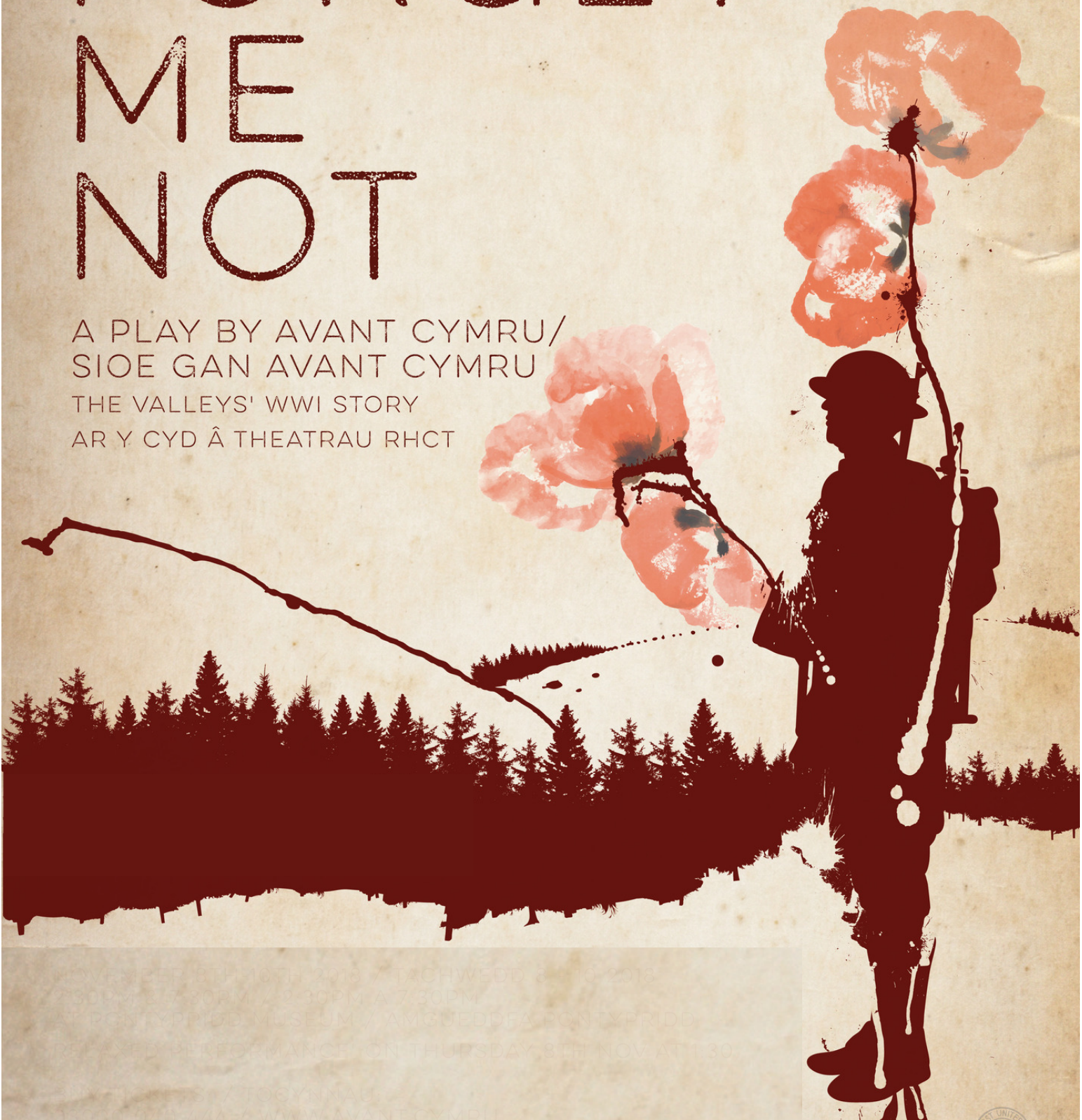


FORGET ME NOT

A PLAY BY AVANT CYMRU/
SIOE GAN AVANT CYMRU
THE VALLEYS' WWI STORY
AR Y CYD Â THEATRAU RHCT



THEATRAU RHONDDA CYNON TAF
THEATRES
WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2015
THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2015



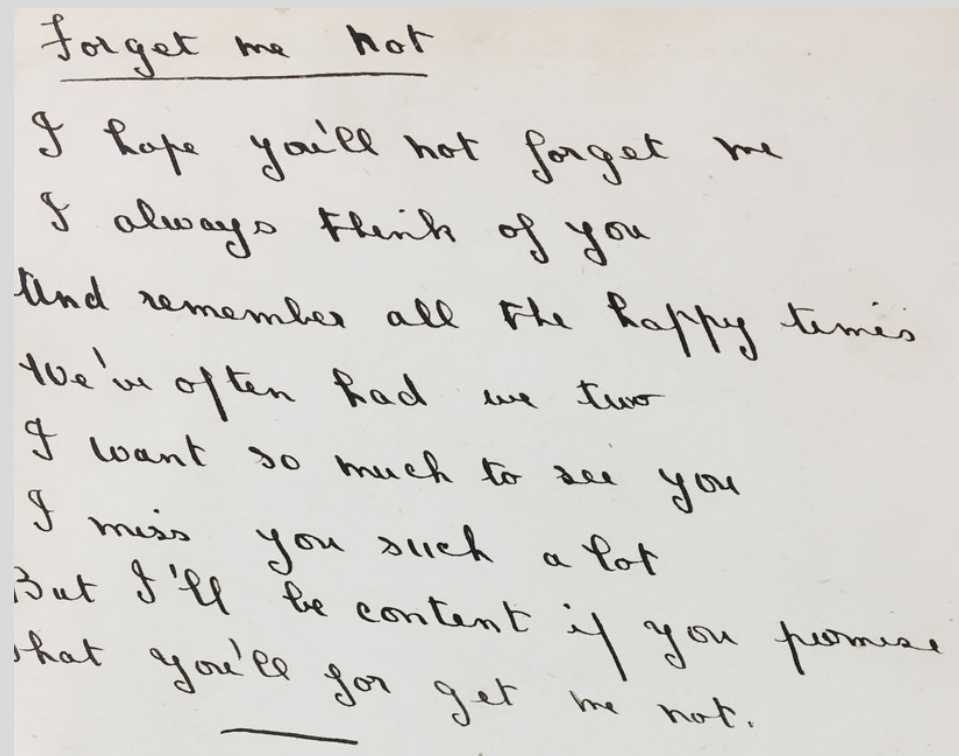
THEATRAU
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
THEATRES



