

Journal #14



Helping the Wounded

Although soldiers in offensive action were ordered not to break the line to give assistance to those who had fallen, many later risked their own lives to try and get the wounded back to safety.

Why would many soldiers volunteer to return to combat, even though they are quite aware of its horrors? Is it patriotism or perhaps something else?

Letter

In his book *Goodbye to All That*, Robert Graves wrote about what happened when a popular officer was wounded in [No Mans Land](#).

Sampson lay groaning about twenty yards beyond the front trench. Several attempts were made to rescue him. He was badly hit. Three men got killed in these attempts: two officers and two men, wounded. In the end his own orderly managed to crawl out to him. Sampson waved him back, saying he was riddled through and not worth rescuing; he sent his apologies to the company for making such a noise. At dusk we all went out to get the wounded, leaving only sentries in the line. The first dead body I came across was Sampson. He had been hit in seventeen places. I found that he had forced his knuckles into his mouth to stop himself crying out and attracting any more men to their death.

1. Why were the wounded collected after dark? The dead were often left where they fell, because many saw no need to risk lives to collect the bodies.
2. Why do you suppose men were willing to risk their lives to save a comrade?
3. What does it say on the part of the officer, knowing his actions will lead to his death?

Vocabulary

Blighty One: A wound serious enough to require the recipient to be sent home (to England).

Body Snatcher: (1) Stretcher bearer. (2) Member of a trench raiding party, often tasked to bring in prisoners for intelligence purposes.

Go West: (1) To be killed, to die. The most popular euphemism of this type. (2) To go astray or be stolen.

Sentries: soldiers stationed at a place to stand guard and prevent the passage of unauthorized persons, and keep watch for enemy activity.