

## **Paul Bäumer's I Shouldn't Have Come Home from *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Eric Remarque adapted by Abbott and Andrews**

I can't say anything...I can't tell you anything you don't know. We live in the trenches out there. We fight. We try not to be killed; sometimes we are.

That's all... I've been there! I know what it's like.... I heard you in here reciting that same old stuff, making more iron men, more young heroes. You still think it's beautiful and sweet to die for your country, don't you?

We used to think, you know. The first bombardment taught us better. It's dirty and painful to die for your country. When it comes to dying for your country, it's better not to die at all. There are millions out there dying for their countries, and what good is it?

...You asked me to tell them how much they're needed out there. He tells you, 'Go out and die.' Oh, but if you'll pardon me, it's easier to say 'go out and die' than it is to do it....And it's easier to say it than to watch it happen...It's no use talking like this. You won't know what I mean.

Only, it's been a long while since we enlisted out of this classroom. So long, I thought maybe the whole world had learned by this time. Only now, they're sending babies, and they won't last a week! I shouldn't have come on leave. Up at the front, you're alive or you're dead, and that's all. You can't fool anybody about that very long.

Up there, we know we're lost and done for, whether we're dead or alive. Three years we've had of it, four years. And every day a year, and every night a century.

And our bodies are earth. And our thoughts are clay. And we sleep and eat with death. And we're done for, because you can't live that way and keep anything inside you.

I shouldn't have come on leave. I'll go back tomorrow. I've got four days more, but I can't stand it here! I'll go back tomorrow. Sorry.