wars. It's not for the squeamish or faint of heart.March 16, 2024All Quiet on the Western Front isn't just a war story, its a trial of war through the eyes of a generation robbed of its innocence. Remarque doesn't just depict the deafening chaos of battlefields; he paints a portrait of the psychological trenches dug deep within these young soldiers. Remarque's prose cuts deep, exposing the raw wounds of men turned into machinery. You don't just witness the physical brutalities; you feel the soul-crushing weight of fear, the desperate camaraderie that becomes a lifeline, the gnawing emptiness that war leaves behind. The narrative is a tapestry woven with moments of heartbreaking tenderness a shared cigarette, a stolen laugh in the face of oblivion that only heighten the gut-wrenching futility of their situation.Remarque forces us to confront the truth these soldiers aren't grand heroes, but pawns in a game played by distant figures of power. Their lives are expendable, their futures stolen. It's a powerful reminder of the human cost, a cost borne by those who fight for a cause they barely understand. You see the war not through grand strategies, but through the haunted eyes of Paul Bumer and his comrades. But Remarque doesn't stop at the trenches. He delves into the profound disillusionment that awaits them back in a world that seems alien after the horrors they've faced. It's a poignant reminder that war's greatest tragedy isn't just the lives lost, but the shattered humanity of those who survive. Its a masterpiece of unflinching honesty that stays with you long after the final, chilling words. This isn't a tale of glory or heroism; it's a poignant exploration of how war strips away innocence, leaving behind a generation forever haunted by the ghosts of their youth. Remarque's words resonate because they capture a truth that transcends time and nationality: the profound tragedy of young lives wasted in the pursuit of glory for distant figures.A powerful and unforgettable read! Stays with you for years! I feel emotional talking about this book. Its one of my favourite books of all time and it places Remarque as one of my all time favourite authors. favorites have-on-my-bookshelfDisplaying 1 - 30 of 21,462 reviewsGet help and learn more about the design.In the late 1920s, Erich Maria Remarque published All Quiet on the Western Front, which follows a group of disillusioned German soldiers navigating the horrors of World War I. The novel gave voice to a generation of young veterans on both sides of the conflict who had struggledand were still struggling, even a decade after the armisticeto reacclimate to civilian life. Nearly a century later, its still considered one of the most searing war (or, rather, anti-war) stories ever written. Here are eight facts about its history and legacy.1. Erich Maria Remarque based the novel on his own experiences in World War I.Erich Maria Remarque circa 1930. | brandstaetter images/GettyImagesErich Paul Remark was born in Osnabrck, Germany, on June 22, 1898, to Anna Maria and Peter Franz Remark. (He would later replace Paul with Maria as a tribute to his mother and adopt his French ancestors spelling of his surname: Remarque.) The future writer was an 18-year-old student when, in November 1916, he was drafted into the Imperial German Army. He spent about six weeks at the front in the early summer of 1917 before a shrapnel injury landed him in the hospital, and those harrowing memories eventually inspired All Quiet on the Western Front.Remarque experienced depression in the decade following the war, and it wasnt until 1928 that he finally linked his malaise to military trauma. I could observe a similar phenomenon in many of my friends and acquaintances, he said in a 1929 interview. The shadow of war hung over us, especially when we tried to shut our minds to it. The very day this thought struck me, I put pen to paper, without much in the way of prior thought. Six weeks later, the novel was finished.2. All Quiet on the Western Front isnt a direct translation of the books German title.The Berlin newspaper Vossische Zeitung printed Remarques story in serial form in 1928; and the Ullstein Verlag, a German publisher, released it as a book the following January. But it wasnt called All Quiet on the Western Front: The German title was (and is) Im Westen nichts Neues, meaning Nothing New in the West.That line is the army report from