

By the end of studying **Act 1** I need to know:

Plot: Stanhope's company have arrived to complete 6 days in this line of the trenches. Osborne completes handover with Hardy, who informs him that the big attack is expected any time soon. After Hardy leaves, a newly arrived soldier, Raleigh, arrives and reveals to Osborne that his sister is Stanhope's fiancé- Stanhope has taken to drinking as a coping mechanism with war. Stanhope is shocked to see Raleigh there and the officers sit down for dinner. Hibbert attempts to convince Stanhope that he has neuralgia- though Stanhope suspects it is a lie in order to get sent home sick. Towards the end of the Act Stanhope gets increasingly drunk and expresses his true feelings about the war and his alcoholism, as well deciding to censor Raleigh's letters.

Ideas: Trench life is completely different to the expectations the audience at the time (1932) would have had. Stanhope has become an alcoholic to cope with the realities of war; however, he is still considered one of the best company commanders in the entire brigade. Raleigh, the young and naïve second lieutenant, is completely oblivious as to the realities of war and the psychological effect it has.

<p>Vocabulary</p>	<p>Ideology [noun]- a system of ideas that have been constructed by a group (often political or social). <i>[ideological- adjective]</i> Indoctrination- the process by which ideologies/ beliefs are embedded within the psyche of a group so that it is readily accepted and unquestioned. <i>[indoctrinate- verb]</i> Masculinity [noun]- qualities or attributes regarded as characteristic of men. <i>[masculine- adjective]</i> Warfare [noun]-engagement in or the activities involved in war or conflict. Heroism [noun]- great bravery. <i>[hero- noun; heroic- adjective; heroically- adverb]</i> Comradeship [noun]- the company and friendship of others with common aims. <i>[comrade- noun; comradeship- adjective]</i> Trench [noun]- were dug into the ground; soldiers fought, lived and slept in them during World War One [then known as the Great War]. Stoicism [noun]- to ensure pain or hardship without the display of feelings or without complaint. <i>[stoic- adjective]</i></p>
<p>Context (To inform interpretation)</p>	<p>Operation Michael- The play opens on the evening on Monday 18 March 1918, Operation Michael (part of the Germans four-pronged 'Spring Offensive' was launched on Thursday 21 March 1918. It was a huge German offensive with the goal being to break through the Allie lines to seize the channel ports and was launched in St Quentin, where the play is set. The British government knew of the Germans' plans long before the offensive, though not the scale. Large parts of the line in Northern France, and around St Quentin, had been vacant due to loss on the Allied sides. David Lloyd George, against military advice, installed British regiments in areas of the line previously occupied by French soldiers- including St Quentin- in the December 1917. On 10 March 1918, British intelligence predicted that a German offensive would take place in the Arras-St Quentin region, due to Allied photographs revealing new supply roads being made to the German line, something also reiterated on Sunday 17 March 1918. On Wednesday 20 March raids were conducted and captured German prisoners revealed the attack would take place the following morning. Bombardment began at 04:35 on Thursday 21 March. 6109 allied soldiers were killed.</p> <p>The battle of Vimy Ridge- At this battle, commanders (such as Stanhope) were ordered to send their men running at German machine guns, knowing that they would be killed. It occurred on 9-12 April 1917; Osborne states that Stanhope has been commanding this company for a year, which means this would have been Stanhope's first big battle after taking command. It's also this battle that led him to start drinking: 'I knew I would go mad if I didn't break the strain'- this reflects Stanhope's care for his men and the guilt he feels over knowingly sending men to their deaths. There's a good link here to the Colonel surrounding the raid, who is aware that soldiers will die but expresses indifference. It could also be this event that causes Stanhope to ask for volunteers for the read- he doesn't want to have to choose men to die again.</p> <p>Propaganda- In order to persuade soldiers to join the war, the government launched mass propaganda campaigns using a variety of different mediums. These were targeted about both men and women- young men to sign up and women to convince them to fight. They presented the idea that fighting in the war was honourable, that soldiers were respected. The realities of life in the trenches was often concealed- instead a romanticised or glamorised view of war was presented, one that would have inspired young men to sign up in the hopes of being glorified as a hero. The advent of cinema also meant enabled short films to be portrayed at the beginning of films- often dramatisations of atrocities committed by the Germans; these served to vilify the Germans and unite the country against a common enemy. As such, soldiers arrived in the trenches with preconceived ideas of what trench life, fighting in the war and the Germans would be like.</p> <p>Ideologies of masculinities and indoctrination- Central to the power of propaganda was the belief that men were expected to fulfil their duty towards their country. The firm ideologies of masculinity that had been indoctrinated into society for millennia came into play here- the propaganda relying on this expectation. Conscientious objectors, those who refused to fight, were deemed cowards. Women would give them white feathers, a symbol of cowardice.</p>

Reading:

Stanhope- Commander of 'C' Company. 21 years old, has been fighting in the war for 3 years.

