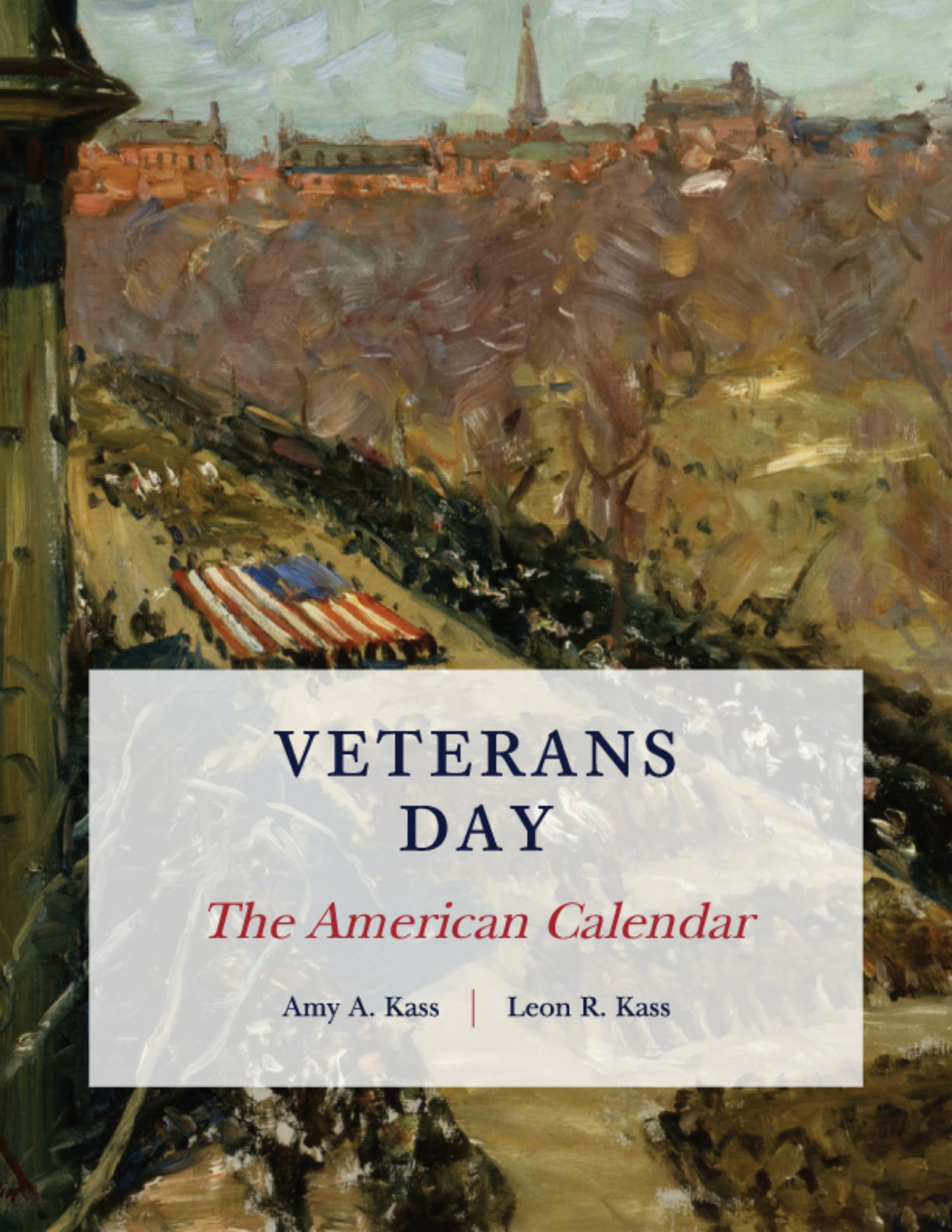

VETERANS DAY

The American Calendar

Amy A. Kass | Leon R. Kass

THE MEANING OF VETERANS DAY

The American Calendar

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Table of Contents

[*] *Suitable for students, grades 5–8*

1

Veterans Day:
Its Evolving Meaning

A History of Veterans Day: Its Origins and Traditions

On the morning of November 11, 1918, after four years of war, Allied and German powers met in Rethondes, France, to sign an armistice that halted the hostilities of World War I. The agreement was signed shortly after 5:00 a.m. and went into effect at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, finally bringing to an end the carnage of the Great War—the war thought by many to be the war that would end all wars.[1]

One year later, on the first anniversary of the armistice, President Woodrow Wilson turned the nation's thoughts toward those who had sacrificed on America's behalf. He proclaimed the first Armistice Day, both to honor the services of the troops and to celebrate the opportunity that victory provided for the United States to advance the cause of peace and justice in the world:

> To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations.[2]

This first Armistice Day was conceived as a day to be set aside for public parades, meetings, and a two-minute suspension of all business activity at 11:00 a.m. Other countries also observed the day, with many British Commonwealth nations using the red poppy—taken from John McCrae's poem, "In Flanders Fields" (1915)—to honor their fallen soldiers. At Armistice Day ceremonies the following year, 1920, the United Kingdom and France both established tombs of the unknown soldier, at Westminster Abbey and the Arc de Triomphe, respectively.

In 1921, the United States Congress approved the creation of the country's own tomb of the unknown soldier and set aside November 11 of that year as a federal holiday to honor all those who served in the war. At an Armistice Day ceremony officiated by President Warren G. Harding, an unidentified American soldier killed in France—"a soldier known but to God," as the tomb's inscription states—was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery.

Five years later, on June 4, 1926, Congress, once again in the spirit of promoting international peace, passed a resolution that officially recognized the end of the Great War and encouraged the continued annual observance of Armistice Day:

> WHEREAS the 11th of November 1918, marked the cessation of the most destructive, sanguinary, and far reaching war in human annals and the resumption by the people of the United States of peaceful relations with other nations, which we hope may never again be severed; and
>
> WHEREAS it is fitting that the recurring anniversary of this date should be commemorated

[1] The Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended the war, was not signed until the following year, on June 28, 1919. However, the armistice agreement brought an end to the fighting, and hostilities were not renewed before the peace treaty was signed.

[2] "The History of Veterans Day," US Army Center of Military History, http://www.history.army.mil/html/reference/holidays/vetsday/vetshist.html (accessed October 10, 2012).

with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations; and

WHEREAS the legislatures of twenty-seven of our States have already declared November 11 to be a legal holiday: Therefore be it Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that the President of the United States is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the officials to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on November 11 and inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples.[3]

On May 13, 1938, ironically almost on the eve of World War II, another congressional act officially established November 11 as a legal federal holiday—a day "to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be hereafter celebrated and known as 'Armistice Day.'"[4]

With a new generation of American veterans following World War II, a national movement was started to expand the holiday's purpose to honor all veterans, not just those who served in World War I. In 1945, Raymond Weeks, a veteran of World War II from Birmingham, Alabama, met with General Dwight D. Eisenhower to discuss the creation of a National Veterans Day, an idea Eisenhower supported. Two years later, on November 11, 1947, Weeks organized the first Veterans Day celebration in Birmingham. In 1953, citizens of Emporia, Kansas, officially re-named their Armistice Day commemoration "Veterans Day," leading Kansas Congressman Edward H. Rees to propose legislation to change the name of the federal holiday to Veterans Day as well.

On June 1, 1954, Congress amended the Act of 1938, officially renaming "Armistice Day" as "Veterans Day" and thereby expanding the recognition of the holiday to include veterans of all American wars. The first Veterans Day Proclamation was issued by President Eisenhower on October 8 of that year:

WHEREAS it has long been our custom to commemorate November 11, the anniversary of the ending of World War I, by paying tribute to the heroes of that tragic struggle and by rededicating ourselves to the cause of peace; and

WHEREAS in the intervening years the United States has been involved in two other great military conflicts, which have added millions of veterans living and dead to the honor rolls of this Nation. . . .

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, President of the United States of America, do hereby call upon all of our citizens to observe Thursday, November 11, 1954, as Veterans Day. On that day let us solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom,

[3] "History of Veterans Day," US Department of Veteran Affairs, www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp (accessed September 14, 2012).
[4] 52 Stat. 351; 5 US Code, Sec. 87a.

and let us reconsecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so that their efforts shall not have been in vain.[5]

In 1971, the Uniform Monday Holiday Act moved the national observances of four holidays—Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Columbus Day, and Veterans Day—to Mondays, creating three-day weekends for each of these holidays. The change as it affected Veterans Day, however, was unpopular with many Americans, who believed that the November 11 date carried great historical significance that was inseparable from the anniversary it marked. As a result of public opposition, including forty-six states continuing to celebrate the holiday on its original date, in 1978, the national observance of Veterans Day was once again fixed to November 11.

Today, the Veterans Day National Ceremony is held each year on November 11 at Arlington National Cemetery. The tradition-rich ceremony commences at 11:00 a.m. when the president (or his representative) lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and a bugler sounds "Taps." The ceremony then continues inside the Memorial Amphitheater adjacent to the tomb, where a color guard composed of members from each of the Armed Forces and various veterans' organizations participates in a parade of flags.

Finally, it should be noted that Veterans Day remains a unique federal holiday, with a purpose distinct from that of Memorial Day. That holiday, observed on the last Monday in May, stems from the Civil War's "Decoration Day" (when towns would decorate with flowers the graves of the fallen) and is set aside to remember and honor veterans now deceased—both those who were killed in the line of duty and those who have since passed away. Veterans Day, on the other hand, is chiefly a day to thank and recognize veterans who are still living—and, in many cases, serving.

[5] Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Proclamation 3071: Veterans Day 1954," *Federal Register* 19, no. 198 (October 12, 1954), www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/docs/proclamation_1954.pdf (accessed September 14, 2012).

Address on Armistice Day

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

In an address delivered before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery less than a month before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941) would bring the United States into war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945) spoke about the meaning of Armistice Day and the war whose conclusion it commemorated. Amidst the gathering storm of World War II, how does he ask Americans to understand World War I and the sacrifices that it occasioned? Why, according to Roosevelt, was that war fought? What lessons for present and future conduct does he draw from the past? Is he right in suggesting that, to hold our liberty and freedom and democracy, we must fight eternally*? Is Roosevelt transforming the meaning of Armistice Day?*

You who have served, you serve today.

Among the great days of national remembrance, none is more deeply moving to Americans of our generation than the eleventh of November, the anniversary of the Armistice of 1918, the day sacred to the memory of those who gave their lives in the war which that day ended.

Our observance of this anniversary has a particular significance in the year 1941.

For we are able today as we were not always able in the past to measure our indebtedness to those who died.

A few years ago, even a few months, we questioned, some of us, the sacrifice they had made. Standing near the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Sergeant York of Tennessee on a recent day spoke to such questioners. "There are those in this country today," said Sergeant York, "who ask me and other veterans of World War Number One, 'What did it get you?'"

Today we know the answer—all of us. All who search their hearts in honesty and candor know it.

We know that these men died to save their country from a terrible danger of that day. We know, because we face that danger once again on this day.

"What did it get you?"

People who asked that question of Sergeant York and his comrades forgot the one essential fact which every man who looks can see today.

They forgot that the danger which threatened this country in 1917 was real—and that the sacrifice of those who died averted that danger.

Because the danger was overcome they were unable to remember that the danger had been present.

Because our armies were victorious they demanded why our armies had fought.

Because our freedom was secure they took the security of our freedom for granted and asked why those who died to save it should have died at all.

"What did it get you?"

"What was there in it for you?"

If our armies of 1917 and 1918 had lost there would not have been a man or woman in America who would have wondered why the war was fought. The reasons would have faced us everywhere. We would have known why liberty is worth defending as those alone whose liberty is lost can know it. We would have known why tyranny is worth defeating as only those whom tyrants rule can know.

But because the war had been won we forgot, some of us, that the war might have been lost.

Whatever we knew or thought we knew a few years or months ago, we know now that the danger of brutality and tyranny and slavery to freedom-loving peoples can be real and terrible.

We know why these men fought to keep our freedom—and why the wars that save a people's liberties are wars worth fighting and worth winning—and at any price.

"What did it get you?"

The men of France, prisoners in their cities, victims of searches and of seizures without law, hostages for the safety of their masters' lives, robbed of their harvests, murdered in their prisons—the men of France would know the answer to that question. They know now what a former victory of freedom against tyranny was worth.

The Czechs know the answer too. The Poles. The Danes. The Dutch. The Serbs. The Belgians. The Norwegians. The Greeks.

We know it now.

We know that it was, in literal truth, to make the world safe for democracy that we took up arms in 1917. It was, in simple truth and in literal fact, to make the world habitable for decent and self-respecting men that those whom we now remember gave their lives. They died to prevent then the very thing that now, a quarter century later, has happened from one end of Europe to the other.

Now that it has happened we know in full the reason why they died.

We know also what obligation and duty their sacrifice imposes upon us. They did not die to make the world safe for decency and self-respect for five years or ten or maybe twenty. They died to make it safe. And if, by some fault of ours who lived beyond the war, its safety has again

been threatened, then the obligation and the duty are ours. It is in our charge now, as it was America's charge after the Civil War, to see to it "that these dead shall not have died in vain." Sergeant York spoke thus of the cynics and the doubters: "The thing they forget is that liberty and freedom and democracy are so very precious that you do not fight to win them once and stop. Liberty and freedom and democracy are prizes awarded only to those peoples who fight to win them and then keep fighting eternally to hold them."

The people of America agree with that. They believe that liberty is worth fighting for. And if they are obliged to fight they will fight eternally to hold it.

This duty we owe, not to ourselves alone, but to the many dead who died to gain our freedom for us—to make the world a place where freedom can live and grow into the ages.

Armistice Day Address

OMAR N. BRADLEY

Known as the "GI's General" for his modest demeanor, Omar N. Bradley (1893–1981) served as commander of the Twelfth US Army Group during World War II, leading nearly a million soldiers as part of the build up for the Normandy invasion. Following the conclusion of the war, in 1949, he became the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Harry S. Truman, and in 1950 he was promoted to general of the Army, becoming the fifth (and, as of yet, last) person to serve as a five-star general in the US Army. In this speech, delivered on November 10, 1948, before the Boston Chamber of Commerce, Bradley commemorates the end of World War II and describes the nation's future challenges.

A mere three years after World War II ended with the complete surrender of the Axis powers, the world remained a very dangerous place, owing primarily to Soviet expansionism and the new presence of nuclear weapons. How do these circumstances change the way General Bradley thinks about Armistice Day? What does he mean by saying that, in World War I, "we won a war and lost a peace"? How does he suggest that the United States avoid repeating that disastrous mistake? What, according to Bradley, are the obligations of the United States toward international aggression? Toward keeping the peace in an age of nuclear weapons? How should a powerful but peace-loving nation like ours deal with nations or terrorist organizations—like the Soviet Union then or al Qaeda now—that threaten the peace? How do we find ethical guidance in an age of weapons of mass destruction?

Tomorrow is our day of conscience.

For although it is a monument to victory, it is also a symbol of failure. Just as it honors the dead, so must it humble the living.

Armistice Day is a constant reminder that we won a war and lost a peace.

It is both a tribute and an indictment. A tribute to the men who died that their neighbors might live without fear of aggression. An indictment of those who lived and forfeited their chance for peace.

Therefore, while Armistice Day is a day for pride, it is for pride in the achievements of others—humility in our own.

Neither remorse nor logic can hide the fact that our armistice ended in failure. Not until the armistice myth exploded in the blast of a Stuka[1] bomb did we learn that the winning of wars does not in itself make peace. And not until Pearl Harbor did we learn that non-involvement in peace means certain involvement in war.

We paid grievously for those faults of the past in deaths, disaster, and dollars.

[1] *A German dive bomber of World War II*

It was a penalty we knowingly chose to risk. We made the choice when we defaulted on our task in creating and safeguarding a peace.

Now new weapons have made the risk of war a suicidal hazard. Any nation which does not exert its vigour, wealth, and armed strength in the avoidance of conflict before it strikes, shall endanger its survival. It is no longer possible to shield ourselves with arms alone against the ordeal of attack. For modern war visits destruction on the victor and the vanquished alike. Our only complete assurance of surviving World War III is to halt it before it starts.

For that reason we clearly have no choice but to face the challenge of these strained times. To ignore the danger of aggression is simply to invite it. It must never again be said of the American people: Once more we won a war; once more we lost a peace. If we do we shall doom our children to a struggle that may take their lives.

Armed forces can wage wars but they cannot make peace. For there is a wide chasm between war and peace—a chasm that can only be bridged by good will, discussion, compromise, and agreement. In 1945, while still bleeding from the wounds of aggression, the nations of this world met in San Francisco to build that span from war to peace.[2] For three years—first hopefully, then guardedly, now fearfully—free nations have labored to complete that bridge. Yet again and again they have been obstructed by a nation whose ambitions thrive best on tension, whose leaders are scornful of peace except on their own impossible terms.

The unity with which we started that structure [the United Nations] has been riddled by fear and suspicion. In place of agreement we are wrangling dangerously over the body of that very nation whose aggression had caused us to seek each other as allies and friends.

Only three years after our soldiers first clasped hands over the Elbe, this great wartime ally has spurned friendship with recrimination, it has clenched its fists and skulked in conspiracy behind it secretive borders.

As a result today we are neither at peace nor war. Instead we are engaged in this contest of tension, seeking agreement with those who disdain it, rearming, and struggling for peace.

Time can be for or against us.

It can be for us if diligence in our search for agreement equals the vigilance with which we prepare for a storm.

It can be against us if disillusionment weakens our faith in discussion—or if our vigilance corrodes while we wait.

Disillusionment is always the enemy of peace. And today—as after World War I—disillusionment can come from expecting too much, too easily, too soon. In our impatience we

[2] *The San Francisco Conference, formally the United Nations Conference on International Organization (April 25–June 26, 1945), which established the United Nations*

must never forget that fundamental differences have divided this world; they allow no swift, no cheap, no easy solutions.

While as a prudent people we must prepare ourselves to encounter what we may be unable to prevent, we nevertheless must never surrender ourselves to the certainty of that encounter.

For if we say there is no good in arguing with what must inevitably come, then we shall be left with no choice but to create a garrison state and empty our wealth into arms. The burden of long-term total preparedness for some indefinite but inevitable war could not help but crush the freedom we prize. It would leave the American people soft victims for bloodless aggression.

Both the East and the West today deprecate war. Yet because of its threatening gestures, its espousal of chaos, its secretive tactics, and its habits of force—one nation has caused the rest of the world to fear that it might recklessly resort to force rather than be blocked in its greater ambitions.

The American people have said both in their aid to Greece and in the reconstruction of Europe that any threat to freedom is a threat to our own lives. For we know that unless free peoples stand boldly and united against the forces of aggression, they may fall wretchedly, one by one, into the web of oppression.

It is fear of the brutal unprincipled use of force by reckless nations that might ignore the vast reserves of our defensive strength that has caused the American people to enlarge their air, naval, and ground arms.

Reluctant as we are to muster this costly strength, we must leave no chance for miscalculation in the mind of any aggressor.

Because in the United States it is the people who are sovereign, the government is theirs to speak their voice and to voice their will, truthfully and without distortion.

We, the American people, can stand cleanly before the entire world and say plainly to any State:

"This Government will not assail you.

"You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressor."

Since the origin of the American people, their chief trait has been the hatred of war. And yet these American people are ready to take up their arms against aggression and destroy if need be by their might any nation which would violate the peace of the world.

There can be no compromise with aggression anywhere in the world. For aggression multiplies—in rapid succession—disregard for the rights of man. Freedom when threatened anywhere is at once threatened everywhere.

No more convincing an avowal of their peaceful intentions could have been made by the American people than by their offer to submit to United Nations the secret of the atom bomb. Our willingness to surrender this trump advantage that atomic energy might be used for the peaceful welfare of mankind splintered the lies of those word-warmakers that our atom had been teamed with the dollar for imperialistic gain.

Yet because we asked adequate guarantees and freedom of world-wide inspection by the community of nations itself, our offer was declined and the atom has been recruited into this present contest of nerves. To those people who contend that secrecy and medieval sovereignty are more precious than a system of atomic control, I can only reply that it is a cheap price to pay for peace.

The atom bomb is far more than a military weapon. It may—as Bernard Baruch[3] once said—contain the choice between the quick and the dead. We dare not forget that the advantage in atomic warfare lies with aggression and surprise. If we become engaged in an atom bomb race, we may simply lull ourselves to sleep behind an atomic stockpile. The way to win an atomic war is to make certain it never starts.

With the monstrous weapons man already has, humanity is in danger of being trapped in this world by its moral adolescents. Our knowledge of science has clearly outstripped our capacity to control it. We have many men of science; too few men of God. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. Man is stumbling blindly through a spiritual darkness while toying with the precarious secrets of life and death. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living.

This is our twentieth century's claim to distinction and to progress.

In our concentration on the tactics of strength and resourcefulness which have been used in the contest for blockaded Berlin, we must not forget that we are also engaged in a long-range conflict of ideas. Democracy can withstand ideological attacks if democracy will provide earnestly and liberally for the welfare of its people. To defend democracy against attack, men must value freedom. And to value freedom they must benefit by it in happier and more secure lives for their wives and their children.

Throughout this period of tension in which we live, the American people must demonstrate conclusively to all other peoples of the world that democracy not only guarantees man's human freedom, but that it guarantees his economic dignity and progress as well. To practice freedom and make it work, we must cherish the individual, we must provide him the opportunities for reward and impress upon him the responsibilities a free man bears to the society in which he lives.

