

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

| | VISUAL | ON-CAMERA AUDIO | OFF-CAMERA AUDIO |
|--------|--|--|--|
| | 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 | Soldier v/o: 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 | | |
| | FADE TO BLACK | | |
| 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 | | Narrator v/o: 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) | | |

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

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

Sc. 04 PHOTO MONTAGE *Length: 0.35*

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 . . .

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

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 . . .

Sc. 06 PHOTO MONTAGE

Length: 1.05

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.'

Sc. 07 INT. DON'S OFFICE, CAMBRIDGE

Length: 0.50

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.

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

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

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

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.

Sc. 10 PHOTO MONTAGE *Length: 1.25*

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

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

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

End credits

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