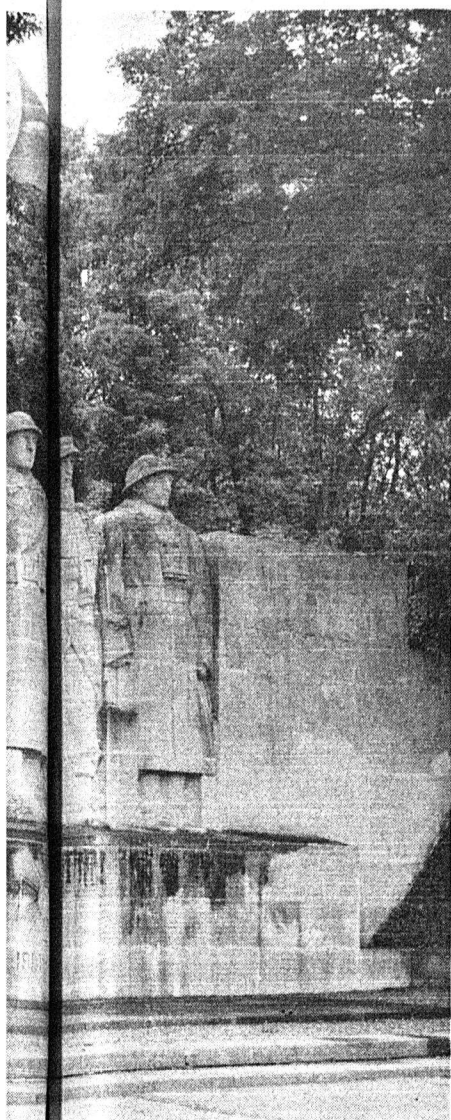


WHAT ITS LIKE TO DIE



notalize though is that
ki not alone in that type
n bombed by the Allied
y totally destroyed. The
en not vital to the war
realimportant war industries
ly pose to the bombing was
e of German people. The
as italy necessary?
t of child's education was
rors of warfare instead of
ers' fields", it would put a
ng in Remembrance Day.

uried they change somewhat in
The or change in Caucasian
o yellow, to yellow-green, to
igh the heat the flesh comes
especially where it has been
it quite a visible tarlike
d grow larger each day until
me quite too big for their
until they seem blown tight
unbearable extent and faces
as balloons.

Perhaps if more of us had the opportunity to talk to the ageing warriors in the Legion we would get a better perspective of what the wars were like. When you sit across the table from some old man and buy him a beer and get him talking you hear about the great times he had in France during the first war. You hear about the time they had a twelve hour leave from the trenches on the Marne and they went to Amiens to get drunk but the town was dry so they spent the day looking for women but there were none. You might hear how it rained for three weeks and the trenches filled with water and they slept in the mud and had a great time playing cards.

After a while, when he has had his third beer and the memories come back you can drag out of him things he has forgotten for forty years. The stench of the trench that you learned to ignore after a few months. The time his best friend was killed five yards out from the wire and it took him six hours to die and they could not drag him back to safety because the bullets were too thick. The time he was trapped under a crossfire in a shellhole for a day and he had to share it with the week old corpses of a mule and a German.

The first thing that you found about the dead was that, hit badly enough, they died like animals. Some quickly from a little wound you would not think would kill a rabbit. They died from little wounds as rabbits die sometimes from three or four small grains of shot that hardly seem to break the skin. Others would die like cats; a skull broken in and iron in the brain, they lie alive two days like cats that crawl into the coal bin with a bullet in the brain and will not die until you cut their heads off.

Even then you have the feeling that things were worse; they don't say it but you get the feeling that the constant terror of death and the hopelessness, they had for their own lives, became a constant companion.

They don't tell you about the times they broke under the strain, of the times they hid in a shell hole instead of facing the enemy because the horror became too much.

