

# THE WARRIOR POETS



**A short documentary shot in HD video.**

**THE SOLDIER POETS OF WORLD WAR ONE**

**\_\_\_\_\_ Their Political Protest \_\_\_\_\_**

DURATION: 10 minutes

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AUSTRALIAN WRITERS' GUILD Reg No: JB008789

# THE WARRIOR POETS

**Episode: 1 of 1**

**Episode Title: The Warrior Poets**

**Episode length: 10 minutes**

	<b>VISUAL</b>	<b>ON-CAMERA AUDIO</b>	<b>OFF-CAMERA AUDIO</b>
	Titles/credits - white on black		Gunfire (very faint) <i>Length: 0.15</i>
Sc. 01	EXT. THE TRENCHES 1914-18 (Archive footage)		<i>Length: 0.50</i>
	Archive footage WWI trenches (sepia rather than B & W)	(Very faintly) Guns /artillery bombardment	<b>Soldier v/o:</b> What passing bells for these who die as cattle? Only the monstrous anger of the guns, Only the stuttering rifle's rapid rattle Can patter out their hasty orizons. No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells. Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells, And bugles calling for them from sad shires.
	White text overlay		
	<b>FADE TO BLACK</b>		
Sc. 02	EXT. THE CENOTAPH, LONDON	DAY	<i>Length: 0.55</i>
	L.S. Horseguards Parade (London) mounted troopers M.L.S. War Memorial (The Cenotaph) London		<b>Narrator v/o:</b> When World War One was declared in August 1914, the overwhelming mood throughout Britain and her colonies was one of optimism, a romantic patriotism captured by young writers of the time.
	L.S. Westminster Abbey (exterior)		

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Sc. 03      INT. POET'S MEMORIAL, LONDON      DAY      *Length: 0.35*

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M.L.S.  
Poets' Memorial, West-  
minster Abbey, London

**Soldier v/o:**

If I should die, think only this of me  
That there's some corner of a  
    foreign field  
That is forever England.  
There shall be in that rich earth  
A richer dust concealed.

**Narrator v/o:**

But as the horrors of war became  
reality in the mud and blood of the  
trenches, the mood changed.

**DISSOLVE TO**

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Sc. 04      PHOTO MONTAGE      *Length: 0.35*

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Photo montage of  
still photographs - trench  
scenes and portraits of  
the three poets  
(archive)

**Narrator v/o:**

The poems of Rupert Brooke, Siegfried  
Sassoon and Wilfred Owen were to  
become particularly well known. True  
Warrior Poets, two of these men were  
awarded the Military Cross for  
exceptional bravery in the trenches.

Still photographs of Rupert  
Brooke  
(archive)

Rupert Brooke was to die early in  
the war, at the age of twenty eight.  
Educated at Rugby School and  
Cambridge University . . .

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Sc. 05      EXT. CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY      DAY      *Length: 0.45*

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L.S.  
Streetscapes - King's College  
Cambridge University

**Narrator v/o:**

. . . . Brooke published his first volume  
of poems in nineteen eleven before  
travelling around the world. His poetry  
in 1914 captures the patriotic spirit  
prevalent at the start of the war.

L.S.  
Streetscapes - Clare College  
Cambridge University

Siegfried Sassoon was also educated  
at Cambridge University. Older than  
Rupert Brooke, Sassoon . . .

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Sc. 06 PHOTO MONTAGE

Length: 1.05

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Still photos of Siegfried  
Sassoon  
(archive)

Footage of the trenches,  
bodies, WWI  
(archive)

**Narrator v/o:**

. . . survived the war and wrote poetry  
which describes in graphic detail the  
horrors of the Western Front.

**Soldier v/o:**

The bishop tells us: 'When the boys  
come back  
They will not be the same, for they'll  
have fought in a just cause.  
They lead the last attack  
On anti-Christ.'

'We're none of us the same!' the  
boys reply,  
'For George lost both 'is legs;  
and Bill's stone blind.  
Poor Jim's shot through the lungs  
and like to die.  
And Bert's gone syphilitic. You'll  
not find  
a chap who's served who hasn't  
found some change.'

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Sc. 07 INT. DON'S OFFICE, CAMBRIDGE

Length: 0.50

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M.C.U  
Professor of  
Literature, Cambridge  
(credit overlay)

**Professor**

As the men gained experienced  
of war, so their poetry changed and  
became not only more truthful in the  
descriptions of suffering, but also  
more critical of politicians, the incom-  
petence of senior army commanders  
and the apathy of the British public as  
a whole.

As a consequence of their experiences  
in the trenches of France, writers such as  
Sassoon and Owen have left a legacy  
of some of the finest poems in the  
history of English literature.

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Sc. 08      STREETSCAPE 1916 (Archive footage)      *Length: 0.15*

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Archival footage - Newspaper printing and street sales c. 1916

**Narrator v/o:**  
Siegfried Sassoon, in particular, made a protest against the war, writing to the press in 1917

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Sc. 09      EXT. RMC SANDHURST      DAY      *Length: 1.10*

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L.S.  
Parade ground - officer cadets marching

**Sergeant Major**  
By the left, quick march . . .  
(etcetera)

M.C.U.  
Military Historian  
Royal Military College,  
Sandhurst (UK)  
(credit overlay)

**Historian**  
Sassoon's letter to the press received wide publicity in 1917 and was debated in Parliament.

Many people saw his protest as an act of cowardice, whereas it was, in fact, a plea for understanding made on behalf of his fellow soldiers. The argument put forward was that the suffering of the soldiers and the wanton waste of life on both sides was unnecessary.

Rather than court martial Sassoon, the 'Powers that Be' in London declared him insane, shell-shocked.

L.S.  
Parade ground - officer cadets marching

Sassoon subsequently returned to the trenches, where he served with distinction.

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Sc. 10      PHOTO MONTAGE      *Length: 1.25*

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Still photographs of Wilfred Owen  
(archive)

**Narrator v/o:**  
Whilst in hospital, Sassoon met a youthful Wilfred Owen, also wounded in France. Sassoon was impressed by Owen's poetic gift and encouraged his writing. Like Sassoon, Owen returned to the trenches in 1917 and sadly was to die just seven days before peace was declared in November 1918.

L.S.  
Current footage of  
war graves  
(archive)

**Soldier v/o:**  
And by his smile, I knew that sudden  
hall.  
By his dead smile I knew we stood  
in hell.  
'I am the enemy you killed, my friend.  
I knew you in this dark, for so you  
frowned yesterday  
Through me, as you jabbed and  
killed.  
I parried, but my hands were slow  
and cold.  
Let us sleep now . . . . . '

M.C.U.  
Footage of Rupert Brookes'  
statue (Rugby School) UK

**Music**  
*War Requiem* Benjamin Britten

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Sc. 11      INT. POETS' MEMORIAL, LONDON      DAY      *Length:* **0.50**

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M.C.U.  
Poets' Memorial (Westminster  
London)

**Music**  
*War Requiem* Benjamin Britten

**Narrator v/o:**  
No less than sixteen Warrior Poets  
are commemorated in London's  
Westminster Abbey.

M.C.U.  
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier  
Westminster Abbey (London)

Often quoted, their poetry is time-  
less and a sad testament to Man's  
inhumanity to Man.

**FADE TO BLACK**

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End credits

*War Requiem*      *Length:* **0.30**  
Benjamin Britten

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