

Theme: Conflict

Source A: 20th Century Non Fiction

The following extracts are taken from the diary of Captain Charlie May, a First World War soldier who was killed on the morning of July 1st 1916, leading his men into action on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. He was 27 years old. After his death the soldier who carried his body from the battlefield discovered Captain May's notebook. He later discovered six further pocketbooks among the late officer's possessions, all written in faint pencil in tiny, italic handwriting.

November 28, 1915

I see that last evening I boasted that it would take more than rats to disturb us. I was badly mistaken. They ran over my legs, body, chest and feet, but when they started on my face I must own that I slavishly surrendered, fell to cursing horribly and finally changed my lying place. I can tell you they are some rats, these.

December 1, 1915

It is exciting work, sniping. In fact, one must curb the tendency lest it should become a fascination. The Second in Command of the E Lancs [East Lancashire Regiment] and myself put in a couple of hours this morning and had quite a bit of fun worrying the Boches in their trenches. 5

One fellow was walking across the open – 2,000 yards off – when I spotted him and let go. You never saw a chap move quicker in your life. He ran for a tree and jumped behind it and I let him have four more there. Whether I got him or not I don't know but he didn't move for the next half-hour. I know because I waited so anxiously for him. 10

January 13, 1916

I long and long to see you, to clasp you in my arms... and I long with all my heart to see my Baby. How I love her. What hopes I have for her, what a sweet girl she will make.

February 25, 1916

Woke up this morning to find the snow pelting down and covering the ground fully five inches deep. Also it was freezing hard. Cotton came in to breakfast with us. He brought the little bible which [another soldier] had taken from the body of the dead German. 15

On the fly-leaf in a child's handwriting the word Dada. War is very sad. Perhaps the man may have been something to loathe and detest. I do not know. All I am conscious of is that somewhere in his fatherland there is a little child who called him Dada. 20

April 6, 1916

Fritz¹ strafed our new trenches with heavies and searched round the support with high explosive shrapnel and other such obnoxious stuff. One shell claimed three NCOs and wounded three men. We all feel wild to get at the beast and hope we may string him up on the wire. I saw the killed go down the line. It was a pitiful sight.

Poor boys, shell fire is a horrid thing. Gresty – a lad who was a sergeant of mine – was the worst, his body full of gaping holes. It was very, very sad. Do those at home realise how their boys go out for them? Never can they do enough for their soldiers, never can they repay the debt they owe. Not that the men ask any reward...but one day we'll get at him with the bayonet. We'll take our price then for Gresty and all the other hundred thousand Grestys slain as they were standing at their posts. 25
30

June 17, 1916

I do not want to die...the thought that I may never see you or our darling baby again turns my bowels to water. My conscience is clear that I have always tried to make life a joy for you. But it is the thought that our babe may grow up without my knowing her and without her knowing me. I pray God I may do my duty for I know whatever that may entail you would not have it otherwise. 35

July 1, 1916

We marched up [to the assembly trench] last night. The most exciting march imaginable. Guns all round us crashed and roared till sometimes it was quite impossible to hear oneself speak. It was, however, a fine sight and one realised from it what gun power really means.

Fritz, of course, strafed back in reply, causing us some uneasiness and a few casualties before even we reached the line. The night passed noisily and with a few more casualties. The Hun puts a barrage on us every now and then and generally claims one or two victims. 40

It is a glorious morning. We go over in two hours' time. It seems a long time to wait and I think, whatever happens, we shall all feel relieved once the line is launched.

No Man's Land is a tangled desert. Unless one could see it, one cannot imagine what a terrible state of disorder it is in. But we do not yet seem to have stopped the machine guns. These are popping off all along our parapet as I write. I trust they will not claim too many of our lads before the day is over. Now I close this old diary down for the next few 45

¹ Nickname for German soldiers

days since I may not take it into the line. I will keep a record of how things go and enter it up later.

Source B: 21st Century Non Fiction

The following source shows the speech that Colonel Tim Collins gave to the 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment, on the eve of them entering Iraq in 2003.

"We go to liberate, not to conquer. We will not fly our flags in their country. We are entering Iraq to free a people and the only flag which will be flown in that ancient land is their own. Show respect for them.

There are some who are alive at this moment who will not be alive shortly. Those who do not wish to go on that journey, we will not send. As for the others, I expect you to rock their world. Wipe them out if that is what they choose. But if you are ferocious in battle, remember to be magnanimous in victory. 5

Iraq is steeped in history. It is the site of the Garden of Eden, of the Great Flood and the birthplace of Abraham. Tread lightly there. You will see things that no man could pay to see - and you will have to go a long way to find a more decent, generous and upright people than the Iraqis. You will be embarrassed by their hospitality even though they have nothing. Don't treat them as refugees for they are in their own country. Their children will be poor, in years to come they will know that the light of liberation in their lives was brought by you. If there are casualties of war then remember that when they woke up and got dressed in the morning they did not plan to die this day. Allow them dignity in death. Bury them properly and mark their graves. 10 15

It is my foremost intention to bring every single one of you out alive. But there may be people among us who will not see the end of this campaign. We will put them in their sleeping bags and send them back. There will be no time for sorrow.

The enemy should be in no doubt that we are his nemesis and that we are bringing about his rightful destruction. There are many regional commanders who have stains on their souls and they are stoking the fires of hell for Saddam. He and his forces will be destroyed by this coalition for what they have done. As they die they will know their deeds have brought them to this place. Show them no pity. It is a big step to take another human life. It is not to be done lightly. 20 25

I know of men who have taken life needlessly in other conflicts. I can assure you they live with the mark of Cain upon them. If someone surrenders to you then remember they have that right in international law and ensure that one day they go home to their family.

The ones who wish to fight, well, we aim to please. If you harm the regiment or its history by over-enthusiasm in killing or in cowardice, know it is your family who will suffer. You will be shunned unless your conduct is of the highest - for your deeds will follow you down through history. We will bring shame on neither our uniform or our nation. 30

It is not a question of if, it's a question of when. We know he has already devolved the decision to lower commanders, and that means he has already taken the decision himself.

35

If we survive the first strike we will survive the attack. As for ourselves, let's bring everyone home and leave Iraq a better place for us having been there. Our business now is North.”

Section A: Reading

Answer all questions in this section. You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section

Q1) Read lines 1 to 20 of Source A. Choose four statements below which are TRUE.

(4 marks)

- A. The writer finds being a sniper exciting.
- B. A German bible had ‘mama’ written on the inside cover.
- C. Rats disturbed the men when they slept.
- D. Gresty died after a bomb attack.
- E. The man hiding behind the tree didn’t move for an hour.
- F. There was five inches of snow on the ground one day.
- G. He longs to see his little girl.

Q2) Refer to Source A and Source B. Write a summary of the differences in the writers’ attitudes towards those they are fighting.

(8 Marks)

Q3) Refer to Source B. How does Collins use language to present positive views of war?

(12 marks)

Q4) Refer to Source A and Source B. Compare how the writers convey their attitudes to being a soldier during wartime. In your answer, you should:

- compare their attitudes
- compare the methods they use to convey their attitudes
- support your ideas with quotations from both texts

(16 marks)

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section. Write in full sentences. You are reminded of the need to plan your answer. You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

Q5)

'There is no glory in war.'

2016 marks the 100 year anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

Write a letter to your local council discussing how your town should remember the First World War, and how celebrations could be used to promote peace.

(24 marks for content and organisation 16 marks for technical accuracy)

(40 marks)