[3] *Bernard Baruch (1870–1965), an American financier, philanthropist, and adviser to presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt*

The American people cannot abdicate in this present struggle and leave the problem to their armed forces. For this is not a test of combat strength but a contest of resolution. It is dependent less upon military strength and more upon human strength, faith, and fortitude among such citizens as you. If we are to combat communism, we cannot oppose it with anti-communism. We cannot fight something with nothing. More than ever before, we must alert our people—and people throughout the world—to the meaning of their freedom and stimulate in each of them an awareness of their own, their personal share in this struggle.

Good citizenship is the start of a working democracy. And good citizenship begins at home, in the ability of every American to provide a happy and wholesome life for his family. From such simple beginnings do we create better communities, better States, a better nation—and eventually, we hope, a better world.

To you in the greater community of New England much has been given in the heritage that began with Concord, and in the truths that have been left for you by your Lowells, your Emersons, your Holmes.

Out of so fortunate a spiritual start in the meaning and significance of freedom, you have constructed an industrial machine with which to nourish great faith in it.

If we will only believe in democracy, use it, and practice its precepts in the factory as well as the voting booth, we shall so strengthen ourselves that nothing can prevail against us—or against those who stand with us in like good faith.

Veterans Day Remarks

JOHN F. KENNEDY

Seven years after President Dwight D. Eisenhower officially changed Armistice Day to Veterans Day, President John F. Kennedy (1917–63)—like Ike, a World War II veteran—gave his first Veterans Day address at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. How does President Kennedy answer those who might say that "this day has lost its meaning"? What is his view of the current meaning of the holiday? Can you reconcile his final prayer—"that there will be no veterans of any further war"—with his assertion that "the only way to maintain the peace is to be prepared in the final extreme to fight for our country—and mean it"? What do you think of the way, at the end, he honors the dead in Arlington Cemetery?

General Gavan, Mr. Gleason, members of the military forces, veterans, fellow Americans:

Today we are here to celebrate and to honor and to commemorate the dead and the living, the young men who in every war since this country began have given testimony to their loyalty to their country and their own great courage.

I do not believe that any nation in the history of the world has buried its soldiers farther from its native soil than we Americans—or buried them closer to the towns in which they grew up.

We celebrate this Veterans Day for a very few minutes, a few seconds of silence and then this country's life goes on. But I think it most appropriate that we recall on this occasion, and on every other moment when we are faced with great responsibilities, the contribution and the sacrifice which so many men and their families have made in order to permit this country to now occupy its present position of responsibility and freedom, and in order to permit us to gather here together.

Bruce Catton, after totaling the casualties which took place in the battle of Antietam, not so very far from this cemetery, when he looked at statistics which showed that in the short space of a few minutes whole regiments lost 50 to 75 percent of their numbers, then wrote that life perhaps isn't the most precious gift of all, that men died for the possession of a few feet of a corn field or a rocky hill, or for almost nothing at all.[1] But in a very larger sense, they died that this country might be permitted to go on, and that it might permit to be fulfilled the great hopes of its founders.

In a world tormented by tension and the possibilities of conflict, we meet in a quiet commemoration of an historic day of peace. In an age that threatens the survival of freedom, we join together to honor those who made our freedom possible. The resolution of the Congress which first proclaimed Armistice Day, described November 11, 1918, as the end of "the most destructive, sanguinary and far-reaching war in the history of human annals." That resolution expressed the hope that the First World War would be, in truth, the war to end all wars. It suggested that those men who had died had therefore not given their lives in vain.

[1] *See also Bruce Catton's "The Day the Civil War Ended" below.*

It is a tragic fact that these hopes have not been fulfilled, that wars still more destructive and still more sanguinary followed, that man's capacity to devise new ways of killing his fellow men have far outstripped his capacity to live in peace with his fellow men.

Some might say, therefore, that this day has lost its meaning, that the shadow of the new and deadly weapons have robbed this day of its great value, that whatever name we now give this day, whatever flags we fly or prayers we utter, it is too late to honor those who died before, and too soon to promise the living an end to organized death.

But let us not forget that November 11, 1918, signified a beginning, as well as an end. "The purpose of all war," said Augustine, "is peace." The First World War produced man's first great effort in recent times to solve by international cooperation the problems of war. That experiment continues in our present day—still imperfect, still short of its responsibilities, but it does offer a hope that some day nations can live in harmony.

For our part, we shall achieve that peace only with patience and perseverance and courage—the patience and perseverance necessary to work with allies of diverse interests but common goals, the courage necessary over a long period of time to overcome an adversary skilled in the arts of harassment and obstruction.

There is no way to maintain the frontiers of freedom without cost and commitment and risk. There is no swift and easy path to peace in our generation. No man who witnessed the tragedies of the last war, no man who can imagine the unimaginable possibilities of the next war, can advocate war out of irritability or frustration or impatience.

But let no nation confuse our perseverance and patience with fear of war or unwillingness to meet our responsibilities. We cannot save ourselves by abandoning those who are associated with us, or rejecting our responsibilities.

In the end, the only way to maintain the peace is to be prepared in the final extreme to fight for our country—and to mean it.

As a nation, we have little capacity for deception. We can convince friend and foe alike that we are in earnest about the defense of freedom only if we are in earnest—and I can assure the world that we are.

This cemetery was first established ninety-seven years ago. In this hill were first buried men who died in an earlier war, a savage war here in our own country. Ninety-seven years ago today, the men in Gray were retiring from Antietam, where thousands of their comrades had fallen between dawn and dusk in one terrible day. And the men in Blue were moving towards Fredericksburg, where thousands would soon lie by a stone wall in heroic and sometimes miserable death.

It was a crucial moment in our Nation's history, but these memories, sad and proud, these quiet grounds, this Cemetery and others like it all around the world, remind us with pride of our obligation and our opportunity.

On this Veterans Day of 1961, on this day of remembrance, let us pray in the name of those who have fought in this country's wars, and most especially who have fought in the First World War and in the Second World War, that there will be no veterans of any further war—not because all shall have perished but because all shall have learned to live together in peace.

And to the dead here in this cemetery we say:

They are the race—
they are the race immortal,
Whose beams make broad
the common light of day!
Though Time may dim,
though Death has barred their portal,
These we salute,
which nameless passed away.[2]

[2] *This excerpt comes from Laurence Housman's 1934 poem "Victoria Regina."*

2

The Experience of War

Going to War

Over There

GEORGE M. COHAN

George M. Cohan (1878–1942) was a noted composer and lyricist, famous for such songs as "The Yankee Doodle Boy" and "You're a Grand Old Flag." He started his musical career as a violinist and dancer at the age of eight, started touring with his family's vaudeville musical act—"The Four Cohans"—at the age of twelve, and made his Broadway debut when he was fifteen. In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt presented Cohan with the Congressional Gold Medal for his contribution to American morale during the war years, the first time Congress had bestowed the award for the writing of songs. In 1942, Cohan was immortalized in the film Yankee Doodle Dandy, *with James Cagney starring as the songwriter.*

"Over There" was one of the best-known songs of World War I, originally published in 1917, just as the United States was entering the stalemated European war. Nora Bayes, the popular singer and vaudevillian, helped make it famous, and by the war's end, more than a million records had been sold.[1] *(It was later revived during World War II.) What mood does the song display regarding going off to war? How do you explain the national and personal enthusiasm for the war and the confidence about its outcome? Do you think this song and these attitudes survived World War I? Could they survive other wars?*

Johnnie get your gun, get your gun, get your gun,
Take it on the run, on the run, on the run,
Hear them calling you and me,
Ev'ry son of liberty.
Hurry right away, no delay, go today,
Make your daddy glad to have had such a lad,
Tell your sweetheart not to pine,
To be proud her boy's in line.

(Chorus)
Over there over there
Send the word, send the word over there
That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming,
The drums rum-tumming ev'rywhere
So prepare say a pray'r
Send the word, send the word to beware
We'll be over, we're coming over,
And we won't come back till it's over over there!

Johnnie get your gun, get your gun, get your gun,
Johnnie show the Hun you're a son of a gun,
Hoist the flag and let her fly,

[1] *Listen to Nora Bayes sing "Over There" here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aed8-0C6XcY; Billy Murray's version can be found here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbggEGUaE28.*

Yankee Doodle do or die.
Pack your little kit, show your grit, do your bit,
Yankees to the ranks from the towns and the tanks,
Make your mother proud of you
And the old Red White and Blue.

(Repeat Chorus)

The War Prayer

MARK TWAIN

As the soldiers go off to battle, those at home work, worry, and pray for their success and safety. Mark Twain (born Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 1835–1910), never one to miss a chance at satire, takes aim at our nation's wartime prayers. Twain wrote this short story in 1905 in response to the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine-American War (1899–1902), but, at the request of his family, he did not publish it. In 1916, six years after Twain's death and shortly before the United States entered World War I, Harper's Monthly *finally published the "prayer."*

What do you think of the minister's "war prayer" and of the stranger's "correction" of it? Can you make sense of appealing to God—and in particular, to the God of Love—for victory in war? Could soldiers do their duty if they kept vividly in mind the misery they were causing? Does the justice of their cause or the necessity of war also justify the necessary means and attendant suffering? Or is pacifism the only possible moral position for a Christian? How should those left at home feel and act about those who have gone to war?

It was a time of great and exalting excitement. The country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism; the drums were beating, the bands playing, the toy pistols popping, the bunched firecrackers hissing and spluttering; on every hand and far down the receding and fading spread of roofs and balconies a fluttering wilderness of flags flashed in the sun; daily the young volunteers marched down the wide avenue gay and fine in their new uniforms, the proud fathers and mothers and sisters and sweethearts cheering them with voices choked with happy emotion as they swung by; nightly the packed mass meetings listened, panting, to patriot oratory which stirred the deepest deeps of their hearts and which they interrupted at briefest intervals with cyclones of applause, the tears running down their cheeks the while; in the churches the pastors preached devotion to flag and country and invoked the God of Battles beseeching His aid in our good cause in outpourings of fervid eloquence which moved every listener. It was indeed a glad and gracious time, and the half-dozen rash spirits that ventured to disapprove of the war and cast a doubt upon its righteousness straightway got such a stern and angry warning that for their personal safety's sake, they quickly shrank out of sight and offended no more in that way.

Sunday morning came—next day the battalions would leave for the front; the church was filled; the volunteers were there, their young faces alight with martial dreams—visions of the stern advance, the gathering momentum, the rushing charge, the flashing sabers, the flight of the foe, the tumult, the enveloping smoke, the fierce pursuit, the surrender!—then home from the war, bronzed heroes, welcomed, adored, submerged in golden seas of glory! With the volunteers sat their dear ones, proud, happy, and envied by the neighbors and friends who had no sons and brothers to send forth to the field of honor, there to win for the flag, or, failing, die the noblest of noble deaths. The service proceeded; a war chapter from the Old Testament was read; the first prayer was said; it was followed by an organ burst that shook the building, and with one impulse the house rose, with glowing eyes and beating hearts, and poured out that tremendous invocation

God the all-terrible! Thou who ordainest,
Thunder thy clarion and lightning thy sword!

Then came the "long" prayer. None could remember the like of it for passionate pleading and moving and beautiful language. The burden of its supplication was that an ever-merciful and benignant Father of us all would watch over our noble young soldiers and aid, comfort, and encourage them in their patriotic work; bless them, shield them in the day of battle and the hour of peril, bear them in His mighty hand, make them strong and confident, invincible in the bloody onset; help them to crush the foe, grant to them and to their flag and country imperishable honor and glory.

An aged stranger entered and moved with slow and noiseless step up the main aisle, his eyes fixed upon the minister, his long body clothed in a robe that reached to his feet, his head bare, his white hair descending in a frothy cataract to his shoulders, his seamy face unnaturally pale, pale even to ghastliness. With all eyes following him and wondering, he made his silent way; without pausing, he ascended to the preacher's side and stood there, waiting. With shut lids, the preacher, unconscious of his presence, continued with his moving prayer and at last finished it with the words, uttered in fervent appeal, "Bless our arms, grant us the victory, O Lord our God, Father and Protector of our land and flag!"

The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside—which the startled minister did—and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes, in which burned an uncanny light; then in a deep voice he said:

"I come from the Throne—bearing a message from Almighty God!" The words smote the house with a shock; if the stranger perceived it he gave no attention. "He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd and will grant it if such shall be your desire after I, His messenger, shall have explained to you its import—that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many of the prayers of men, in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of—except he pause and think.

"God's servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two—one uttered, the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him Who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this—keep it in mind. If you would beseech a blessing upon yourself, beware! Lest without intent you invoke a curse upon a neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain upon your crop which needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse upon some neighbor's crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

"You have heard your servant's prayer—the uttered part of it. I am commissioned of God to put into words the other part of it—that part which the pastor, and also you in your hearts, fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: 'Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!' That is sufficient. The *whole* of the uttered prayer is compact into those pregnant words. Elaborations were not necessary. When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory—*must*

follow it, cannot help but follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God the Father fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words. Listen!

"O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle—be Thou near them! With them, in spirit, we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore, beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

(*After a pause.*) "Ye have prayed it; if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits!"

It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.

At War

A Son of the Gods

AMBROSE BIERCE

Ambrose Gwinnett Bierce (1842–1913[?]) was an American journalist, critic, and author whose acid wit and dark view of human nature earned him the nickname "Bitter Bierce." After working as a printer's apprentice in his youth, he enlisted in the Ninth Indiana Volunteer Infantry at the outset of the Civil War, fighting in the Battle of Shiloh in 1862 and receiving a serious head wound at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain in 1864. With the war's conclusion, Bierce moved to San Francisco, contributing to local newspapers and periodicals stories and essays that were influenced by the horrors of battle. He disappeared in December of 1913 at the age of seventy-one while on a trip in Mexico.

In this story, first published in 1888, a lone soldier, astride his white horse and scarlet saddle-blanket, is sent across an open plain on a sacrificial mission, intended to disclose the position of the enemy, probably hidden behind a hill on the other side. How does he comport himself? What is his effect on the troops? What does Bierce mean by his title, "a son of the gods"? Early in the story, the narrator suggests that soldiers do not usually regard their foes as men like themselves but that when they discover the humanity of their enemies, they are even more in awe of them. Can you understand what he means?

A breezy day and a sunny landscape. An open country to right and left and forward; behind, a wood. In the edge of this wood, facing the open but not venturing into it, long lines of troops halted. The wood is alive with them, and full of confused noises—the occasional rattle of wheels as a battery of artillery goes into position to cover the advance; the hum and murmur of the soldiers talking; a sound of innumerable feet in the dry leaves that strew the interspaces among the trees; hoarse commands of officers. Detached groups of horsemen are well in front—not altogether exposed—many of them intently regarding the crest of a hill a mile away in the direction of the interrupted advance. For this powerful army, moving in battle order through a forest, has met with a formidable obstacle—the open country. The crest of that gentle hill a mile away has a sinister look; it says, Beware! Along it runs a stone wall extending to left and right a great distance. Behind the wall is a hedge; behind the hedge are seen the tops of trees in rather straggling order. Among the trees—what? It is necessary to know.

Yesterday, and for many days and nights previously, we were fighting somewhere; always there was cannonading, with occasional keen rattlings of musketry, mingled with cheers, our own or the enemy's, we seldom knew, attesting some temporary advantage. This morning at daybreak the enemy was gone. We have moved forward across his earthworks, across which we have so often vainly attempted to move before, through the debris of his abandoned camps, among the graves of his fallen, into the woods beyond.

How curiously we regarded everything! how odd it all had seemed! Nothing appeared quite familiar; the most commonplace objects—an old saddle, a splintered wheel, a forgotten canteen—everything had related something of the mysterious personality of those strange men who had been killing us. The soldier never becomes wholly familiar with the conception of his foes as men like himself; he cannot divest himself of the feeling that they are another order of

beings, differently conditioned, in an environment not altogether of the earth. The smallest vestiges of them rivet his attention and engage his interest. He thinks of them as inaccessible; and, catching an unexpected glimpse of them, they appear farther away, and therefore larger, than they really are—like objects in a fog. He is somewhat in awe of them.

From the edge of the wood leading up the acclivity[1] are the tracks of horses and wheels—the wheels of cannon. The yellow grass is beaten down by the feet of infantry. Clearly they have passed this way in thousands; they have not withdrawn by the country roads. This is significant—it is the difference between retiring and retreating.

That group of horsemen is our commander, his staff and escort. He is facing the distant crest, holding his field-glass against his eyes with both hands, his elbows needlessly elevated. It is a fashion; it seems to dignify the act; we are all addicted to it. Suddenly he lowers the glass and says a few words to those about him. Two or three aides detach themselves from the group and canter away into the woods, along the lines in each direction. We did not hear his words, but we knew them: "Tell General X. to send forward the skirmish line." Those of us who have been out of place resume our positions; the men resting at ease straighten themselves and the ranks are re-formed without a command. Some of us staff officers dismount and look at our saddle-girths; those already on the ground remount.

Galloping rapidly along in the edge of the open ground comes a young officer on a snow-white horse. His saddle-blanket is scarlet. What a fool! No one who has ever been in action but remembers how naturally every rifle turns toward the man on a white horse; no one but has observed how a bit of red enrages the bull of battle. That such colors are fashionable in military life must be accepted as the most astonishing of all the phenomena of human vanity. They would seem to have been devised to increase the death-rate.

This young officer is in full uniform, as if on parade. He is all agleam with bullion—a blue-and-gold edition of the Poetry of War. A wave of derisive laughter runs abreast of him all along the line. But how handsome he is!—with what careless grace he sits his horse!

He reins up within a respectful distance of the corps commander and salutes. The old soldier nods familiarly; he evidently knows him. A brief colloquy between them is going on; the young man seems to be preferring some request which the elder one is indisposed to grant. Let us ride a little nearer. Ah! too late—it is ended. The young officer salutes again, wheels his horse, and rides straight toward the crest of the hill!

A thin line of skirmishers, the men deployed at six paces or so apart, now pushes from the wood into the open. The commander speaks to his bugler, who claps his instrument to his lips. *Tra-la-la! Tra-la-la!* The skirmishers halt in their tracks.

Meantime the young horseman has advanced a hundred yards. He is riding at a walk, straight up the long slope, with never a turn of the head. How glorious! Gods! what would we not give to be in his place—with his soul! He does not draw his sabre; his right hand hangs easily at his side. The breeze catches the plume in his hat and flutters it smartly. The sunshine rests upon his

[1] *An ascending slope (as of a hill)*

shoulder-straps, lovingly, like a visible benediction. Straight on he rides. Ten thousand pairs of eyes are fixed upon him with an intensity that he can hardly fail to feel; ten thousand hearts keep quick time to the inaudible hoof-beats of his snowy steed. He is not alone—he draws all souls after him. But we remember that we laughed! On and on, straight for the hedge-lined wall, he rides. Not a look backward. O, if he would but turn—if he could but see the love, the adoration, the atonement!

Not a word is spoken; the populous depths of the forest still murmur with their unseen and unseeing swarm, but all along the fringe there is silence. The burly commander is an equestrian statue of himself. The mounted staff officers, their field glasses up, are motionless all. The line of battle in the edge of the wood stands at a new kind of "attention," each man in the attitude in which he was caught by the consciousness of what is going on. All these hardened and impenitent man-killers, to whom death in its awfulest forms is a fact familiar to their every-day observation; who sleep on hills trembling with the thunder of great guns, dine in the midst of streaming missiles, and play at cards among the dead faces of their dearest friends—all are watching with suspended breath and beating hearts the outcome of an act involving the life of one man. Such is the magnetism of courage and devotion.

If now you should turn your head you would see a simultaneous movement among the spectators—a start, as if they had received an electric shock—and looking forward again to the now distant horseman you would see that he has in that instant altered his direction and is riding at an angle to his former course. The spectators suppose the sudden deflection to be caused by a shot, perhaps a wound; but take this field-glass and you will observe that he is riding toward a break in the wall and hedge. He means, if not killed, to ride through and overlook the country beyond.

You are not to forget the nature of this man's act; it is not permitted to you to think of it as an instance of bravado, nor, on the other hand, a needless sacrifice of self. If the enemy has not retreated he is in force on that ridge. The investigator will encounter nothing less than a line of battle; there is no need of pickets, videttes,[2] skirmishers, to give warning of our approach; our attacking lines will be visible, conspicuous, exposed to an artillery fire that will shave the ground the moment they break from cover, and for half the distance to a sheet of rifle bullets in which nothing can live. In short, if the enemy is there, it would be madness to attack him in front; he must be maneuvered out by the immemorial plan of threatening his line of communication, as necessary to his existence as to the diver at the bottom of the sea his air tube. But how ascertain if the enemy is there? There is but one way,—somebody must go and see. The natural and customary thing to do is to send forward a line of skirmishers. But in this case they will answer in the affirmative with all their lives; the enemy, crouching in double ranks behind the stone wall and in cover of the hedge, will wait until it is possible to count each assailant's teeth. At the first volley a half of the questioning line will fall, the other half before it can accomplish the predestined retreat. What a price to pay for gratified curiosity! At what a dear rate an army must sometimes purchase knowledge! "Let me pay all," says this gallant man—this military Christ!

There is no hope except the hope against hope that the crest is clear. True, he might prefer capture to death. So long as he advances, the line will not fire—why should it? He can safely ride

[2] *A mounted sentinel stationed in advance of pickets*

into the hostile ranks and become a prisoner of war. But this would defeat his object. It would not answer our question; it is necessary either that he return unharmed or be shot to death before our eyes. Only so shall we know how to act. If captured—why, that might have been done by a half-dozen stragglers.

