

World War II: A Living History

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“Good history requires a good story.”

Name _____

Summer reading: Terkel, Studs, *The Good War* (1997)

“I can’t relate to World War II. It’s in schoolbook texts, that’s all. Battles were won, battles were lost...it’s a story in the past. |It’s so distant, so abstract. I don’t get myself up in a bunch about it...”

Assignment: Students are required to read this book. Each section has a central message that we will be discussing in class. For Sept, Books One and Two should be completed. Discussion topics appear in quotations. As you come across these quotations, you should do three things, unless otherwise directed:

- Identify the speaker.
- Place the quotation in context, explaining what you think the speaker means.
- Where noted, include your reaction to the quotation.

This should be done in your own handwriting, and this guide is provided to give us a starting point for class discussion. Your first major test may be on the first day of class and will be based on Books One and Two, pages 3-297. ***If you do this assignment you will be fine for the test.*** You may certainly finish the book, and many of you will as you get caught up in the stories.

The chapter outline is as follows:

Introduction:

“For the typical American soldier, it wasn’t about ‘getting another Jap’ or ‘getting another Nazi’ that impelled him to the front...”

Context:

“In tough circumstances, what was most on the soldier’s mind was not women nor politics nor family, nor for that matter, God...”

Context:

“After Pearl Harbor, I never played with dolls again...”

Speaker:

Context:

Reaction:

“This {farmer} neighbor told me, what we needed was a damn good war, and we’d solve our agricultural problems”...

Speaker:

Context:

Reaction:

“When Uncle Sam called me, I knew I would be called the real McCoy. But when I got in the army, they called me soldier “boy”. I wonder when I will be called a man?”

Speaker:

Context:

Reaction:

“Wartime prosperity had extended into an exhilarating period of postwar prosperity...for the returning GI, it was a wholly new society...”

Context:

“Ours was the only country among the combatants that was neither invaded nor bombed. Must a society experience horror in order to understand horror?”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

Book One

A Sunday Morning

“They were hiding in caves all the time, women, children, soldiers...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“We were near the gate when we saw my father come in. He saw us. It was a sad, happy moment, because we’d been separated for a year.”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“KEEP FREEDOM IN YOUR FUTURE WITH U.S. SAVINGS BONDS”

Context:

Your Reaction:

A Chance Encounter

“A sort of expression on their faces- you’re gonna find out now...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“My buddies and I found an abandoned apartment building...I hear the door creaking open... I pulled out the .32...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

Tales of the Pacific

“Every time he would get one in there, it’d splash. It reminded me of a child throwing pebbles in a puddle. It was just so unreal...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“That boy took a draw off it and flipped it in the Japanese’ face. They offered another one a drink of water. He took a little taste of it and throwed it right in the Japanese’ face...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“Oh, yeah, we were fighting fascism-kids today don’t even know what fascism is...people in America do not know what war is...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“We lost between 600-700 Americans in the four days of the march. The Filipinos lost close to 10,000...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“God damn, I wish I was back in Seattle...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

Rosie

“Everything started opening up for us. We got a chance to go places we had never been able to go before...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“The good war? That infuriates me... maybe you have to get people to fight a war, maybe you have to lie to them...{but} there was one good thing that came out of it...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“We had stereotypes of a shocking nature...they always had to be decadent, immoral, rotten people, sneaks...”

“I don’t know what the answer is. Unfortunately, the dead can’t speak. I wonder what they’d say...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“It must have been okay if President Roosevelt said it was okay. But I knew those girls should’ve been nurses...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

Neighborhood Boys

“At least he had a great operatic finish- hanging by the heels...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“ You read these things, you heard these things, but you never believed them. It’s typical of the American people, I guess- you don’t believe it until you see it...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

Reflections on Machismo

If you are interested in reforming me or rehabilitating me or changing me, you must explain to me why you've got these guys in here who have been convicted of murder and why you've got me in here too, because I refuse to murder people..."

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

"What about Hitler? He was only one person. They were all doing what Hitler said...they do what the warden says. The only power Hitler had was the power people gave him..."

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

"That's how Barrett rehumanized himself. Good Friday became Easter and his friend was resurrected from the dead..."

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

Book Two

High Rank

“I hate it when they say “ ‘He gave his life for his country’. Nobody gives his life for anything. We steal the lives of these kids.”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“I’m certainly not warlike. But I always think-Blessed be the peacemakers. Because somebody’s got to take care of the peacemakers while they’re making peace.”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

The Bombers and the Bombed

“ My mother had disappeared. I wandered out into the completely burning neighborhood. The smell of burning for me is one of the stronger images of the war.”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“ Our attacks on their air-frame plants were a total failure. In the months after the great spring raids of 1944, their production increased by big amounts...we made a major onslaught on German agriculture...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“The bomb did not end the Japanese war...I was left with an image which has stayed with me all of my life...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

Growing Up: Here and There

“That’s when the V-2s came...no pilot, no nothing...on this morning, kids were shopping at Woolworth’s...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“There was a tiny door on the stage, behind the principal. There was another door behind it. He didn’t open that one...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“He pulled this axle from his motorcycle and held it up before the class- ‘You see, boys? Even an axis can break...’

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

The most difficult days were when my mother could not get up from the bed to go to work. She was too weak from hunger. I went to the kindergarten by myself...

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

"We hadn't seen many men around-I grew up in a society of women, except for uncles, who were old, and the country doctor..."

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

"Later, when some pupils had the guts to ask about the war, they were ignored. Some of these teachers had been soldiers..."

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

D-Day and All That

"We landed on June 6th, 1944. On July 4th, I was able to take my shoes and socks off and change clothes..."

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“I went down the road to meet him-he was sobbing and falling into my arms. He kept saying, ‘no more killing, no more killing, no more killing’...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“Some guy opened his hatch a little bit early. The Germans looked and they said ‘Schwartzten soldaten!’ That word went right through the bunch and they started running back to the damn woods...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“ It continued to rain 88s. I moved over several yards and the next thing I know, I looked up and he looked at me. There was something in his eyes, like he was trying to tell me something. I couldn’t hear because of the noise of all of the bombs...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

“You begin to realize that something terrible has happened. There’s quietness...I got more passionately angry than I guess I’d ever been. I said, ‘Let’s kill all the sons of bitches, kill all the goddamn Germans...”

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

"I wish we had gone and taken our chances. I sensed a new world I had never dreamed of. I went back to my bunk and lay there... 'What does this mean'?"

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

"Americans have never known what war really is, because there is one feature they never appreciated..."

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

"The hardest drink they ever has was a milkshake... he said to these young boys, 'With your blood and my guts' ...I'll never get over that until the day I die. 'Your blood and my guts' ...he always asked for the SIWs to be pointed out to him..."

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy

"The elevator man said, 'Don't you remember me' She said, 'Should I?' He said, Yeah, remember Naples? Remember the guy that fell off the rafter? That was me!"

Speaker:

Context:

Your Reaction:

Book Three- Now, if you would like to continue on at your leisure, you can kill two birds with one stone. Choose 2 quotes from each of the following sections that strike you. I will take your quotes and use them on a future assessment/discussion for the class.

Sudden Money

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

The Big Panjandrum

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Flying High

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Up Front with Pen, Camera, and Mike

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Book Four

Crime and Punishment

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

A Turning Point

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Chilly Winds

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Is You Is Or Isn't You My Baby?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Remembrance of Things Past

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Epilogue: Boom Babies and Other New People

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?

Quote for discussion: (page #)

Speaker:

Context:

Why did you choose it?