

The soldier

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Age 12

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It's a nightmare, so many wounded soldiers and civilians. The bullets, bombs and even tanks that came to our countryside a few days ago burnt out our village.

The wounded are arriving in the church because we don't have a hospital. The soldiers are coming out of the bunker, some walking, some limping, some being given a fireman's lift or being dragged by their friends. The lucky ones were on stretchers – covered with animal skins and bandages.

A shout goes up that the Germans are bringing a tank to the church. Everyone has to leave. In the end the church blows up, but luckily once everyone has left.

The now makeshift hospital set up quickly in the civic hall stank of death and despair. Nevertheless, those attending the casualties, those angels of wartime, our dedicated nurses were doing their very best to keep our men alive. The huge challenge of trying to save limbs and gouging out bullets that were embedded in the bodies of the soldiers was a daunting task. The piercing screams of agony echoed around the building and drowned out any other sounds that could be heard.

The priest was praying for the lives of each poor soul that he came across. Unfortunately he was never going to be able to save them all.

The end