Osborne- Stanhope's Second Lieutenant, 45 years old.

Trotter- an officer

Hibbert- an officer, 23 years old.

Mason- Private, also the cook.

Hardy- Commanding officer of a different company; his company are about to vacate the trenches that Stanhope's are moving into.

Madge- Stanhope's fiancé and Raleigh's sister

Speech- The script for Trotter and Mason includes phonetic spelling (for instance 'noo' for 'new' and 'ouse for house'). This is due to them being from the working class, which Sherriff highlights through the way in which the characters speak.

Always read stage and speech directions.

A lot of the war poetry, particularly of Owen, reflects upon the unrelenting expectations within the society at the time that convinced young soldiers to sign up [such as *Dulce et Decorum est*].

Disregard of Senior officials- The substandard equipment, knowledge that the big attack is looming, refusal to send reinforcements and the general conditions of the trenches serve to highlight the discrepancy between the propaganda and the reality of war. The conditions also aren't conducive to fighting effectively- **the lack of wire on the beds** would result in back ache, whilst soldiers would be expected to carry a 50kg bag on their backs; the food lacks the required nutrients to stay healthy and fight well; there's a severe lack of sanitising- Trotter describes pepper as a **'disinfectant'**. It's worth noting here that these sub-standard conditions are afforded to the officers; this means that the conditions are worse for the privates. This disregard for the living conditions, and eventually lives of the soldiers, became a chief criticism of the government following WW1.

Realities of trench life- Sherriff originally named the play 'waiting'- before deciding upon 'Journey's End'. This is because, despite the expectations constructed by the propaganda, soldiers invariably spent the majority of their time waiting. This is something that Raleigh remarks and also leads to life in the trenches being presented as rather boring- Trotter's circles, Hardy's earwig races (and drying of his sock). Not only this, but the unsanitary and unhealthy conditions- trench foot was a common ailment amongst soldiers, spending day and night in sodden boots.

Commanders and superiority- In the army, the expectation is for subordinates to adhere to the instructions of those senior to them. It's also expected that subordinates address their superiors as 'sir'. The fact Stanhope only expects to be addressed as 'sir' in front of the privates- as mentioned by Osborne- establishes Stanhope as a character who does not adhere fully to the rules of this hierarchy. This also helps to endear him to the audience. His relationship with Osborne is evident here as well, the fact that Osborne can question Stanhope's instructions (such as censoring Raleigh's letter in Act 2)- highlighting how 'different' Stanhope is, as well as reflecting the close relationship between Osborne and Stanhope.

Censorship- It was the expectation that all officers had their letters censored by a commanding officer, to ensure no sensitive information was leaked. This was also used to prevent some of the realities of life in the trenches being revealed back at home. Stanhope's decision to censor Raleigh's letters is one that he would normally be expected to do anyway- the fact he chooses to censor Raleigh's letters shows, yet again, the respect he usually gives his officers as he clearly doesn't usually. This is something he even mentions in Act 2 Scene 1 **'I ought to censor your letters, uncle'**.

The Class System- The class system at the turn of the 20th Century was extremely rigid. This came to be reflected in the hierarchy of the army- officers were more likely to have come from private schools. Sherriff reflects this through the largely upper-class officers (Raleigh, Stanhope, the Colonel, Hibbert). It also serves to highlight how, despite his appearances, Trotter is an extremely capable officer- being a member of the working class, only the very best would have been given the honour of promotion. Sherriff also depicts this through the language the characters speak and differing levels of formality. Some critics argue that Sherriff is also mocking the formality and rigour of the class system, which seem somewhat redundant at a time of war.

Themes

Comradeship, bravery and heroism- Sherriff highlights the unity of the soldiers throughout the play. This is firstly evident through how Osborne defends Stanhope against Hardy; he calls him the **'best company commander we've got'** and states how he'd **'go to hell with that fellow'**. The fact that Osborne supports Stanhope even in his absence reflects the idea of comradeship between them. Stanhope, as a commanding officer, could be like Hardy- who rather than cleaning the **'blasted mess'** the trenches are in is too busy **'drying his sock over a candle'** despite the fact he is about to imminently be relieved. However, rather than abusing his power, Stanhope displays the attitudes he expects of his men. Osborne relates how he's **'seen him on his back all day with trench fever and up on duty all night'**. It's also evident in the quieter moments- Osborne supporting Raleigh in his first moments in the trenches; Osborne humouring Mason with his concerns over accidentally bringing pineapple chunks; Stanhope going to see the ruin in no man's land so Trotter doesn't have to crawl out **'after that cutlet'**. Not one of the soldiers are outlandishly heroic- they don't regale each other with tales of battles, or of brave acts- and so they challenge the preconceived expectations and ideologies of heroism that were prevalent in the propaganda.