Now begins an extraordinary contest of intellect between a man and an army. Our horseman, now within a quarter of a mile of the crest, suddenly wheels to the left and gallops in a direction parallel to it. He has caught sight of his antagonist; he knows all. Some slight advantage of ground has enabled him to overlook a part of the line. If he were here he could tell us in words. But that is now hopeless; he must make the best use of the few minutes of life remaining to him, by compelling the enemy himself to tell us as much and as plainly as possible—which, naturally, that discreet power is reluctant to do. Not a rifleman in those crouching ranks, not a cannoneer at those masked and shotted guns, but knows the needs of the situation, the imperative duty of forbearance. Besides, there has been time enough to forbid them all to fire. True, a single rifle-shot might drop him and be no great disclosure. But firing is infectious—and see how rapidly he moves, with never a pause except as he whirls his horse about to take a new direction, never directly backward toward us, never directly forward toward his executioners. All this is visible through the glass; it seems occurring within pistol-shot; we see all but the enemy, whose presence, whose thoughts, whose motives we infer. To the unaided eye there is nothing but a black figure on a white horse, tracing slow zigzags against the slope of a distant hill—so slowly they seem almost to creep.

Now—the glass again—he has tired of his failure, or sees his error, or has gone mad; he is dashing directly forward at the wall, as if to take it at a leap, hedge and all! One moment only and he wheels right about and is speeding like the wind straight down the slope—toward his friends, toward his death! Instantly the wall is topped with a fierce roll of smoke for a distance of hundreds of yards to right and left. This is as instantly dissipated by the wind, and before the rattle of the rifles reaches us he is down. No, he recovers his seat; he has but pulled his horse upon its haunches. They are up and away! A tremendous cheer bursts from our ranks, relieving the insupportable tension of our feelings. And the horse and its rider? Yes, they are up and away. Away, indeed—they are making directly to our left, parallel to the now steadily blazing and smoking wall. The rattle of the musketry is continuous, and every bullet’s target is that courageous heart.

Suddenly a great bank of white smoke pushes upward from behind the wall. Another and another—a dozen roll up before the thunder of the explosions and the humming of the missiles reach our ears and the missiles themselves come bounding through clouds of dust into our covert, knocking over here and there a man and causing a temporary distraction, a passing thought of self.

The dust drifts away. Incredible!—that enchanted horse and rider have passed a ravine and are climbing another slope to unveil another conspiracy of silence, to thwart the will of another armed host. Another moment and that crest too is in eruption. The horse rears and strikes the air with its forefeet. They are down at last. But look again—the man has detached himself from the dead animal. He stands erect, motionless, holding his sabre in his right hand straight above his head. His face is toward us. Now he lowers his hand to a level with his face and moves it

outward, the blade of the sabre describing a downward curve. It is a sign to us, to the world, to posterity. It is a hero's salute to death and history.

Again the spell is broken; our men attempt to cheer; they are choking with emotion; they utter hoarse, discordant cries; they clutch their weapons and press tumultuously forward into the open. The skirmishers, without orders, against orders, are going forward at a keen run, like hounds unleashed. Our cannon speak and the enemy's now open in full chorus; to right and left as far as we can see, the distant crest, seeming now so near, erects its towers of cloud and the great shot pitch roaring down among our moving masses. Flag after flag of ours emerges from the wood, line after line sweeps forth, catching the sunlight on its burnished arms. The rear battalions alone are in obedience; they preserve their proper distance from the insurgent front.

The commander has not moved. He now removes his field-glass from his eyes and glances to the right and left. He sees the human current flowing on either side of him and his huddled escort, like tide waves parted by a rock. Not a sign of feeling in his face; he is thinking. Again he directs his eyes forward; they slowly traverse that malign and awful crest. He addresses a calm word to his bugler. *Tra-la-la! Tra-la-la!* The injunction has an imperiousness which enforces it. It is repeated by all the bugles of all the sub-ordinate commanders; the sharp metallic notes assert themselves above the hum of the advance and penetrate the sound of the cannon. To halt is to withdraw. The colors move slowly back; the lines face about and sullenly follow, bearing their wounded; the skirmishers return, gathering up the dead.

Ah, those many, many needless dead! That great soul whose beautiful body is lying over yonder, so conspicuous against the sere hillside—could it not have been spared the bitter consciousness of a vain devotion? Would one exception have marred too much the pitiless perfection of the divine, eternal plan?

Digging and Grousing

ERNIE PYLE

The most famous war correspondent of World War II, Ernest "Ernie" Taylor Pyle (1900–45) began working for newspapers in college at Indiana University. Beginning in 1934, he contributed a national column to the Scripps-Howard news service about his travels throughout America, recounting the interesting people he met along the way. When World War II broke out, he traveled to the front lines in Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific, writing about the war from the common soldier's perspective. In 1944, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his efforts. The following year, on April 18, 1945, he was killed by Japanese machine-gun fire on the Japanese island of Lejima, where he was buried with his helmet on among the soldiers and Marines he wrote about.

Only some of a soldier's wartime experience is experience of battle. As Ernie Pyle's account makes clear, much of his time is spent in more prosaic things. Why do the soldiers enjoy digging? Grousing? What do their digging and their grousing have in common? Do you share the soldiers' reaction to the letter? What do you make of their light humor? What does this story tell us about the relation between men at war and life—including army life—back home?

ON THE NORTH AFRICAN DESERT, March 23, 1943—When our Sahara salvage expedition finally found the wrecked airplanes far out on the endless desert, the mechanics went to work taking off usable parts, and four others of us appointed ourselves the official ditchdiggers of the day.

We were all afraid of being strafed if the Germans came over and saw men working around the planes, and we wanted a nice ditch handy for diving into. The way to have a nice ditch is to dig one. We wasted no time.

Would that all slit trenches could be dug in soil like that. The sand was soft and moist; just the kind children like to play in. The four of us dug a winding ditch forty feet long and three feet deep in about an hour and a half.

* * *

The day got hot, and we took off our shirts. One sweating soldier said: "Five years ago you couldn't a got me to dig a ditch for five dollars an hour. Now look at me.

"You can't stop me digging ditches. I don't even want pay for it; I just dig for love. And I sure do hope this digging today is all wasted effort; I never wanted to do useless work so bad in my life.

"Any time I get fifty feet from my home ditch you'll find me digging a new ditch, and brother I ain't joking. I love to dig ditches."

Digging out here in the soft desert sand was paradise compared with the claylike digging back at our base. The ditch went forward like a prairie fire. We measured it with our eyes to see if it would hold everybody.

"Throw up some more right here," one of the boys said, indicating a low spot in the bank on either side. "Do you think we've got it deep enough?"

"It don't have to be so deep," another one said. "A bullet won't go through more than three inches of sand. Sand is the best thing there is for stopping bullets."

A growth of sagebrush hung over the ditch on one side. "Let's leave it right there," one of the boys said. "It's good for the imagination. Makes you think you're covered up even when you ain't."

That's the new outlook, the new type of conversation, among thousands of American boys today. It's hard for you to realize, but there are certain moments when a plain old ditch can be dearer to you than any possession on earth. For all bombs, no matter where they may land eventually, do all their falling right straight at your head. Only those of you who know about that can ever know all about ditches.

* * *

While we were digging, one of the boys brought up for the thousandth time the question of that letter in *Time* magazine. What letter, you ask? Why, it's a letter you probably don't remember, but it has become famous around these parts.

It was in the November 23 [1942] issue, which eventually found its way over here. Somebody read it, spoke to a few friends, and pretty soon thousands of men were commenting on this letter in terms which the fire department won't permit me to set to paper.

To get to the point, it was written by a soldier, and it said: "The greatest Christmas present that can be given to us this year is not smoking jackets, ties, pipes or games. If people will only take the money and buy war bonds . . . they will be helping themselves and helping us to be home next Christmas. Being home next Christmas is something which would be appreciated by all of us boys in service!"

The letter was all right with the soldiers over here until they got down to the address of the writer and discovered he was still in camp in the States. For a soldier back home to open his trap about anything concerning the war is like waving a red flag at the troops over here. They say they can do whatever talking is necessary.

"Them poor dogfaces back home," said one of the ditch-diggers with fine soldier sarcasm, "they've really got it rugged. Nothing to eat but them old greasy pork chops and them three-inch steaks all the time. I wouldn't be surprised if they don't have to eat eggs several times a week."

“And they’re so lonely,” said another. “No entertainment except to rassle them old dames around the dance floor. The USO closes at ten o’clock and the nightclubs at three. It’s mighty tough on them. No wonder they want to get home.”

“And they probably don’t get no sleep,” said another, “sleeping on them old cots with springs and everything, and scalding themselves in hot baths all the time.”

“And nothing to drink but that nasty old ten-cent beer and that awful Canadian Club whiskey,” chimed in another philosopher with a shovel.

“And when they put a nickel in the box nothing comes out but Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw and such trash as that. My heart just bleeds for them poor guys.”

“And did you see where he was?” asked another. “At the Albuquerque Air Base. And he wants to be home by next Christmas. Hell, if I could just see the Albuquerque Air Base again I’d think I was in heaven.”

That’s the way it goes. The boys feel a soldier isn’t qualified to comment unless he’s on the wrong side of the ocean. They’re gay and full of their own wit when they get started that way, but just the same they mean it. It’s a new form of the age-old soldier pastime of grousing. It helps take your mind off things.

Letter to His Parents

JOHN F. KENNEDY

On August 2, 1943, then-Lieutenant (j.g.) John F. Kennedy (1917–63) was commanding a patrol torpedo boat off the Solomon Islands in the Pacific Theater when a Japanese destroyer rammed and sunk his vessel. Despite injuring his back in the collision, Kennedy towed an injured crewman to an island by clinching the man's lifejacket strap in his teeth as they swam to shore. Kennedy then swam many more hours to secure aid and food after getting the rest of his crew ashore. For his "outstanding courage, endurance and leadership [that] contributed to the saving of several lives," he was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. He wrote this letter home shortly after this experience.

What can his parents—and we readers—learn from young Lieutenant Kennedy's letter about the experience of war? What can we learn about how people at home should speak about it? As president of the United States, Kennedy committed hundreds of thousands of American troops to fight in Vietnam, in a war that lasted over a decade. Can you understand how the author of this letter might have seen fit to do so?

Dear Mother & Dad:

Something has happened to Squadron Air Mail—none has come in for the last two weeks. Some chowder-head sent it to the wrong island. As a matter of fact, the papers you have been sending out have kept me up to date. For an old paper, the New York Daily News is by far the most interesting. . . .

In regard to things here—they have been doing some alterations on my boat and have been living on a repair ship. Never before realized how badly we have been doing on our end although I have always had my suspicions. First time I've seen an egg since I left the states.

As I told you, Lennie Thom, who used to ride with me, has now got a boat of his own and the fellow who was going to ride with me has just come down with ulcers. (He's going to the States and will call you and give you all the news. Al Hamn). We certainly would have made a red-hot combination. Got most of my old crew except for a couple who are being sent home, and am extremely glad of that. On the bright side of an otherwise completely black time was the way that everyone stood up to it. Previous to that I had become somewhat cynical about the American as a fighting man. I had seen too much bellyaching and laying off. But with the chips down—that all faded away. I can now believe—which I never would have before—the stories of Bataan and Wake. For an American it's got to be awfully easy or awfully tough. When it's in the middle, then there's trouble. It was a terrible thing though, losing those two men. One had ridden with me for as long as I had been out here. He had somewhat shocked by a bomb that had landed near the boat about two weeks before. He never really got over it; he always seemed to have the feeling that something was going to happen to him. He never said anything about being put ashore—he didn't want to go—but the next time we came down the line I was going to let him work on the base force. When a fellow gets the feeling that he's in for it, the only thing to do is to let him get off the boat because strangely enough, they always seem to be the ones that do get

it. I don't whether it's just coincidence or what. He had a wife and three kids. The other fellow had just come aboard. He was only a kid himself.

It certainly brought home how real the war is—and when I read the papers from home and how superficial is most of the talking and thinking about it. When I read that we will fight the Japs for years if necessary and will sacrifice hundreds of thousands if we must—I always like to check from where he is talking—it's seldom out here. People get so used to talking about billions of dollars and millions of soldiers that thousands of dead sounds like drops in the bucket. But if those thousands want to live as much as the ten I saw—they should measure their words with great, great care. Perhaps all of that won't be necessary—and it can all be done by bombing. We have a new Commodore here—Mike Moran—former Captain of the Boise—and a big harp if there ever was one. He's fresh out from six months in the States and full of smoke and vinegar and statements like—it's a privilege to be here and we would be ashamed to be back in the States—and we'll stay here ten years if necessary. That all went over like a lead balloon. However, the doc told us yesterday that Iron Mike was complaining of headaches and diarrhea—so we look for a different tune to be thrummed on that harp of his before many months.

Love,
Jack

Prisoner of War: A First-Person Account

JOHN MCCAIN

John McCain (b. 1936) spent five and a half years in captivity as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. His first-person account of that terrible ordeal was published in US News & World Report *in May 1973. Navy flier McCain was on a bombing mission when he was shot down over Hanoi on October 26, 1967. Despite fractures in his right leg and both arms, he received minimal care and was kept in squalid conditions that he vividly describes in this account. After his return home, he spent eight more years in the Navy before retiring to run for Congress. Elected from Arizona to the US House of Representatives in 1982 and to the US Senate in 1986, McCain ran as the Republican nominee for president in 2008. He is currently serving his fifth term in the Senate.*

Few people have had worse war experiences than John McCain. What enabled him to endure his imprisonment? Is he right that "every man has his breaking point"? Is he also right in suggesting that "anybody else in our place would have performed just as well"? What, according to McCain, are the obligations of prisoners of war? Compare McCain's resolve on returning home with that of Krebs, the protagonist in Hemingway's story "Soldier's Home" (below). What accounts for the difference in the ways they approached a return to civilian life? With whom do you identify?

The date was Oct. 26, 1967. I was on my 23rd mission, flying right over the heart of Hanoi in a dive at about 4,500 feet, when a Russian missile the size of a telephone pole came up—the sky was full of them—and blew the right wing off my Skyhawk dive bomber. It went into an inverted, almost straight-down spin.

I pulled the ejection handle, and was knocked unconscious by the force of the ejection—the air speed was about 500 knots. I didn't realize it at the moment, but I had broken my right leg around the knee, my right arm in three places, and my left arm. I regained consciousness just before I landed by parachute in a lake right in the corner of Hanoi, one they called the Western Lake. My helmet and my oxygen mask had been blown off.

I hit the water and sank to the bottom. I think the lake is about 15 feet deep, maybe 20. I kicked off the bottom. I did not feel any pain at the time, and was able to rise to the surface. I took a breath of air and started sinking again. Of course, I was wearing 50 pounds, at least, of equipment and gear. I went down and managed to kick up to the surface once more. I couldn't understand why I couldn't use my right leg or my arm. I was in a dazed condition. I went up to the top again and sank back down. This time I couldn't get back to the surface. I was wearing an inflatable life-preserver-type thing that looked like water wings. I reached down with my mouth and got the toggle between my teeth and inflated the preserver and finally floated to the top.

Some North Vietnamese swam out and pulled me to the side of the lake and immediately started stripping me, which is their standard procedure. Of course, this being in the center of town, a huge crowd of people gathered, and they were all hollering and screaming and cursing and spitting and kicking at me.

When they had most of my clothes off, I felt a twinge in my right knee. I sat up and looked at it, and my right foot was resting next to my left knee, just in a 90-degree position. I said, "My God—my leg!" That seemed to enrage them—I don't know why. One of them slammed a rifle butt down on my shoulder, and smashed it pretty badly. Another stuck a bayonet in my foot. The mob was really getting up-tight. . . .

About this time, a guy came up and started yelling at the crowd to leave me alone. A woman came over and propped me up and held a cup of tea to my lips, and some photographers took some pictures. This quieted the crowd down quite a bit. Pretty soon, they put me on a stretcher, lifted it onto a truck, and took me to Hanoi's main prison. I was taken into a cell and put on the floor. I was still on the stretcher, dressed only in my skivvies, with a blanket over me.

For the next three or four days, I lapsed from conscious to unconsciousness. During this time, I was taken out to interrogation—which we called a "quiz"—several times. That's when I was hit with all sorts of war-criminal charges. This started on the first day. I refused to give them anything except my name, rank, serial number and date of birth. They beat me around a little bit. I was in such bad shape that when they hit me it would knock me unconscious. They kept saying, "You will not receive any medical treatment until you talk."

I didn't believe this. I thought that if I just held out, that they'd take me to the hospital. I was fed small amounts of food by the guard and also allowed to drink some water. I was able to hold the water down, but I kept vomiting the food.

They wanted military rather than political information at this time. Every time they asked me something, I'd just give my name, rank and serial number and date of birth.

I think it was on the fourth day that two guards came in, instead of one. One of them pulled back the blanket to show the other guard my injury. I looked at my knee. It was about the size, shape and color of a football. I remembered that when I was a flying instructor a fellow had ejected from his plane and broken his thigh. He had gone into shock, the blood had pooled in his leg, and he died, which came as quite a surprise to us—a man dying of a broken leg. Then I realized that a very similar thing was happening to me.

When I saw it, I said to the guard, "O.K., get the officer." An officer came in after a few minutes. It was the man that we came to know very well as "The Bug." He was a psychotic torturer, one of the worst fiends that we had to deal with. I said, "O.K., I'll give you military information if you will take me to the hospital." He left and came back with a doctor, a guy that we called "Zorba," who was completely incompetent. He squatted down, took my pulse. He did not speak English, but shook his head and jabbered to "The Bug." I asked, "Are you going to take me to the hospital?" "The Bug" replied, "It's too late." I said, "If you take me to the hospital, I'll get well."

"Zorba" took my pulse again, and repeated, "It's too late." They got up and left, and I lapsed into unconsciousness.

Sometime later, "The Bug" came rushing into the room, shouting, "Your father is a big admiral; now we take you to the hospital."

I tell the story to make this point: There were hardly any amputees among the prisoners who came back because the North Vietnamese just would not give medical treatment to someone who was badly injured—they weren't going to waste their time. For one thing, in the transition from the kind of life we lead in America to the filth and dirt and infection, it would be very difficult for a guy to live anyway. In fact, my treatment in the hospital almost killed me. . . .

"They Told Me I'd Never Go Home"

I really didn't know what to think, because I had been having these other interrogations in which I had refused to co-operate. It was not hard because they were not torturing me at this time. They just told me I'd never go home and I was going to be tried as a war criminal. That was their constant theme for many months.

Suddenly "The Cat" [the camp commander] said to me, "Do you want to go home?"

I was astonished, and I tell you frankly that I said that I would have to think about it. I went back to my room, and I thought about it for a long time. At this time I did not have communication with the camp senior ranking officer, so I could get no advice. I was worried whether I could stay alive or not, because I was in rather bad condition. I had been hit with a severe case of dysentery, which kept on for about a year and a half. I was losing weight again.

But I knew that the Code of Conduct says, "You will not accept parole or amnesty," and that "you will not accept special favors." For somebody to go home earlier is a special favor. There's no other way you can cut it.

I went back to him three nights later. He asked again, "Do you want to go home?" I told him "No." He wanted to know why, and I told him the reason. I said that Alvarez [first American captured] should go first, then enlisted men and that kind of stuff.

"The Cat" told me that President Lyndon Johnson had ordered me home. He handed me a letter from my wife, in which she had said, "I wished that you had been one of those three who got to come home." Of course, she had no way to understand the ramifications of this. "The Cat" said that the doctors had told him that I could not live unless I got medical treatment in the United States.

We went through this routine and still I told him "No." Three nights later we went through it all over again. On the morning of the Fourth of July, 1968, which happened to be the same day that my father took over as commander in chief of U.S. Forces in the Pacific, I was led into another quiz room.

"The Rabbit" and "The Cat" were sitting there. I walked in and sat down, and "The Rabbit" said, "Our senior wants to know your final answer."

"My final answer is the same. It's 'No.'"

"That is your final answer?"

"That is my final answer."

With this "The Cat," who was sitting there with a pile of papers in front of him and a pen in his hand, broke the pen in two. Ink spurted all over. He stood up, kicked the chair over behind him, and said, "They taught you too well. They taught you too well"—in perfect English, I might add. He turned, went out and slammed the door, leaving "The Rabbit" and me sitting there. "The Rabbit" said "Now, McCain, it will be very bad for you. Go back to your room."

What they wanted, of course, was to send me home at the same time that my father took over as commander in the Pacific. This would have made them look very humane in releasing the injured son of a top U.S. officer. It would also have given them a great lever against my fellow prisoners, because the North Vietnamese were always putting this "class" business on us. They could have said to the others "Look, you poor devils, the son of the man who is running the war has gone home and left you here. No one cares about you ordinary fellows." I was determined at all times to prevent any exploitation of my father and my family.

There was another consideration for me. Even though I was told I would not have to sign any statements or confessions before I went home, I didn't believe them. They would have got me right up to that airplane and said, "Now just sign this little statement." At that point, I doubt that I could have resisted, even though I felt very strong at the time.

But the primary thing I considered was that I had no right to go ahead of men like Alvarez, who had been there three years before I "got killed"—that's what we say instead of "before I got shot down," because in a way becoming a prisoner in North Vietnam was like being killed.

About a month and a half later, when the three men who were selected for release had reached America, I was set up for some very severe treatment which lasted for the next year and a half.

One night the guards came to my room and said "The camp commander wants to see you." This man was a particularly idiotic individual. We called him "Slopehead."