Thank you to all who helped with the research of this production. To all who came to the Glamorgan Archives and Pontypridd Museum to research the Valleys' stories of WWI. To all who shared their families stories and artefacts. To all who are here today to remember what the people of the Valleys did to contribute to WWI.

"It's not the Man who has the most who gives the most away."

We forget them not



Forget me Not
I hope you'll not forget me
I always think of you
And remember all the happy times
We've often had we two
I want so much to see you
I miss you such a lot
But I'll be content if you promise
that you'll for get me not.

AVANT CYMRU

Avant are a forward thinking theatre company from the Valleys. We are proud to tell stories inspired by our community which remember the past, discuss the present and create the future. Follow us on social media to find out more.

Reverent Richards - Matthew Bool

Sergeant T. Harper - Yannick Budd

Morgan Morgan - Maxwell James

Samuel Morgan - Alan Humphreys

Emily Davies - Cler Stephens

Catrin Williams - Rachel Pedley

James Williams - Jack Wyn White

Organist - David Hutchings

Sound Designer - Ben Tinniswood

Technician - Ian Glover

Costume - Abigail Gould

Production Team - Angela Gould, Alan Humphreys & Rachel Pedley

AVANT CYMRU

Diolch i bawb a gynorthwyodd gyda gwaith ymchwil y cynhyrchiad yma. I bawb a ddaeth i Archifau Morgannwg ac Amgueddfa Pontypridd i ymchwilio storïau'r Cymoedd yn y Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf. I bawb a rannodd straeon ac arteffactau eu teuluoedd. I bawb sydd yma heddiw i gofio beth wnaeth pobl y Cymoedd i gyfrannu at y Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf.

Mae Avant yn gwmni theatr blaengar o'r Cymoedd. Rydyn ni'n falch o adrodd storïau wedi'u hysbrydoli gan ein cymuned sy'n cofio'r gorffennol, trafod y presennol a chreu'r dyfodol.

Dilynwch ni ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol i ddarganfod mwy.

The Research

Thank you to Pontypridd Museum, The Glamorgan Archives and The Rhondda Heritage Park for sharing your collections with us. The words from the Rev. Richards are the words from the Home Diaries kept by Pontypridd Museum. All of the venues have interesting collections on WWI which they are happy to share, if you are interested in your own family history do get in touch with the venues.

We were grateful to the individuals that shared their family stories, all of which feature in the show. We have poems collected by a family member of a current resident in Pontypridd. The family member worked in a hospital and the poems were written by injured stories. Listen out for them in the show.

As part of our research we have looked into the many aspects of WWI – the Valleys people contributed their lives to fight and work towards what they believed in and where they could be of the most use. Not only were there soldiers, but those who were kept home in reserved occupations, conscientious objectors who fought for their beliefs and women who took to employment and volunteering.

Tonight's show is to remember the efforts of those who lived here 100 years ago, there are still so many more lessons to learn, but we hope you enjoy the insight into what we have discovered.





The Post Office in 1914

By 1914 the Post Office employed over 250,000 people with a revenue of £32 million making it the biggest economic enterprise in Britain and the largest single employer of labour in the world.

The Home Front

With nearly a quarter of the workforce enlisted with the army, thousands of temporary workers were drafted in by the Post Office including 35,000 women in the first two years of the war.

The War Office also employed thousands of bilingual women to work on postal and telegraphic censorship monitoring correspondence with neutral countries all over the world. Assisted by the Post Office, this censorship was the largest of its kind and helped the government to catch spies, control the dissemination of military information and to compile economic data used to better execute the blockade of vital imports into Germany.

Another wartime initiative involving women was the introduction of Separation Allowances—payments made by the government through the Post Office to the wives of men who left to fight. Over £2 million per week was paid to some 2.7 million persons in this way and bereaved widows and orphans also received assistance from the 'Post Office Relief Fund' to which postal employees were encouraged to donate. - www.postalmuseum.org

Yr Ymchwil

Diolch i Amgueddfa Pontypridd, Archifau Morgannwg a Pharc Treftadaeth Cwm Rhondda am rannu'ch casgliadau gyda ni. Geiriau'r Parch. Richards yw'r geiriau o'r Dyddiaduron Cartref sy'n cael eu cadw gan Amgueddfa Pontypridd. Mae gan bob un o'r lleoliadau gasgliadau diddorol ar y Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf y maen nhw'n hapus i'w rhannu. Os oes gennych chi ddiddordeb yn hanes eich teulu, cysylltwch â'r lleoliadau. Roedden ni'n ddiolchgar i'r unigolion a rannodd straeon eu teulu. Mae pob un ohonyn nhw'n ymddangos yn y sioe. Mae gyda ni gerddi sydd wedi'u casglu gan aelod o deulu un o drigolion presennol Pontypridd. Gweithiodd yr aelod o'r teulu mewn ysbyty ac ysgrifennwyd y cerddi gan filwyr a oedd wedi'u hanafu. Gwrandewch amdany'n nhw yn y sioe.