Masculinity- See 'deeper understanding';

Realities of War- See 'context' and 'quotes and references'

Links across the text:

<p>Deeper understanding</p>	<p>Coping mechanisms are a common thread throughout the text- the older characters [Trotter and Hibbert] have more effective mechanisms than the younger characters [Stanhope and Hibbert]. This helps to reinforce the idea of wasted youth and how unprepared the youth of Britain were for the horrors of war, specifically the psychological strain. Equally, it also serves to undermine the propaganda- young soldiers who joined up due to the propaganda would become quickly disillusioned by the realities of war. Osborne attempts to teach Raleigh when he arrives- Raleigh remarks on how the Very lights over no man's land look beautiful, at which point Osborne advises 'you must always think of it as romantic'; he is advising Raleigh to always see the positives and beauty in war (a coping mechanism for Osborne that becomes evident later on in the play).</p> <p>Trotter- Trotter appears rather foolish throughout the play, however there are subtle hints that he is more intelligent than he appears. There is an argument for the idea that Trotter is consciously serving as light relief for the soldiers, just as Sherriff intends him as light relief for the audience. When we first meet Trotter, he continually turns a box on different sides to try and make him sit at a table correctly- this makes him appear rather foolish. However, he shows signs of intelligence too- he quickly works out the number of hours they will be in the trenches; he also has managed to rise through the ranks despite being of lower class. He also appears to be overly fond of eating- however, Sherriff takes pains to present the food as unappealing and unappetising- despite Trotter's apparent love of food, his tunic is 'bursting at the waist'. This could create a much sadder interpretation- Trotter struggles just as anyone else does, but relies on humour and food as a coping mechanism. There are subtle hints later on in the play that Trotter, in fact, struggles to cope just like everyone else.</p> <p>The contrast between Hardy and Stanhope- Sherriff introduces Hardy as a foil character for Stanhope. By opening with an inept, lackadaisical and ineffective commander Sherriff ennobles Stanhope as a character. It also serves to highlight the reasons for Stanhope's drinking problems- he cares, whereas Hardy does not. Despite knowing about the big attack, telling us how every night he's heard German transport he hasn't even prepared the trenches: the wiring hasn't been replaced as Stanhope explains how 'every company leaves it for the next one', he hasn't checked whether the inventory is correct (instead he 'thinks the sergeant major' checked it), he also leaves the dugouts 'smelling like cess pits'. If Hardy was a conscientious commander he would do everything he could to support the succeeding company to prepare for the imminent attack. Equally, the fact that his men defecate in the trenches, something Stanhope would never abide, reinforce the lack of respect they have in him. Perhaps this is the reason for Hardy's dislike of Stanhope; however, it could also be this reason why Osborne doesn't respect Hardy- after all he calls Stanhope the 'best company commander we've got' to Hardy (another company commander).</p> <p>Expectations surrounding masculinity- The expectation that soldiers should be brave, noble and fearless influences characters' actions. Sherriff is trying to show the audience the bravery and heroism of soldiers in World War One (known then as the Great War), however he is also highlighting how the characters are shaped and influenced by society's expectations of masculinity- further reinforced through the propaganda. Stanhope struggles to accept his identity as a hero, which he undeniably is, due to the fears he has- 'without being doped with whiskey [he'd] go mad with fright'. In a world where men aren't expected to talk about their feelings, Stanhope [and we later learn Hibbert] are unable to express their feelings about the war and how they feel, despite all soldiers feeling the same. Hardy remarks 'I never did see a youngster put it away the way he does' which reflects how he has become aged by war, he drinks like an old man. However, whiskey- a traditionally male drink- could be symbolic of Stanhope's attempts to become more masculine/ manly in the eyes of society. It is whiskey, an inherently masculine drink, that enables Stanhope to go and fight. It is also whiskey, and cigarettes, - something the schoolboy Stanhope was 'frightfully down on'- that Raleigh is offered in his first moments in the trenches, being provided with symbols of masculinity to help cope with the realities of war. Stanhope's excessive alcohol consumption, therefore, is symbolic of his desire to be more 'masculine' and manly- something we also see later in the play. It is also worthy of noting that these expectations around masculinity are more influential over the younger characters (namely Stanhope and Hibbert). Stanhope has clearly been indoctrinated by the propaganda due to his description of Hibbert being 'another little worm trying to wriggle home'- somewhat implying that Stanhope doesn't see anyone who leaves as a man.</p>
<p>Quotes and references</p>	<p>Description of the trenches-</p> <p>'a wooden bench against the back wall makes another seat, and two boxes serve for the other sides'- poor, unsuitable equipment</p> <p>'a table occupies a good space'- highlights the cramped conditions in the trenches.</p> <p>'an officer's equipment hangs in a jumbled mass from a nail in the wall'- reflects Hardy's lack of care in the conditions/ organisation of the trenches.</p> <p>Character descriptions- The descriptions of characters as they enter help to reveal a lot about their characters:</p> <p>'a red-faced, cheerful looking man'- Hardy is the only character described as 'cheerful'; it could reflect his lack of care, or the fact his company are about to leave the trenches.</p> <p>'physically hard as nails'- This describes Osborne's physical strength but could also be representative of his emotional strength/ the support he provides the other soldiers.</p> <p>'the very new uniform of a 2nd lieutenant'- Raleigh's uniform is described as 'new', representing his inexperience in the war- it's worth comparing this to Stanhope's uniform, which is 'old and war-stained'. This reflects how Stanhope has been aged by war; the 'staining' is symbolic for how he has been psychologically (and permanently) damaged by war. It's also worth noting how, after the raid, Raleigh's uniform becomes war-stained.</p> <p>'he is a well-built, healthy looking boy of about eighteen'- It's worthwhile noting how Raleigh is referred to as a 'boy' throughout the play in stage descriptions- this reinforces his youthful naivety. The fact he is 'well-built' and 'healthy looking' presents Raleigh as a figure of the ideal soldiers that would have been presented in the propaganda. Raleigh is also used here as a contrast to Stanhope; Raleigh is, effectively, what Stanhope would have been like three years ago.</p> <p>'despite his stars of rank he is no more than a boy'- This reflects how Stanhope has advanced quickly, which would be unusual, thus highlighting how diligent he is in his job [again in contrast to Hardy]</p>

