

Winning entries of the Creative World Wars writing competition 2018

One Bullet.

By Rebekah, 13 (1st prize in the 11–13 category)

One Bullet.

Shot by one gun.

Held by one assassin.

Killing one duke.

One duke of one country.

Bordering one other country

Who started one war.

Involving 32 countries.

Sending thousands, millions
of men,

To hundreds of different places,

New places,

Confusing places,

Never knowing

What would happen next.

One Bullet,

Out of millions

Flying over the battlefields,

Mowing men down,

Buried where they died,

Thousands of broken hearts

And families.

Grieving mothers.

Crying wives.

Weeping children.

One Bullet.

Larger bullets

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Targeting towns.

Villages.

Cities.

Destroying the area

Where they landed.

For miles around.

Lists in the newspapers.

Proclaiming lovers lost.

Children gone.

Wiped out forever.

How could just

One Bullet

Cause so much damage?

So much destruction.

So much pain.

For something so tiny.

Insignificant, even.

So small, and yet

So catastrophic.

One Bullet.

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Victims

By Millie, 13 (2nd prize in the 11–13 category)

Hi my name's Heinz Alt,
I'm a Jew,
Age 22, born 1922,
Deported September 28th,
Died January 6 1945,

Hallo, my name is Jan Ancerl,
I'm also a Jew,
I was 1 years old,
Born in a camp,
But not the summer kind,

My name's Lea Deutsch,
I was studying acting in a Jewish school,
I was 16, on March 18 I was born a Jew,
On May 1943 died a roman catholic,

Norbert Barlicki was my name,
6th June 1880 I was born,
61 years later on September 27th 1941,
I studied law and became a lawyer,
Publicists and a politician,

My name is Jane Haining,
Not a Jew I'm Scottish,
On the 30th of January 1933,
I started helping young Jewish girls escape,
1944 I was arrested and killed June 6th of that year.

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Some Primary Sources

(extracts from my granddad's diary and his photographs)

By Pheobe, 14 (1st prize in the 14–15 age category)

- i) FRI 18 FEBRUARY:
"AIR RAID; HEAVY GUNFIRE
BOMBS HIS WHITE HART LANE START FIRES;"
: the diary reads – 1944.
Pencil scattered like ash across yellowing pages
I've never seen before.
Tumbling out in their excitement, I balance the
Tired leather case in my impatient palms.
Static turbulence gathers in my chest.
- ii) WED 23 FEBRUARY:
"AIR RAID AT 12.30 IN MORNING
VERY HEAVY GUNFIRE...
3 H,E'S FELL OVER CHISWICK WAY.
CLOUD OF SOMKE SEEN RISING"
I imagine: the wail of the sirens
- jolted awake - in the shelter you
Freeze, greeted with the sound of metallic hail.
- You smell metal too: iron walls within the
Wounded earth; metallic like the taste of blood on 'undesirables'' lips.
- iii) RAF TRANSPORT COMMAND
IDENTIFICATION
NAME 2277268 CPL HORNE
TO UK
I never knew of Corporal Horne
But it appears he returned from –
- This tattered tag has no date:
Thin card, a shade of subdued manila
Has only creases- like frozen arteries and veins,
And the sweet, stale perfume of old paper
To show its age.
- iv) "This is just a bit of proof that I'm
where I say I am."
Corporal Horne on a bicycle next to the sign:
RAF STATION MAURIPUR.
In a tiny purple album, I have discovered

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A collection of monochrome photographs,
Disgruntled after decades of sleep.
On the opposite sides are captions and dates:
Parts to a puzzle I intend to find.