One thing I should mention here: The camps were set up very similar to their Army. They had a camp commander, who was a military man, basically in charge of the maintenance of the camp, the food, etc. Then they had what they called a staff officer—actually a political officer—who was in charge of the interrogations, and provided the propaganda heard on the radio.

We also had a guy in our camp whom we named "The Soft-Soap Fairy." He was from an important family in North Vietnam. He wore a fancy uniform and was a real sharp cookie, with a dominant position in this camp. "The Soft-Soap Fairy," who was somewhat effeminate, was the nice guy, and the camp commander—"Slopehead"—was the bad guy. Old "Soft-Soap" would

always come in whenever anything went wrong and say, "Oh, I didn't know they did this to you. All you had to do was co-operate and everything would have been O.K."

To get back to the story: They took me out of my room to "Slopehead," who said, "You have violated all the camp regulations. You're a black criminal. You must confess your crimes." I said that I wouldn't do that, and he asked, "Why are you so disrespectful of guards?" I answered, "Because the guards treat me like an animal."

When I said that, the guards, who were all in the room—about 10 of them—really laid into me. They bounced me from pillar to post, kicking and laughing and scratching. After a few hours of that, ropes were put on me and I sat that night bound with ropes. Then I was taken to a small room. For punishment they would almost always take you to another room where you didn't have a mosquito net or a bed or any clothes. For the next four days, I was beaten every two to three hours by different guards. My left arm was broken again and my ribs were cracked.

They wanted a statement saying that I was sorry for the crimes that I had committed against North Vietnamese people and that I was grateful for the treatment that I had received from them. This was the paradox—so many guys were so mistreated to get them to say they were grateful. But this is the Communist way.

I held out for four days. Finally, I reached the lowest point of my 5½ years in North Vietnam. I was at the point of suicide, because I saw that I was reaching the end of my rope.

I said, O.K., I'll write for them.

They took me up into one of the interrogation rooms, and for the next 12 hours we wrote and rewrote. The North Vietnamese interrogator, who was pretty stupid, wrote the final confession, and I signed it. It was in their language, and spoke about black crimes, and other generalities. It was unacceptable to them. But I felt just terrible about it. I kept saying to myself, "Oh, God, I really didn't have any choice." I had learned what we all learned over there: Every man has his breaking point. I had reached mine.

Then the "gooks" made a very serious mistake, because they let me go back and rest for a couple of weeks. They usually didn't do that with guys when they had them really busted. I think it concerned them that my arm was broken, and they had messed up my leg. I had been reduced to an animal during this period of beating and torture. My arm was so painful I couldn't get up off the floor. With the dysentery, it was a very unpleasant time.

Thank God they let me rest for a couple of weeks. Then they called me up again and wanted something else. I don't remember what it was now—it was some kind of statement. This time I was able to resist. I was able to carry on. They couldn't "bust" me again.

Prayer: "I Was Sustained in Times of Trial"

I was finding that prayer helped. It wasn't a question of asking for superhuman strength or for God to strike the North Vietnamese dead. It was asking for moral and physical courage, for

guidance and wisdom to do the right thing. I asked for comfort when I was in pain, and sometimes I received relief. I was sustained in many times of trial.

When the pressure was on, you seemed to go one way or the other. Either it was easier for them to break you the next time, or it was harder. In other words, if you are going to make it, you get tougher as time goes by. Part of it is just a transition from our way of life to that way of life. But you get to hate them so bad that it gives you strength. . . .

From that time on it was one round of rough treatment followed by another. Sometimes I got it three or four times a week. Sometimes I'd be off the hook for a few weeks. A lot of it was my own doing, because they realized far better than we did at first the value of communicating with our fellow Americans. When they caught us communicating, they'd take severe reprisals. I was caught a lot of times. One reason was because I'm not too smart, and the other reason was because I lived alone. If you live with somebody else you have somebody helping you out, helping you survive.

But I was never going to stop. Communication with your fellow prisoners was of the utmost value—the difference between being able to resist and not being able to resist. You may get some argument from other prisoners on that. A lot depends on the individual. Some men are much more self-sufficient than others.

Communication primarily served to keep up morale. We would risk getting beat up just to tell a man that one of his friends had gotten a letter from home. But it was also valuable to establish a chain of command in our camps, so our senior officers could give us advice and guidance.

So this was a period of repeated, severe treatment. It lasted until around October of '69. They wanted me to see delegations. There were antiwar groups coming into Hanoi, a lot of foreigners—Cubans, Russians. I don't think we had too many American "peaceniks" that early, although within the next year it got much greater. I refused to see any of them. The propaganda value to them would have been too great, with my dad as commander in the Pacific.

David Dellinger came over. Tom Hayden came over. Three groups of released prisoners, in fact, were let out in custody of the "peace groups." The first ones released went home with one of the Berrigan brothers. The next group was a whole crew. One of them was James Johnson, one of the Fort Hood Three. The wife of the "Ramparts" magazine editor and Rennie Davis were along. Altogether, I think about eight or nine of them were in that outfit. Then a third group followed.[1]

The North Vietnamese wanted me to meet with all of them, but I was able to avoid it. A lot of times you couldn't face them down, so you had to try to get around them. "Face" is a big thing

[1] *David Dellinger, Tom Hayden, and Rennie Davis were antiwar protesters and members of the Chicago Seven, whose disruption of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago led to charges of conspiracy and incitement. Philip and Daniel Berrigan were Catholic priests and political activists. The Fort Hood Three were three privates from Fort Hood, Texas, who refused to ship out to Vietnam in June 1966. Ramparts was a left-wing political and literary magazine, published from 1962 through 1975.*

with these people, you know, and if you get around them so that they could save face, then it was a lot easier.

For example, they would beat the hell out of me and say I was going to see a delegation. I'd respond that, O.K. I'd see a delegation, but I would not say anything against my country and I would not say anything about my treatment and if asked, I'd tell them the truth about the conditions I was kept under. They went back and conferred on that and then would say, "You have agreed to see a delegation so we will take you." But they never took me, you see.

One time, they wanted me to write a message to my fellow prisoners at Christmas. I wrote down:

"To my friends in the camp who I have not been allowed to see or speak to, I hope that your families are well and happy, and I hope that you will be able to write and receive letters in accordance with the Geneva Convention of 1949 which has not been allowed to you by our captors. And may God bless you."

They took it but, of course, it was never published. In other words, sometimes it was better to write something that was laudatory to your Government or against them than say, "I won't write at all"—because a lot of times it had to go up through channels, and sometimes you could buy time this way. . . .

Once you become a prisoner of war, then you do not have the right to dissent, because what you do will be harming your country. You are no longer speaking as an individual, you are speaking as a member of the armed forces of the United States, and you owe loyalty to the Commander in Chief, not to your own conscience. Some of my fellow prisoners sang a different tune, but they were a very small minority. I ask myself if they should be prosecuted, and I don't find that easy to answer. It might destroy the very fine image the great majority of us have brought back from that hellhole. Remember, a handful of turncoats after the Korean War made a great majority of Americans think that most of the POW's in conflict were traitors.

If these men are tried, it should not be because they took an antiwar stance, but because they collaborated with the Vietnamese to an extent, and that was harmful to the other American POW's. And there is this to consider: America will have other wars to fight until the Communists give up their doctrine of violent overthrow of our way of life. These men should bear some censure so that in future wars there won't be a precedent for conduct that hurts this country.

By late January of this year, we knew [the] end of the war was near. I was moved then to the "Plantation." We were put together in groups by the period when we were shot down. They were getting us ready to return by groups. . . .

There was no special ceremony when we left the camp. The International Control Commission came in and we were permitted to look around the camp. There were a lot of photographers around, but nothing formal. Then we got on the buses and went to Gia Lam

Airport. My old friend "The Rabbit" was there. He stood out front and said to us, "When I read your name off, you get on the plane and go home."

That was March 15. Up to that moment, I wouldn't allow myself more than a feeling of cautious hope. We had been peaked up so many times before that I had decided that I wouldn't get excited until I shook hands with an American in uniform. That happened at Gia Lam, and then I knew it was over. There is no way I can describe how I felt as I walked toward that U.S. Air Force plane.

Now that I'm back, I find a lot of hand-wringing about this country. I don't buy that. I think America today is a better country than the one I left nearly six years ago.

The North Vietnamese gave us very little except bad news about the U.S. We didn't find out about the first successful moon shot [in 1969] until it was mentioned in a speech by George McGovern saying that Nixon could put a man on the moon, but he couldn't put an end to the Vietnam war.

They bombarded us with the news of Martin Luther King's death and the riots that followed. Information like that poured continuously out of the loud-speakers.

I think America is a better country now because we have been through a sort of purging process, a re-evaluation of ourselves. Now I see more of an appreciation of our way of life. There is more patriotism. The flag is all over the place. I hear new values being stressed—the concern for environment is a case in point.

I've received scores of letters from young people, and many of them sent me POW bracelets with my name on it, which they had been wearing. Some were not too sure about the war, but they are strongly patriotic, their values are good, and I think we will find that they are going to grow up to be better Americans than many of us.

This outpouring on behalf of us who were prisoners of war is staggering, and a little embarrassing because basically we feel that we are just average American Navy, Marine and Air Force pilots who got shot down. Anybody else in our place would have performed just as well.

My own plans for the future are to remain in the Navy, if I am able to return to flying status. That depends upon whether the corrective surgery on my arms and my leg is successful. If I have to leave the Navy, I hope to serve the Government in some capacity, preferably in Foreign Service for the State Department.

I had a lot of time to think over there, and came to the conclusion that one of the most important things in life—along with a man's family—is to make some contribution to his country.

Coming Home

Not to Keep

ROBERT FROST

This poem by Robert Frost (1874–1963) examines the emotions caused by a wounded soldier's homecoming and his return to war once his wounds have healed. First published in the Yale Review *in January 1917 and included in Frost's 1924 Pulitzer Prize-winning collection* New Hampshire, *the poem was likely inspired by Frost's friendship with the poet Edward Thomas, whom Frost had met while living in England between 1912 and 1915. Thomas enlisted in the British Artists Rifles in 1915 and was killed in action in France a few months after this poem was published, in April 1917. Frost went on to win three more Pulitzer Prizes and served as the Poet Laureate for the United States from 1958 to 1959.*

Going slowly through the poem, line by line, describe as fully as you can the unfolding thoughts and feelings of the woman whose husband (or, perhaps, 'whose son') has been "sent . . . back to her," wounded from the war. What can we learn from this poem about the effects of war on loved ones left behind? What does the man mean by "Enough/Yet not enough"? Reflect on the questions each asks the other with her/his eyes. What is the meaning of the poem's title?

They sent him back to her. The letter came
Saying. . . . And she could have him. And before
She could be sure there was no hidden ill
Under the formal writing, he was in her sight,
Living. They gave him back to her alive—
How else? They are not known to send the dead—
And not disfigured visibly. His face?
His hands? She had to look, to ask,
"What was it, dear?" And she had given all
And still she had all—*they* had—they the lucky!
Wasn't she glad now? Everything seemed won,
And all the rest for them permissible ease.
She had to ask, "What was it, dear?"

"Enough,
Yet not enough. A bullet through and through,
High in the breast. Nothing but what good care
And medicine and rest, and you a week,
Can cure me of to go again." The same
Grim giving to do over for them both.
She dared no more than ask him with her eyes
How was it with him for a second trial.
And with his eyes he asked her not to ask.
They had given him back to her, but not to keep.

Soldier's Home

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

In 1918, eighteen-year-old Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) volunteered to serve as an ambulance driver in World War I. In July of that year, stationed near Milan at the Italian Front, he was wounded by German mortar fire and was awarded the Italian Silver Medal of Bravery for carrying an Italian soldier to safety despite his own injuries. For the rest of his life, Hemingway would write about his experience in and recuperating from the Great War in such works as The Nick Adams Stories *(1972) and* A Farewell to Arms *(1929). In the late 1930s, he reported firsthand on the Spanish Civil War, and in 1944 he covered the D-Day landing and the Allied liberation of Paris. He won the 1952 Pulitzer Prize for* The Old Man and the Sea *and two years later was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.*

Unlike the veteran in Frost's "Not to Keep," the hero of Ernest Hemingway's story, first collected in In Our Time *(1925), is home to stay, but not happily so. Collect and consider Krebs's many reactions to being back at home. Why does he have so much trouble coming home? Do you sympathize with him, or do you find him lacking? What, if anything, might make it possible for him—or for any returning soldier—happily to come home and to rejoin civilian life? Can he ever recover his prewar attitudes toward life or the people he knows and meets? What or where is the "soldier's home"?*

Krebs went to the war from a Methodist college in Kansas. There is a picture which shows him among his fraternity brothers, all of them wearing exactly the same height and style collar. He enlisted in the Marines in 1917 and did not return to the United States until the second division returned from the Rhine in the summer of 1919.

There is a picture which shows him on the Rhine with two German girls and another corporal. Krebs and the corporal look too big for their uniforms. The German girls are not beautiful. The Rhine does not show in the picture.

By the time Krebs returned to his home town in Oklahoma the greeting of heroes was over. He came back much too late. The men from the town who had been drafted had all been welcomed elaborately on their return. There had been a great deal of hysteria. Now the reaction had set in. People seemed to think it was rather ridiculous for Krebs to be getting back so late, years after the war was over.

At first Krebs, who had been at Belleau Wood, Soissons, the Champagne, St. Mihiel and in the Argonne[1] did not want to talk about the war at all. Later he felt the need to talk but no one wanted to hear about it. His town had heard too many atrocity stories to be thrilled by actualities. Krebs found that to be listened to at all he had to lie, and after he had done this twice he, too, had a reaction against the war and against talking about it. A distaste for everything that had happened to him in the war set in because of the lies he had told. All of the times that had been able to make him feel cool and clear inside himself when he thought of them; the times so long

[1] *Sites of battles in World War I in which American troops were instrumental in pushing back the Germans*

back when he had done the one thing, the only thing for a man to do, easily and naturally, when he might have done something else, now lost their cool, valuable quality and then were lost themselves.

His lies were quite unimportant lies and consisted in attributing to himself things other men had seen, done or heard of, and stating as facts certain apocryphal incidents familiar to all soldiers. Even his lies were not sensational at the pool room. His acquaintances, who had heard detailed accounts of German women found chained to machine guns in the Argonne forest and who could not comprehend, or were barred by their patriotism from interest in, any German machine gunners who were not chained, were not thrilled by his stories.

Krebs acquired the nausea in regard to experience that is the result of untruth or exaggeration, and when he occasionally met another man who had really been a soldier and they talked a few minutes in the dressing room at a dance he fell into the easy pose of the old soldier among other soldiers: that he had been badly, sickeningly frightened all the time. In this way he lost everything.

During this time, it was late summer, he was sleeping late in bed, getting up to walk down town to the library to get a book, eating lunch at home, reading on the front porch until he became bored and then walking down through the town to spend the hottest hours of the day in the cool dark of the pool room. He loved to play pool.

In the evening he practiced on his clarinet, strolled down town, read and went to bed. He was still a hero to his two young sisters. His mother would have given him breakfast in bed if he had wanted it. She often came in when he was in bed and asked him to tell her about the war, but her attention always wandered. His father was non-committal.

Before Krebs went away to the war he had never been allowed to drive the family motor car. His father was in the real estate business and always wanted the car to be at his command when he required it to take clients out into the country to show them a piece of farm property. The car always stood outside the First National Bank building where his father had an office on the second floor. Now, after the war, it was still the same car.

Nothing was changed in the town except that the young girls had grown up. But they lived in such a complicated world of already defined alliances and shifting feuds that Krebs did not feel the energy or the courage to break into it. He liked to look at them, though. There were so many good-looking young girls. Most of them had their hair cut short. When he went away only little girls wore their hair like that or girls that were fast. They all wore sweaters and shirt waists with round Dutch collars. It was a pattern. He liked to look at them from the front porch as they walked on the other side of the street. He liked to watch them walking under the shade of the trees. He liked the round Dutch collars above their sweaters. He liked their silk stockings and flat shoes. He liked their bobbed hair and the way they walked.

When he was in town their appeal to him was not very strong. He did not like them when he saw them in the Greek’s ice cream parlor. He did not want them themselves really. They were too complicated. There was something else. Vaguely he wanted a girl but he did not want to have

to work to get her. He would have liked to have a girl but he did not want to have to spend a long time getting her. He did not want to get into the intrigue and the politics. He did not want to have to do any courting. He did not want to tell any more lies. It wasn't worth it.

He did not want any consequences. He did not want any consequences ever again. He wanted to live along without consequences. Besides he did not really need a girl. The army had taught him that. It was all right to pose as though you had to have a girl. Nearly everybody did that. But it wasn't true. You did not need a girl. That was the funny thing. First a fellow boasted how girls mean nothing to him, that he never thought of them, that they could not touch him. Then a fellow boasted that he could not get along without girls, that he had to have them all the time, that he could not go to sleep without them.

That was all a lie. It was all a lie both ways. You did not need a girl unless you thought about them. He learned that in the army. Then sooner or later you always got one. When you were really ripe for a girl you always got one. You did not have to think about it. Sooner or later it could come. He had learned that in the army.

Now he would have liked a girl if she had come to him and not wanted to talk. But here at home it was all too complicated. He knew he could never get through it all again. It was not worth the trouble. That was the thing about French girls and German girls. There was not all this talking. You couldn't talk much and you did not need to talk. It was simple and you were friends. He thought about France and then he began to think about Germany. On the whole he had liked Germany better. He did not want to leave Germany. He did not want to come home. Still, he had come home. He sat on the front porch.

He liked the girls that were walking along the other side of the street. He liked the look of them much better than the French girls or the German girls. But the world they were in was not the world he was in. He would like to have one of them. But it was not worth it. They were such a nice pattern. He liked the pattern. It was exciting. But he would not go through all the talking. He did not want one badly enough. He liked to look at them all, though. It was not worth it. Not now when things were getting good again.

He sat there on the porch reading a book on the war. It was a history and he was reading about all the engagements he had been in. It was the most interesting reading he had ever done. He wished there were more maps. He looked forward with a good feeling to reading all the really good histories when they would come out with good detail maps. Now he was really learning about the war. He had been a good soldier. That made a difference.

One morning after he had been home about a month his mother came into his bedroom and sat on the bed. She smoothed her apron.

"I had a talk with your father last night, Harold," she said, "and he is willing for you to take the car out in the evenings."

"Yeah?" said Krebs, who was not fully awake. "Take the car out? Yeah?"

“Yes. Your father has felt for some time that you should be able to take the car out in the evenings whenever you wished but we only talked it over last night.”

“I’ll bet you made him,” Krebs said.

“No. It was your father’s suggestion that we talk the matter over.”

“Yeah. I’ll bet you made him,” Krebs sat up in bed.

“Will you come down to breakfast, Harold?” his mother said.

“As soon as I get my clothes on,” Krebs said.

His mother went out of the room and he could hear her frying something downstairs while he washed, shaved and dressed to go down into the dining-room for breakfast. While he was eating breakfast, his sister brought in the mail.

“Well, Hare,” she said. “You old sleepy-head. What do you ever get up for?”

Krebs looked at her. He liked her. She was his best sister.

“Have you got the paper?” he asked.

She handed him *The Kansas City Star* and he shucked off its brown wrapper and opened it to the sporting page. He folded *The Star* open and propped it against the water pitcher with his cereal dish to steady it, so he could read while he ate.

“Harold,” his mother stood in the kitchen doorway, “Harold, please don’t muss up the paper. Your father can’t read his *Star* if it’s been mussed.”

“I won’t muss it,” Krebs said.

His sister sat down at the table and watched him while he read.

“We’re playing indoor over at school this afternoon,” she said. “I’m going to pitch.”

“Good,” said Krebs. “How’s the old wing?”

“I can pitch better than lots of the boys. I tell them all you taught me. The other girls aren’t much good.”

“Yeah?” said Krebs.

“I tell them all you’re my beau. Aren’t you my beau, Hare?”

“You bet.”

"Couldn't your brother really be your beau just because he's your brother?"

"I don't know."

"Sure you know. Couldn't you be my beau, Hare, if I was old enough and if you wanted to?"

"Sure. You're my girl now."

"Am I really your girl?"

"Sure."

"Do you love me?"

"Uh, huh."

"Will you love me always?"

"Sure."

"Will you come over and watch me play indoor?"

"Maybe."

"Aw, Hare, you don't love me. If you loved me, you'd want to come over and watch me play indoor."

Krebs's mother came into the dining-room from the kitchen. She carried a plate with two fried eggs and some crisp bacon on it and a plate of buckwheat cakes.

"You run along, Helen," she said. "I want to talk to Harold."

She put the eggs and bacon down in front of him and brought in a jug of maple syrup for the buckwheat cakes. Then she sat down across the table from Krebs.

"I wish you'd put down the paper a minute, Harold," she said.

Krebs took down the paper and folded it.

"Have you decided what you are going to do yet, Harold?" his mother said, taking off her glasses.

"No," said Krebs.

"Don't you think it's about time?" His mother did not say this in a mean way. She seemed worried.

“I hadn’t thought about it,” Krebs said.

“God has some work for every one to do,” his mother said. “There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom.”

“I’m not in His Kingdom,” Krebs said.

“We are all of us in His Kingdom.”

Krebs felt embarrassed and resentful as always.

“I’ve worried about you too much, Harold,” his mother went on. “I know the temptations you must have been exposed to. I know how weak men are. I know what your own dear grandfather, my own father, told us about the Civil War and I have prayed for you. I pray for you all day long, Harold.”

Krebs looked at the bacon fat hardening on his plate.

