

## Journal #1



*Tommy*



*Fritz*



*Poilu*

What are some of the reasons two countries might go to war with each other? In your opinion, are any of these reasons good enough? If so, which ones?

## Letter

**Wilfred Owen's last letter dated 31 October 1918. He was killed on 4 November, one week before the end of the war.**

Dearest Mother,

So thick is the smoke in this cellar that I can hardly see by a candle 12 inches away. And so thick are the inmates that I can hardly write for pokes, nudges, and jolts. On my left, the company commander snores on a bench. It is a great life. I am more oblivious than the less, dear mother, of the ghastly glimmering of the guns outside and the hollow crashing of the shells.

I hope you are as warm as I am, soothed in your room as I am here. I am certain you could not be visited by a band of friends half so fine as surround us here. There is no danger down here - or if any, it will be well over before you read these lines...

1. What is the attitude of Wilfred Owen in this letter?
2. Where is he writing from? Why?
3. How does he feel about his fellow soldiers?

## Vocabulary

**Tommy:** British army soldier. From *Tommy Atkins*, a name sometimes used on specimen forms to represent a typical British army private soldier. Said to be derived from a British soldier who distinguished himself at the battle of Waterloo.

**Fritz:** (1) A German Soldier. From the diminutive of *Friedrich*. (2) Potato chips. From the French, *frites*.

**Poilu:** French soldier. From the French *hairy one*. French soldiers themselves disliked the term, instead referring to themselves as *les hommes* or *les bonhommes*.