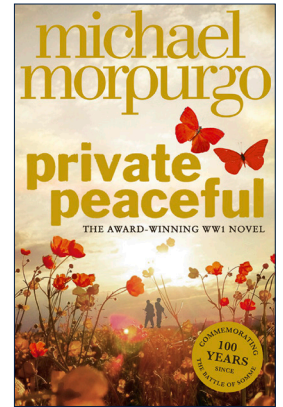


# michael morpurgo

## Private Peaceful



**“That’s not a foot, Tommo. That’s my ticket home.”**

*“When World War One was declared there were street celebrations in most of Europe’s capital cities. No-one even envisaged trench warfare in August 1914 let alone the appalling casualties that occurred over 4 years of fighting.”*  
(The History Learning Site)

Exact numbers are not known, but it is estimated that between 8 and 9 million British men were sent to serve in World War One. Of those around 900,000 British soldiers were killed and between 2 and 3 million wounded.

In the British Army wounds that resulted in a soldier being sent home to a hospital in England were termed ‘Blighty’ injuries. Strange as it sounds, the horrors of war meant that this was something some soldiers hoped for. However if there was suspicion that injuries were self-inflicted, the ultimate punishment was death by the firing squad.

*“...So they heard it all from Sergeant Hanley, and they swallowed everything he told them, like it was gospel truth. I think there’s a big push coming, and they wanted to make an example of someone, Tommo. And I was the Charlie.” He laughed at that. “A right Charlie. Then of course there was my record as a troublemaker, ‘a mutinous troublemaker’ Hanley called me. Remember Etaples? Had up on a charge of gross insubordination? Field Punishment Number One? It was all there on my record. So was my foot.”*

*“Your foot?”*

*“That time I was shot in the foot. All foot wounds are suspicious, they said. It could have been self-inflicted – it goes on all the time, they said. I could have done it myself just to get myself out of the trenches and back to Blighty.”*

*“But it wasn’t like that,” I say.*

*“Course it wasn’t. They believed what they wanted to believe.”*  
(Private Peaceful, Five To Five)

**What do you want to believe? Consider Charlie the Solider and older brother to Tommo, and then consider Charlie the father of a newly born baby son. Write two persuasive arguments.**

**1. Why Charlie would *not* have inflicted an injury to his own foot.**

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[illegible]