the day of protagonist Paul Bumers death shortly before the end of the war. In the English-language edition, however, Australian translator Arthur Wesley Wheen rendered it in the novel as All quiet on the Western Front, which also became the title. Like Remarque, Wheen fought for his home country and was wounded in the war, and he readily admitted that it was these parallel experiencesmore than his grasp of German, which I had but imperfectlythat made him understand the story. In short, Wheen was generally less concerned with direct translation than capturing the essence of Remarques words.3. Early American editions were censored.German soldiers in a trench, circa 1917. | Kirn Vintage Stock/GettyImagesAfter Little, Brown and Company bought the rights to publish Wheens translation in the U.S. in 1929, editors made some updates for two reasons: to abide by obscenity laws, and also to help ensure that the Book of the Month Club would choose it as a future book pick. Little, Brown went so far as to accept edits suggested by the clubs judges, a decision ethically dicey enough to set off a modest media hubbub in which the publisher tried to downplay the revisions.So what were the revisions? Literature scholar Sarah Eilefson found that most were small phrasal omissions involving sex or bodily functionsplus two pretty significant deleted scenes. One is a description of the public outdoor latrine where the soldiers would pass hours playing cards and reading letters.The soldier is on friendlier terms than other men with his stomach and intestines. Three-quarters of his vocabulary is derived from these regions, and they give an intimate flavour to expressions of his greatest joy as well as of his deepest indignation, Remarque wrote in part. We feel ourselves for the time being better off than in any palatial white-tiled convenience. There it can only be hygienic; here it is beautiful.In the other passage that was removed, Paul and his fellow hospital patients make a great clatter and play skat noisily in their communal room so their bedridden friend can enjoy a conjugal visit with his wife. We now feel ourselves like one big family, the woman is rather quieter, and Lewandowski lies there sweating and beaming. We call [the woman] Mother, she is pleased and shakes up our pillows for us.4. Remarque wrote a sequel.In All Quiet on the Western Front, the soldiersthe young ones in particularstruggle to imagine returning to regular life after the war, and Paul has a tough time just being home on leave. Remarque explored the difficulties of reassimilation more fully in his sequel, Der Weg zurckThe Way Back, or, in Wheens original and better-known translation, The Road Back. The novel was first serialized in Vossische Zeitung in late 1930 to early 1931 and published as a book later that year.According to Christine Barker and R.W. Lasts biography, Erich Maria Remarque, the author intended for the sequel to be hopeful. We want to begin once again to believe in life, he said. He who has pointed out the danger must also point out the road onward. It still ended up being pretty bleak. The story follows several of Pauls surviving contemporariesmostly new characters, though the ever-ravenous Tjaden from All Quiet is among themin their troubled attempts to reintegrate into a society that they no longer understand (and that no longer understands them).5. The 1933 Nazi book burnings included All Quiet on the Western Front.Books burned in Berlin. | brandstaetter images/GettyImagesOn May 10, 1933, far-right German college students congregated in nearly three dozen towns and cities to burn some 25,000 books deemed un-German. The piles included works by Ernest Hemingway, Helen Keller, Albert Einstein, Bertolt Brecht, and Sigmund Freud. Though Remarque had maintained that All Quiet on the Western Front was unpolitical, it, too, was burned, along with The Road Back.That wasnt the extent of nationalist efforts to discredit Remarque: The Nazi newspaper Vlkischer Beobachter actually claimed that the author was Jewish, and had changed his name from Kramer (Remark in reverse). Other detractors insisted that Remarque had never even fought at the front. The general feeling among German nationalists was that All Quiet on the Western Front was damagingly unpatriotic and disrespectful to the German military. Shortly after the Nazi takeover in 1933, Remarque fled to Switzerland, and he relocated to