



“War Isn’t Worth One Life”



Harry Patch, Britain’s last combat veteran of World War I, died on July 25 at age 111.

Shortly before he died, in an interview on Britain’s ITN TV, his message was not patriotism under fire, but rather **the futility of war and the common humanity of soldiers who meet as enemies on the battlefield.**

He was asked if the effort invested by the Allies in World War I was worth the 20 million lives that were lost.

“No, it wasn’t worth one,” he said.

Mr. Patch said all who fought, whether British or German, should be mourned. **“Irrespective of the uniforms we wore,”** he told the BBC, **“we were all victims.”**

As his request, his funeral was neither a military nor a state ceremony, without even one rifle or artillery salute. The most moving scene was **the presence of two German soldiers in full dress uniform as honorary pallbearers.**

In the service, Pete Seeger’s Vietnam-era antiwar ballad, “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” was sung by a young woman from the cathedral choir to remind people of Mr. Patch’s view of the futility of war. At the present time when the U.S. invades and occupies Iraq and Afghanistan, Mr. Patch’s voice is a refreshing reminder. War, he said once, was “the calculated and condoned slaughter of human beings.”

In his 2007 autobiography “The Last Fighting Tommy,” he wrote, **“politicians who took us to war should have been given the guns and told to settle their differences themselves, instead of organising nothing better than legalised mass murder.”**



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