

A Junior Military Doctor on His Mental Trauma (November 17, 1916)

Abstract

In this letter from the front Wilhelm Pfuhl, a junior physician [*Unterarzt*] who was recovering in a field hospital from a “nervous disorder” (i.e. shell shock), describes the reasons for his own psychological collapse.

Source

I think it is not so much the strain as all the horrors I have experienced in the last few months that have so shaken my health. It seems quite inconceivable to me how humanity can tear itself apart like this in mutual mass murder. I cannot boast of ever having been particularly resistant to the repulsive and horrible, but now I can no longer bear it at all. I am so tired and weary that I would like to fall asleep and not wake up again until there is peace in the country, or not at all.

Source of original German text: Bernd Ulrich and Benjamin Ziemann, *Frontalltag im Ersten Weltkrieg. Wahn und Wirklichkeit*. Berlin, 1995, p. 103.

Translation: Insa Kummer

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