“Your father is worried, too,” his mother went on. “He thinks you have lost your ambition, that you haven’t got a definite aim in life. Charley Simmons, who is just your age, has a good job and is going to be married. The boys are all settling down; they’re all determined to get somewhere; you can see that boys like Charley Simmons are on their way to being really a credit to the community.”

Krebs said nothing.

“Don’t look that way, Harold,” his mother said. “You know we love you and I want to tell you for your own good how matters stand. Your father does not want to hamper your freedom. He thinks you should be allowed to drive the car. If you want to take some of the nice girls out riding with you, we are only too pleased. We want you to enjoy yourself. But you are going to have to settle down to work, Harold. Your father doesn’t care what you start in at. All work is honorable as he says. But you’ve got to make a start at something. He asked me to speak to you this morning and then you can stop in and see him at his office.”

“Is that all?” Krebs said.

“Yes. Don’t you love your mother, dear boy?”

“No,” Krebs said.

His mother looked at him across the table. Her eyes were shiny. She started crying.

“I don’t love anybody,” Krebs said.

It wasn't any good. He couldn't tell her, he couldn't make her see it. It was silly to have said it. He had only hurt her. He went over and took hold of her arm. She was crying with her head in her hands.

"I didn't mean it," he said. "I was just angry at something. I didn't mean I didn't love you."

His mother went on crying. Krebs put his arm on her shoulder.

"Can't you believe me, mother?"

His mother shook her head.

"Please, please, mother. Please believe me."

"All right," his mother said chokily. She looked up at him. "I believe you, Harold."

Krebs kissed her hair. She put her face up to him.

"I'm your mother," she said. "I held you next to my heart when you were a tiny baby."

Krebs felt sick and vaguely nauseated.

"I know, Mummy," he said. "I'll try and be a good boy for you."

"Would you kneel and pray with me, Harold?" his mother asked.

They knelt down beside the dining-room table and Krebs's mother prayed.

"Now, you pray, Harold," she said.

"I can't," Krebs said.

"Try, Harold."

"I can't."

"Do you want me to pray for you?"

"Yes."

So his mother prayed for him and then they stood up and Krebs kissed his mother and went out of the house. He had tried so to keep his life from being complicated. Still, none of it had touched him. He had felt sorry for his mother and she had made him lie. He would go to Kansas City and get a job and she would feel all right about it. There would be one more scene maybe before he got away. He would not go down to his father's office. He would miss that one. He

wanted his life to go smoothly. It had just gotten going that way. Well, that was all over now, anyway. He would go over to the schoolyard and watch Helen play indoor baseball.

The Veteran

STEPHEN CRANE

Courage is a virtue needed both in war and at home—a truth explored by Stephen Crane (1871–1900) in his short story "The Veteran." Written as part of a contract with McClure Syndicate to capitalize on the success of Crane's Civil War novel, The Red Badge of Courage *(1895), the story revisits the book's eighteen-year-old protagonist, Henry Fleming, now an old man and grandfather.*

*How do the men in the grocery—and how does his grandson—regard the old man and the account of his war experience? Does the courage he displayed in battle have anything to do with the courage he displays in this story? Why is the story called "*The *Veteran," rather than "*A *Veteran"? How typical a veteran do you think the old man is? How does civil society benefit from the presence of veterans?*

Out of the low window could be seen three hickory trees placed irregularly in a meadow that was resplendent in springtime green. Farther away, the old, dismal belfry of the village church loomed over the pines. A horse meditating in the shade of one of the hickories lazily swished his tail. The warm sunshine made an oblong of vivid yellow on the floor of the grocery.

"Could you see the whites of their eyes?" said the man, who was seated on a soap box.

"Nothing of the kind," replied old Henry warmly. "Just a lot of flitting figures, and I let go at where they 'peared to be the thickest. Bang!"

"Mr. Fleming," said the grocer—his deferential voice expressed somehow the old man's exact social weight—"Mr. Fleming, you never was frightened much in them battles, was you?"

The veteran looked down and grinned. Observing his manner, the entire group tittered. "Well, I guess I was," he answered finally. "Pretty well scared, sometimes. Why, in my first battle I thought the sky was falling down. I thought the world was coming to an end. You bet I was scared."

Every one laughed. Perhaps it seemed strange and rather wonderful to them that a man should admit the thing, and in the tone of their laughter there was probably more admiration than if old Fleming had declared that he had always been a lion. Moreover, they knew that he had ranked as an orderly sergeant, and so their opinion of his heroism was fixed. None, to be sure, knew how an orderly sergeant ranked, but then it was understood to be somewhere just shy of a major general's stars. So, when old Henry admitted that he had been frightened, there was a laugh.

"The trouble was," said the old man, "I thought they were all shooting at me. Yes, sir, I thought every man in the other army was aiming at me in particular, and only me. And it seemed so darned unreasonable, you know. I wanted to explain to 'em what an almighty good fellow I

was, because I thought then they might quit all trying to hit me. But I couldn't explain, and they kept on being unreasonable—blim!—blam!—bang! So I run!"

Two little triangles of wrinkles appeared at the corners of his eyes. Evidently he appreciated some comedy in this recital. Down near his feet, however, little Jim, his grandson, was visibly horror-stricken. His hands were clasped nervously, and his eyes were wide with astonishment at this terrible scandal, his most magnificent grandfather telling such a thing.

"That was at Chancellorsville.[1] Of course, afterward I got kind of used to it. A man does. Lots of men, though, seem to feel all right from the start. I did, as soon as I 'got on to it,' as they say now; but at first I was pretty well flustered. Now, there was young Jim Conklin, old Si Conklin's son—that used to keep the tannery—you none of you recollect him—well, he went into it from the start just as if he was born to it. But with me it was different. I had to get used to it."

When little Jim walked with his grandfather he was in the habit of skipping along on the stone pavement, in front of the three stores and the hotel of the town, and betting that he could avoid the cracks. But upon this day he walked soberly, with his hand gripping two of his grandfather's fingers. Sometimes he kicked abstractedly at dandelions that curved over the walk. Any one could see that he was much troubled.

"There's Sickles's colt over in the medder, Jimmie," said the old man. "Don't you wish you owned one like him?"

"Um," said the boy, with a strange lack of interest. He continued his reflections. Then finally he ventured, "Grandpa—now—was that true what you was telling those men?"

"What?" asked the grandfather. "What was I telling them?"

"Oh, about your running."

"Why, yes, that was true enough, Jimmie. It was my first fight, and there was an awful lot of noise, you know."

Jimmie seemed dazed that this idol, of its own will, should so totter. His stout boyish idealism was injured.

Presently the grandfather said: "Sickles's colt is going for a drink. Don't you wish you owned Sickles's colt, Jimmie?"

The boy merely answered: "He ain't as nice as our'n." He lapsed then into another moody silence.

* * *

[1] *Chancellorsville, a major Civil War battle known as "Lee's greatest victory," was fought from May 1–4, 1863, twelve miles west of Fredericksburg in northern Virginia.*

One of the hired men, a Swede, desired to drive to the county seat for purposes of his own. The old man loaned a horse and an unwashed buggy. It appeared later that one of the purposes of the Swede was to get drunk.

After quelling some boisterous frolic of the farm hands and boys in the garret, the old man had that night gone peacefully to sleep, when he was aroused by clamouring at the kitchen door. He grabbed his trousers, and they waved out behind as he dashed forward. He could hear the voice of the Swede, screaming and blubbering. He pushed the wooden button, and, as the door flew open, the Swede, a maniac, stumbled inward, chattering, weeping, still screaming: "De barn fire! Fire! Fire! De barn fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!"

There was a swift and indescribable change in the old man. His face ceased instantly to be a face; it became a mask, a grey thing, with horror written about the mouth and eyes. He hoarsely shouted at the foot of the little rickety stairs, and immediately, it seemed, there came down an avalanche of men. No one knew that during this time the old lady had been standing in her night clothes at the bedroom door, yelling: "What's th' matter? What's th' matter? What's th' matter?"

When they dashed toward the barn it presented to their eyes its usual appearance, solemn, rather mystic in the black night. The Swede's lantern was overturned at a point some yards in front of the barn doors. It contained a wild little conflagration of its own, and even in their excitement some of those who ran felt a gentle secondary vibration of the thrifty part of their minds at sight of this overturned lantern. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been a calamity.

But the cattle in the barn were trampling, trampling, trampling, and above this noise could be heard a humming like the song of innumerable bees. The old man hurled aside the great doors, and a yellow flame leaped out at one corner and sped and wavered frantically up the old grey wall. It was glad, terrible, this single flame, like the wild banner of deadly and triumphant foes.

The motley crowd from the garret had come with all the pails of the farm. They flung themselves upon the well. It was a leisurely old machine, long dwelling in indolence. It was in the habit of giving out water with a sort of reluctance. The men stormed at it, cursed it; but it continued to allow the buckets to be filled only after the wheezy windlass had howled many protests at the mad-handed men.

With his opened knife in his hand old Fleming himself had gone headlong into the barn, where the stifling smoke swirled with the air currents, and where could be heard in its fulness the terrible chorus of the flames, laden with tones of hate and death, a hymn of wonderful ferocity.

He flung a blanket over an old mare's head, cut the halter close to the manger, led the mare to the door, and fairly kicked her out to safety. He returned with the same blanket, and rescued one of the work horses. He took five horses out, and then came out himself, with his clothes bravely on fire. He had no whiskers, and very little hair on his head. They soused five pailfuls of water on him. His eldest son made a clean miss with the sixth pailful, because the old man had turned and was running down the decline and around to the basement of the barn, where were the

stanchions of the cows. Some one noticed at the time that he ran very lamely, as if one of the frenzied horses had smashed his hip.

The cows, with their heads held in the heavy stanchions, had thrown themselves, strangled themselves, tangled themselves: done everything which the ingenuity of their exuberant fear could suggest to them.

Here, as at the well, the same thing happened to every man save one. Their hands went mad. They became incapable of everything save the power to rush into dangerous situations.

The old man released the cow nearest the door, and she, blind drunk with terror, crashed into the Swede. The Swede had been running to and fro babbling. He carried an empty milk pail, to which he clung with an unconscious, fierce enthusiasm. He shrieked like one lost as he went under the cow's hoofs, and the milk pail, rolling across the floor, made a flash of silver in the gloom.

Old Fleming took a fork, beat off the cow, and dragged the paralyzed Swede to the open air. When they had rescued all the cows save one, which had so fastened herself that she could not be moved an inch, they returned to the front of the barn and stood sadly, breathing like men who had reached the final point of human effort.

Many people had come running. Some one had even gone to the church, and now, from the distance, rang the tocsin[2] note of the old bell. There was a long flare of crimson on the sky, which made remote people speculate as to the whereabouts of the fire.

The long flames sang their drumming chorus in voices of the heaviest bass. The wind whirled clouds of smoke and cinders into the faces of the spectators. The form of the old barn was outlined in black amid these masses of orange-hued flames.

And then came this Swede again, crying as one who is the weapon of the sinister fates. "De colts! De colts! You have forgot de colts!"

Old Fleming staggered. It was true; they had forgotten the two colts in the box stalls at the back of the barn. "Boys," he said, "I must try to get 'em out." They clamoured about him then, afraid for him, afraid of what they should see. Then they talked wildly each to each. "Why, it's sure death!" "He would never get out!" "Why, it's suicide for a man to go in there!" Old Fleming stared absent-mindedly at the open doors. "The poor little things!" he said. He rushed into the barn.

When the roof fell in, a great funnel of smoke swarmed toward the sky, as if the old man's mighty spirit, released from its body—a little bottle—had swelled like the genie of fable. The smoke was tinted rose-hue from the flames, and perhaps the unutterable midnights of the universe will have no power to daunt the colour of this soul.

[2] *A warning signal or alarm*

The Artilleryman's Vision

WALT WHITMAN

In September 1861, five months after the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, Walter "Walt" Whitman (1819–1892) published his poem "Beat! Beat! Drums!" in Harper's Weekly, *urging Americans to take up the cause of the Union and join the war. The following year, he received news that his brother George was wounded in the Battle of Fredericksburg, and the poet set off to find him. Though his brother's wounds were minor, Whitman was profoundly affected by his interactions with the wounded soldiers, and for much of the war he served as a volunteer nurse in Washington, DC. According to a 1915 profile in the* Times Literary Supplement, *between 1862 and 1865, Whitman visited eighty to a hundred thousand sick and wounded soldiers, "comprehending all, slighting none. Rebel or compatriot, it made no difference. 'I loved the young man,' [the poet] cries again and again." This selection was published in 1865 in Whitman's first anthology of his Civil War poetry,* Drum-Taps.

In this poem and the next, Whitman speaks of the way memories of war haunt the peacetime lives of the returning Civil War veterans. Going carefully through the details of this artilleryman's nocturnal (but waking) vision, see if you can imagine how it makes him feel. Is he more frightened than excited? What does he mean by saying that the sound of cannon rouses "even in dreams, a devilish exultation, and all the old mad joy, in the depths of my soul"? How does battle remembered differ from battle experienced? Can a battle veteran ever be free from the memories of war?

While my wife at my side lies slumbering, and the wars are over long,
And my head on the pillow rests at home, and the vacant midnight passes,
And through the stillness, through the dark, I hear, just hear, the breath of my infant,
There in the room, as I wake from sleep, this vision presses upon me:
The engagement opens there and then, in fantasy unreal;
The skirmishers begin—they crawl cautiously ahead—I hear the irregular snap! snap!
I hear the sounds of the different missiles—the short *t-h-t! t-h-t!* of the rifle balls;
I see the shells exploding, leaving small white clouds—I hear the great shells shrieking as they pass;
The grape, like the hum and whirr of wind through the trees, (quick, tumultuous, now the contest rages!)
All the scenes at the batteries themselves rise in detail before me again;
The crashing and smoking—the pride of the men in their pieces;
The chief gunner ranges and sights his piece, and selects a fuse of the right time;
After firing, I see him lean aside, and look eagerly off to note the effect;
—Elsewhere I hear the cry of a regiment charging—(the young colonel leads himself this time, with brandish'd sword;)
I see the gaps cut by the enemy's volleys, (quickly fill'd up, no delay;)
I breathe the suffocating smoke—then the flat clouds hover low, concealing all;
Now a strange lull comes for a few seconds, not a shot fired on either side;
Then resumed, the chaos louder than ever, with eager calls, and orders of officers;

While from some distant part of the field the wind wafts to my ears a shout of applause, (some special success;)
And ever the sound of the cannon, far or near, (rousing, even in dreams, a devilish exultation, and all the old mad joy, in the depths of my soul;)
And ever the hastening of infantry shifting positions—batteries, cavalry, moving hither and thither;
(The falling, dying, I heed not—the wounded, dripping and red, I heed not—some to the rear are hobbling;)
Grime, heat, rush—aid-de-camps galloping by, or on a full run;
With the patter of small arms, the warning *s*-*s*-*t* of the rifles, (these in my vision I hear or see,)
And bombs bursting in air, and at night the vari-color’d rockets.

Old War-Dreams

WALT WHITMAN

As in his previous poem, in this selection by Walt Whitman, published in Sequel to Drum-Taps *(1865), a veteran speaks about his remembrances of war, this time as they fill his dreams. Of what precisely does he dream? What is the connection between his dreams of the mortally wounded and newly dead (stanza one) and his dreams of scenes of nature, of beauteous sky and shining moon (stanza two)? What, according to this poem (stanza three), is the relation between battle experienced and battle remembered? Can battle veterans ever be entirely back home again?*

In midnight sleep of many a face of anguish,
Of the look at first of the mortally wounded, (of that indescribable look,)
Of the dead on their backs with arms extended wide,
    I dream, I dream, I dream.

Of scenes of Nature, fields and mountains,
Of skies so beauteous after a storm, and at night the moon so unearthly bright,
Shining sweetly, shining down, where we dig the trenches and gather the heaps,
    I dream, I dream, I dream.

Long have they pass'd, faces and trenches and fields,
Where through the carnage I moved with a callous composure, or away from the fallen,
Onward I sped at the time—but now of their forms at night,
    I dream, I dream, I dream.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation

WALT WHITMAN

This 1865 poem by Walt Whitman, unlike the previous two, dwells not on concrete details of battlefield experience remembered, but on larger philosophical and religious themes of purification, reconciliation, and redemption. What is the "Word over all" that the speaker invokes at the beginning of the poem? What does the speaker find "beautiful" regarding the carnage of war and "this soil'd world"? What is the connection between those thoughts and the sight of his enemy in the coffin? How does he regard that enemy now, and why? What, according to this poem, makes reconciliation possible?

Word over all, beautiful as the sky!
Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in time be utterly lost;
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night, incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world:
. . . For my enemy is dead—a man divine as myself is dead;
I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin—I draw near;
I bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

The Day the Civil War Ended

BRUCE CATTON

Bruce Catton (1899–1978) was one of the most-read Civil War historians. His fascination with the Civil War began in Benzonia, Michigan, where he grew up with Civil War veterans, whose stories "gave a color and a tone, not merely to our village life, but to the concept of life with which we grew up." In 1916, he began attending Oberlin College, but left without completing a degree to serve in World War I. He was fifty years old when he began the first of his thirteen books on the Civil War, winning both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for the final volume of his trilogy on the Army of the Potomac, A Stillness at Appomattox *(1953). He was also the founding editor of* American Heritage*, where this article was published in 1978.*

What, according to Catton's account, is the meaning of commemorating and reenacting the battle of Gettysburg fifty years later? Why does he regard what happened on July 3, 1913, as the conclusion of the battle fought fifty years earlier? What made possible the reconciliation at the end of the reenactment? Can one generalize this experience of Civil War veterans? What does it take for soldiers to become reconciled with those against whom they had previously fought?

The most dramatic and tragic moment of the American Civil War was the climactic point of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg on the afternoon of July 3,1863. This doomed assault brought the Southern Confederacy to what looked like the verge of triumph, broke up in dust and fire, and put the armies on the road that led inevitably to the surrender field at Appomattox. Nothing in all the war has been written about so exhaustively.

For a slightly different angle, begin with the familiar setting: Union infantry and guns massed on Cemetery Ridge, boiling smoke clouds brimming the shallow valley in front, shadowy movement all along the milewide stretch of woodland on Seminary Ridge a mile to the west—then the smoke drifts away as the bombardment stops, and out on the open ridge step Pickett's fifteen thousand, lining up with military formality, sunlight glinting from rifle barrels and bayonets as the men dress ranks for the advance. And finally the charge begins, disciplined thousands crossing the open field to meet the disciplined defenders in blue, breaking out at last in the wild, nerve-tingling Rebel yell as they come within close range, and the men in blue level their rifles to shoot them down. . . .

Before they fire, skip fifty years to July of 1913 to see the conclusion.

In 1913 the government arranged for a joint North-South commemoration of the battle of Gettysburg. Not all the wounds left by the Civil War had healed entirely—civil wars cut deep—but at least the country had recognized itself as one nation forever more, and 1913 seemed like a good time to make a public demonstration of the fact. So various keepers of documents were called on to supply names and addresses of surviving veterans of the battle, and such veterans as were able and willing to attend were invited to return to Gettysburg at no cost to themselves and see what battlefield and antagonists looked like half a century later. A big tent city was laid out on the field, complete with hospital tents, doctors, and ambulances—after all, when you hold an outdoor convention of seventy-year-olds with a lot of walking around and a powerful emotional

strain, you are apt to have a few casualties—and there were bakeries, kitchens, dining tents, and all manner of conveniences these men had lacked on their first visit to the place. Several thousand veterans showed up.

So did the tourists, who came in swarms, along with the people who make a living by going where tourists are. Among these latter were photographers—what tourist could fail to buy on the spot pictures of the old-timers, especially when he himself could get into the scene?—and to our good fortune one of these cameramen hired as an assistant an eighteen-year-old college man-on-vacation named Philip Myers. Not long ago Mr. Myers wrote down his recollections of the great event.

"We went to Gettysburg late in June," he wrote, "but by the time we arrived the town was overflowing with thousands of visitors. We considered ourselves fortunate to bivouac in the haymow of a barn on the edge of town." This photographer took Devil's Den for his base of operations, and a day of scrambling up and down the ponderous rocks in this area left the young collegian very tired at nightfall. But somehow it was impossible to go to bed; every night the two men sat in the door of the haymow and looked out at the tented city. Mr. Myers recalled it:

"One by one the lights in the tents were extinguished, the singing ceased and an eerie calm embraced the encampment. A brilliant moon created soft radiance as, at eleven o'clock, a bugler at nearby headquarters broke the silence with the hauntingly melancholy notes of Taps. When the last plaintive notes of that somber call had faded, he was followed by another trumpeter farther off, then by another still more remote, and another, until it was impossible to tell if the notes we heard were real or imaginary."

Between the tourists and the veterans themselves the photographer and his helper put in a full day every day (and were the rest of the summer clearing up the backlog of developing and printing). There were two shots in particular that Mr. Myers remembered.

One was a cigar-smoking Yankee veteran who held his hand to his cheek while drawing on his stogie. Mr. Myers protested that this spoiled the photo by hiding most of his face, and the veteran explained. He himself had been on Little Round Top during the battle, but here he was in Devil's Den, because "I want to see where that so-and-so who shot me must've been standin'. . . ." He went on:

"I'm a-fightin' and a-yellin' at the top of my lungs, when his bullet come along an' catches me right in my mouth. But what with yellin' my mouth is wide open, so it misses my teeth an' comes outta my cheek. An' when it heals, it don't close up tight. There is still a little hole there. If I don't plug it with my finger I don't get no draft on my smoke." He took a deep puff and with lips tightly pursed blew smoke out through his cheek.

