Prøve

3.a

17. marts 2025

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| Analyse and interpret the extract from Private Harold Saunder’s memoir from the Western Front during the Great War. Part of your analysis must focus on **how the writer uses language to describe** his time at the front in order to show how and why his attitude to war has changed.As always, you must support your analysis with quotes from the text.You are not required to write an introduction, but I expect you to write a conclusion at the end that briefly sums up your analysis of how the writer’s attitude to war has changed. |

**Tid:** 2 t 15 min.

**Hjælpemidler**

* Analysemodel til memoirs og non-fiction (et memoir er en slags non-fiction)
* Tone mood-circle
* Andre printede noter
* Ordbog

MEMOIR OF A WESTERN FRONT SOLDIER (1917)

An extract from the memoir of Private Harold Saunders, a Western Front soldier of the 14th London Scottish division, which served in France in 1916-17

As the War had to be, I shall always be glad I was able to play even a negligible part[[1]](#footnote-1) in it, or I should never have known with such certainty the madness of it. During training I was aware only of the glamour of War. I prepared myself for it with enthusiasm, and bayoneted and clubbed[[2]](#footnote-2) the stuffed sacks representing the enemy with a sort of exalted ferocity[[3]](#footnote-3). I was as jealous of my regiment as I used to be of my school.

The journey from Southampton to Havre in an ancient paddle-boat and on from there by train in a cattle truck to the mysterious destination called the Front seemed a fitting prelude[[4]](#footnote-4) to the adventure. It was tedious[[5]](#footnote-5) and uncomfortable, but we told each other this was war. We became better acquainted with tedium and discomfort later.

When I made my debut in the line I had a cheerful conviction that nothing would hit me. And I remember standing on the fire-step for the first time and saying to myself exultantly: “You’re in it at last! You’re in it! The greatest thing that’s ever happened!”

Lice and wind-up[[6]](#footnote-6) came into my life about the same time. At stand-to one morning a flight of whizz-bangs[[7]](#footnote-7) skimmed the top of the trench. The man next to me went down with a scream and half his face gone. The sand-bag in front of me was ripped open and I was blinded and half-choked with its contents.

This was in the summer of 1916. In the plain on our right the flash and rumble of guns was unceasing. It was the beginning of the Somme offensive we learnt afterwards, but even if we had known one of the big battles of the War was in progress at our elbows I doubt if we should have been deeply stirred. To every private in the line the War was confined to his own immediate front.

My first spell[[8]](#footnote-8) in the line lasted three weeks. Water was scarce, and even the tea ration was so short there was none left over for shaving. I had a nine days’ growth of beard when we went down to rest. Some of us looked like Crimean veterans[[9]](#footnote-9) and we all began to feel like it. My socks were embedded in my feet with caked mud and filth and had to be removed with a knife.

Lack of rest became a torment[[10]](#footnote-10). Undisturbed sleep seemed more desirable than heaven and much more remote. This is why two occasions stand out like beacons[[11]](#footnote-11) in my memory. One was when I found myself in bed in a field hospital for the first time. The other was when I dropped among the straw in a rat-ridden barn after a long march down the line, tired beyond words and exquisitely drunk on a bottle of Sauterne. As I dropped into forgetfulness I felt I had achieved bliss[[12]](#footnote-12).

I have slept on the march like a somnambulist[[13]](#footnote-13) and I have slept standing up like a horse. Sleeping at the post was a court-martial affair, with death or field punishment and a long term of imprisonment as the penalty. But, try as I would not to fall asleep, I often woke from a delectable[[14]](#footnote-14) dream with a start to find myself confronted with No Man’s Land.

One got used to many things, but I never overcame my horror of the rats. They abounded in some parts, great loathsome beasts gorged with flesh. I shall never forget a dug-out[[15]](#footnote-15) at the back of the line near Anzin. It was at the foot of rising ground, at the top of which was a French war cemetery. About the same time every night the dug-out was invaded by swarms of rats. They gnawed holes in our haversacks and devoured our iron rations. We hung haversacks[[16]](#footnote-16) and rations to the roof, but they went just the same. Once we drenched the place with creosote[[17]](#footnote-17). It almost suffocated us, but did not keep the rats away. They pattered down the steps at the usual time, paused a moment and sneezed, and then got to work on our belongings.

A battalion of Jerrys[[18]](#footnote-18) would have terrified me less than the rats did sometimes. As a matter of fact, hatred of the enemy, so strenuously fostered in training days, largely faded away in the line. We somehow realized that individually they were very like ourselves, just as fed-up and as anxious to be done with it all. For the most part; the killing that was done and attempted was quite impersonal. I doubt if I ever killed or wounded anyone. If I did it was more by bad luck than good judgment when we took pot shots[[19]](#footnote-19) at little grey working parties scuttling about at daybreak in front of their line.

The next time I went into the line a spot of gas sent me out of it for good. I did not know American troops were in France till I found myself in one of their hospitals at Etretat. The nurses and doctors were gentle beyond anything I ever experienced. I could only account for it by thinking they must regard my case as hopeless, and when I found a large white bow[[20]](#footnote-20) pinned on my bed there seemed no room for doubt. I got rather light-headed and fancied my obsequies[[21]](#footnote-21) had already begun in the hustling fashion of the Americans. But the white bow only meant that I was on milk diet.

A week later I was in Blighty[[22]](#footnote-22), the soldier’s Promised Land. Six months afterwards I appeared in the streets again as a civilian with a profound hatred for war and everything it implies.

<https://alphahistory.com/worldwar1/memoir-western-front-soldier-1917/>

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| **Vurderingskriterier og graden af målopfyldelse** | **I høj** **grad** | **I rimelig grad** | **I ringe grad** | **Supplerende kommentarer** |
|  | Analysis in general |   |   |   |  |
| How the writer uses language to describe his time at the front in order to show how and why his attitude to war has changed. |  |  |  |
| Anvendelse af faglige begreber |  |  |  |
| Går tæt på artiklen (dokumenterer, citerer, parafraserer, henviser med linjenummer) |  |  |  |
| Konklusion og afrunding |   |  |   |

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| Konklusion og afrunding |   |  |   |

1. En del, der ikke er særlig vigtig [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Slog med køller [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Vold og aggressivitet, der fuld af liv og glæde [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Præludium, et kort forspil [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For træls og langvarig [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Noget irriterende [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Granater [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Periode [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Veteraner fra Krim-krigen [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Pine [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Fyrtårn [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Dyb lykke [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Søvngænger [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Behagelig [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Et rum gravet ind i siden af skyttegraven under jorden [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Rygsække [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Stenkulstjære (sådan noget man imprægnerede jernbanesveller med) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Tyske soldater [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Skud, hvor man ikke rigtigt sigter [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Sløjfe [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Begravelsesritualer [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. England [↑](#footnote-ref-22)