



Festival of Remembrance Resources

PEACE

by John Smith. Enlisted in Sutton in 1939

In these days of trouble and war,
Whether we be rich or very poor,
Let us hope that when we pray,
We pray for peace, to come and stay.
Why should we have to kill and slaughter,
Someone's loving son or daughter,
When we were born to love and cherish,
Not to take up arms to kill or perish.



Poem: Comrades

by John Smith.

We all met in France, out on the old Somme,
Went out and came back, no matter where from,
Jimmy, George and myself were always three pals,
Shared all our fags, our troubles, and tales,

Worked in the mud, and all kinds of weather,
Did guards and fatigues, all kinds, together.
Went on parade, stood, spit, polish and shine,
Whatever we did, wherever we went, we toed the line.

It's funny that – war - makes all pals like us,
Do things, and say things, and not cause a fuss,
So, when it's all over, we hope we can see,
All people, together, like Jim, George and me.



Poem: “Ode to a Damaged Warplane” by A Guard Commander.
(Written while guarding a crashed Hurricane on Xmas Eve, 1940)

D.W.H. Sheppard – Educated at Sutton Grammar

It was Christmas Day in war-time
By the broken plane we stood
While all around were merry
We had no Christmas pud.

We were there to do our duty
A job of trust not fame,
While all around were playing
We stood and played the game.

The 'plane that we stood guarding
Had been a beautiful thing,
But her flying days were over
No more would her engines sing.

No more to glorious battle
Would she wing her glorious way,
Her propeller shaft was broken,
In mud and slush she lay.

Through many a stirring conflict,
Through many a bloody fight,
She went up in all her glory
'Gainst the Hun's tyrannical might.

The dashing young man who flew her
Had dressed in Air Force Blue
As smart and debonair he was,
As trim as the craft he flew.

With many a fight behind him
And many a dog-fight won.
There's many a shattered Heinkel,
To the name of this son of a gun.

In battle dress and great coat
And armed with rifles true,
We paid a silent tribute
To the lads in Air Force Blue.



Song: Mademoiselle from Armentières

attributed to Edward Rowland (became manager of the cinema in Sutton)

O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
Mademoiselle from Armentières,
She hasn't been kissed for forty years,

Hinky-dinky parlez-vous.

O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
She got the palm and the croix de guerre,
For washin' soldiers' underwear

Hinky-dinky parlez-vous.

O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
You didn't have to know her long,
To know the reason men go wrong!

Hinky-dinky parlez-vous.

O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
Where are the girls who used to swarm
About me in my uniform?

Hinky-dinky parlez-vous.

O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
O, Mademoiselle from Armentières, Parlez-vous,
You might forget the gas and shell
But you'll nev'r forget the Mademoiselle!

Hinky-dinky parlez-vous.



Poem: "Abshied vom Leben" - Farewell to life

by "Doddler", Sydney Neville Levitt.

(Educated at Sutton Grammar)

The wound burns hot; my quivering lips are pale,
My heart is nigh to burst beneath the strain;
Now I await the end of Life's short reign,
And breathe 'Thy will be done'. Nought can avail,
For now the shades of Death do e'en assail
Mine eyes, where golden peace had once domain.

Yet courage, heart! The fond ideals we gain
On earth must live with us beyond Death's pale,
And what I held as sacred here below,
That which set youthful ardour all aglow,
The pride of freedom and the charm of love,
I see their forms seraphic up above,
And as my body sinks down into Night,
They bear my spirit upwards to the Light.



Poem: "Decorum Est" by "Doddler"

by Sydney Neville Levitt.

O Motherland! You called! And we are here!
Not singly did we come, or haltingly,
But in a mighty, shouting band we came.

Before your voice was raised, we did not lust
For war. The arts of peace were what we knew:
We ploughed, we sowed, we gathered in the grain,
We builded ships to trade with foreign lands,
And all the world was ours in which to seek
The reason and the meaning and the why.
Athene was the goddess whom we loved;
And many were the gifts we brought to her,
Made costly by the toil with which we wrought.
And then you called
Athene who we loved is gone away,
And Mars is come to be our leader now.
The ploughs which once we guided down the field,
And harrows too, to reeking tubes are bent;
And all we sought to save we kill.

Do we regret?

A myriad voices shout the answer, "No !"
Full well we know the reason why you called.
Full well we know the purpose of your cry;—
We waste because we will not suffer dross,
We kill that in the world fair truth may live,
We die that all the yet unborn may wake
And find their heritage kept clean,
Nor taint nor sully on the shield they'll bear.
What matters it if some made old shall be
And some be maimed and many yet shall die.
So that our land and all our land holds dear
Shall yet remain?—So that we know through us
The world shall set that honour, beauty, love,
Still live and kindle flames within men's hearts?

"Do you regret?" you ask us, Motherland.

To every corner of the mighty Targe
The answer rings, "No! no!" and "No!" again.



Poem: "To an Old Boy killed in the War"

by "Doddler", Sydney Neville Levitt.

And thou art fallen, never to rise again:
Thy youth is sacrificed for Freedom's right.
Yet is thy full libation not in vain,
For never yet has man, in such a fight,
Perished for nought, nor ever died unwept.
And thou, who first didst answer Duty's call,
Hast by thy noble aid allegiance kept
With that loved Empire, wherein lay thy all.
Thou art, of all her sons, the one most blest:
For in her hour of need, when she, sore prest.
Was menaced by Destruction's awful wing,
Thou didst the honour have thy sword to swing
For her just cause. There is no nobler end
Than his who dies his country to defend.



Poem: Lie in the dark and Listen

by Noel Coward (Lived in Sutton as a child)

Lie in the dark and listen,
It's clear tonight so they're flying high
Hundreds of them, thousands perhaps,
Riding the icy, moonlight sky.
Men, materials, bombs and maps
Altimeters and guns and charts
Coffee, sandwiches, fleece-lined boots
Bones and muscles and minds and hearts
English saplings with English roots
Deep in the earth they've left below
Lie in the dark and let them go
Lie in the dark and listen.
Lie in the dark and listen

They're going over in waves and waves
High above villages, hills and streams
Country churches and little graves
And little citizen's worried dreams.
Very soon they'll have reached the sea
And far below them will lie the bays
And coves and sands where they used to be
Taken for summer holidays.
Lie in the dark and let them go
Lie in the dark and listen.

Lie in the dark and listen
City magnates and steel contractors,
Factory workers and politicians
Soft hysterical little actors Ballet dancers,
'reserved' musicians,
Safe in your warm civilian beds
Count your profits and count your sheep
Life is flying above your heads
Just turn over and try to sleep.
Lie in the dark and let them go
Theirs is a world you'll never know
Lie in the dark and listen.