Mr. Myers' other memorable picture came once when he was making the favorite shot—a Yank and a Reb standing with arms intertwined. ("I must have made a thousand exposures of it.") A tall, stately Confederate with a great shock of wintry hair called two Union veterans to his side, placed his arms on their shoulders, and demanded a photograph. The photographer

remarked that the big campaign hats shaded their faces and suggested that they take off their hats. The men complied, and the Reb ran his fingers through his hair.

“Son,” he said to the cameraman with a courtly bow, “fifty years ago it was the blue and gray. Now it’s all gray.”

Unfortunately, almost all the pictures this photographer made have disappeared in the years since the reunion. . . .Although relations between former foes were harmonious, serious arguments did develop here and there.

“One of the more serious ones took place in a restaurant near the Jennie Wade House,” wrote Mr. Myers. “After violent words had been exchanged across the table, a Reb and a Yank had at each other, not with bayonets this time, but with forks. Unscathed in the melee of 1863, one of them—and I never learned whether North or South—was almost fatally wounded in 1913 with table hardware!”

Incidentally, Mr. Myers had feared that a good many of the old veterans would die during the encampment. The Army Quartermaster Corps apparently felt the same way, for it was reported to have stockpiled a considerable number of coffins. Fortunately, hardly any of these were needed. Old soldiers apparently are a tough breed.

. . . and we come at last to the afternoon of July 3, and the great re-enactment of Pickett’s charge, with thousands on thousands of spectators gathered all about, Union veterans on Cemetery Ridge, Southern veterans on Seminary Ridge to the west. Out of the woods came the Southerners, just as beforewell, in some ways just as before. They came out more slowly this time, and Mr. Myers saw a dramatic difference: “We could see, not rifles and bayonets, but canes and crutches. We soon could distinguish the more agile ones aiding those less able to maintain their places in the ranks.”

Nearer they came, until finally they raised that frightening falsetto scream. “As the Rebel yell broke out after a half century of silence, a moan, a gigantic sigh, a gasp of unbelief, rose from the onlookers.”

So “Pickett’s men” came on, getting close at last, throwing that defiant yell up at the stone wall and the clump of trees and the ghosts of the past.

“It was then,” wrote Mr. Myers, “that the Yankees, unable to restrain themselves longer, burst from behind the stone wall, and flung themselves upon their former enemies. The emotion of the moment was so contagious that there was scarcely a dry eye in the huge throng. Now they fell upon each other—not in mortal combat, but re-united in brotherly love and affection.”

The Civil War was over.

3

Honoring Veterans, Their Deeds, and Their Services

Public Recognition

The Veteran

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

The son of two escaped slaves from Kentucky, Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906) was a prolific poet, novelist, and playwright, authoring a dozen books of poetry, five novels, four books of stories, and a play that successfully toured on Broadway and in England for four years. Growing up in Dayton, Ohio, he was the only African-American at his high school (at which he served as class president), and he showed an early interest in literature and poetry, publishing two poems in the local Herald *newspaper while still in high school. His father fought in the Civil War, serving in the Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts Infantry Regiment and the Fifth Massachusetts Colored Cavalry Regiment. Though Dunbar wrote many of his poems in African-American dialect, this poem, first published in* Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow *(1905), is written in a more traditional style.*

In many cities and towns across the United States, parades of surviving veterans were, from the beginning, central events in the commemoration of Veterans Day. How does the poet regard the aged veterans marching in the (probably Veterans Day) parade? Why, and in what spirit, do they march? What does the poet mean by calling this "memory at its best"? Why is he saddened by the sight of the veteran unable to join the march? In general, what does this poem suggest about the meaning of Veterans Day reunions and parades? How does it make you *feel—and how* should *you feel—toward the parading veterans?*

Underneath the autumn sky,
Haltingly, the lines go by.
Ah, would steps were blithe and gay,
As when first they marched away,
Smile on lip and curl on brow,—
Only white-faced gray-beards now,
Standing on life's outer verge,
E'en the marches sound a dirge.

Blow, you bugles, play, you fife,
Rattle, drums, for dearest life.
Let the flags wave freely so,
As the marching legions go,
Shout, hurrah and laugh and jest,
This is memory at its best.
(Did you notice at your quip,
That old comrade's quivering lip?)

Ah, I see them as they come,
Stumbling with the rumbling drum;
But a sight more sad to me
E'en than these ranks could be
Was that one with cane upraised

Who stood by and gazed and gazed,
Trembling, solemn, lips compressed,
Longing to be with the rest.

Did he dream of old alarms,
As he stood, “presented arms”?
Did he think of field and camp
And the unremitting tramp
Mile on mile—the lonely guard
When he kept his midnight ward?
Did he dream of wounds and scars
In that bitter war of wars?

What of that? He stood and stands
In my memory—trembling hands,
Whitened beard and cane and all
As if waiting for the call
Once again: “To arms, my sons,”
And his ears hear far-off guns,
Roll of cannon and the tread
Of the legions of the Dead!

Duty, Honor, Country

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) served his country as a soldier for more than sixty years. He found his fame as the commander who led America's withdrawal from the Philippines with the words "I shall return"—a promise he would fulfill. For his leadership in the defense of the Philippines, MacArthur was awarded the Medal of Honor, making him and his father Arthur MacArthur Jr. the first father-son pair to be awarded the nation's highest military honor. In 1951, after President Harry S. Truman relieved him of command in Korea, MacArthur famously bid the American people farewell: "like the old soldier of [the West Point ballad], I now close my military career and just fade away, an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty."

Ten years later, in 1962, MacArthur was honored by the West Point Association of Graduates with the Sylvanus Thayer Award, given "to an outstanding citizen of the United States whose service and accomplishments in the national interest exemplify personal devotion to the ideals expressed in the West Point motto, "DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY." Delivered before 2,100 cadets, both the occasion and MacArthur's speech emphasize the importance of honor, not only as a reward but also as a guiding principle of worthy service. What exactly do each of the ideas of duty, honor, and country mean—to MacArthur, and to you? What, according to MacArthur, does adherence to this code produce in the human beings who are devoted to it? Does it explain why they fight or why we honor them? How does MacArthur—and how do you—view the relationship between citizen and soldier? How can citizens best honor the service of veterans?

General Westmoreland, General Grove, distinguished guests, and gentlemen of the Corps:

As I was leaving the hotel this morning, a doorman asked me, "Where are you bound for, General?" and when I replied, "West Point," he remarked, "Beautiful place. Have you ever been there before?"

No human being could fail to be deeply moved by such a tribute as this [Thayer Award]. Coming from a profession I have served so long, and a people I have loved so well, it fills me with an emotion I cannot express. But this award is not intended primarily to honor a personality, but to symbolize a great moral code—the code of conduct and chivalry of those who guard this beloved land of culture and ancient descent. That is the meaning of this medallion. For all eyes and for all time, it is an expression of the ethics of the American soldier. That I should be integrated in this way with so noble an ideal arouses a sense of pride and yet of humility which will be with me always.

Duty—Honor—Country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying points: to build courage when courage seems to fail; to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith; to create hope when hope becomes forlorn. Unhappily, I possess neither that eloquence of diction, that poetry of imagination, nor that brilliance of metaphor to tell you all that they mean. The unbelievers will

say they are but words, but a slogan, but a flamboyant phrase. Every pedant, every demagogue, every cynic, every hypocrite, every troublemaker, and, I am sorry to say, some others of an entirely different character, will try to downgrade them even to the extent of mockery and ridicule. But these are some of the things they do. They build your basic character, they mold you for your future roles as custodians of the nation's defense, they make you strong enough to know when you are weak, and brave enough to face yourself when you are afraid. They teach you to be proud and unbending in honest failure, but humble and gentle in success; not to substitute words for actions, not to seek the path of comfort, but to face the stress and spur of difficulty and challenge; to learn to stand up in the storm but to have compassion on those who fall; to master yourself before you seek to master others; to have a heart that is clean, a goal that is high; to learn to laugh yet never forget how to weep; to reach into the future yet never neglect the past; to be serious yet never to take yourself too seriously; to be modest so that you will remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength. They give you a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions, a freshness of the deep springs of life, a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, an appetite for adventure over love of ease. They create in your heart the sense of wonder, the unfailing hope of what next, and the joy and inspiration of life. They teach you in this way to be an officer and a gentleman.

And what sort of soldiers are those you are to lead? Are they reliable, are they brave, are they capable of victory? Their story is known to all of you; it is the story of the American man-at-arms. My estimate of him was formed on the battlefield many, many years ago, and has never changed. I regarded him then as I regard him now—as one of the world's noblest figures, not only as one of the finest military characters but also as one of the most stainless. His name and fame are the birthright of every American citizen. In his youth and strength, his love and loyalty he gave—all that mortality can give. He needs no eulogy from me or from any other man. He has written his own history and written it in red on his enemy's breast. But when I think of his patience under adversity, of his courage under fire, and of his modesty in victory, I am filled with an emotion of admiration I cannot put into words. He belongs to history as furnishing one of the greatest examples of successful patriotism; he belongs to posterity as the instructor of future generations in the principles of liberty and freedom; he belongs to the present, to us, by his virtues and by his achievements. In twenty campaigns, on a hundred battlefields, around a thousand campfires, I have witnessed that enduring fortitude, that patriotic self-abnegation, and that invincible determination which have carved his statue in the hearts of his people. From one end of the world to the other he has drained deep the chalice of courage.

As I listened to those songs of the glee club, in memory's eye I could see those staggering columns of the First World War, bending under soggy packs, on many a weary march from dripping dusk to drizzling dawn, slogging ankle-deep through the mire of shell-shocked roads, to form grimly for the attack, blue-lipped, covered with sludge and mud, chilled by the wind and rain; driving home to their objective, and, for many, to the judgment seat of God. I do not know the dignity of their birth, but I do know the glory of their death. They died unquestioning, uncomplaining, with faith in their hearts, and on their lips the hope that we would go on to victory. Always, for them—Duty—Honor—Country; always their blood and sweat and tears as we sought the way and the light and the truth.

And twenty years after, on the other side of the globe, again the filth of murky foxholes, the stench of ghostly trenches, the slime of dripping dugouts; those boiling suns of relentless heat, those torrential rains of devastating storms; the loneliness and utter desolation of jungle trails, the bitterness of long separation from those they loved and cherished, the deadly pestilence of tropical disease, the horror of stricken areas of war; their resolute and determined defense, their swift and sure attack, their indomitable purpose, their complete and decisive victory—always victory. Always through the bloody haze of their last reverberating shot, the vision of gaunt, ghastly men reverently following your password of Duty—Honor—Country.

The code which those words perpetuate embraces the highest moral laws and will stand the test of any ethics or philosophies ever promulgated for the uplift of mankind. Its requirements are for the things that are right, and its restraints are from the things that are wrong. The soldier, above all other men, is required to practice the greatest act of religious training—sacrifice. In battle and in the face of danger and death, he discloses those divine attributes which his Maker gave when he created man in his own image. No physical courage and no brute instinct can take the place of the Divine help which alone can sustain him. However horrible the incidents of war may be, the soldier who is called upon to offer and to give his life for his country is the noblest development of mankind.

You now face a new world—a world of change. The thrust into outer space of the satellites, spheres and missiles marked the beginning of another epoch in the long story of mankind—the chapter of the space age. In the five or more billions of years the scientists tell us it has taken to form the earth, in the three or more billion years of development of the human race, there has never been a more abrupt or staggering evolution. We deal now not with things of this world alone, but with the illimitable distances and as yet unfathomed mysteries of the universe. We are reaching out for a new and boundless frontier. We speak in strange terms: of harnessing the cosmic energy; of making winds and tides work for us; of creating unheard synthetic materials to supplement or even replace our old standard basics; to purifying sea water for our drink; of mining ocean floors for new fields of wealth and food; of disease preventatives to expand life into the hundreds of years; of controlling the weather for a more equitable distribution of heat and cold, of rain and shine; of space ships to the moon; of the primary target in war, no longer limited to the armed forces of an enemy, but instead to include his civil populations; of ultimate conflict between a united human race and the sinister forces of some other planetary galaxy; of such dreams and fantasies as to make life the most exciting of all time.

And through all this welter of change and development, your mission remains fixed, determined, inviolable—it is to win our wars. Everything else in your professional career is but corollary to this vital dedication. All other public purposes, all other public projects, all other public needs, great or small, will find others for their accomplishment; but you are the ones who are trained to fight: yours is the profession of arms—the will to win, the sure knowledge that in war there is no substitute for victory; that if you lose, the nation will be destroyed; that the very obsession of your public service must be Duty—Honor—Country. Others will debate the controversial issues, national and international, which divide men's minds; but serene, calm, aloof, you stand as the nation's war-guardian, as its lifeguard from the raging tides of international conflict, as its gladiator in the arena of battle. For a century and a half you have defended, guarded, and protected its hallowed traditions of liberty and freedom, of right and

justice. Let civilian voices argue the merits or demerits of our processes of government; whether our strength is being sapped by deficit financing, indulged in too long, by federal paternalism grown too mighty, by power groups grown too arrogant, by politics grown too corrupt, by crime grown too rampant, by morals grown too low, by taxes grown too high, by extremists grown too violent; whether our personal liberties are as thorough and complete as they should be. These great national problems are not for your professional participation or military solution. Your guidepost stands out like a ten-fold beacon in the night—Duty—Honor—Country.

You are the leaven which binds together the entire fabric of our national system of defense. From your ranks come the great captains who hold the nation’s destiny in their hands the moment the war tocsin sounds. The Long Gray Line has never failed us. Were you to do so, a million ghosts in olive drab, in brown khaki, in blue and gray, would rise from their white crosses thundering those magic words—Duty—Honor—Country.

This does not mean that you are war mongers. On the contrary, the soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war. But always in our ears ring the ominous words of Plato, that wisest of all philosophers, “Only the dead have seen the end of war.”

The shadows are lengthening for me. The twilight is here. My days of old have vanished tone and tint; they have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were. Their memory is one of wondrous beauty, watered by tears, and coaxed and caressed by the smiles of yesterday. I listen vainly for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll. In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry, the strange, mournful mutter of the battlefield.

But in the evening of my memory, always I come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes—Duty—Honor—Country.

Today marks my final roll call with you, but I want you to know that when I cross the river my last conscious thoughts will be of The Corps, and The Corps, and The Corps.

I bid you farewell.

Speech on the Fortieth Anniversary of D-Day

RONALD REAGAN

On June 6, 1944, the largest amphibious assault in history began as 160,000 Allied troops and nearly 200,000 naval personnel controlling over 5,000 vessels commenced the D-Day beach landings at Normandy, France, as part of Operation Overlord. As part of the invasion plan, US Army Rangers under Lieutenant Colonel James Rudder were given the task of destroying a German-controlled artillery installation atop Pointe du Hoc, situated between the Allied landing zones on Utah Beach and Omaha Beach. To reach the guns (which the Germans had actually moved a few miles away before the attack began), the Rangers scaled the cliffs with rope ladders while being attacked by the German defenders. Once atop the cliffs, the Rangers, isolated from the rest of the Allied forces and outnumbered by the Germans, proceeded to fend off several counterattacks, though at a costly price: by the time the Rangers were relieved by other Allied forces on June 7, the landing force of 225 soldiers had been reduced to about 90 men who were still able to fight.

Although not given to commemorate Veterans Day, this speech by President Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) on the fortieth anniversary of the invasion of Normandy, delivered on the very spot that the invasion began to an audience of D-Day veterans and heads of state, is a most moving tribute to those who fought to defend their country, liberate the victims of tyranny, and advance the principles of freedom and democracy throughout the world. In the middle of the speech, Reagan, specifically addressing the D-Day veterans, asks about why *they had fought. What answers does he give? What lessons does he draw from their service and the cause for which they had fought forty years ago? How does he propose that we honor their service going forward?*

We're here to mark that day in history when the Allied armies joined in battle to reclaim this continent to liberty. For four long years, much of Europe had been under a terrible shadow. Free nations had fallen, Jews cried out in the camps, millions cried out for liberation. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here, in Normandy, the rescue began. Here, the Allies stood and fought against tyranny, in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.

We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. The air is soft, but forty years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, and the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon. At dawn, on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 Rangers jumped off the British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission was one of the most difficult and daring of the invasion: to climb these sheer and desolate cliffs and take out the enemy guns. The Allies had been told that some of the mightiest of these guns were here, and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers at the edge of the cliffs, shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and began to pull themselves up. When one Ranger fell, another would take his place. When one rope was cut, a Ranger would grab another

and begin his climb again. They climbed, shot back, and held their footing. Soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top, and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs, they began to seize back the continent of Europe. Two hundred and twenty-five came here. After two days of fighting, only ninety could still bear arms.

Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there. These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war. Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem. You are men who in your "lives fought for life and left the vivid air signed with your honor."

I think I know what you may be thinking right now—thinking "we were just part of a bigger effort; everyone was brave that day." Well, everyone was. Do you remember the story of Bill Millin of the 51st Highlanders? Forty years ago today, British troops were pinned down near a bridge, waiting desperately for help. Suddenly, they heard the sound of bagpipes, and some thought they were dreaming. Well, they weren't. They looked up and saw Bill Millin with his bagpipes, leading the reinforcements and ignoring the smack of the bullets into the ground around him.

Lord Lovat was with him—Lord Lovat of Scotland, who calmly announced when he got to the bridge, "Sorry, I'm a few minutes late," as if he'd been delayed by a traffic jam, when in truth he'd just come from the bloody fighting on Sword Beach, which he and his men had just taken.

There was the impossible valor of the Poles who threw themselves between the enemy and the rest of Europe as the invasion took hold, and the unsurpassed courage of the Canadians who had already seen the horrors of war on this coast. They knew what awaited them there, but they would not be deterred. And once they hit Juno Beach, they never looked back.

All of these men were part of a roll call of honor with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore: the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England's armored divisions, the forces of Free France, the Coast Guard's "Matchbox Fleet," and you, the American Rangers.

Forty summers have passed since the battle that you fought here. You were young the day you took these cliffs; some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you. Yet, you risked everything here. Why? Why did you do it? What impelled you to put aside the instinct for self-preservation and risk your lives to take these cliffs? What inspired all the men of the armies that met here? We look at you, and somehow we know the answer. It was faith and belief. It was loyalty and love.

The men of Normandy had faith that what they were doing was right, faith that they fought for all humanity, faith that a just God would grant them mercy on this beachhead, or on the next. It was the deep knowledge—and pray God we have not lost it—that there is a profound, moral difference between the use of force for liberation and the use of force for conquest. You were

here to liberate, not to conquer, and so you and those others did not doubt your cause. And you were right not to doubt.

You all knew that some things are worth dying for. One's country is worth dying for, and democracy is worth dying for, because it's the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. All of you loved liberty. All of you were willing to fight tyranny, and you knew the people of your countries were behind you.

The Americans who fought here that morning knew word of the invasion was spreading through the darkness back home. They fought—or felt in their hearts, though they couldn't know in fact, that in Georgia they were filling the churches at 4 a.m., in Kansas they were kneeling on their porches and praying, and in Philadelphia they were ringing the Liberty Bell.

Something else helped the men of D-day: their rock-hard belief that Providence would have a great hand in the events that would unfold here; that God was an ally in this great cause. And so, the night before the invasion, when Colonel Wolverton asked his parachute troops to kneel with him in prayer, he told them: Do not bow your heads, but look up so you can see God and ask His blessing in what we're about to do. Also that night, General Matthew Ridgway on his cot, listening in the darkness for the promise God made to Joshua: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

These are the things that impelled them; these are the things that shaped the unity of the Allies.

When the war was over, there were lives to be rebuilt and governments to be returned to the people. There were nations to be reborn. Above all, there was a new peace to be assured. These were huge and daunting tasks. But the Allies summoned strength from the faith, belief, loyalty, and love of those who fell here. They rebuilt a new Europe together. There was first a great reconciliation among those who had been enemies, all of whom had suffered so greatly. The United States did its part, creating the Marshall Plan to help rebuild our allies and our former enemies. The Marshall Plan led to the Atlantic alliance—a great alliance that serves to this day as our shield for freedom, for prosperity, and for peace.

In spite of our great efforts and successes, not all that followed the end of the war was happy or planned. Some liberated countries were lost. The great sadness of this loss echoes down to our own time in the streets of Warsaw, Prague, and East Berlin. Soviet troops that came to the center of this continent did not leave when peace came. They're still there, uninvited, unwanted, unyielding, almost forty years after the war. Because of this, allied forces still stand on this continent. Today, as forty years ago, our armies are here for only one purpose: to protect and defend democracy. The only territories we hold are memorials like this one and graveyards where our heroes rest.

We in America have learned bitter lessons from two World Wars: It is better to be here ready to protect the peace, than to take blind shelter across the sea, rushing to respond only after freedom is lost. We've learned that isolationism never was and never will be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with an expansionist intent. But we try always to be prepared

for peace, prepared to deter aggression, prepared to negotiate the reduction of arms, and, yes, prepared to reach out again in the spirit of reconciliation. In truth, there is no reconciliation we would welcome more than a reconciliation with the Soviet Union, so, together, we can lessen the risks of war, now and forever.

It’s fitting to remember here the great losses also suffered by the Russian people during World War II: 20 million perished, a terrible price that testifies to all the world the necessity of ending war. I tell you from my heart that we in the United States do not want war. We want to wipe from the face of the Earth the terrible weapons that man now has in his hands. And I tell you, we are ready to seize that beachhead. We look for some sign from the Soviet Union that they are willing to move forward, that they share our desire and love for peace, and that they will give up the ways of conquest. There must be a changing there that will allow us to turn our hope into action.

