

NOT ONLY POETS . . .

CURSE

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J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973), the author of the *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, and an acclaimed academic and scholar, spent most of the Somme campaign at the front. This experience clearly made a deep impression on him, and the experience shaped his writings for the rest of his life. Tolkien was of German ancestry, although his family had been in England since the late 18th century.

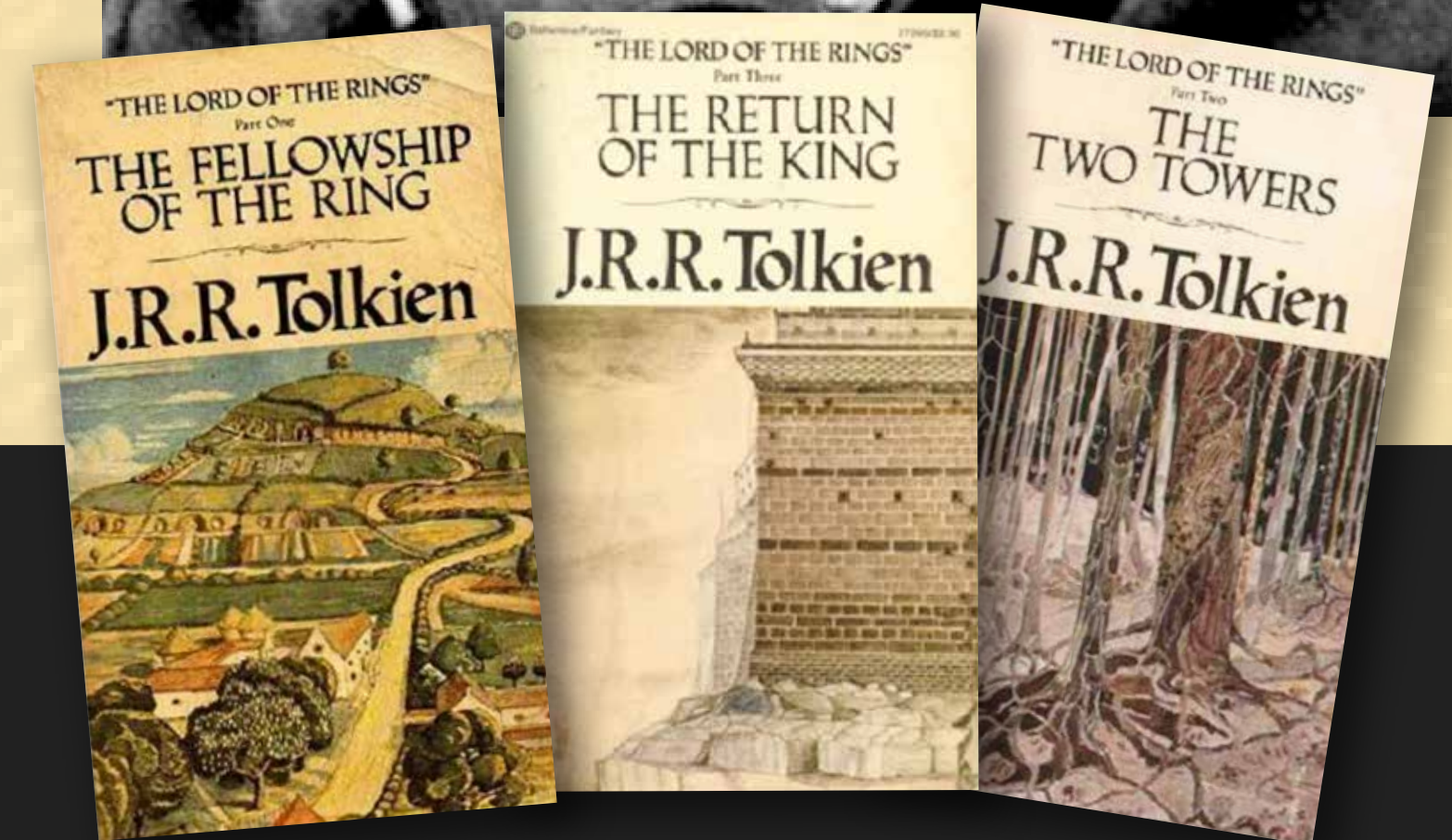
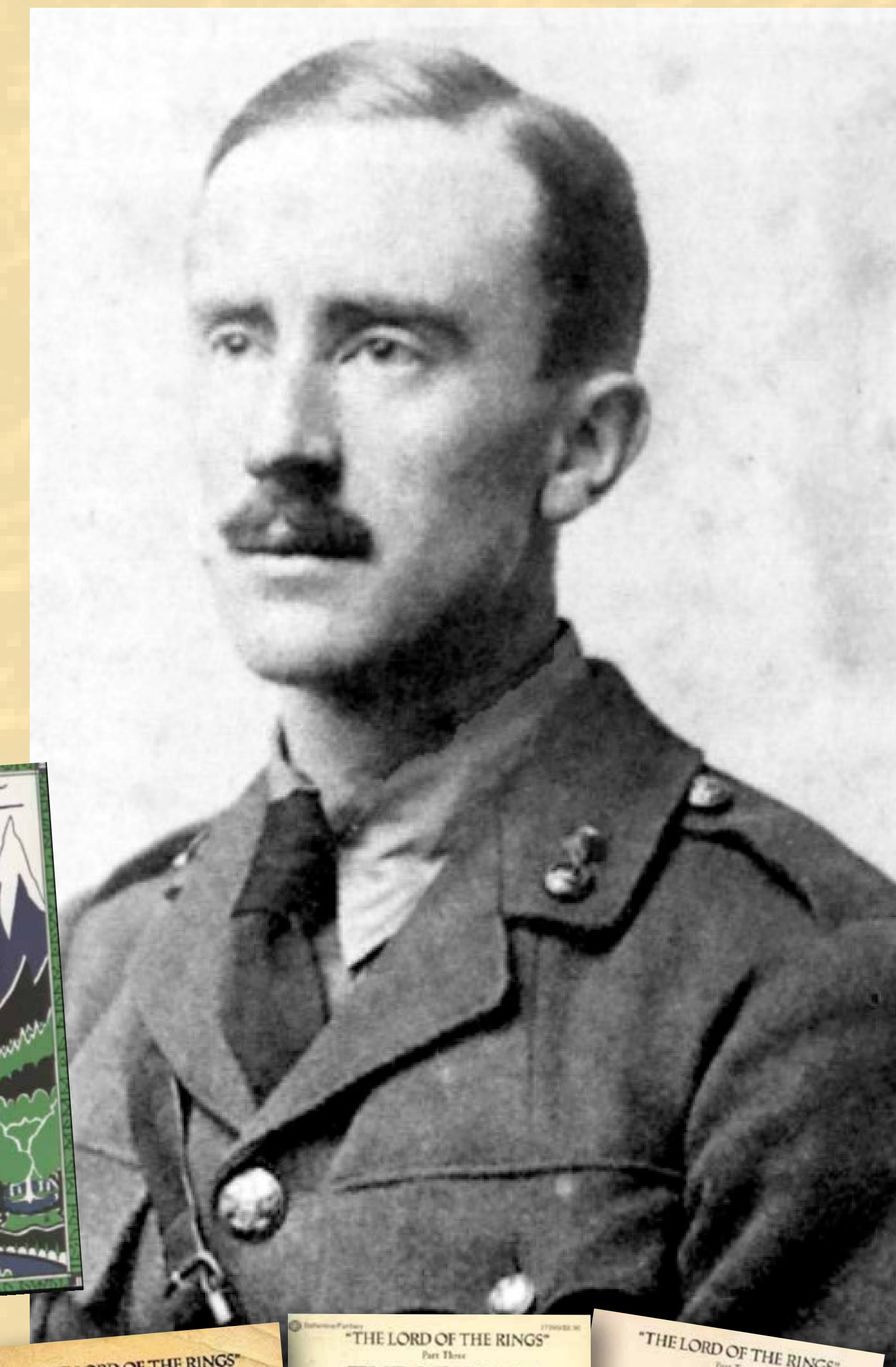
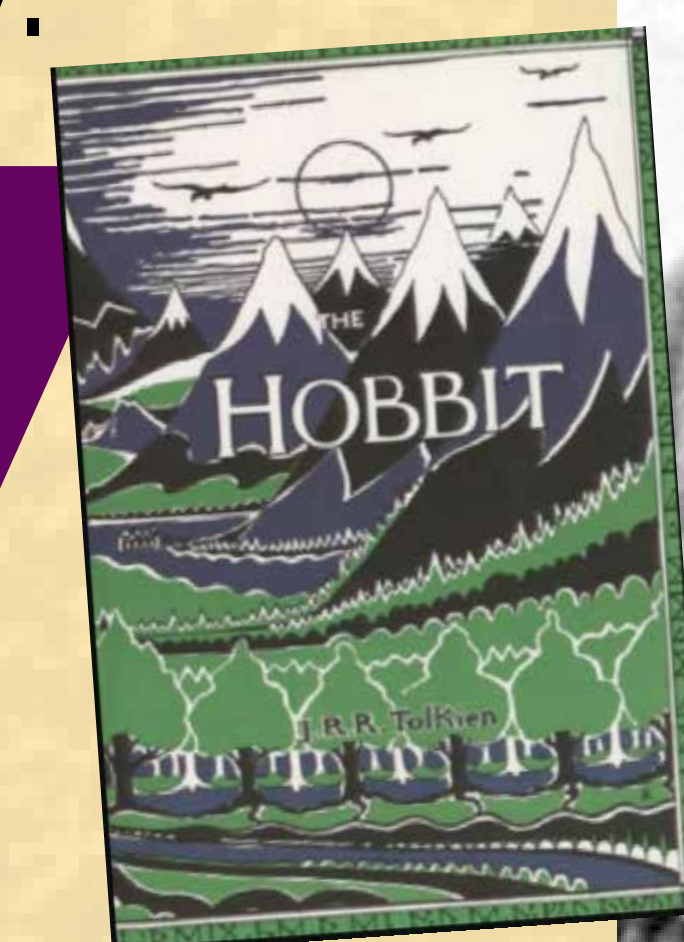
"One has personally to come under the shadow of war to feel fully its oppression; but as the years go by it seems now often forgotten that to be caught in youth by 1914 was no less hideous an experience than to be involved in 1939 and the following years. By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead." - **J.R.R. Tolkien**

