



I was able to walk so a kind soldier took me away from here to a place where horses were being made better. They bandaged me and let me rest in peace and quiet. I had plenty of food and slowly began to feel better. Everyone was kind to me and I didn't have to worry about the bangs.

It was lovely having the food and rest. I know that the soldiers worked very hard to keep us fed.

But eventually the vet said that I was fit enough to go back to "The front". I was very frightened as I didn't want to be hurt again, but even though I tried to tell them they still made me go.

This time I didn't have a rider. I had to carry things on my back. The soldier with me said that the things were ammunition and using us horses was the only way that ammunition could get to the front. This was because the roads and tracks were so muddy and slippery lorries couldn't get through.

For a very long time we carried different supplies on our backs, always during heavy shelling. We hated it when the shells came over and some of the ex farm horses used to lie down and try to crawl under nearby carts. We were frightened all the time, and tired and hungry.

One day after a very long time we were taken to a place which the soldiers called "an active service stable" It was very cold without much shelter or a roof but it was wonderful not to be carrying those heavy weights and struggling in the mud

Strangely it was very quiet and gradually we stopped being frightened. It was wonderful just to eat and rest. The soldiers said that the war was over and we wouldn't have to be frightened or hungry ever again.



This went on for several weeks. We weren't hurt but it was terribly hard carrying the heavy weights and keeping our balance on the slippery tracks. We were very hungry as it was terribly cold and there wasn't much food, not even any grass.

One day all of a sudden there was a huge bang and the noise knocked me off balance and I fell into a muddy ditch. I did my best to get out but it was very slippery and I couldn't get out. The heavy weight on my back held me down and I thought I would never get out. I was very frightened and kept whinnying for help. Soldiers came and took the ammunition off my back and put ropes around me and pulled me out. I was so happy to be out but I was very weak and tired after the struggle. The soldiers took me back to the place where they make you better. They fed me and groomed the mud out of my legs and coat and let me sleep.



We were looking forward to going home but not all of us were able to. We heard that many of us were going to be left behind in France. Some would be sold to farmers to work on the land, and some we heard were sold to butchers for meat.

I was very lucky. I was sent back home. I was very weak and tired, and any loud noises scared me, but I was home with my mother and all the other horses at Elvaston Castle.

There aren't as many of us now. Some of my friends came back, but not many. The young ones don't bother us much. We stand together under the oak trees and share our memories. Sometimes we cry. Our mothers watch over us.

We are glad to be home.



This was Danny's story.

In his book *The War Horses* Simon Butler says tens of thousands of horses were stripped from farms, liverys, hunt stables and from private ownership, packed onto ships and sent overseas. Over eight million animals were thus engaged in the war worldwide. On the Western front over a million horses died. Of the total in use by the British army alone, themselves numbering almost a million, only around 60,000 are said to have been returned to Britain at the war's end!

He concludes, "sadly, the human taste for war shows little sign of abating, but at least we can hope that no future war will require the direct sacrifice of so many million animals as did that of 1914 - 18. And at this distance, a century on, how might we explain to some other noble beast our justification for the slaughter of the First World War".



I had to go back to carrying the ammunition and then one day my soldier put a very strange bag on my head. I DIDN'T LIKE IT! My soldier said that it was to help me breath when the enemy soldiers shot a nasty type of gas over us. All we horses had to wear them when someone shouted "Gas".



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