We will pray forever that some day that changing will come. But for now, particularly today, it is good and fitting to renew our commitment to each other, to our freedom, and to the alliance that protects it.

We are bound today by what bound us forty years ago, the same loyalties, traditions, and beliefs. We’re bound by reality. The strength of America’s allies is vital to the United States, and the American security guarantee is essential to the continued freedom of Europe’s democracies. We were with you then; we are with you now. Your hopes are our hopes, and your destiny is our destiny.

Here, in this place where the West held together, let us make a vow to our dead. Let us show them by our actions that we understand what they died for. Let our actions say to them the words for which Matthew Ridgway listened: “I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.”

Strengthened by their courage, heartened by their valor and borne by their memory, let us continue to stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you very much, and God bless you all.

Between Parents and Children

Kid MacArthur

STEPHANIE VAUGHN

The daughter of a career army officer and raised in the United States, the Philippines, and Italy, Stephanie Vaughn (b. 1943) is a teacher of writing at Cornell University. She began writing short stories for the New Yorker *and other publications in the late 1970s, winning both the Pushcart and O. Henry awards. "Kid MacArthur," an (excerpted) account of growing up in an Army family, was first published in the* New Yorker *in 1984 and later printed in her 1990 short story collection,* Sweet Talk.

How does the experience of war affect the peacetime attitudes and practices of returning veterans, especially toward their families? What hopes and aspirations do they have for their children? What lessons about guns, war, and life is this career Army father teaching his ten-year-old son? What is the boy learning from his veteran father? Why does he name his boy for the World War II hero General Douglas MacArthur? To what extent do you think this story is generalizable?

I grew up in the Army. About the only kind of dove I ever saw was a dead dove resting small-boned upon a dinner plate. Even though we were Protestants and Bible readers, no one regarded the dove sentimentally as a symbol of peace—the bird who had flown back to Noah carrying the olive branch, as if to say, "The land is green again, come back to the land." When I was thirteen, my family moved to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, only a few weeks before the dove-hunting season opened. My father, who liked to tinker with guns on weekends, sat down at the dining-room table one Saturday and unwrapped a metal device called the Lombreglia Self-Loader. The Self-Loader was a crimping mechanism that enabled a person to assemble shotgun ammunition at home. "Save Money and Earn Pleasure," the box label said. "For the Self-Reliant Sportsman Who Wants to Do the Job Right!"

"If you can learn to handle this," my father said, "you can load my shells for me when the hunting season arrives." He was addressing my brother, MacArthur, who was ten years old. We pulled up chairs to the table, while my mother and grandmother remained near the light of the kitchen door. My father delivered a little lecture on the percussive action of the firing pin as he set out the rest of the loading equipment—empty red cartridges, cardboard wads, brass caps, a bowl of gunpowder, and several bowls of lead shot. He spoke in his officer's briefing-room voice—a voice that seemed to say, "This will be a difficult mission, soldier, but I know you are up to the mark." MacArthur seemed to grow taller listening to that voice, his spine perfectly erect as he helped align the equipment in the center of the table. My father finished the lecture by explaining that the smallest-size shot was best for dove or quail, the medium size was best for duck or rabbit, and the largest size was best for goose or wild turkey.

"And which size shot is best for humans?" my grandmother said. She did not disapprove of guns, but she could rarely pass up a chance to say something sharp to my father. My grandmother was a member of the WCTU [Women's Christian Temperance Union], and he was conducting this lesson in between sips of a scotch-and-soda.

"It depends," my father said. "It depends on whether you want to eat the person afterward."

"Well, ha, ha," my grandmother said.

"It is a lot of work trying to prize small shot out of a large body," my father said.

"Very funny," my grandmother said.

My father turned to MacArthur and grew serious. "Never forget that a gun is always loaded."

MacArthur nodded.

"And what else?" my father said to MacArthur.

"Never point a gun at someone unless you mean to kill him," MacArthur said.

"Excuse me," my mother said, moving near the table. "Are you sure all of this is quite safe?" Her hands wavered above the bowl of gunpowder.

"That's right," my grandmother said. "Couldn't something blow up here?"

My father and MacArthur seemed to have been hoping for this question. They led us outside for a demonstration, MacArthur following behind my father with the bowl of powder and a box of matches. "Gunpowder is not like gasoline in a tank," my father said. He ripped a line of powder onto the sidewalk.

"It's not like wheat in a silo, either," MacArthur said, handing the matches to my father.

"Everybody stand back," my father said as he touched a match to the powder. It flared up with a hiss and gave off a stream of pungent smoke.

We watched the white smoke curl into the branches of our pecan tree, and then my grandmother said, "Well, it surely is a pleasure to learn that the house can burn down without blowing up."

Even my father laughed. On the way back into the house, he grew magnanimous and said to me, "You can learn to load shells, too, you know."

"No, thanks," I said. "My destiny is with the baton." I was practicing to be a majorette. It was the white tasseled boots I was after, and the pink lipstick. Years later, a woman friend, seeing a snapshot of me in the white-braided costume, a sort of paramilitary outfit with ruffles, said, "What a waste of your youth, what a corruption of your womanhood." Today, when I contemplate my wasted youth and corrupted womanhood, I recall that when I left high school I went to college. When MacArthur left high school, he went to war.

Sacred Ground
from *Flags of Our Fathers*

JAMES BRADLEY (WITH RON POWERS)

James Bradley (b. 1954) spent four years of his life seeking and writing about the true account of a famous event in World War II in which his father had participated but about which he had never spoken: the flag-raising on Iwo Jima. Captured in an iconic photograph on February 23, 1945, the flag-raising occurred during one of the bloodiest battles of World War II's Pacific Theater. Its story became the subject of Bradley's 2000 bestselling book Flags of Our Fathers.

Why do you think John Bradley, after the war, never told anyone about the "the happiest moment of my life"? What do you think of him for keeping silent? What do you think of his son for "breaking" his silence? Many returning veterans choose not to speak about their war experiences. How, then, can family and friends properly honor their service? Given "the history you don't know," what do you need to do to pay proper tribute to America's veterans? Can stories like this help?

The only thing new in the world is the history you don't know.
—Harry Truman

In the spring of 1998, six boys called to me from half a century ago on a distant mountain and I went there. For a few days I set aside my comfortable life—my business concerns, my life in Rye, New York—and made a pilgrimage to the other side of the world, to a primitive flyspeck island in the Pacific. There, waiting for me, was the mountain the boys had climbed in the midst of a terrible battle half a century earlier. One of them was my father. The mountain was called Suribachi; the island, Iwo Jima.

The fate of the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries was being forged in blood on that island and others like it. The combatants, on either side, were kids—kids who had mostly come of age in cultures that resembled those of the nineteenth century. My young father and his five comrades were typical of these kids. Tired, scared, thirsty, brave; tiny integers in the vast confusion of war-making, trying to do their duty, trying to survive.

But something unusual happened to these six: History turned all its focus, for 1/400th of a second, on them. It froze them in an elegant instant of battle: froze them in a camera lens as they hoisted an American flag on a makeshift pole. Their collective image, blurred and indistinct yet unforgettable, became the most recognized, the most reproduced, in the history of photography. It gave them a kind of immortality—a faceless immortality. The flagraising on Iwo Jima became a symbol of the island, the mountain, the battle; of World War II; of the highest ideals of the nation, of valor incarnate. It became everything except the salvation of the boys who formed it.

For these six, history had a different set of agendas.

Three were killed in action in the continuing battle. Of the three survivors, two were overtaken and eventually destroyed—dead of drink and heartbreak. Only one of them managed to live in peace into an advanced age. He achieved this peace by willing the past into a cave of silence.

My father, John Henry Bradley, returned home to small-town Wisconsin after the war. He shoved the mementos of his immortality into a few cardboard boxes and hid these in a closet. He married his third-grade sweetheart. He opened a funeral home; fathered eight children; joined the PTA, the Lions, the Elks; and shut out any conversation on the topic of raising the flag on Iwo Jima.

When he died in January 1994, in the town of his birth, he might have believed he was taking the unwanted story of his part in the flagraising with him to the grave, where he apparently felt it belonged. He had trained us, as children, to deflect the phone-call requests for media interviews that never diminished over the years. We were to tell the caller that our father was on a fishing trip. But John Bradley never fished. No copy of the famous photograph hung in our house. When we did manage to extract from him a remark about the incident, his responses were short and simple and he quickly changed the subject.

And this is how we Bradley children grew up: happily enough, deeply connected to our peaceful, tree-shaded town, but always with a sense of an unsolved mystery somewhere at the edges of the picture. We sensed that the outside world knew something important about him that we would never know. For him, it was a dead issue; a boring topic. But not for the rest of us. Me, especially.

For me, a middle child among the eight, the mystery was tantalizing. I knew from an early age that my father had been some sort of hero. My third-grade schoolteacher said so; everybody said so. I hungered to know the heroic part of my dad. But try as I might I could never get him to tell me about it.

"The real heroes of Iwo Jima," he said once, coming as close as he ever would, "are the guys who didn't come back."

John Bradley might have succeeded in taking his story to his grave had we not stumbled upon the cardboard boxes a few days after his death.

My mother and brothers Mark and Patrick were searching for my father's will in the apartment he had maintained as his private office. In a dark closet they discovered three heavy cardboard boxes, old but in good shape, stacked on top of each other.

In those boxes my father had saved the many photos and documents that came his way as a flagraiser. All of us were surprised that he had saved anything at all.

Later I rummaged through the boxes. One letter caught my eye. The cancellation indicated it was mailed from Iwo Jima on February 26, 1945. A letter written by my father to his folks just three days after the flagraising.

The carefree, reassuring style of his sentences offers no hint of the hell he had just been through. He managed to sound as though he were on a rugged but enjoyable Boy Scout hike: “I’d give my left arm for a good shower and a clean shave, I have a 6 day beard. Haven’t had any soap or water since I hit the beach. I never knew I could go without food, water or sleep for three days but I know now, it can be done.”

And then, almost as an aside, he wrote: “You know all about our battle out here. I was with the victorious [Easy Company] who reached the top of Mt. Suribachi first. I had a little to do with raising the American flag and it was the happiest moment of my life.”

The “happiest moment” of his life! What a shock to read that. I wept as I realized the flagraising had been a happy moment for him as a twenty-one-year-old. What happened in the intervening years to cause his silence?

Reading my father’s letter made the flagraising photo somehow come alive in my imagination. Over the next few weeks I found myself staring at the photo on my office wall, daydreaming. Who were those boys with their hands on that pole? I wondered. Were they like my father? Had they known one another before that moment or were they strangers, united by a common duty? Did they joke with one another? Did they have nicknames? Was the flagraising “the happiest moment” of each of their lives?

* * *

The quest to answer those questions consumed four years. At its outset I could not have told you if there were five or six flagraisers in that photograph. Certainly I did not know the names of the three who died during the battle.

By its conclusion, I knew each of them like I know my brothers, like I know my high-school chums. And I had grown to love them.

What I discovered on that quest forms the content of this book.

The quest ended, symbolically, with my own pilgrimage to Iwo Jima. Accompanied by my seventy-four-year-old mother, three of my brothers, and many military men and women, I ascended the 550-foot volcanic crater that was Mount Suribachi. My twenty-one-year-old father had made the climb on foot carrying bandages and medical supplies; our party was whisked up in Marine Corps vans. I stood at its summit in a whipping wind that helped dry my tears. This was exactly where that American flag was raised on a February afternoon fifty-three years before. The wind had whipped on that day as well. It had straightened the rippling fabric of that flag by its force.

* * *

Not many Americans make it to Iwo Jima these days. It is a shrine of World War II, but it is not an American shrine. A closed Japanese naval base, it is inaccessible to civilians of all nationalities except for rare government-sanctioned visits.

It was the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles Krulak, who made our trip possible. He offered to fly us from Okinawa to Iwo Jima on his own plane. My mother, Betty, and three of my brothers—Steve, then forty-eight, Mark, forty-seven, and Joe, thirty-seven—made the trip with me. (I was forty-four.) Not everyone in the clan could. Brothers Patrick and Tom stayed at home, as did sisters Kathy and Barbara.

Departing Okinawa for the island on a rainswept Tuesday aboard General Krulak's plane, we were warned that we could expect similar weather at our destination. But two hours later, as we began our descent to Iwo Jima, the clouds suddenly parted and Suribachi loomed ahead of us bathed in bright sun, a ghost-mountain from the past thrust suddenly into our vision.

As the plane banked its wings, circling the island twice to allow us close-up photographs of Suribachi and the outlying terrain, the commandant began speaking of Iwo Jima, in a low voice, as being "holy land" and "sacred ground." "It's holy ground to both us and the Japanese," he added thoughtfully at one point.

A red carpet was rolled out and waiting for my mother as she stepped off the plane, the first of us to exit. A cadre of Japanese soldiers stood at strict attention along one side; U.S. Marines flanked the other.

General Krulak presented my mother to the Japanese commandant on the island, Commander Kochi. We were, indeed, the guests of the commander and his small garrison. American forces might have captured Iwo Jima in the early weeks of 1945, but today the island is a part of Japan's sovereign state.

Unlike in 1945, we had landed this time with their permission.

* * *

A visitor is inevitably struck by the impression that Iwo Jima is a very small place to have hosted such a big battle. The island is a trivial scab barely cresting the infinite Pacific, its eight square miles only about a third the mass of Manhattan Island. One hundred thousand men battled one another here for over a month, making this one of the most intense and closely fought battles of any war.

Eighty thousand American boys fought aboveground, twenty thousand Japanese boys fought from below. They were hidden in a sophisticated tunnel system that crisscrossed the island; reinforced tunnels that had rendered the furiously firing Japanese all but invisible to the exposed attackers. Sixteen miles of tunnels connecting fifteen hundred man-made caverns. Many surviving Marines never saw a live Japanese soldier on Iwo Jima. They were fighting an enemy they could not see.

We boarded Marine vans and drove to the "Hospital Cave," an enormous underground hospital where Japanese surgeons had quietly operated on their wounded forty feet below advancing Marines. Hospital beds had been carved into the volcanic-rock walls.

We then entered a large cavern that had housed Japanese mortar men. On the cavern wall were markers that corresponded to the elevations of the sloping beaches. This allowed the Japanese to angle their mortar tubes so they could hit the invading Marines accurately. The beaches of Iwo Jima had been preregistered for Japanese fire. The hell the Marines walked through had been rehearsed for months.

We drove across the island to the old combat site where my father had been wounded two weeks after the flagraising. I noticed that the ground was hard, and rust-colored. I stooped down and picked up one of the shards of rock that littered the surface. Examining it up close, I realized that it was not a rock at all. It was a piece of shrapnel. This is what we had mistaken for natural terrain: fragments of exploded artillery shells. Half a century old, they still formed a kind of carpet here. My father carried some of that shrapnel in his leg and foot to his grave.

* * *

Then it was on to the invasion beaches, the sands of Iwo Jima. We walked across the beach closest to Mount Suribachi. The invading Marines had dubbed it “Green Beach” and it was across this killing field that young John Bradley, a Navy corpsman, raced under decimating fire.

Now I watched as my mother made her way across that same beach, sinking to her ankles in the soft volcanic sand with each step. “I don’t know how anyone survived!” she exclaimed. I watched her move carefully in the wind and sunlight: a small white-haired widow now, but a world ago a pretty little girl named Betty Van Gorp of Appleton, Wisconsin, who found herself in third-grade class with a new boy, a serious boy named John. My father walked Betty home from school every day for the stretch of the early 1930’s when he lived in Appleton, because her house was on his street. When he came home from World War II a decade and a half later, he married her.

* * *

Two hundred yards inland from where she now stood, on the third day of the assault, John Bradley saw an American boy fall in the distance. He raced through the mortar and machine-gun fire to the wounded Marine, administered plasma from a bottle strapped to a rifle he’d planted in the sand, and then dragged the boy to safety as bullets pinged off the rocks. For his heroism he was awarded the Navy Cross, second only to the Medal of Honor.

John Bradley never confided the details of his valor to Betty. Our family did not learn of his Navy Cross until after he had died.

* * *

Now Steve took my mother’s arm and steadied her as she walked up the thick sand terraces. Mark stood at the water’s edge lost in thought, facing out to sea. Joe and I saw a blockhouse overlooking the beach and made our way to it.

The Japanese had installed more than 750 blockhouses and pillboxes around the island: little igloos of rounded concrete, reinforced with steel rods to make them virtually impervious even to

artillery rounds. Many of their smashed white carcasses still stood, like skeletons of animals half a century dead, at intervals along the strand. The blockhouses were hideous remnants of the island defenders' dedication in a cause they knew was lost. The soldiers assigned to them had the mission of killing as many invaders as possible before their own inevitable deaths.

Joe and I entered the squat cement structure. We could see that the machine-gun muzzle still protruding through its firing slit was bent—probably from overheating as it killed American boys. We squeezed our way inside. There were two small rooms, dark except for the brilliant light shining through the hole: one room for shooting, the other for supplies and concealment against the onslaught.

Hunched with my brother in the confining darkness, I tried to imagine the invasion from the viewpoint of a defending blockhouse occupant: He created terror with his unimpeded field of fire, but he must have been terrified himself; a trapped killer, he knew that he would die there—probably from the searing heat of a flamethrower thrust through the firing hole by a desperate young Marine who had managed to survive the machine-gun spray.

What must it have been like to crouch in that blockhouse and watch the American armada materialize offshore? How many days, how many hours did he have to live? Would he attain his assigned kill-ratio of ten enemies before he was slaughtered?

What must it have been like for an American boy to advance toward him? I thought of my own interactions with the Japanese when I was in my early twenties. I attended college in Tokyo and my choices were study or sushi. But for too many on bloody Iwo there were no choices; it had been kill or be killed.

But now it was time to ascend the mountain.

* * *

Standing where they raised the flag at the edge of the extinct volcanic crater, the wind whipping our hair, we could view the entire two-mile beach where the armada had discharged its boatloads of attacking Marines. In February 1945 the Japanese could see it with equal clarity from the tunnels just beneath us. They waited patiently until the beach was chockablock with American boys. They had spent many months prepositioning their gun sights. When the time came, they simply opened fire, beginning one of the great military slaughters of all history.

An oddly out-of-place feeling now seized me: I was so glad to be up here! The vista below us, despite the gory freight of its history, was invigorating. The sun and the wind seemed to bring all of us alive.

And then I realized that my high spirits were not so out of place at all. I was reliving something. I recalled the line from the letter my father wrote three days after the flagraising: "It was the happiest moment of my life."

Yes, it had to be exhilarating to raise that flag. From Suribachi, you feel on top of the world, surrounded by ocean. But how had my father’s attitude shifted from that to “If only there hadn’t been a flag attached to that pole”?

As some twenty young Marines and older officers milled around us, we Bradleys began to take pictures of one another. We posed in various spots, including near the “X” that marks the spot of the actual raising. We had brought with us a plaque: shiny red, in the “mitten” shape of Wisconsin and made of Wisconsin ruby-red granite, the state stone. Part of our mission here was to embed this plaque in the rough rocky soil. Now my brother Mark scratched in that soil with a jackknife. He swept the last pebbles from the newly bared area and said, “OK, it should fit now.”

Joe gently placed the plaque in the dry soil. It read:

TO JOHN H. BRADLEY
FLAGRAISER
FEB. 23, 1945
FROM HIS FAMILY

We stood up, dusted our hands, and gazed at our handiwork. The wind blew through our hair. The hot Pacific sun beat down on us. Our allotted time on the mountain was drawing short.

I trotted over to one of the Marine vans to retrieve a folder that I had carried with me from New York for this occasion. It contained notes and photographs: a few photographs of Bradleys, but mostly of the six young men. “Let’s do this now,” I called to my family and the Marines who accompanied us up the mountain as I motioned them over to the marble monument which stands atop the mountain.

When the Marines had gathered in front of the memorial, everyone was silent for a moment. The world was silent, except for the whipping wind.

And then I began to speak.

I spoke of the battle. It ground on over thirty-six days. It claimed 25,851 U.S. casualties, including nearly 7,000 dead. Most of the 22,000 defenders fought to their deaths.

It was America’s most heroic battle. More medals for valor were awarded for action on Iwo Jima than in any battle in the history of the United States. To put that into perspective: The Marines were awarded eighty-four Medals of Honor in World War II. Over four years, that was twenty-two a year, about two a month. But in just one month of fighting on this island, they were awarded twenty-seven Medals of Honor: one third their accumulated total.

I spoke then of the famous flagraising photograph. I remarked that nearly everyone in the world recognizes it. But no one knows the boys.

I glanced toward the frieze on the monument, a rendering of the photo’s image.

I'd like to tell you, I said, a little about them now.

I pointed to the figure in the middle of the image. Solid, anchoring, with both hands clamped firmly on the rising pole.

Here is my father, I said.

He is the most identifiable of the six figures, the only one whose profile is visible. But for half a century he was almost completely silent about Iwo Jima. To his wife of forty-seven years he spoke about it only once, on their first date. It was not until after his death that we learned of the Navy Cross. In his quiet humility he kept that from us. Why was he so silent? I think the answer is summed up in his belief that the true heroes of Iwo Jima were the ones who didn't come back.

(There were other reasons for my father's silence, as I had learned in the course of my quest. But now was not the time to share them with these Marines.)

I pointed next to a figure on the far side of John Bradley, and mostly obscured by him. The handsome mill hand from New Hampshire.