Fel rhan o'n hymchwil rydyn ni wedi edrych i mewn i sawl agwedd ar y Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf. Roedd pobl y cymoedd wedi cyfrannu eu bywydau i ymladd a gweithio tuag at yr hyn yr oedden nhw'n credu gallai fod yn fwyaf defnyddiol. Heblaw am y milwyr, roedd y rhai a arhosodd gartref i wneud gwaith neilltuedig, gwrthwynebwy'r cydwybodol a ymladdodd am eu credoau a menywod a gymerodd i gyflogaeth a gwirfoddoli.

Mae'r sioe heno'n cofio ymdrechion y rheiny a oedd yn byw yma 100 mlynedd yn ôl. Mae yna lawer mwy o wersi i'w dysgu, ond gobeithio y byddwch chi'n mwynhau'r mewnwelediad i'r hyn rydyn wedi'i ddarganfod.

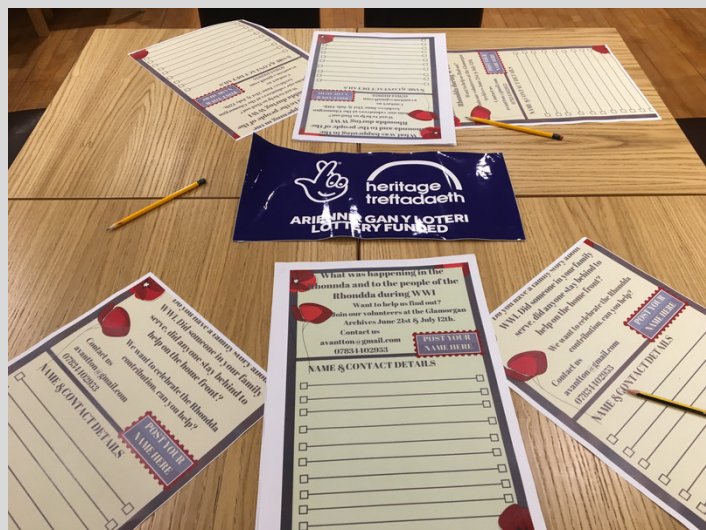
The Creation

2018 is 100 years since WWI ended. The creation of the play was inspired by the anniversary of this momentous historical event.

The creative team worked with volunteers who spent days researching at Pontypridd Museum, The Glamorgan Archives and The Rhondda Heritage Park. We wanted to find local stories, newspaper articles and records to remember the soldiers and people of the valleys, and their contribution to the war effort.

The creative team used this research to shape the story that is shared with you today. The actors working with Avant have devised the play that has been created. We want to say a special thank you to the The Park & Dare Theatre and Angela Gould for their creativity, research, support, and rehearsal space which has helped shape this project.

Thank you to the Heritage Lottery Fund, RCT Council, Pontypridd Town Council and Your Pontypridd for the financial support to make this play and the volunteering opportunities possible.



Creu'r Ddrama

Mae 2018 yn nodi 100 mlynedd ers i'r Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf ddod i ben. Cafodd y ddrama ei hysbrydoli gan ganmlwyddiant y digwyddiad hanesyddol tyngedfennol yma. Bu'r tîm creadigol yn gweithio gyda gwirfoddolwyr a dreuliodd ddyddiau'n ymchwilio yn Amgueddfa Pontypridd, Archifau Morgannwg a Pharc Treftadaeth Cwm Rhondda. Roedden ni am ddod o hyd i straeon lleol, erthyglau papur newydd a chofnodion i gofio milwyr a phobl y cymoedd, a'u cyfraniad at ymdrech y rhyfel.

Defnyddiodd y tîm creadigol yr ymchwil yma i lunio'r stori sy'n cael ei rhannu gyda chi heddiw. Yr actorion sy'n gweithio gydag Avant

sydd wedi ysgrifennu'r ddrama. Rydyn ni am ddiolch yn arbennig i Theatr y Parc a'r Dâr ac Angela Gould am eu creadigrwydd, eu hymchwil, eu cefnogaeth a lle ymarfer sydd wedi helpu i lunio'r prosiect yma.

Diolch i Gronfa Treftadaeth y Loteri, Cyngor Rhondda, Cyngor Tref Pontypridd a Your Pontypridd am y gefnogaeth ariannol i wneud y ddrama yma a'r cyfleoedd gwirfoddoli'n bosib.



The Script
Forget Me Not

Avant Cymru – Rachel Pedley and Angela Gould inspired by the community of
RCT

Scene One – The Chapel

A chapel space audience are greeted by two ladies from the community (a lady in her early 60's Emily Davies and a mother Catrin Williams early 30's), they hand them an Order Of Service

Catrin:

Reverend, can I have a quick word?

Rev:

Yes

Catrin:

You spoke about the relief fund this evening....

Rev:

Yes Catrin I'm fully aware of the relief fund thank you very much.

Catrin:

Well the ladies were speaking earlier and after the explosion,

Rev:

I'm sorry for your loss, I am aware Catrin, industrial distress, its awful. There's always more work to be done though Catrin, we must continue God's work.

Catrin:

We are trying our best to participate...

Rev:

You've two boys at home Catrin.

Catrin:

They're still at school reverend

Rev:

Oh I wasn't aware of that...

