

Shine Bright LLCE Cycle Terminal

File 5 War will not tear us apart

A beach memorial p. 65

Hello I'm Danny Boyle and I'm standing on Folkstone beach. From this beach, over 100 years ago, thousands and thousands of personnel left to fight in the First World War. I wanted to issue an invitation for you to join us on your own beaches around the country to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, the end of the 14-18 war. The idea of being on the beach and the beaches around Britain and Northern Ireland is that we wanted to create a partner to the more formal ceremony that happens at the cenotaphs around the country every year. It's not an alternative to the cenotaph. It's a kind of complement to that, really and it's to try and make it a more community-based gesture. These are amazing democratic places anybody can come here. There's no rulers here. Everybody's equal. So we wanted to create an artwork. What we're going to do is we're going to create a number of different faces around different beaches around Britain. When the tide goes out, the volunteers — which is you, the community — will come together and will make an imprint on these beaches, like a photograph in the sand, of some of the people who served, who gave their lives. For instance, Wilfred Owen the famous poet. He left from Folkstone, and in fact he swam off this beach apparently the day before he left to serve, and lost his life of course. And then we will wait. We'll stand back, as you must, as the tide returns and it will wash away this face for the last time really. Let's fill the beaches around the UK and stand together. It would be a final goodbye, a final salute to the people who gave their lives.

We've also asked to Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, to write a poem that will be read aloud in some form on the beach on the day. And what I hope, that this poem will be something that you'll be able to read as individuals yourself privately or amongst friends or amongst the people on the beach on that day.

It seems strange to talk about poetry, but poetry changed the world then. It reported in the way that television does now. It reported on the reality of something which was

unimaginable to people. So I hope you'll be able to join in on November the 11th and I hope it's a day like this, which would be absolutely beautiful. But if it isn't, it doesn't matter, because our beaches are unruly. They're ours and they're kind of anybody's at any time, if you can get to them. They're a great democratic space, so this seems like a fitting and wonderful place to salute them and to say goodbye.

The Christmas truce p. 68

Dan Snow: It will be over by Christmas, many of the troops assured themselves. But it wasn't. Instead, the British expeditionary force had been exposed to the full might of the German army and all the brutal apparatus of industrial war. For many, Christmas Day was a day like any other. But some witnessed an event that stood out in the history of the war, and in the years since has achieved a mythical status.

Dan Snow: At various points along the front line, a series of ceasefires spontaneously broke out. Historian Peter Hart carried out many of the interviews with veterans in the Imperial War Museum's collection.

Peter Hart: When you listen to the interviews there's a real sense of – what is going on? What are they like? It was a chance to meet, to talk to the enemy. It's a very powerful motivation, curiosity, and this comes across all the time as you listen to their voices, the interest in what's going on the other side of the barbed wire.

Henry Williamson: Some of us went over at once. And they came to this barbed-wire fence between us, which was hung by... hung with empty bully-beef tins, that would make a rattle if they came. And very soon we were exchanging gifts.

“My Boy Jack” p. 70

“Have you news of my boy Jack?”

Not this tide.

“When d’you think that he’ll come back?”

Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

“Has any one else had word of him?”

Not this tide.

For what is sunk will hardly swim,

Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

“Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?”

None this tide,

Nor any tide,

Except he did not shame his kind—

Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.

Then hold your head up all the more,

This tide,

And every tide;

Because he was the son you bore,

And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!