

Dear diary,
August, 3, 1914

My name is Dezarae. I am 16 years old and I was born the year 1898. I made this diary to talk about how life is living in the beginning of a war.

At the moment there is a war going on and it is pretty big. I'm scared Canada will lose its rights and we will be forced to go in to slavery or something terrible like that. This all happened because Britain declared war on Germany, and Canada's legal status as a British dominion brought it in to war. And because I am an Aboriginal Canadian, my dad and older brother Jarvis have the option to go to war. They leave tomorrow! I think and think, but my mind is completely blank I have no ideas. I look at the clock it is already 12:00 my eye lids get heavy and my muscles start to become lighter. I jump in to bed and fall asleep. I dream of myself but I am in an unfamiliar place. There are holes in the ground and trenches everywhere. I am alone. Suddenly I hear a familiar voice. I turn my head to see who it is and there stands my dad in a uniform. I hear another voice saying "Dezmond" I turn and again there is Jarvis standing in the same uniform my dad has on. I realize he just called me Dezmond I look down and I am wearing a uniform the same as Jarvis and my dad's. I realize that I am on the war grounds and I am a man but this is my own dream. In reality I am a girl! This is the weirdest dream I have ever had.

Dear diary
August, 4, 1914

I wake up in the morning and I think really deeply about my dream. I see that no one is woken. I look at the clock and it is 6:14 a.m. My dad leaves in a few hours. I think and think harder. A few minutes later I have a huge idea that a person could call me insane for. But my dad and brother are worth it. My plan is to make myself look like a man going to war, just like Jarvis and my dad. I slowly walk to my mom and dad's room, they are heavily sleeping but I could see dry tears in my mom's eyes. I grab baggy clothes and immediately leave the room. I take off my night gown and put on the clothes. I pack a bag of clothes.

3 pairs in total, 1 pair of PJ's, my tooth brush, and my brush. I put my pillows under my blanket to make it seem like I am still sleeping. If I'm lucky my parents won't notice. I run really fast, as far away from my house as I can in the direction of the government post office to register myself in war. I felt like something was missing... my hair it was still long and would for sure give away my cover as a guy. I ran even faster back to my house. The morning was still young and I was relieved. I grabbed a pair of scissors and placed them in my bag, then I walk back in that same direction out of breath. I come in to an alley and place my hair in between the two blades. My heart is pounding because of all the years it took me to grow this out just to be cut off and not even by a professional. I press the handles together and a handful of my hair is cut off. I cut all the rest of my hair off and find a shard of glass to see my reflection in. I now look like a man with uneven hair. I cut off a bit more and now I look like a proper soldier going to war. I march to the post office, keeping good posture, but I just really want to be at home with my family, but that is not an option I know that if my mom knew what I was doing she would ground me for the second time in my life. But she doesn't know so yay I hope I don't die. I see the post office 10 yards away I tell my heart to calm down and I wipe the layer of sweat off my fore head. I walk in to see a man smiling at me "you here to join the war son?" asks the man. "Yes sir" I pretend to say in a low and proud voice. "Well, how old are you?" (I heard in school that you have to be 19 to join the war.) "19, sir" "ok just tell me your first and last name" I have to think about this one "Dezmond Smith sir." I say unsure "Ok Smith we can't really fit you in for training so just ask the older soldiers if you need any help." "Ok, thank you sir." I say "um sir, when do I start?" "You start today at 9:00, so that would be in 1 hour." I leave the post office and stay in the alley I found.

Dear diary

1 hour later

I am about to board the trucks that take us to war. I see my dad and Jarvis in front of me and they are whispering something to each other. All I can make out is "I hope she is ok." Yes my fears have come true, they found out I was gone. We board the truck and I am seated beside a boy from my school my age. "Hi" I say starting a conversation "hi" he says back. "are you scared?" I ask

“well, yes I’m scared I bet everyone on this truck is scared right now.” “Well, I’m not!” I lie again.

Dear diary

a few hours later

We can now see the ships we are boarding to the western front. We walk in them. I stay away from Jarvis and my dad. We are now floating in the Atlantic Ocean 3 minutes. It is the first time for many soldiers, including myself. I feel nervous and sick to my stomach. But I calm myself down.

It has been a few hours and I am getting impatient. I ask if I can see the captain and the man says “no” I walk away but after 2 steps I turn back around look “are we almost there.” “You sound like a child not to mention your high voice” darn it I let my voice slip. “I was very good at girl impressions at my old school” I say pretending to be funny. “Well young man you think your funny, I can have you kicked off this ship but I will let you off with a warning.” I turn again and walk to my seat.

Dear diary

August, 5, 1914 12:30 a.m.

We are now at the western front. I am so relieved to get off that ship. But what is going to happen to me? What if I die? We get settled in the trenches and they smell bad but I am hoping it is something I can get used to. I see my dad and Jarvis. They are sleeping. I lie down and fall asleep.

Dear diary

August, 5, 1914 9:00 a.m.

I wake up to the kid from my school shaking my shoulders “Get up! Get up!” I am startled, so I instantly wake up “what’s wrong” I ask “a land mine blew up.” I run to check on my dad and Jarvis, they are still sleeping. I tell them to wake up. Without giving away my voice. They are startled by my frightened tone. We hear another land mine now. It was pretty clear what was going on. We all get dressed and get our weapons. I wasn’t trained like they were, all I could do was copy them. I was terrified. Man after man they died either by an explosion or shot. This thought occurs to me and I realize I need to find Jarvis. Jarvis is in the front. He would have a bigger chance of getting shot than my dad. I see him in the corner of my eye. He has been shot and left behind but he

is still alive. Everyone else was far in the front. I run to him in my heavy uniform. "Jarvis" I yell "please don't die" I say. "How do you know who I am?" he asks "It's me Dezarae. your sister" I answer with tears heavily flowing in my eyes. I hold my brother in my arms and he smiles as blood floods in his mouth. He takes his last breath and I hold him tight and say "I love you brother."

Dear diary

August, 5 8:00

It is dark and I am grieving in a different trench than my dad who I think is very sad as well. I start to scratch myself very hard and I see other men do it too. What is wrong? Is there some kind of rash going around? I lift my pants up to my knee and I see tiny bugs that go by the name of lice. I gag and start picking them off. An older man sits beside me "It's no use they lay eggs in your clothes the best thing to do is to not scratch." So that's what I do, but lice are something I can't get used to. Suddenly I see a giant rat licking a can of beef stew that I left over. I am disgusted and run out of the trench and the man follows me. I wish he hadn't. I throw up in the grass and see 7 other giant rats gather to eat my puke. I turn around and go back to the trench, the man follows me back in. "This is disgusting" I think to myself. I am still a bit hungry from the day so I asked the commander if there was anything else I could eat. He handed me a biscuit. I tried to take a bite of the biscuit but it was hard and reminded me of a dog biscuit. I was officially miserable here.

Dear diary

August, 6, 1914

I wake up to an alarm this morning. I get ready and run out with my heavy gun. I see two men that were gagging really badly trying to hold their breath. One had enough oxygen to say run in a faint voice. I remember the old man telling me to watch out for mustard gas, which has no identifying scent. I'm guessing that's what's happening here. I run but then I feel a sharp pain in my stomach, then it starts to hurt really badly. I have been shot! I see my dad and he runs over "Are you ok?" He asks "no" I respond "Dad it's me. He hugs me as I slowly die. My last words were "I hope I'm going to heaven..."