the U.S. during World War II.6. But two Nazi newspapers were tricked into publishing excerpts as true accounts.Nazis also tried to undermine the veracity of Remarques work by publishing true stories from the front lines that clashed with those of Remarques characters. After all the lies told by people like Remarque, we now bring to you the experience of a soldier who took part in the war, of which you will say at once: that is what it was really like, read a 1936 issue of Vlkischer Beobachter.But the account that came after that somewhat smug message was literally just an excerpt from All Quiet on the Western Front. And it wasnt even the first time Nazis had fallen for the trick: Someone had previously sent an excerpt from the novel to Der Angriff, a newspaper founded by Joseph Goebbels himself, and its editors had printed it as a genuine tale from the front line.7. All Quiet on the Western Front inspired three film adaptations The first and most famous film adaptation of Remarques magnum opus hit theaters in 1930 and won Oscars for Best Picture (then called Outstanding Production) and Best Director (Lewis Milestone). In 1979, CBS aired a TV movie starring Richard Thomas as Paul and Ernest Borgnine as Katczinsky, Pauls middle-aged mentor and closest friend at the front. It, too, was well received, earning a handful of Emmy nominations and one win for film editing.The 2022 Netflix movie, helmed by German director Edward Berger, is the first German-language adaptation. With nine Oscar nominations, its yet more evidence that the story of Paul and his ill-fated comrades is just as moving on the silver screen as it is on the page (or at least that awards voters are suckers for war movies).8. And one Elton John song.The novel also inspired an Elton John song called All Quiet on the Western Front, the last track on his 1982 album Jump Up! Longtime collaborator Bernie Taupin wrote the lyrics, though the Rocket Man did ask him to replace one line: thin white men in stinking tents. According to Elizabeth J. Rosenthals biography, His Song: The Musical Journey of Elton John, the superstar felt it wasnt an attractive line to sing.Even without it, the song failed to make a splash. Its the worst-selling single in Phonograms history, but we like it, John said before performing the song at Londons Eventim Apollo (then the Hammersmith Odeon) in December 1982.We know only that in some strange and melancholy way we have become a wasteland.It is common knowledge that war is physically destructive and treacherous. It is common knowledge that soldiers all around the world perish daily. In Erich Maria Remarques novel, All Quiet on the Western Front, a new aspect of war is introduced. What lies after combat, death, and loss is most tragic of all; life after the war. This historic war novel takes place during The Great War, World War I. German Soldier, Paul Bumer, narrates from his standpoint as he enters the war as an eager eighteen-year-old. Throughout the story, he experiences a profound bond with his comrades, a bond broken only by death itself. Although Paul does not live to return home to his family, read his books again, nor pursue his dreams prior to the war, he has already been desecrated by the image of fallen friends and even enemies.Surviving the terrors of war does not set soldiers free, but makes them as unlucky as their fallen brothers. Shockingly, one of the most unsettling worries for the young soldiers was returning home after the war. Paul, along with his comrades, was rushed into combat at an early stage in his life. When comparing his life to older soldiers, Paul expresses, for the generation that grew up before us, though it has passed these years with us here, already had a home and a calling; now it can return to its old occupations, and the war will be forgotten (294). Due to the men joining the army right after they finished high school, they did not have time, nor the opportunity to begin life outside of education, as the older generation did. Instead of starting a family, continuing school, or finding a steady job, the men are rushed off into combat. Without a previous life before the war, the men notably have nothing to look forward to. The war becomes their life, the only life they have ever known. Therefore, when they return from the fiery of the fronts, they find themselves more alone than ever before. Another way war destroys minds is through