

Thankfully, in many respects, I have no idea what it feels like to go into a war zone. The thoughts that run through your head when you put on your uniform, tie up the laces on your boots and advance into the unknown are ones I can barely begin to imagine.

This year marks the centenary of one of the bloodiest and muddiest of battles during the First World War. The Third Battle of Ypres, that of Passchendaele, was famously where Harry Patch fought and was referred to as "Hell" by Siegfried Sassoon. Given the ferocity and horror which left us with the defining images of waterlogged trenches, deep thick mud, poor weather, and gas attacks, it is easy to see why it was called Hell.

Kent had its share of soldiers who fought and died at Passchendaele, including Charlie Blythe, who played cricket for Kent and England. In fact tens of thousands died during the three month battle, many of whom are remembered at the incredibly moving Commonwealth War Graves Commission Tyne Cot cemetery. The endless rows of headstones and the list of names on the side of the Menin Gate leave you speechless. It is here that an event will take place at the end of July to commemorate the start of Passchendaele. Descendants of those who fought in Ypres can apply for free tickets, which will be allocated in pairs, online at www.passchendaele100.org

It is important that we remember the legacy of war, whenever they were, so that we and our children and our children's children never forget the sacrifices that men and women made. Passchendaele was one bloody battle in many, a stark reminder of the horror of war. The commemorations allow us to pay our respects, acknowledge the importance of peace but ultimately ensure we never forget.