Catrin:

James is here, helping this evening

Rev:

Is he? Is he... and how old is he?

Catrin

13

Rev

13 And how is school going?

Catrin;

Doing very well, thank you.

Rev:

Good, good... it'd be a shame if schools disappear Catrin?

Catrin

Schools wouldn't disappear, why would you say such a thing.

Rev:

It be a shame if they had to learn German. 13 you say. Strapping lad, practically a man / that's about the same age you were when had him, wasn't it?

13?

Right we will start with hymn 72 Calon Lan.

The organ starts

Rev Richards:

We are going to start with hymn number 72 Calon Lan

Hymn One - Calon Lan

Nid wy'n gofyn bywyd moethus,

Aur y byd na'i berlau mân:

Gofyn wyf am galon hapus,

Calon onest, calon lân.

Calon lân yn llawn daioni,

Tecach yw na'r lili dlos:

Dim ond calon lân all ganu-

Canu'r dydd a chanu'r nos.

Pe dymunwn olud bydol,

Hedyn buan ganddo sydd;

Golud calon lân, rinweddol,

Yn dwyn bythol elw fydd.

Hwyr a bore fy nymuniad

Gwyd i'r nef ar edyn cân

Ar i Dduw, er mwyn fy Ngheidwad,

Roddi i mi galon lân.

Rev Richards:

Lord, have mercy.

All : Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

All : Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

All : Lord, have mercy.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw us to himself and cleanse us from our sins, that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All: Amen

Rev Richards:

Tonight's collection is in aid of the National Relief Fund set up by the Prince of Wales, as treasurer. This fund will help the families of serving men and those suffering from "industrial distress". In the words of Prince Edward "At such a moment we all stand by one another, and it is to the heart of the British people that I confidently make this earnest appeal".

Please turn to hymn number 14

Hymn Two - Abide With Me

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Rev Richards:

1914 saw the start of the Great War and a year on it still rapes lands, one of the highest struggles that we have ever seen. Thousands of lives gone on every side and we do not see signs of the end.

Some say for our sins we are judged, that WE have wondered far away from God. Men in high stations thought that they knew enough themselves and take a guide of a motion of their own hand. All sins and wrongs have to be punished.

The means God uses are queer to us, we wonder sometimes, if God WILL give us away into the hands of our enemies if we forsakes him. He did this to Israel of old, to people who he loved and lead them to the wilderness for 40 years when they found him lost.

Do not be lost, stand with our army and our country.

Now for hymn number 22 Cwm Rhondda.

Hymn Three -

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah
Pilgrim through this barren land
I am weak but Thou art mighty
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.

Bread of heaven, bread of heaven
Feed me till I want no more
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing waters flow
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.

Strong Deliv'rer, Strong Deliv'rer
Be Thou still my strength and shield
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan
Bid my anxious fears subside
Bear me through the swelling current
Land me safe on Canaan's side

Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will never give to Thee.....

Interrupting the end of the song:

Sergeant T. Harper:

'Your country needs YOU!'

I stand here today calling for men aged between 19 and 35 to join the British
Army. It will be Hell to be in it; and Hell to be out of it."

I stand alongside David Watts Morgan, we are recruiting in the Rhondda for the
10th battalion and the 1st Rhondda Welsh Regiment. David has been
commissioned to the rank of lieutenant for his work, he has sworn in 4510 men
from the Rhondda alone, join them fight for your country, our nation.

While walking down to the next level.

'Don't lag! Follow your flag' we don't want any white feathers thrown here.

James Williams:

Mam, I want to fight to fight against our sins. I want to stand behind Lord
Kitchener, help him build his 70 division's strong army.

Catrin Williams:

I don't want you to go down the mines, like your father did, you must try to enlist.

But your hair is looking scruffy, come here, put on this caps, we need to make sure you look smart before you meet the sergeant. Your Dad would be so proud of the young man you have become.

James Williams:

Mam, I'll will meet the sergeant.

Mother and older lady move on to speak to the men in the audience, lining them up to enlist, separating males in the audience.

James Williams:

Sir, I wish to enlist to defend the country and fight in the name of my father.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Age?

James Williams

I am 13 years of age sir.

Sergeant T. Harper:

I stand here today calling for men aged between 19 to 35 to join the British Army, to fight for God and country.

Lad, take a walk around and come back.

CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

Morgan Morgan - Miner: (wearing red waist coat)

I want to enlist, I don't want a white feather thrown at me like they did at the boys in Station Street in Aberdare.

Sergeant T. Harper:

What is your current employment status?

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

I am a collier at Cymmer Colliery.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Thank you for your offer but I shall not avail myself of it at the moment. We need 15 million tons of coal, for the admiralty, we need your efforts towards the war here. The national registration act won't allow you to join, due to you being in a reserved occupation.

Next please.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

Sir please, I can't let my family down, I want to fight for the freedom of my children.

Army Sergeant:

Please sir, take a step aside, we must enlist those who are eligible. We must have coal for the War effort. You men who are train drivers, coal miners, ship yard workers, manufacturers and farmers, we see you as soldiers, soldiers not in uniform.

Unlike those cowards who call themselves conscientious objectors, who refuse to take part in OUR war effort. Don't they know that their country needs them?

Next please, what is your current employment status?

Samuel Morgan Uncle:

I am a teacher at Graig-y-wion Boys School.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

I am sure that you won't be able to sign up either brother, the education of young won't be affected.

Army Sergeant:

Yes, sir your services are needed, Name, Mark here, Welcome to the army, Line-up.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

But I am also able, if you are taking my brother please take me.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Now Stand Aside, Next:

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

Sam?

