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# Why Soldiers Die Unafraid

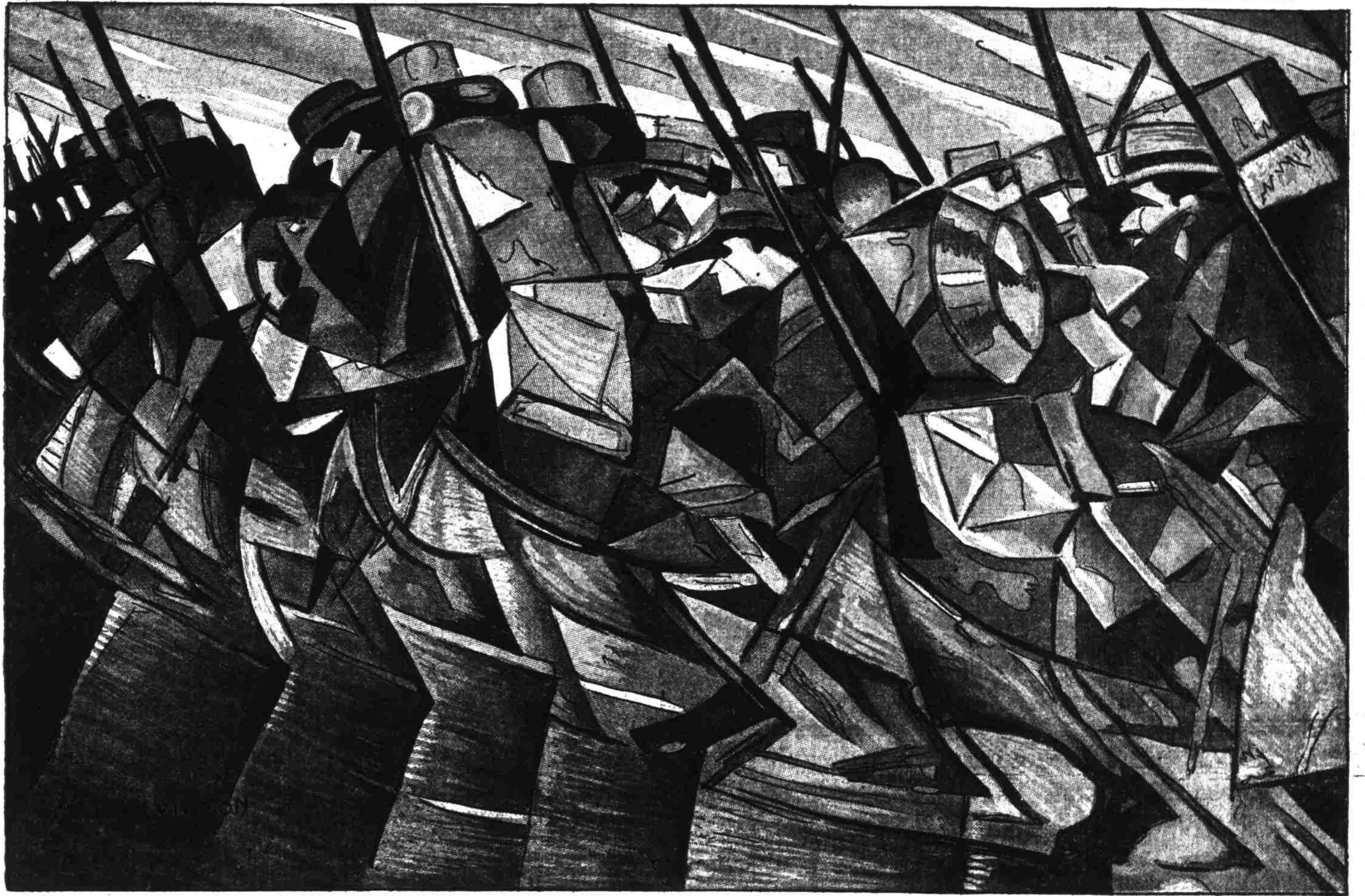
Futurists or Realists in Art Find in the Rush and Smash of Armed Action the Most Thrilling Emotion in the World. You May Feel in These War Paintings the Desperate Abandon That Sends Men to Their Death Without a Qualm.



OW can they die without dread? They have no hope, yet they have no fear. Why?

There is no answer that may be written down. Literature, helpless, falls to the ground when it confronts the task of describing the supreme emotion of a soldier. You may spend a lifetime in a library yet never learn. For your question will never be answered by written or spoken word.

But you may do this: You may stare into the courage-steeled faces that rush across the canvases of war artists and know. Genuses of the brush have caught that indescribable death hunger of the fighting man and have put that passion of



The futurist artist, G. R. W. Nevinson, has put into his "Returning to the Trenches" the absorbed, determined spirit that animates the soldier.

Watch Nevinson's Frenchmen sweeping back to their trenches at dawn. Their heads stretch forward, their knees lift with one short, hard jerk, their feet come down in a single decisive "clump." The ditch into which they will soon be tumbling is a pit of death; into it shells come smashing, gases that rend lungs come drifting; through it blood and water run as high as a man's knees, but there is nothing to suggest those horrors in the eager swoop of this compact, hard-driven file of men. Some unseen force, something that is bred in uniform determination and desire, puts that vigor and dash into their marching step.

Some mighty spirit envelops them, the

spirit of thousands of men, all absorbed in the same thoughts, all striving for the same ends, all doing and acting for the accomplishment of the same things. When a man feels that surging up and down his spine life becomes less dear and death less dreadful.

It is the spirit that rises out of war pictures and out of nothing else in the realm of art or representation.

Here are the horsemen of Napoleon at Waterloo! Into the ditch they go, stern, inflexible, unflinching. To die in the open is one thing, to be smothered and trampled to death in a hole in the ground is another.

Then suddenly under the feet of the front rank appeared a deep ditch, the

sunken road. A detour was impossible. The momentum of the mass thrust the front lines unhesitatingly onward. There was no escape, so the soldiers of the emperor rode bolt upright over the brink and filled the trench with their bodies. When it was level full the remaining horsemen kept on over the mass of battered, mangled flesh.

The artist paints that moment when the second rank swept over the edge of the ravine. On his canvas appears no Frenchman afraid. Faced by a terrible death, they ride into it, still intent upon that something that wipes dread and remorse from the soldier's mind.

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"Scotland Forever," by Lady Butler, has in it the abandon which drives fear from the minds of warriors.



"The Ravine at Waterloo," painted by V. Checa, catches the mental concentration of the fighting man who is too intent upon the magnitude of his endeavors to fear death, even in the smothered depths of a ditch.

passions where you may see. They have seized and held for the view of posterity that master moment when man, sword and heart are at the zenith, they have put into the fierce countenances of the soldiers that tremendous sense of heroic abandon which lifts them high and clear above thoughts of gain and memories of ambition.

Look at the Greys, thundering down, sabers swinging, voices screaming, manes whipping, scabbards rattling; look into that row of emotion-torn faces peering over the wild heads of their straining horses; feel, with the breathless riders, that bursting flood of abandon and know why men die unafraid!

