



Student worksheet

# Experiencing the end of World War 1

Soldier	Emotions	Evidence from the source
Horace Calvert, <i>Second Grenadier Guards</i>		
Private Harold Boughton		
Fred Dixon		
Albert Birtwhistle		
Soldier	Emotions	Evidence from the source



Joseph Pickard		
William Towers		
Lieutenant John Nettleton, <i>Rifle Brigade</i>		
Sergeant Harry Hopthrow, <i>Royal Engineers</i>		
<b>Soldier</b>	<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Evidence from the source</b>



<p>Private K Hares, Oxon <i>and Bucks Light Infantry</i></p>		
<p>Harry Patch, <i>Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry</i></p>		

- *What emotions can you detect in this source?*

**Lieutenant Richard Dixon, Royal Field Artillery**

'An unreal thought was running through my mind. I had a future. It took some getting used to – this knowledge. There was a future ahead for me, something that I had not imagined for some years. All that mattered was that the war was over and by some miracle I had come through it when some many better men had not.'



- *Now study these sources and compare them. How similar and how different are the emotions being expressed?*

### **Guardsman Horace Calvert, Second Grenadier Guards**

'I saw staff officers surrounded by a lot of troops and they were telling them that they wanted money paid every week, they hadn't been paid for weeks. The rumour was around that the last of the men called up would be the first to be demobilised because they were the key men to get the industry going. Chaps said they hadn't been home for four years and it was time they were allowed to go home. They were making a point and it was a forceful point. Everybody was in agreement apparently. There were two or three ringleaders, they were doing all the talking and waving everyone around to come and join them, there was two or three hundred there. It wasn't a mutiny – I would call it a disturbance! They managed to disperse them eventually.'

### **Private Harold Boughton**

'I was so useful in this camp orderly room, that the captain wouldn't sign my papers; he wouldn't let them go through. While other chaps were getting discharged I was still stuck in this blooming camp. One day I filled up my discharge papers and slipped them in amongst several others. The captain, who very rarely read anything – he just signed it – he signed my papers and two or three days later my discharge came through. He was furious!'

### **Fred Dixon**

'I applied for a job at Whitehall, at the Ministry of Labour as a temporary clerk. I went before a man, he was chairman and a lot of bearded old men round a board. The old men were in the saddle again and you just didn't stand a chance. He said, "I'm sorry Mr Dixon, but you've had no experience!" Why, didn't I see red! I got up on my hind legs and said, "Pardon me, sir! But I've had more experience than anybody in this room, but the thing is it's been the wrong sort! When I joined the army in 1914, I told the recruiting sergeant I couldn't ride a horse and he said, 'We'll bloody well soon teach you!' They did and they spared no pains over it! Apparently I could be fitted for war but I can't be fitted for peace! I shall know what to do another time gentlemen!"'

### **Albert Birtwhistle**

'I think it sent me crackers a bit. One day the gaffer came, he said something to me and it just got right on top of me. I grabbed hold of him by the blinking lapel of his coat and I said, "I'll split you top to bottom!" Stupid of me. I think he thought, "Here's a crackpot come out from the war!" I calmed down after a while.'

### **Joseph Pickard**

'Can you ever imagine being without one? I never put the bandages back on; I got a piece of plastic to put across the hole, I just covered it, I didn't have any nose. All the kids in the blinking neighbourhood had gathered: talking, looking, gawping at you. I still had this little bit of plastic stuff as a nose. I could have taken the crutch and hit the whole lot of them! I knew what they were looking at. So I turned round and went back to the hospital. I was sitting one day and I thought, "Well, it's no good, I can stop like this for the rest of my life – I've got to face it sometime!" So I went out again – people staring – I used to turn round and look at them!'

### **William Towers**

'He eyes me up and down, he said, "I suppose you'll have to be living on people's generosity for the rest of your life?" I said, "Well it won't be your bloody generosity I want,



goodbye!” And I walked away. I thought, “Well I’ll show that fellow if nobody else – I don’t want their generosity!” Do you know it spurred me on!

### **Lieutenant John Nettleton, Rifle Brigade**

‘We were told that this was “the war to end war” and some of us at least believed it. It may sound extraordinarily naïve, but I think one had to believe it. All the mud, blood and bestiality only made sense on the assumption that it was the last time civilised man had to suffer it. I could not believe that anyone who had been through it could ever allow it to happen again. I thought that the ordinary man on both sides would rise up as one and kick any politician in the teeth who even mentioned the possibility of war.’

### **Sergeant Harry Hopthrow, Royal Engineers**

‘When the Armistice came, I found an enormous blank in my life, and wondered what I would do next, because, most of my skills were involved with wireless telegraphy in the army. There was a silence on my mind as to what the future was going to be.’

### **Private K Hares, Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry**

‘When I went home to Weston-super-Mare looking for a job they didn’t want to know me – they couldn’t give a damn. They only had council houses for key workers, and I thought to myself, ‘What the hell have I been all this time then?’ We weren’t key workers apparently, after all we’d been through. The British public never realised or appreciated what myself and all the other fellows had experienced.’

### **Harry Patch, Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry**

‘Even ninety-two years afterwards, I still remember... Why should the British Government call me up and take me out to a battlefield to shoot a man I never knew, whose language I couldn’t speak? All those lives lost for a war finished over a table. Now what is the sense in that?’