Samuel Morgan - Uncle:

Do not worry Morgan, you are obviously needed here. I will write.

Rev Richards:

Sir, I would like to offer my services. We welsh, of all parties and creeds, must give our full and whole hearted support and cast aside political and industrial divisions, throwing ourselves into the war effort with gusto.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Good, we need role models like yourself minister. Mark here, welcome to the army. Line up.

You welsh men you sympathise deeply for the small defenceless nations on the continent, and your response to the call to arms with such vigour and enthusiasm is nothing short of miraculous.

...

Catrin Williams:

What did the Sergeant say?

James Williams:

He asked me to take a walk and come back to see him. He said that I needed to be 19 years of age.

Catrin Williams:

I don't want you heading down the pits, I don't want you to risk your life as your father did. It's a little white lie, tell the officer you are 19.

James Williams:

Yes Mam, what about the uniform, what if it doesn't fit.

Catrin Williams:

I will adjust it, go tell him, as younger members of the army, there's no way they'll put you in danger, you will be used for messages, you will be safer in the army, instead of at that dirty coal front.

...

Rev Richards:

In the eyes of our lord, we are going to serve Him and country and wash away our sins.

...

James Williams:

Sir, I'd like to enlist.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Yes young man. Age?

James Williams:

I am 19 sir.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Name. Mark here, welcome to the army my lad. Line up.

Calon lan music starts to fade in.....

James Williams:

Thank you sir.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

No. boy where is your mother?

James Williams:

Mam, don't worry I'll be back for Christmas, I will write to you.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

Catrin?

Catrin Williams:

You would of made your father so proud.

To Morgan - He will be better off in the army won't he?

Males in the audience are lined up with those enlisted, other audience members and cast are left separated from the men.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Right that's now 419 men from Pontypridd.

Men, Attention. Follow me. March. This way.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Our Daily routine consists of physical exercise, squad drill, musketry instruction, route marching, and night operations. It is surprising how remarkably keen men are on night operations.

Rev will you get the bus ready?

Football is the favourite pastime, and inter-platoon matches take place every Saturday afternoon.

We are over strength here now, but we hear there are lots of men at Cardiff barracks. I suppose you will go into the 2nd battalion, which is the 12th Rhondda Battalion Welsh regiment, I dear say the goat will create some excitement.

Men are marched out of the front door.

Emily Davies:

This is all causing a little bit of excitement, it was only last bank holiday Sunday when a telegram for Dai Watts Morgan arrived at our very own post office, from Kitchener himself. Well by the afternoon the news had spread like wild fire, spectators gathered from miles around. Once news had spread that he was being recalled, and promoted as a lleuenat 1 - a position of great importance, so they say.

He stepped out from his loggings, so I hear in the most spectacular khaki green uniform, to catch the 5'Oclock train back to Cardiff. Such a scene to behold, we will be talking about it from now until Christmas.

We need to pull together as a community, come everyone, let's get home. Together. We need each other.

We hear the voices from letters from the men from training. Men are marched around the front and side of the building and taken closer to the trench.

When walking around (start as you are leaving the building so other audience members can catch glimmers of the information : Others are taken down the stairs and lift to the back wall.

Scene Two - The Trench

Sound - noises created by soundscape artists (RAIN, GUN FIRE, SIRENS, TRANSPORT, YELLING, FLIES, WIND, ETC)

Lights - dark, flashes

Letter frames hand to divide those who could and could not go to war. The Young boy runs interweaving through the male audiences members. He's taps on a few people's shoulders.

(This scene will have the noise underscoring the action - the action to be delivered fast and without pause).

James Williams (running through the men, he is holding parcels and letters):
Are you Samuel Watts?

Sergeant T. Harper:

Right men, thank you for your service. Remember, when you reach 750 yards, two of you must stay in the tunnel to ignite explosives. For God and Country. The Uncle - Samuel Morgan salutes and turns to walks through the audience soldiers pouring them their daily tot.

Samuel Morgan - Uncle:

Boys give us your cup,

We've got 100 yards left, your efforts have not gone un-noticed.
(To James), Please get this back to my brother. I am staying with Samuel Watts, we will light the explosives. He is readying the equipment in the tunnel as we speak. I'll take that to him.
Please get this back to his family and can you get this back to my brother.

Sergeant T. Harper:

(heading towards the men in the audience), Corporal John Thomas, has anyone seen corporal Thomas?

Rev Richards:

Is there any news from back home? Is anyone looking after your allotment?
I'm rambling, That letter is important, get it back home.

James Williams:

I will, I've asked Mam for new socks, I have only had this one pair for three weeks.

They'll never make it back out of the tunnel in time.

Rev Richards:

They both know what they are doing. They are serving God and doing our town proud.

James Williams:

What do you have there?

James Morgan, looks down at the reverent, he shakes his hand noticing the minister is waste deep in the trench.

Rev Richards:

I found an empty shell. I was inspired by hearing they are organising the eistedford back home. They have fixed the date to the first week of August every year, wasn't that a clever thing to do. We all know now when it is happening. I am alighted to know that it will be happening so close to home in Neath. Mind you Chair John Thomas Job will have his work cut out to match that of last years chair Hedd Wyn, he was a clever man and a wonderful poet.
I made a vase. It will take pride of place in the chapel at home. Can you send it off now for me please? Remember me to the folks back home!

Samuel Morgan - Uncle: (handing a pack to the rev)

If only we could sit together and have this drink, and raise a glass of our favourite brew in the Llanover, with Jones the coal, propping up the bar and telling his stories of how to live a dirty life, What a boy and a half, wish I'd taken some of that advice now boys.

