

## **My Father by John Midgley – November Reflection**

In Autumn, when Remembrance Sunday comes around, my thoughts always go to my father. He was a soldier in the First World War, but unlike millions of others, he lived to tell the tale, as we say. Except that he didn't tell the tale. He hardly ever spoke about his experiences. It seems that all he wanted to do was put it all behind him, get back to his ordinary life, to raise and enjoy his family.

Occasionally he would refer to the time when he was 'in the trenches' as he would say. And I know that he was wounded twice and sent back twice. And I know that he learned to operate a machine gun. As a small boy I asked him once, naively, if he had ever killed anyone. But he brushed the question off, saying it was impossible to know.

I know that his wartime experiences affected him because for many years he suffered nightmares, shouting and yelling in the dark of night.

But mostly no, we learned nothing of his army career and I sometimes regret that I never questioned him about it. But perhaps that would have been unwise. I might have brought on more nightmares.

So mostly, at this time, my thoughts are of gratitude. I feel grateful that he did what he believed was his duty, grateful that he survived and raised a family including me. With gratitude I remember him on Remembrance Day.