the death of a fellow comrade. The everlasting bond between soldiers is described best by Paul when he declares, They are more to me than life, these voices, they are more than motherliness and more than fear; they are the strongest, most comforting thing there is anywhere: they are the voices of my comrades (212). Death can tear people apart; death can also bring people closer. In All Quiet on the Western Front, the soldiers, despite the suffering and loss, develop an unbreakable bond. Whether it is the brutal training with Corporal Himmelstoss, a ruthless man who trains the soldiers, or the terrors of machine guns, grenades, and poison gas, the men are with each other through everything. In fact, they are all each other have. This bond can be both key to survival and keeping sanity but it can also be deadly. When a fellow comrade perishes in battle, the men lose a brother, best friend, and soldier all at once. War is not solely about surviving, it is about surviving with others.A soldiers mind, much like Pauls when he loses Kat, his best friend, is forever damaged. No medicine nor time away from war can heal a soldiers memory, no medicine nor time can heal a soldiers mind. Not only are soldiers harmed by the death of comrades, but they are also slowly damaged by how normal death becomes. Death on the battlefield is inevitable, and in a sense, normal. An orderly tending to Kemmerichs fatal leg amputation reports, today alone there have been sixteen deaths- yours is the seventeenth. There will probably be twenty altogether (32). In the midst of war, numbers replace lives. For every life lost, a number is added to a chart. Kemmerich was a comrade and friend to Pauls squad. To the orderly, he was no more than the seventeenth death of the day. Perhaps it is easier for the men to cope with loss when death is habitual. However, it is not until after the war when each number is replaced with a life, an innocent and promising life.Dehumanization benefits the soldiers during the war when they need to barricade loss. Unfortunately, years after the war when men need it the least, dehumanization seizes ones thoughts and holds them accountable for every life, every number, every man. Those who consider themselves lucky for surviving war are truly fortunate. Not all soldiers have the belief to say surviving was lucky. Men find themselves lost with no life to return to post-war; war is their life and will continue to be. They find themselves struggling to cope with the loss of fallen brothers, and although they perished years ago, are still a vivid image in the veterans mind. Emotional disconnection paves the way for a ruinous impact on the soldiers life. Slowly, and then all at once, without warning or guidance, every casualty visits the mind of a soldier. All Quiet on the Western Front explores bonds between comrades while giving insight into the effects on the soldiers mental health. Remarques novel proves people can be destroyed by death before they are physically killed by death.Remember! This essay was written by a studentYou can get a custom paper by one of our expert writersOrder custom paperWithout paying upfront edit descriptions of this character edit descriptions of this character edit descriptions of this character Writing an essay is not easy. 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Gegen einen krperlichen Angriff kann man sich wehren, nicht gegen ein Odium, nicht gegen ein Achselzucken, nicht gegen die vielwissende Miene: Man wei ja ...Seit Jahr und Tag wird mit aller Energie gegen den Schriftsteller Erich Maria Remarque gehetzt, dem nicht verziehen wird, da er einen Frontroman in den unfreundlichen Farben der Wahrheit geschrieben hat. Seitdem ist man unablssig bemht, ihm etwas anzuhngen. Da er nachweislich keine groben Kriminalverbrechen begangen hat, versucht man es mit Kleinigkeiten. Remarque soll nicht Remarque heien, sondern anders. Aus dem Recht des Schriftstellers auf ein Pseudonym wird pltzlich eine suspekte Sache. Auf dieser Linie bewegte sich lange Zeit der sogenannte Kampf um Remarque.Jetzt hat man endlich einen fetteren Happen. Remarque soll Kapital verschoben haben. Wenigstens sind auf eine Denunziation hin Vermgenswerte von ihm bei der Danatbank beschlagnahmt worden. Zwar dmpfte eine Erklrung seines Rechtsbeistandes den Sensationswert dieser Nachricht etwas, aber sogleich war doch ein neues Schlagwort da: Remarque lebt im