

It Also Rained in the Trenches

By Mike McCardell

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It was raining. For the thirtieth year in a row I was at the Remembrance Day ceremony. I had no idea what to do.

In the past I have talked to old veterans whose stories can make your stomach tighten and your eyes water.

But it was raining and there was grumbling about the rain from some young people who had come to see the ceremony.

It was good that they came, but they were saying to each other that they were getting wet and they hoped they could get home quickly.

In the front rows were the veterans. It was raining on them.

I stood at the back of the wall of black umbrellas and wrote these words:

Nov. 11, 2008

Lest we forget, it also rained in the trenches. And it rained in the foxholes.

The mud in the trenches was over their knees. They could not move their feet. They could not walk. They could not sit down. If they did the mud came up to their chests. They could not lie down. They would drown.

They tried to sleep standing up, leaning against the walls of mud with the rain dripping off their helmets.

By November of the first year their rainproof ponchos were destroyed and the rain soaked through their woollen coats, and through their shirts, and through their skin.

When they were told to attack they slipped on the mud trying to climb out of the trenches. They slipped on the mud trying to run across no man's land.

They slipped on the mud and fell into the barbed wire. Their blood mingled with the mud.

The rain fell on the buildings in the next war. When the bombs exploded and the roofs were blown off, the rain fell on the dead inside.

In World War II it was raining in London when Edward R. Murrow reported over the radio that, “the fires reflecting on the wet glass made the windows look like they were crying tears of blood.”

It rained on the children whose mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters were killed.

It rained on the endless columns of drenched soldiers marching across Europe. They did not have umbrellas or Gortex or rubber boots or Helly Hansen or North Face. They had only shivers, which went deep into their bones.

And then they were told to fight.

When today’s ceremony ends we will all go home where it is dry.

They stayed, in the rain, so that we could go home.

Please read Mike McCardell’s BIO [HERE](#)