I have these left over from my last package from Blighty (he hands the cigs to the rev).

James, I have some oxo left over, please take it.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Corporal is there a problem.

We notice that the minister isn't moving, that he is waist deep in the trench.

Rev Richards:

Sir, I tried to move this morning, some of the lads have tried to lift me out, but
I fear God has sealed my fate.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Your bravery has not gone un-noticed corporal.

Rev Richards:

Sir!

Sergeant T. Harper: (To James Williams).

Private, please retrieve this items and get it to base to send home.

James takes the items and takes one look back at the reverent, before running
off.

Sergeant T. Harper:

Lads of the bright and fearless eyes

And spirits like a feather

With boyant minds. Like upland wind,

That sweeps your native heather.

No futile paeon can unfold, the glory of those hearts of gold

For you no organ down the nave

Shall swell its solemn dirges;

The guns athwart my soliders-grave

Shall boom their last aspurses

At boyhoods threshold yet he donned

The manhood of the great beyond

The shell-scarred wood shall be the shrine

Of noble, valiant souls like thine.

The contest was his soul delight

The trophy scarcely fired him

And on that larger field of fame

In death he won the nobler game.

Ok Men, that is the siren, we need you to take positions for the mission.

Samuel Morgan - Uncle: (addressing different audience members).

Get this down you,

Down the hatch,

Some Dutch courage boys.

The audience are given their tot and the men and rushed into the other room.

Women follow on as the soldiers cover themselves from the flies and the
sergeant prepares his gun ready for battle.

Scene 3 - The Local Post Office

A post office (the back room), worker Emily sorts mail:
The audience can hear a recorded conversation: from a WWI speech

Recorded message finishes.

Emily Davies takes out a sack, she unloads more letters onto the table and starts to sort.

Emily Davies:

So much communication, so many people talking to one another. It's so important to talk, let your feelings to be known.

It's exciting really, I'm sure YOU would have been proud of me David.

She lights a red candle.

I have a purpose in life, something I never thought I would have had again. A working woman. Would you believe it me standing here in charge of the post office? Such an important role, such an important part to play, offering a service to our community.

I will never forget receiving the letters from you, when you were away fighting.

It's always at this time in the early morn when the morning frost lies ever so quietly on top, over everything just like a light scattering of powdered sugar all white and brittle.

It's so peaceful and as I pull my shawl around my shoulders, as a way of comfort, a little light shimmer up my cheek, gives me peace as it always reminds me of your gentle touch, that would always reassure me that the day ahead would be good.

She pulls the shawl tighter around her shoulders.

I look back and think of the life we would have had and all that we sacrificed, you sacrificed. Our life, our family, our future together. This dreadful war, stirs so many memories that I can hardly bear.

Looking out of the window.

Suddenly when the sun slowly creeps up from behind that big old mountain, like an old man hunched from age, I feel the warmth of its rays slowly engulfing my body. My soul, my spirt and it brings tremendous peace to me.

When I lost you due to the zulu war, many years ago, I thought that was my end.

It's hard to believe now that I once again have a purpose. I am not a spring chicken anymore and I have seen and experienced so much, a life I have lived but yet a love I've lost. So much I would have loved to have shared with you. Shared those memories, the longing the hiraeth.

She walks to a framed image of flowers and remembers with fondness:

Forget Me Not:

I hope you'll not forget me,

I always think of you,

And remember all the happy times we've often had we two.

I want so much to see you,

I miss you such a lot,

But I will be content if you promise that you'll forget me not.

There is hope, hope for the future of our community. It is hard, I have to admit it really is hard. To hand over the letters/telegrams, knowing that the envelopes may carry news/bad news, just like the news I received about your fate. I pray to god that this will be the last, the last of these dreadful wars, no good comes from this, it always seems that we sacrifice so much and for what?

But it is a job that must be done and done well and done correctly.

Catrin Williams enter in a Red Cross outfit, she is carrying a book.

Emily Davies:

Bore da Cariad, busy day ahead I feel, what with all this communication.

Catrin Williams

More like gossip mail, if you have anything to do with it.

Emily Davies:

Don't be cheeky.

They both laugh

Have you heard they are looking for more staff to assist me, because we are having a telephonication device installed.

Catrin Williams:

A telephone, duw duw, things are really becoming quite cosmopolitan around here.

Emily Davies:

I have been practising my...telephone voice..."Heello this is Emily Davies speaking, can you hear me?"

Catrin Williams:

Are they deaf?

Emily Davies:

No, but they are far away!

They both laugh

Emily Davies:

I need to make sure what is said is safe, got to make sure none it gets heard by spies.

Catrin Williams:

Oh, so you will have to listen in to the calls to make sure no one is sharing delicate information.

Bet you'll find that hard, noseey!

Emily Davies:

I don't know what you mean. I will have to assist those like Lady Rhondda, on her business. Do you know her and Old King Coal himself have turned their home into Llanwen hospital?

Catrin Williams:

Of course I do, I was working a shift up there, one of the injured soldiers wrote the poem I brought you last week.

Emily Davies:

Lady Rhondda was telling me that she is sitting as chair of the women's advisory committee, standing up for women's rights.

Catrin Williams:

I'd rather sit down and be a welsh mam, queen of my own little home, getting it ready for my boy to return. Women's rights, don't make me laugh. Even the men around here who don't have two pennies to rub together don't have the vote!

Emily Davies:

Next thing you know they'll be letting women vote!

They both laugh.

Are you off to Llwynypia or Llanwen hospital now?
Have you collected any further poems from the men?

Catrin:

I have Emily, I know how much joy they bring you and the men themselves relish in the time to write, can you read this new one for me?