Ausland, er zieht es vor, das mit seinem Buche verdiente Geld anderswo zu verzehren, anstatt es seinem notleidenden Vaterland zukommen zu lassen. Lebte Remarque hier in Deutschland, so wrde es gewi heien: Remarque prat, whrend Hitler im Kaiserhof darbt! Wahrscheinlich wird sich auch die Sache mit dem verschobenen Kapital am Ende als Verleumdung herausstellen, aber wenn die Lge auch zerplatzt, ihr Geruch bleibt, und er bleibt nicht an dem haften, der sie aufgebracht hat.Kapitalverschiebung, das hrt sich nicht schn an, und ist Remarque schuldig, so wird ihn das Gesetz zur Ader lassen mssen. Aber rechtfertigt das eine groe Pressehetze? Handelte es sich nicht um einen bekannten und erfolgreichen Schriftsteller sondern um den schwerreichen Kommerzienrat X. so wrde man lchelnd sagen: Aha, der kleine Verkehrsunfall eines sonst tchtigen Geschftsmannes! und zur Tagesordnung bergehen.Eine bestimmte idealistisch verkitschte Auffassung sieht den Knstler noch immer erhaben ber die materiellen Notwendigkeiten des Lebens. Willst du in meinem Himmel mit mir leben, so oft du kommst, er soll dir offen sein!, so dichtete der selige Schiller, und er hat damit namenloses Unheil angerichtet. Denn unsre Klassiker, deren Geist so hoch flog, waren im Leben durchweg arme verprgelte Untertanen, die sich in den reinen griechischen ther schwangen, um zu vergessen, da sie schlielich von der Laune eines Gnners oder von einem tristen Professorengehalt existieren muten. Deshalb war Schiller nur konsequent, wenn er den Knstler endgltig aus der Welt verbannte, in der die Prozente verteilt werden. Und deshalb gibt es immer ein so groes und peinliches Erstaunen, wenn der Knstler pltzlich wie ein hungriger Spatz aus dem Blauen geflattert kommt und sich ein Stck Torte vom Tisch holt.Der Knstler hat jedoch das gleiche Anrecht auf die allgemeinen Gebrechen wie ein jeder in andrer Branche ttige Mitmensch. Man verbelt es einem Maler, wenn er rechnen kann wie ein Bankier, man ist enttuscht von einem Dichter, der fr seine Auslandskonten sorgt, als wre er ein national gesinnter Wirtschaftsfhrer. Da zerbricht man sich den Kopf ber einen ehrenwerten alten Schriftsteller von streng konservativer Anschauung, der sein Haus angeznden hat, um die Versicherungssumme zu erlangen, und weil keine Anzeichen sichtbar sind, da er pltzlich Bolschewik oder Antimilitarist geworden ist, sagt man einfach, er knne nicht mehr bei gesundem Verstande sein. Wirklich geisteskrank? Der rmste handelte nicht anders als ein kleiner Geschftsmann, der sich am Ende wei, keine Hilfsmittel mehr sieht und in einem desperaten Anfall das Glck mit einem trichten Gewaltstreich zu korrigieren versucht. Frher lag die Sndendomne des Knstlers in den weiten Gebieten der Erotik. Heute wre ein Fall Oscar Wilde nicht mehr mglich, und zwar nicht, weil wir freiheitlicher oder toleranter geworden sind, sondern weil wir andre Sorgen haben. Die Snden dieser Zeit sind konomische. Auch der Knstler wird nur seiner sozialen Kategorie entsprechend reagieren. Es ist Dummheit und Heuchelei, ihn hrter zu beurteilen, nur weil er von Berufs wegen gleichsam der Menschheit Wrde zu vertreten hat.Niemand wird jemals entrtseln knnen, warum grade Erich Maria Remarque in der Agitation der Rechten zu einer Art von Plakatscheusal geworden ist. Sein Kriegsroman ist gewi eine glnzende Leistung, voll von wirklichkeitsnahen Schilderungen aber um Tat zu werden, dazu fehlt der Rest, auf den es ankommt. Auch ohne mit dem Spachtel aufgetragene Tendenz mu ein Roman, der das strkste Erlebnis einer Generation behandelt, aus der Literatur in die Politik hineinwirken. Das ist nicht geschehen, das Buch ist nur eine interessante isolierte Leistung geblieben. Seine ungeheure Verbreitung hat dem Nationalismus keinen Abbruch getan. Es ist im Grunde effektlos vorbergerauscht. Es ist als eine Modesache aufgenommen, so gelesen und wieder weggelegt worden.Vielleicht ist das Verhalten des Autors daran nicht unschuldig. Es war von Remarque gut und geschmackvoll, da er dem fatalen Tagesruhm auswich, der mit einem solchen Erfolg unvermeidlich verknpft ist. Es war verhngnisvoll, da er vor den Kmpfen kniff, die eine ebenso unausweichbare Konsequenz seines Erfolges waren. Den Angriffen auf den Roman, auf den Film, der danach gedreht wurde, setzte er ein beharrliches Schweigen entgegen. Whrend alles Stellung nahm, zog er sich selbst in eine bequeme Neutralitt zurck, Freunden und Widersachern die