- v) "The great fire at 306 M.U.
april 1947"
A small print, the size of my index finger:
Figures only just distinguishable in a distant field.
A volcanic battalion of black smoke advances into the sky.
Raised voices and bitter air.
- vi) "KARACHI – NOVEMBER 1947
This is me getting some practice in
for the journey home."
: Corporal Horne stood on the deck of a fishing boat
In the sun of recently formed Pakistan.
I rifle through the photographs
Searching for context, in this cursive writing.
- (Sporadic captions and abbreviations.
Is it possible to tell a story without its narrator?)
- I find other evidence too:
- vii) A pocket Bible with a message from the king;
viii) A substantial book about planes;
ix) Blue and white stripes, the fabric slightly frayed,
The shape of geese in flight
Or a carrier pigeon's wings.
(I wonder if this Unit had a mascot; a cat or a dog maybe.
Animals amongst a human's war. Again.)
- x) "Place one of these on each
loose article of clothing, your Oxygen Mask,
Parachute and Hand Baggage
which you carry on board."
: So is this tag from 1947?
I can't be sure.
Is 306 M.U. RAF STATION MAURIPUR?
Possibly.
Were "H,E'S" bombs that "FELL OVER CHISWICK WAY-
I watch the crimson evening sky.
Everything is still but the mechanical
Workings of the clock
And the turbulent static of a
Thousand questions – the answers yet to find.
Questions are more important than answers

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Perhaps; but neither are at peace without the other
- but I am glad for what I do know
So I sit by my window,
And imagine it all.

A Rat

By William, 14 (2nd prize in the 14–15 age category)

The last thing that I can remember was the shrill, eerie sound of my captain's last words; "Gas!".

Fading between consciousness, I come to the realisation that my arm is no longer attached to my severed shoulder, I am sprawled helplessly across the hard, unyielding surface of the bloodstained earth of no-man's land. My sleeve is crusted with blood, the gunshot was extremely precise, it pierced through my shoulder like a mole, digging deep into my flesh, blood, muscle and bone, persisting through anything to go through to the other side.

One minute we were being showered by artillery fire, bombarded by the seemingly incessant stutter and rattle of rifles and machine guns, and the next; nothing. No wind, no noise, no explosions. Nothing but the thick barrage of fog, slowly stretching over the bleak horizon, covering the bare, austere, lifeless landscape. We were not alone though. Shadowy, masked figures were slowly approaching the front line of our trench, their horrific, mangled silhouettes just visible enough to churn those of our insides that weren't spilled over the battlefield, with fear. My fate is in God's hands now. All that I have left to do is reflect on the days of my young life. I have the time it takes the advancing soldiers to walk the remaining five-hundred yards or so to our trench. All that time I'll be hoping that I bleed to death before they get here.

Earlier on in the war, a couple of weeks ago, our regiment was attacking an enemy look out post. We had demolished almost all signs of life, successfully capturing the post. All that remained among the devastation was scatted fragments of limbs and skin. The sunset was a kaleidoscope of greys. Bodies are draped over barbed wire, amidst the vast expanse of bare emptiness, lifeless faces are looking at me from different directions, but without any expression; blanketed with a thick covering of blood and earth. I see one at my feet. A man with a friendly face but a deep gash running down the side of his forehead. Mortified, I let out a shriek of horror as blood started running down through his right nostril. I raised my rifle to his head, my hands shaking. He struggled violently, coughing out blood, to lift his hands in the air.

"Please," he breathed painfully in barely a whisper, "don't." he lowered his head as if preparing to be shot. "Please." He murmured in desperation, gradually raising his head in disbelief, hardly daring to look me in the eyes. I lowered the rifle. A hint of a smile flickered across his pathetic grateful face. He slowly struggled to turn around. As he slithered gradually away, dragging himself across the rugged terrain; I noticed an odd tattoo printed on his rear arm. It appeared to be a rat of some sort. I stood there and watched him stagger to safety one-hundred yards from where he had started. It

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was like I had been unconscious, blocked out from all my surroundings for that couple of minutes.

Ice cold, muddy water insidiously seeps through my rigid trousers and up to my underlying garments, chilling me to the bone-and chafing me to the extent that it is equally enraging. My body seizes up in horror at the noise of footsteps trudging slowly towards me. Using all my remaining strength, I turn and face the legs of the man that is now standing above me. He stared grimly down at me through the funnel of his gas mask, stepped over my helpless body and walked off. Struggling to roll over, I catch sight of a tattoo on his rear arm. A rat.