Catrin passes Emily a small book

Emily:

She reads:

Remember every kindness done
To you whatever its measure
Remember praise by others won
And pass it on with pleasure
Remember every promise made
And keep it to the letter
Remember those who lend you aid
And be a grateful debtor
Remember all the happiness
That comes your way in living
Forget all worries and distress
Be hopeful and forgiving
Remember good, remember truth, remember heavens above you
And you will find through age and youth
True joys and hearts to love you. D Gibby

Catrin Williams:

How could we ever forget the boys and men serving?

Emily Looking at Catrin -

Wouldn't it be a fitting tribute to gather 'Forget Me Not's' in April and press them in the book. Like you did as a child. Such a lovely collection of heart felt words, the flowers will help illustrate such beautiful poems.

Catrin:

This one is much prettier than yesterday, you know the one I mean.

Emily:

Oh lets read it again:

She Reads: Two Lips and tulips which are the best,

I prefer two lips it must be confessed.

Tulips are pretty and pleasing to the eye, but two lips well pressed will
electrify.

Catrin:

Oh that's brought a redness to my cheeks Mrs Davies, They laugh.

Emily Davies:

It's good to see the boys are still in good spirits.

Look there's a letter addressed to you.

Catrin takes the letter and opens it quickly, it is from James her son.

Catrin Williams:

It's in James's hand, Emily will you read it for me please.

Emily Davies:

Dear Mam, Thank you very much for the package, it was very thoughtful of you.
However it has taken a while to get to me, so some of the food has been spoilt.
I hope that this letter finds you well and that you have found someone to help
you with the allotment in the new season. I spoke to the officer in regards to
the payment for the allotment and he said to write to the war office in
Shrewsbury so they can sort out the correct rate.

(Referring to the letter) I will help you write the letter Catrin!

Have you asked Morgan the hauler to help, help turn over the allotment?

Catrin Williams:

I mentioned it last week, he is struggling, struggling with the guilt as he puts
it. He just wants to enlist.

Also, He hasn't heard from his brother, you know Samuel who was enlisted to the
172nd Tunnelling Company.

Does James mention if he needs anything?

Emily Davies:

She continues to read:

Please thank Mr Morgan for the cigarettes. I would very much appreciate socks
in the next parcel, the trenches are damp and I have had only one pair of socks
to wear this month. Clean pairs would be much appreciated.

Send love to all back home, your son, James.

Emily (Looking at Catrin):

We will have to get darning send a job lot of socks out to the boys, all of these
things to think of.

Catrin Williams:

It's horrendous, one pair of socks and in all that damp. They were only given
just two shirts, 1 pair of socks and two towels in their uniform packs. Just 1
pair of socks.

Socks

Morgan Morgan - Miner;

I didn't know you were interested in the coc....kerel fighting Mrs Williams.

Catrin William:

I said socks, go and wash your mouth out with soap, you dirty bugger.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

Morning ladies, have you received news from your boy Catrin?

Catrin Williams:

Funny enough I've just heard from my James. He is.... Well it's just...I dunno

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

The frustration I feel, I want to be there, to fight alongside the boys. I attended the meeting at the pit head last night. They may let us fight.

Emily Davies:

The work you are doing here is needed Morgan.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

But I want to be able to do more, sitting in the Llanover last night with Dai checking his eye lids for holes. I just feel like I can do more.

Catrin Williams:

After seeing Charlie in the hospital after the Ferndale colliery gas explosion, I just could never bear the thought of my boy going down the mines like their father.

Morgan men like you risk your life every single day, working underground in that hell hole. Charlie would be black and blue with bruises after he scrubbed off the coal dust and his lungs were full of the dust, you could hear them rattle as he tried to sleep. The dust it just got everywhere.

I wanted more for James.

With them being so young I never dreamed he would be on the front line. James's words, painting a picture that he knows I need to see, yet I know deep down I don't know the full horror that they endure daily.

Telling me he has had the same socks on for a month. It begs belief. I was so stupid, I blame myself for encouraging them to go, I can't believe that the people in charge would risk the lives of our next generation by putting them in harm's way, and putting them on the front line first.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

It's not the man who has the most who give the most away!

Catrin Williams:

I had been speaking to Elizabeth Llewelyn, you know Bet, Christopher's mother. We both lost our husbands in the same explosion. She helped Christopher enlist and even had to adjust his uniform because he was so small. Christopher wanted to be bugler, just like his dad and his dad's dad before him, who both played in the Albion Colliery Band.

She hasn't heard from Christopher in a month, we just thought they'd be safer at war, than down the pits.

Emily Davies:

The people of the valleys are fighters, we are fighting for our survival, your boys will be fine and they will come home heroes, ready to fight for a better life here, for us and all of our futures. We cannot forget that the people here are working hard for our plight.

Morgan Morgan:

Did you hear those Catholics are doing that walk again?

Emily Davies

I think you mean pilgrimage.

Morgan Morgan:

No it's a walk isn't it, all the way up to Mary's well in Penrhys.

Emily Davies:

(Sarcastic) Who do they think they are, walking in our fields to steal our good old valley's water?

Catrin Williams:

What are you two like! There's not enough water in the world to allow the Catholics to drink the well dry.

Morgan Morgan:

They bloody well try if they could turn the water into wine!

They all laugh

Emily Davies:

Did you read the article in the Porth Gazette Morgan?

Look Cook wrote "we must do our duty as trade unionists and as citizens to force the Government, who in one night could vote for £100 million pounds for destruction of human life to see that justice is meted out to these unfortunates".

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

Duw this is not a time to strike, despite the mine owners making a fortune from our hard work.

