

3. THEMATIC WALK - From man to soldier: Identity

The war between 1914 and 1918 is called “World Wide” because involved several nation with different cultural roots and not only their ordinary army, but the whole population, the “normal people”. Into the same trench had met for the first time men from the south and men from the north with a different Italian dialect. At the same time, men who lived near the front line recognised on the other side of the front a friend, an acquaintance, a familiar of a remote time, when war didn't exist for them: they were simply neighbors. What the Italian part concern, there were also the interventists, people who lived in Austro-Hungarian territory just on the Italian border: they believed more in this young nation than in the old empire and were sure to gain a better life under Italian flag. So they enrolled into the Italian army, facing a great danger: if Austrian had captured them, they were not only enemy, they were traitors. In Marmolada we meet the story of one of them, Tullio Minghetti.

On the other side there was the Austro-Hungarian Empire that unified under the same army lots of men from different cultural areas as Austrians from Wien and Hungarians from Budapest, together with Czech Republic and Slavs. Moreover, all the Russian prisoners had to follow the official army to be used as bearers or workers.

The war nearly cancelled their identity; men were moved from one front section to another one, often without explanations or indications; they were supposed to start an attack even if it led to death. For these reasons each soldier in each army received an identification tag, where you could read name, surname, battalion, place of birth and all the sanitary information of the man who wore it, to recognise him and give him back his name, his face, his life.

QUESTIONS:

1. Tell the transformation of a man into a soldier – also drawing it.
2. Pretend to be in a Marmolada trench. Which language can you hear?
3. Why could a Russian man be on the top of Marmolada in 1916?
4. Game: write the identification tag of a soldier who fought on Marmolada frontline.