

All Quiet on the Western Front

Encyclopedia Article

All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque

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All Quiet on the Western Front

One of the greatest pacifist statements ever to reach the screen, *All Quiet on the Western Front* follows a group of German youths from their patriotic fervor at the start of World War I in 1914, to the death of the last of their number in 1918. Based on Erich Maria Remarque's like-titled novel, *All Quiet* downplays the political issues that led to World War I and dwells instead on the folly and horror of war in general. Filmed at a cost of \$1.2 million and populated with 2,000 extras, many of them war veterans, *All Quiet* garnered widespread critical acclaim and Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Director (Lewis Milestone). It also made a star of Lew Ayres, a previously unknown 20 year-old who played Remarque's autobiographical figure of Paul Baumer. A 1990 addition to the National Film Registry, *All Quiet* remains a timely and powerful indictment of war.

Further Reading:

Millichap, Joseph R. *Lewis Milestone*. Boston, Twayne, 1981.

Norden, Martin F. *The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies*. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1994.