Streitfrage berlassend, wie der Roman nun eigentlich gemeint sei. Die Haltung, die einem ruheliebenden stheten neidlos gegnnt sein mag, wird einem Schriftsteller nicht leicht durchgehen, der an das erregendste Thema unsrer Tage gerhrt hat, der knstlerisch gestaltend an das gerhrt hat, was Deutschland bis heute in zwei Teile spaltet: an den Krieg.Es ist eine Albernheit, Remarque vorwerfen zu wollen, er verzehre sein Geld nicht in Deutschland. Das kommt aus der Begriffswelt von Ksehndlern, die bse sind, wenn bei der Konkurrenz gekauft wird. Es ist kein besseres Argument gegen Remarque, ihm nachzuschreien, er wre aus Deutschland geflohen. Denn Deutschland ist heute eine Gasse, in der dumme Jungen mit Steinen und Dreck werfen. Wer es nicht ntig hat, macht einen Umweg. Remarque ist nicht aus Deutschland geflohen, sondern aus der Zeit. Er hat die Verpflichtung ignoriert, die in seiner Arbeit und in seinem Erfolge lag. Das ist der ernste Einwand gegen ihn. Das ist der wirkliche Fall Remarque.Das Buch ist heute schon vergessen. Sein Verfasser wre es auch, wenn nicht die rachschtige Bosheit der Chauvinisten ihn immer wieder in Erinnerung brchte. Warum dieser Ha gegen den Autor von Im Westen nichts Neues? Das ist, wie gesagt, kaum zu beantworten. Vielleicht fhlen die auf der andern Seite, welch gewaltige Waffe dieses eine Buch htte werden knnen mit einem Manne dahinter. Aber dieser Mann war nicht da sondern nur ein Glckskind, das einen Zufallstreffer gemacht und sich daraufhin sofort ins Privatleben zurckgezogen hat.Die Weltbhne, 12. April 1932 Im Westen nichts Neues Roman Im Westen nichts Neues ist der mit Abstand bekannteste und einflussreichste aller Romane Remarques. Direkt nach seinem Erscheinen bei Ullstein im Jahre 1928 wurde er zu einem Massenerfolg, wie ihn das deutsche Verlagswesen noch nicht gesehen hatte. Zugleich wurde er aber auch das Ziel heftigster Angriffe der Rechten und insbesondere der Nationalsozialisten, die zu der Verbrennung von Remarques Bchern im Mai 1933 und zu seiner Ausbrgerung 1938 fhren sollten. Die Handlung dreht sich um die Erlebnisse des jungen Soldaten Bumer, der sich unter dem Einfluss seines Klassenlehrers im Ersten Weltkrieg direkt von der Schulbank an die Front meldet. Er erlebt den Tod aller seiner Freunde und den Zusammenbruch seiner jugendlichen Welt in dem unvorstellbaren Grauen des Schtzengrabens. 1930 wurde der Roman von Lewis Milestone, der auch bei Arc de Triomphe Regie fhren sollte, verfilmt. Der Film Im Westen nichts Neues wurde zu dem Klassiker unter den Antikriegsfilmen. Das Kaisergesprch aus Im Westen nichts Neues Acht Tage lang knnte man glauben, in einer Rekrutenkaserne zu sitzen, so wird gearbeitet und exerziert. Alles ist verdrossen und nervs, denn bermiges Putzen ist nichts fr uns und Parademarsch noch weniger. Gerade solche Sachen verrgern den Soldaten mehr als der Schtzengraben. Endlich ist der Augenblick da. Wir stehen stramm, und der Kaiser erscheint. Wir sind neugierig, wie er aussehen mag. Er schreitet die Front entlang, und ich bin eigentlich etwas enttuscht: Nach den Bildern hatte ich ihn mir grer und mchtiger vorgestellt, vor allen Dingen mit einer donnernden Stimme. Er verteilt Eiserne Kreuze und spricht diesen und jenen an. Dann ziehen wir ab. Nachher unterhalten wir uns. Tjaden sagt staunend: Das ist nun der Alleroberste, den es gibt. Davor mu dann doch jeder stramm stehen, jeder berhaupt! Er berlegt: Davor mu doch auch Hindenburg stramm stehen, was? Jawoll, besttigt Kat. Tjaden ist noch nicht fertig. Er denkt eine Zeitlang nach und fragt: Mu ein Knig vor einem Kaiser auch stramm stehen? Keiner wei das genau, aber wir glauben es nicht. Die sind beide schon so hoch, da es da sicher kein richtiges Strammstehen mehr gibt. Was du dir fr einen Quatsch ausbrtest, sagt Kat. Die Hauptsache ist, da du selber stramm stehst. Aber Tjaden ist vllig fasziniert. Seine sonst sehr trockene Phantasie arbeitet sich Blasen. Sieh mal, verkndet er, ich kann einfach nicht begreifen, da ein Kaiser auch genau so zur Latrine mu wie ich. Darauf kannst du Gift nehmen, lacht Kropp. Verrckt und drei sind sieben, ergnzt Kat, du hast Luse im Schdel, Tjaden, geh du nur selbst rasch los zur Latrine, damit du einen klaren Kopp kriegst und nicht wie ein Wickelkind redest. Tjaden verschwindet. Eins mchte ich aber doch wissen, sagt Albert, ob es Krieg gegeben htte, wenn der Kaiser n

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