	<p>'despite being tanned by months in the open air there is a pallor under his skin'- This symbolises the effect war has had on him. He has a sun tan, due to being outside all of the time, yet beneath that healthy tan is a 'pallor'- symbolic of his mental degradation. The fact this pallor is 'under his skin' also implies that he is hiding his feelings. It's interesting to compare this with Hibbert's 'pallid face', which implies his fear is not hidden unlike Stanhope's</p> <p>'his dark hair is carefully brushed; his uniform, though old and war-stained, is well-cut and cared for'- This reveals a lot of Stanhope- he is desperate to put on an outwardly appearance of order and control, also reflected in how he leads his men. He leads by example- taking pride in his appearance. It's worth contrasting with Hardy here, who were first meet</p> <p>'drying his sock over a candle'- creating a very different impression of him. The fact his hair is 'carefully brushed' contrasts with his hair being 'ruffled' after Osborne's death- demonstrating how Osborne's death causes Stanhope to give up.</p> <p>'apparently he has put on weight during his war service, for his tunic appears to be on the verge of bursting at the waist'- This highlights how Trotter has put on weight whilst he's been at war, as his tunic would have fit when he first joined. This also shows his over-reliance on food as a coping mechanism- despite the poor quality and taste.</p> <p>Poor conditions in the trenches-</p> <p>Mason describes how the cutlet is a 'noo shape' and how he 'wouldn't like to commit' as to what the actual meat is. This reflects the poor quality of the food, certainly not conducive to fighting. Trotter even notes how, after he eats it and is asked to go out on duty, that he wouldn't like 'rolling around on his belly after that cutlet'; it's clear that the food is almost impinging their ability to do their jobs rather than aiding them.</p> <p>When it emerges that Mason forgot to pack pepper Osborne states how they 'must have pepper [because] it's a disinfectant'- medically, pepper doesn't have any disinfectant properties, therefore revealing just how unsanitary conditions are and how they aren't given adequate supplies to keep themselves healthy. Trotter also asserts that 'war is bad enough with pepper, without it's bloomin' awful', which again suggests how unappetising the food must be- pepper is usually used to enhance flavour, therefore the food must be extremely bland.</p> <p>Hardy points out that his bed is the best because it is the only one with wire. Without wire the officers are forced to 'hang their arms and legs' over the sides. This could easily cause back problems, something that is extremely problematic in war, and also wouldn't help the officers get a comfortable night's sleep. Rest and recuperation would be important for the officers dealing with life and death decisions as well as how physically exhausting battle would be.</p> <p>The inventory lists 'rusty bombs' and 'damp rifle grenades'- meaning neither would work. Hardy has already revealed that the big attack is imminent and Osborne mentions they've been expecting it 'for months', yet the British government have not replenished stores with actually workable ammunition. This supports the idea that they are simply allowing the soldiers to die. It also shows how impossible it would be to keep the trenches dry- as it would be expected that every effort would be taken to keep the stores as dry as possible.</p>
Terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage Directions Speech Directions Broken Speech Imperatives Declaratives Metaphor Simile Symbolism Foreshadowing Silence Active voice Passive voice Dehumanising Setting Lighting