The Fall of Gondolin (from *The Book of Lost Tales Part Two* and *The Silmarillion*) is the first traceable story of Tolkien's legendarium. It was written on the back of military music sheets while Tolkien recovered from trench fever.

"Always after a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another shape and grows again." - **Gandalf the Grey** *Fellowship of the Ring* "The Shadow of the Past"

"It was Sam's first view of a battle of Men against Men and he did not like it much. He was glad he could not see the dead face. He wondered what the man's name was and where he came from; and if he was really evil of heart, or what lies and threats had led him on the long march from his home; and if he would not rather have stayed there in peace."

The Two Towers "Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit"



"They lie in pools, pale faces, deep deep under the dark water. I saw them: grim faces and evil, noble faces and sad. Many faces proud and fair, and weeds in their silver hair. But all foul, all rotting, all dead."

The Two Towers "The Passage of the Marshes"

PTSD ~ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

"Even the stout-hearted would fling themselves to the ground as the hidden menace passed over them, or they would stand, letting their weapons fall from nerveless hands while into their minds a blackness came, and they thought no more of war, but only of hiding and of crawling, and of death."

The Return of the King "The Siege of Gondor"

"But I have been too deeply hurt, Sam. I tried to save the Shire, and it has been saved, but not for me. It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger: someone has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them."

The Return of the King "The Grey Havens"

"The Dead Marshes owe something to Northern France after the Battle of the Somme." - **J.R.R. Tolkien**

"My Sam Gamgee is indeed a reflection of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 war, and recognised as so far superior to myself." - **J.R.R. Tolkien**

Mûmakil were large creatures resembling elephants, often used in battle by the Haradrim and ascribed all kinds of strange powers. **Oliphaunt** was the more familiar name given to them by the Hobbits. Described as a "grey-clad moving hill" the Oliphaunt mows down everything in its path like a tank, with the horses of the Rohirrim afraid to go near them.

"Grey as a mouse,
Big as a house,
Nose like a snake,
I make the earth shake,
As I tramp through the grass;
Trees crack as I pass.
If ever you'd met me
You wouldn't forget me.
If you never do,
You won't think I'm true;
But old Oliphaunt am I,
And I never lie."

- **Samwise Gamgee to Gollum as they and Frodo Baggins rested in the dell before the Morannon**