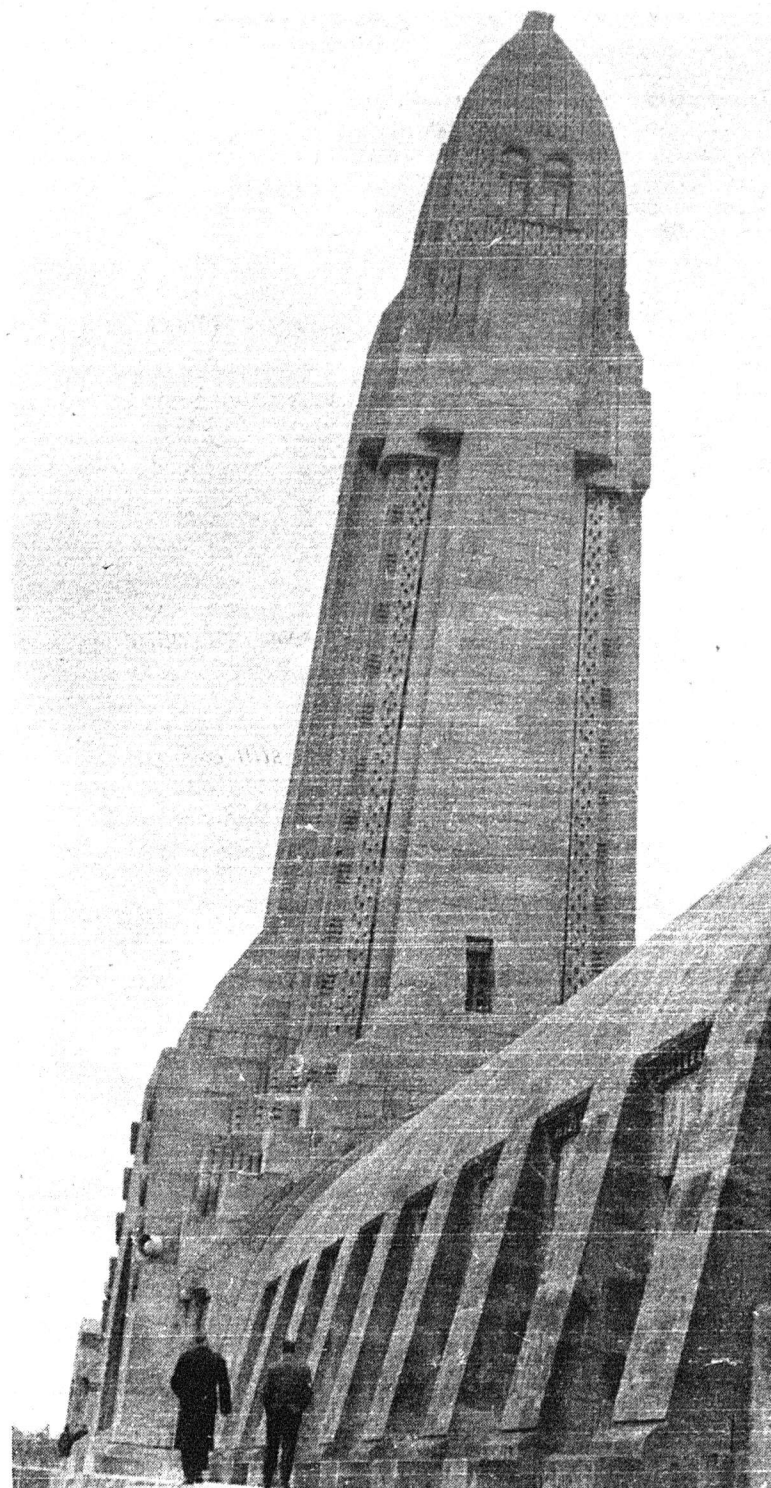
They don't tell you of what it was like to have your youth wasted and warped through years of war. Nor can you ever find out what six years of death and killing did to their minds.

For today's generation the remembrance services are of little relevance in their present form. There are too many flags, too many trumpets, too many speeches that amount to little more than "We should be sorry because its the Christian thing to do so bow your head and lets get back to making this country safe against attack."

It is clear there is not an Armistice among the world powers these days but a state of subdued, judicial killing under the guise of what is called "bush wars". Suex, Cyprus, Vietnam, Cambodia, Cuba, Hungary - the list is long and will get far longer before



people kill themselves off or mature enough to realize that war is no solution to their problems.



We agreed too that the picking up of the fragments had been an extraordinary business; it being amazing that the human body should be blown into pieces which exploded along no anatomical lines, but rather divided as capriciously as the fragmentation in the burst of a high explosive shell.

November 11 is a time to remember that war is wrong and never worth the cost. Time to remember the dead, only for what they are, not what the histories and the speeches say they were. They are nothing more or less than dead.

Time to remember that you would not want to die and that it is possible to do something about future wars.

Time to remember and feel sorry for the people that are living, who will live in years to come, and who are going to die violently because of a war.

Quotes selected from Ernest Hemingway's "Natural History of the Dead" and Ian Adams "Trudeau Papers"