Rene Gagnon stood shoulder to shoulder with my dad in the photo, I said. But in real life they took the opposite approach to fame. When everyone acclaimed Rene as a hero—his mother, the President, *Time* magazine, and audiences across the country—he believed them. He thought he would benefit from his celebrity. Like a moth, Rene was attracted to the flame of fame.

I gestured now to the figure on the far right of the image; toward the leaning, thrusting figure jamming the base of the pole into the hard Suribachi ground. His right knee is nearly level with his shoulder. His buttocks strain against his fatigues. The Texan.

Harlon Block, I said. A star football player who enlisted in the Marines with all the seniors on his high-school football team. Harlon died six days after they raised the flag. And then he was forgotten. Harlon's back is to the camera and for almost two years this figure was misidentified. America believed it was another Marine, who also died on Iwo Jima.

But his mother, Belle, was convinced it was her boy. Nobody believed her, not her husband, her family, or her neighbors. And we would never have known it was Harlon if a certain stranger had not walked into the family cotton field in south Texas and told them that he had seen their son Harlon put that pole in the ground.

Next I pointed to the figure directly in back of my father. The Huck Finn of the group. The freckle-faced Kentuckian.

Here's Franklin Sousley from Hilltop, Kentucky, I said. He was fatherless at the age of nine and sailed for the Pacific on his nineteenth birthday. Six months earlier, he had said good-bye to his friends on the porch of the Hilltop General Store. He said, "When I come back I'll be a hero."

Days after the flagraising, the folks back in Hilltop were celebrating their hero. But a few weeks after that, they were mourning him.

I gazed at the frieze for a moment before I went on.

Look closely at Franklin’s hands, I asked the silent crowd in front of me. Do you see his right hand? Can you tell that the man in back of him has grasped Franklin’s right hand and is helping Franklin push the heavy pole?

The most boyish of the flagraisers, I said, is getting help from the most mature. Their veteran leader. The sergeant. Mike Strank.

I pointed now to what could be seen of Mike.

Mike is on the far side of Franklin, I said. You can hardly see him. But his helping young Franklin was typical of him. He was respected as a great leader, a “Marine’s Marine.” To the boys that didn’t mean that Sergeant Mike was a rough, tough killer. It meant that Mike understood his boys and would try to protect their lives as they pursued their dangerous mission.

And Sergeant Mike did his best until the end. He was killed as he was drawing a diagram in the sand showing his boys the safest way to attack a position.

Finally I gestured to the figure at the far left of the image. The figure stretching upward, his fingertips not quite reaching the pole. The Pima Indian from Arizona.

Ira Hayes, I said. His hands couldn’t quite grasp the pole. Later, back in the United States, Ira was hailed as a hero but he didn’t see it that way. “How can I feel like a hero,” he asked, “when I hit the beach with two hundred and fifty buddies and only twenty-seven of us walked off alive?” Iwo Jima haunted Ira, and he tried to escape his memories in the bottle. He died ten years, almost to the day, after the photo was taken.

Six boys. They form a representative picture of America in 1945: a mill worker from New England; a Kentucky tobacco farmer; a Pennsylvania coal miner’s son; a Texan from the oil fields; a boy from Wisconsin’s dairy land, and an Arizona Indian.

Only two of them walked off this island. One was carried off with shrapnel embedded up and down his side. Three were buried here. And so they are also a representative picture of Iwo Jima. If you had taken a photo of any six boys atop Mount Suribachi that day, it would be the same: two-thirds casualties. Two out of every three of the boys who fought on this island of agony were killed or wounded.

* * *

When I was finished with my talk, I couldn’t look up at the faces in front of me. I sensed the strong emotion in the air. Quietly, I suggested that in honor of my dad, we all sing the only two

songs John Bradley ever admitted to knowing: "Home on the Range" and "I've Been Working on the Railroad."

We sang. All of us, in the sun and whipping wind. I knew, without looking up, that everyone standing on this mountaintop with me—Marines young and old, women and men; my family—was weeping. Tears were streaming down my own face. Behind me, I could hear the hoarse sobs coming from my brother Joe. I hazarded one glance upward—at Sergeant Major Lewis Lee, the highest-ranking enlisted man in the Corps. Tanned, his sleeves rolled up over brawny forearms, muscular Sergeant Major Lee looked like a man who could eat a gun, never mind shoot one. Tears glistened on his chiseled face.

Holy land. Sacred ground.

And then it was over.

Gratitude

What a Veteran Knows

JOE CARTER

Joe Carter (b. 1969) served for fifteen years in the US Marine Corps, reaching the rank of gunnery sergeant. He now works as a senior editor at the Acton Institute, an adjunct professor of journalism at Patrick Henry College, and online editor of the journal First Things*—where this account was published in 2009.*

What is it, according to Carter, that a veteran knows—and that we at home do not? What, according to Carter, is the true meaning of service? Comparing this selection to some of the previous ones (or to the next one), do you think that Carter is selling combat, valor, and heroism short? What do you mean when you tell a veteran, "Thank you for your service"? Does this selection lead you to think differently about veterans and Veterans Day? How?

"Thank you for your service," they say, as they shake our hands and pat our backs.

We smile and thank them for their gratitude and try to think of something else to talk about. These encounters with strangers happen from time to time, though always on Veteran's Day. It's the one time we can count on civilians—a group from which we came but can never fully return—to think about us.

On Veteran's Day, they think of the men and women who march in the VFW parades. They think of their grandfathers, the gregarious World War II sailors, eager to share sea stories, and their uncles, stolid Vietnam-era airmen reticent to talk about the war. They think of the aunt who served in the Persian Gulf and the neighbor's son who recently shipped off to Afghanistan.

They think of us when they see us in airport terminals, young soldiers and marines, giving our teary-eyed parents a welcome-home embrace as we return from recruit training. They think of us when they see us on airport tarmacs, older soldiers and marines, kissing our runny-nosed kids goodbye as we leave for missions of peacekeeping or warmaking.

They think of us as we are in the movies: marching off to war with stoic resolve and assaulting beachheads with quiet determination. They think of us aligned on parade grounds, weapons and uniforms sparkling in the sun, postures the very picture of discipline.

They think that military service is about combat and heroism and uncommon acts of valor.

But there are things a veteran knows.

We know that few of us ever saw battle and that we're mostly ordinary people who performed common duties.

We know that our service—whether three years or thirty—was mainly composed of discrete units of banal and boring routine and that the drudgery of time spent cleaning—rifles, equipment, barracks—in preparation for inspections and reviews and formations in which we'd spend hours

standing ramrod straight while trying to hide buckling knees and sweat-drenched necks and the maddening urge to scratch skin that itched more and more the longer we stood still.

We know that service is about our willingness to endure shin splints and blistered feet from too many miles of marching and running. We know it was about doing sit-ups on wet beaches on mornings that were too cold and came much too early. We know it was about our ability to endure our own incessant whining as we made an avocation of complaining about being tired, wet, cold, and sore. And we know about enduring the failings and weaknesses that were exposed when we discovered the limits of our endurance.

We know that service requires loving our home so much that we willingly give up all that we cherished—our freedom, our youth, our life—so that others may be safe.

We know that in serving our homeland we gave up our ability to watch over our own homes. We know that it meant leaving our families for far-off lands and seas and that no matter how many cards and letters and pictures and videos our families would send that it could never replace the time we missed being with our children, watching over them, and letting them know we were there to protect them.

We know Veteran’s Day is about the men and women we once served alongside: the voluble young marine, who was always eager to talk about her kids, and the reverent old soldier who led prayer in chapel. We still think of them from time to time, though always on Veteran’s Day. And when we meet our fellow veterans we always know exactly what we mean when we pat their back and take their hand and say, “Thank you for your service.”

Veterans Day Speech to the Semper Fi Society of St. Louis

JOHN F. KELLY

In this (excerpted) speech to the Semper Fi Society of St. Louis—an organization supporting US Marines and their families—Lieutenant General John F. Kelly, US Marine Corps (b. 1950), commander of the Multinational Force-West in Iraq from 2008 to 2009, pays a moving tribute to the heroism of our warriors. He makes clear the debt of gratitude that the rest of us owe these dedicated men and women, whose sacrifices make it possible for us to enjoy peace, freedom, and the pursuit of private happiness. He concludes with an account of a most remarkable display of self-sacrifice on the part of two Marines. (Four days before this speech was given, General Kelly's own son, Robert, was killed in action on a mission in Afghanistan during his third tour of duty; another son remained in combat with the Marines.)

What is—and what should be—the relation between the warriors and the larger community, especially when only a tiny minority of the population serves? Some might say that this speech is tragic, showing that superior men and women sacrifice and die for people less worthy, people whose patriotism amounts to little more than "a plastic flag in their car window." Do you agree with this judgment? Why or why not? What can the rest of us learn from these heroic examples? What is the best way to honor their service and sacrifice?

Nine years ago, four commercial aircraft took off from Boston, Newark, and Washington. Took off fully loaded with men, women, and children—all innocent, and all soon to die. These aircraft were targeted at the World Trade Towers in New York, the Pentagon, and likely the Capitol in Washington, D.C. Three found their mark. No American alive old enough to remember will ever forget exactly where they were, exactly what they were doing, and exactly who they were with at the moment they watched the aircraft dive into the World Trade Towers on what was, until then, a beautiful morning in New York City. Within the hour three thousand blameless human beings would be vaporized, incinerated, or crushed in the most agonizing ways imaginable. The most wretched among them—over two hundred—driven mad by heat, hopelessness, and utter desperation, leapt to their deaths from a thousand feet above lower Manhattan. We soon learned hundreds more were murdered at the Pentagon, and in a Pennsylvania farmer's field.

Once the buildings had collapsed and the immensity of the attack began to register, most of us had no idea of what to do, or where to turn. As a nation, we were scared like we had not been scared for generations. Parents hugged their children to gain as much as to give comfort. Strangers embraced in the streets, stunned and crying on one another's shoulders, seeking solace, as much as to give it. . . .

There was, however, a small segment of America that made very different choices that day—actions the rest of America stood in awe of on 9/11 and every day since. The first were our firefighters and police, their ranks decimated that day as they ran towards—not away from—danger and certain death. They were doing what they'd sworn to do—"protect and serve"—and went to their graves having fulfilled their sacred oath. Then there was you armed forces, and I

know I am a little biased in my opinion here, but the best of them are Marines. Most wearing the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor today joined the unbroken ranks of American heroes after that fateful day not for money, or promises of bonuses or travel to exotic liberty ports, but for one reason and one reason alone: because of the terrible assault on our way of life by men they knew must be killed and extremist ideology that must be destroyed. A plastic flag in their car window was not their response to the murderous assault on our country. No, their response was a commitment to protect the nation, swearing an oath to their God to do so, to their deaths. When future generations ask why America is still free and the heyday of al-Qaeda and their terrorist allies was counted in days rather than in centuries as the extremists themselves predicted, our hometown heroes—soldiers, sailors, airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and Marines—can say, "Because of me and people like me who risked all to protect millions who will never know my name." . . .

America's civilian and military protectors both here at home and overseas have for nearly nine years fought this enemy to a standstill and have never for a second "wondered why." They know, and are not afraid. Their struggle is your struggle. . . . If anyone thinks you can somehow thank them for their service, and not support the cause for which they fight—America's survival—then they are lying to themselves and rationalizing away something in their lives, but, more importantly, they are slighting our warriors and mocking their commitment to the nation. . . .

It is a fact that our country today is in a life-and-death struggle against an evil enemy, but America as a whole is certainly not at war. Not as a country. Not as a people. Today, only a tiny fraction—less than a percent—shoulders the burden of fear and sacrifice, and they shoulder it for the rest of us. Their sons and daughters who serve are men and women of character who continue to believe in this country enough to put life and limb on the line without qualification, and without thought of personal gain, and they serve so that the sons and daughters of the other 99 percent don't have to. No big deal, though, as Marines have always been "the first to fight," paying in full the bill that comes with being free—for everyone else.

The comforting news for every American is that our men and women in uniform, and every Marine, is as good today as any in our history. . . . They have the same steel in their backs and have made their own mark, etching forever places like Ramadi, Fallujah, and Baghdad, Iraq, and Helmand and Sagin, Afghanistan, that are now part of the legend and stand just as proudly alongside Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, Inchon, Hue City, Khe Sanh, and Ashau Valley, Vietnam. None of them has ever asked what their country could do for them, but always and with their lives asked what they could do for America. . . .

We can also take comfort in the fact that these young Americans are not born killers, but are good and decent young men and women who for going on ten years have performed remarkable acts of bravery and selflessness to a cause they have decided is bigger and more important than themselves. Only a few months ago they were delivering your paper, stocking shelves in the local grocery store, worshiping in church on Sunday, or playing hockey on local ice. Like my own two sons who are Marines and have fought in Iraq, and today in Sagin, Afghanistan, they are also the same kids that drove their cars too fast for your liking, and played the God-awful music of their generation too loud, but have no doubt they are the finest of their generation. Like those who went before them in uniform, we owe them everything. We owe them our safety. We

owe them our prosperity. We owe them our freedom. We owe them our lives. Any one of them could have done something more self-serving with their lives as the vast majority of their age group elected to do after high school and college, but no, they chose to serve knowing full well a brutal war was in their future. They did not avoid the basic and cherished responsibility of a citizen—the defense of country—they welcomed it. They are the very best this country produces, and have put every one of us ahead of themselves. All are heroes for simply stepping forward, and we as a people owe a debt we can never fully pay. . . .

Over five thousand have died thus far in this war—eight thousand if you include the innocents murdered on 9/11. They are overwhelmingly working-class kids, the children of cops and firefighters, city and factory workers, schoolteachers and small business owners. With some exceptions they are from families short on stock portfolios and futures, but long on love of country and service to the nation. Just yesterday, too many were lost and a knock on the door late last night brought their families to their knees in a grief that will never, ever go away. Thousands more have suffered wounds since it all started, but like anyone who loses life or limb while serving others—including our firefighters and law enforcement personnel who on 9/11 were the first casualties of this war—they are not victims, as they knew what they were about, and were doing what they wanted to do. . . . Those with less of a sense of service to the nation never understand it when men and women of character step forward to look danger and adversity straight in the eye, refusing to blink, or give ground, even to their own deaths. The protected can't begin to understand the price paid so they and their families can sleep safe and free at night. No, they are not victims, but are warriors, your warriors, and warriors are never victims, regardless of how and where they fall. Death, or fear of death, has no power over them. Their paths are paved by sacrifice, sacrifices they gladly make—for you. . . .

Two years ago . . . [on] the 22nd of April 2008, two Marine infantry battalions. . . were switching out in Ramadi. . . . Two Marines, Corporal Jonathan Yale and Lance Corporal Jordan Haerter, twenty-two and twenty years old, respectively, one from each battalion, were assuming the watch together at the entrance gate of an outpost that contained a makeshift barracks housing fifty Marines. The same broken-down ramshackle building was also home to one hundred Iraqi police, also my men and our allies in the fight against the terrorists in Ramadi, a city until recently the most dangerous city on earth and owned by al-Qaeda. Yale was a dirt-poor mixed-race kid from Virginia with a wife and daughter, and a mother and sister who lived with him and he supported as well. He did this on a yearly salary of less than $23,000. Haerter, on the other hand, was a middle-class white kid from Long Island. They were from two completely different worlds. . . . But they were Marines, combat Marines, forged in the same crucible of Marine training, and because of this bond they were brothers as close, or closer, than if they were born of the same woman.

The mission orders they received from the sergeant squad leader I am sure went something like: "Okay, you two clowns, stand this post and let no unauthorized personnel or vehicles pass. You clear?" I am also sure Yale and Haerter then rolled their eyes and said in unison something like: "Yes, Sergeant," with just enough attitude that made the point without saying the words, "No kidding, sweetheart, we know what we're doing." They then relieved two other Marines on watch and took up their post at the entry control point of Joint Security Station Nasser, in the Sophia section of Ramadi, al Anbar, Iraq.

A few minutes later a large blue truck turned down the alleyway—perhaps sixty to seventy yards in length—and sped its way through the serpentine of concrete jersey walls. The truck stopped just short of where the two were posted and detonated, killing them both catastrophically. Twenty-four brick masonry houses were damaged or destroyed. A mosque one hundred yards away collapsed. The truck's engine came to rest two hundred yards away, knocking most of a house down before it stopped. Our explosive experts reckoned the blast was made of two thousand pounds of explosives. Two died, and because these two young infantrymen didn't have it in their DNA to run from danger, they saved 150 of their Iraqi and American brothers-in-arms. . . .

I traveled to Ramadi the next day and spoke individually to a half-dozen Iraqi police [who witnessed the event], all of whom told the same story. The blue truck turned down into the alley and immediately sped up as it made its way through the serpentine. They all said, "We knew immediately what was going on as soon as the two Marines began firing." The Iraqi police then related that some of them also fired, and then, to a man, ran for safety just prior to the explosion. All survived. Many were injured, some seriously. One of the Iraqis elaborated and with tears welling up said, "They'd run like any normal man would to save his life." "What he didn't know until then," he said, "and what he learned that very instant, was that Marines are not normal." Choking past the emotion, he said, "Sir, in the name of God no sane man would have stood there and done what they did." "No sane man." "They saved us all."

What we didn't know at the time, and only learned a couple of days later after I wrote a summary and submitted both Yale and Haerter for posthumous Navy Crosses, was that one of our security cameras, damaged initially in the blast, recorded some of the suicide attack. It happened exactly as the Iraqis had described it. It took exactly six seconds from when the truck entered the alley until it detonated.

You can watch the last six seconds of their young lives. Putting myself in their heads, I supposed it took about a second for the two Marines to separately come to the same conclusion about what was going on once the truck came into their view at the far end of the alley. Exactly no time to talk it over, or call the sergeant to ask what they should do. Only enough time to take half an instant and think about what the sergeant told them to do only a few minutes before: ". . . let no unauthorized personnel or vehicles pass." The two Marines had about five seconds left to live.

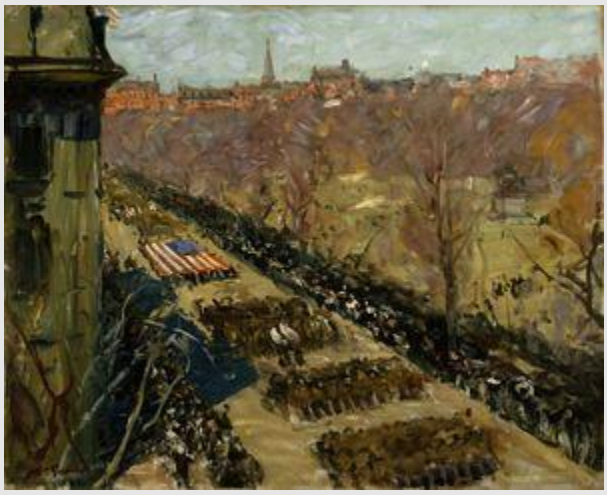
It took maybe another two seconds for them to present their weapons, take aim, and open up. By this time the truck was halfway through the barriers and gaining speed the whole time. Here, the recording shows a number of Iraqi police, some of whom had fired their AKs, now scattering like the normal and rational men they were—some running right past the Marines. They had three seconds left to live.

For about two seconds more, the recording shows the Marines' weapons firing nonstop, the truck's windshield exploding into shards of glass as their rounds take it apart and tore in to the body of the son of a b[] who is trying to get past them to kill their brothers—American and Iraqi—bedded down in the barracks totally unaware of the fact that their lives at that moment depended entirely on two Marines standing their ground. If they had been aware, they would

have known they were safe—because two Marines stood between them and a crazed suicide bomber. The recording shows the truck careening to a stop immediately in front of the two Marines. In all of the instantaneous violence, Yale and Haerter never hesitated. By all reports and by the recording, they never stepped back. They never even started to step aside. They never even shifted their weight. With their feet spread shoulder-width apart, they leaned into the danger, firing as fast as they could work their weapons. They had only one second left to live.

The truck explodes. The camera goes blank. Two young men go to their God. Six seconds. Not enough time to think about their families, their country, their flag, or about their lives or their deaths, but more than enough time for two very brave young men to do their duty—into eternity. That is the kind of people who are on watch all over the world tonight—for you. . . .

About the Cover



Arthur Clifton Goodwin
***Liberty Loan Parade*, 1918**
Indianapolis Museum of Art
Martha Delzell Memorial Fund

Born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Arthur Clifton Goodwin (1864–1929) was raised outside Boston, a city he later made his home. Though he did not make painting his career until age thirty, the self-taught artist eventually became one of Boston's most celebrated painters—and one of the nation's last great impressionist artists. Goodwin often used the cities of Boston and New York as the subjects of his paintings, setting up his easel on the sidewalk in order to capture the street-level experience of city life. Goodwin, who struggled with alcoholism throughout his life and suffered bouts of depression after his failed marriage, died at the age of sixty-five, shortly after arranging a trip to Paris to study impressionism with fellow American artist Louis Kronberg.

In this painting, *Liberty Loan Parade* (1918), created in a Boston studio across from the Public Garden, Goodwin depicts a fundraising parade coming down Arlington Street. Such parades were held in cities across the United States as a way to raise money for the US war effort during World War I. Goodwin himself sold this painting at an auction to raise money for war bonds.

Goodwin's painting gives its viewers a panoramic, bird's-eye view of parading soldiers, watched by citizen spectators, with the public garden and the city of Boston peacefully spread out behind. But against the autumnal colors, our gaze is drawn most to the American flag, itself on parade, stretched and carried by a troop of soldiers. How does this scene move you or impress you? What might it suggest about the relationship between the parading soldiers and flag, on the one hand, and the citizens and peaceful city, on the other?

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