Do you know in 1913 we dug 1.5 million tons of coal for the admiralty, this year we dug 15million and our wages have been the same.

The boys are calling for an 'industrial war'!

Cook gave a powerful speech in Ynysir last week.

He asked (he recites his speech) "Are we going to allow this war to go on? The government wants a hundred thousand men. They demand fifty thousand immediately, and the Clyde workers would not allow the government to take them. Let the miners stand by them, and show them that Wales will do the same."

<http://spartacus-educational.com/CoalFWW.htm>

But I want to be out there with my brother to face our enemy's and push them back.

Catrin Williams:

The miners should get a proper wage, they don't need to be exploited because of their patriotism. They are working hard for the war effort.

Cook has two brothers in the army who were forced to join, but he say No to joining! I heard that there has been 900 conscientious objectors in Wales. I can't work out if they are lazy buggers or if there is sense in what they are doing!

Emily Davies:

Talking of lazy buggers, did you know her at number 11 came in last week. She was all in black and needed to fill out a separation allowance form. Her Husband had joined the 10th!

The next day she came in in pink!

Morgan Morgan:

Not in pink!

Catrin laughs

Emily Davies:

Yes in pink, she needed brown paper as she was helping her brother in law, Rhys move into number 11! He's a hewer and they have two pay packages going into that house. Which no one has exited for two days!!! I saw him touch her hand, her hand.

Very irresponsible one might say!

Oh (clears her throat)

Emily sorts through the letter plan, as Morgan prepares his pipe and Catherine tidy's letters which have fallen to the floor.

Um, Catrin will you hand this to Mrs Jones

(A letter is handed to the audience member, with a guilty look on catrin's face).

Thought-out the scene, each letter represents a letter of some who died for Pontypridd and surrounding area - replica letter from the Williams brothers - can abi do this in costume?).

Morgan, there is a letter here for you.

Morgan takes and opens the letter and reads to himself.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

Samuel is dead.

Emily Davies:

Samuel, oh Morgan I am sorry.

Morgan Morgan:

It should have been me, he had so much to offer the next generation, he was a teacher, a teacher. Always seeing the potential in everyone.

Emily:

He was always a bright boy and a generous kind soul. But Morgan, you are offering so much also, without the miners efforts we wouldn't have the power to win this war. Please don't blame yourself.

Morgan Morgan:

It should have been me. They used him as a tunneller.

He hasn't worked underground since he was 18, he studied so that he could teach.

He would read for hours after his shifts so that he could keep up with his studies.

Catrin Williams:

Morgan, I am so sorry. Is there any news on how it happened?

...

Interrupting:

Emily Davies:

There is another letter here addressed to the community.

All hesitate, and look from Catrin to the letter.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

I will read it.

Dear All.

I am saddened to inform you that your Reverent has been killed on the 22nd of January 1918. He was a brave soldier and an honour to your community.

I am afraid the circumstances around his death are not very pleasant. The conditions in the trenches are horrendous and unfortunately Reverent Richards got trapped in the trench. He has sent back a vase he has made out of a used shell and we hope it can take place in your church and be filled with Forget Me Nots to remember the efforts of your local heroes.

Your Faithfully Sargent Thomas Harper

Catrin Williams:

How can this be, how can he get trapped in the trench. What sort of conditions are the boys living in? Our men, my son.

Emily Davies:

Oh Catrin, come here my love.

Catrin Williams:

It cannot be. My boy, this is all my fault.

Morgan

No matter what role we take, we have a fight on our hands. These are troubled times and Sam and Revenant Richards are at peace and forever in our hearts. They have earned the right to their silence, their stillness, their calm that nothing can destroy.

James Williams

(He enters on crutches and with a bandage around his head) He sees his mother is upset.

Mam?

Catrin Williams:

James Thank God.

James Williams:

Have you heard about Reverent Richards and Sam? Morgan, I'm so sorry.

Morgan Morgan - Miner:

He has shown true bravery my lad, you and all the boys out there fighting.

James Williams:

I am sorry to hear about Samuel Mr Morgan, we were in trenches together. He was teaching me English in the evenings.

Emily Davies:

(referring to the injuries) Oh James, what's happened?

James Williams:

I was hit about 8:30 in the evening. I was returning to camp. I saw that one of the officers had been hit badly and went to his assistance to give him water, this while under tremendous machine gun fire.

While trying to assist I was hit myself, I was taken to the hospital, but they couldn't do more for me there.

Morgan Morgan:

James we stand shoulder to shoulder, all of us, the working class, demonstrating solidarity with our brothers in arms.

So many lives have been lost, both down the mine and on the front line.

But we fight for the future and the right to create an existence we can all be proud of. For all our fight and our plight is the same, we fight for a better day.

Your son, my brother are / were fighting for a day where all men are equal. I can picture the spot where my brother has fallen and now where his body lies. I want to see the French wood, the scenery last looked upon by the blue eyes of a welsh boy. And by my brother.

We continue to fight and play our role, because we have our destiny written in the stars and we are needed here to shape a future that builds not just walls for individuals but a home and community that we can all take pride in.

We hear signing from outside the doors - Cwm Rhondda

It's not the man that knows the most

That has the most to say

It's not the man that has the most

All:

That gives the most away

Audience open their letter to reveal a name of a soldier from Ponty or the Rhondda who died and a poppy.

Emily Davies:

These individual battles, within ourselves with others, they can excel to such awful heights.

It is so true, our community have paid a great price on the front line, and underground. We have all stepped up to be part of this "Great War". Let's hope that we Forget Them Not and learn for the future.

The audience attach their poppy to the reef.



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