THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

KEY STAGE 4 / LESSON 2

Ernest Brooks

War Photographer

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

National Literacy Trust

Changing life stories

The Bigger Picture by Paul Jenkins

They capture the moment,
They frame the scene,
Not just the battles,
The bits in between...

The badges, the pride, the uniform,
The team, the jokes,
The camaraderie,
The waiting...
The polishing of arms,
Parades, inspections,
Medical injections
The waiting...
Masks, guns, tanks and bombs
Building, digging,
Night time singing,
Stretcher bearers.
Tears.
Stiff upper lips.
Letters written home.
More waiting.
Flags, maps, compasses,
And the idea that someone
Amongst us has a plan.
Dogs, horses, pigeons,
Sniffing, galloping, transmitting,
Guiding the unguidable.
Ten feet, twenty feet closer to our goal.
Calendars, dates, crosses,
So many crosses.
And waiting...
So much waiting...
A Tommy sharing his last tin of beef,
Salutes for a passing chief,
When will the waiting end?
It ends with a whistle.
And a ladder.
And helmets.
And a look in the eye that says
"I want to go home".

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Not just the battles,
The bits in between.

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