



War is Hell:
Military Fiction, Reporting for Duty

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Military Observances

May – National Military Appreciation Month

May 18 – Armed Forces Day

May 27, 2019 – Memorial Day

June 6, 2019 – 75th anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy

June 28, 2019 – 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles

November 11, 2019 – Veterans Day

December 16, 2019 – 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge

June 25, **2020** – 70th anniversary of start of Korean War

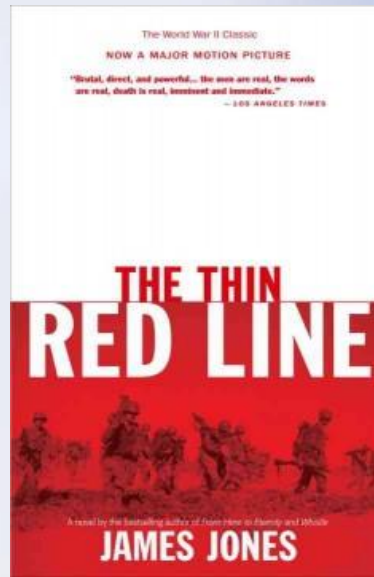
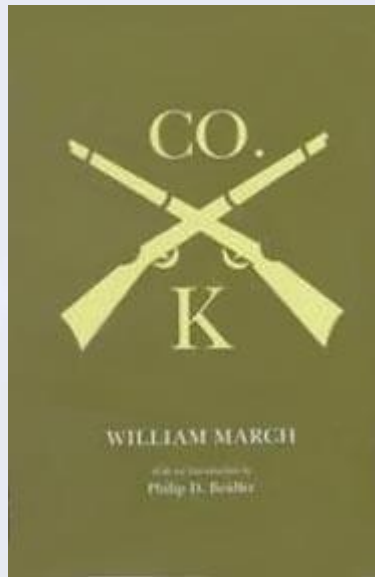
September 2, **2020** – 75th anniversary of VJ Day

About Military Fiction

- Based in history
- Re-interpretation of events
- Primary action is in field of combat
 - Characters are preparing for, in, returning from war
- Features battles, war horrors/atrocities
- Common themes are heroism, nationalism, cowardice, morality

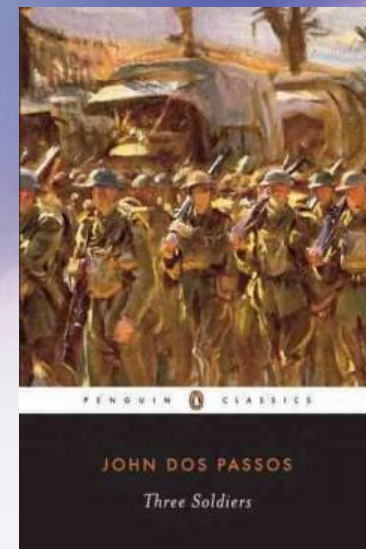
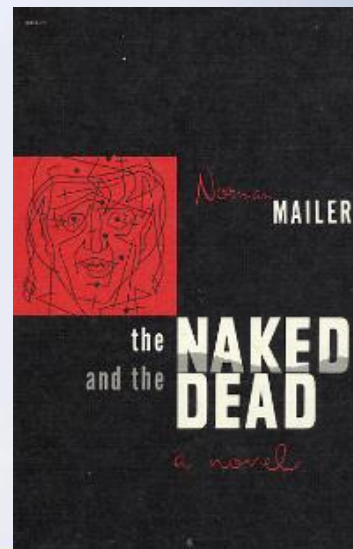
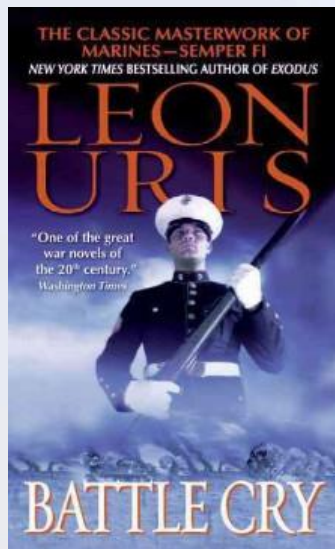
Common viewpoints

- Company-level
- Platoon and squad also common



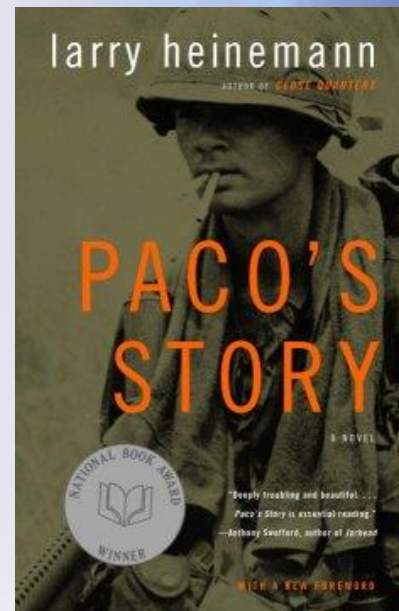
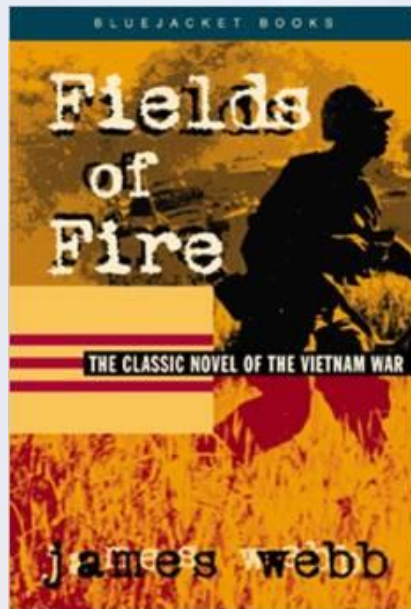
Common viewpoints

- Command-level
 - Wide variety of characters
 - Melting pot of “American boys”
 - Early: Civil War army units from same state
 - Later: national units led to cliché of melting pot



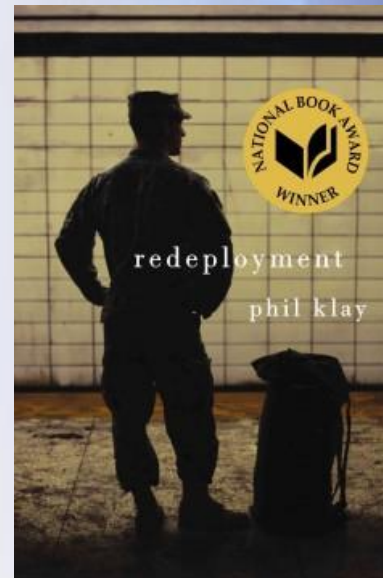
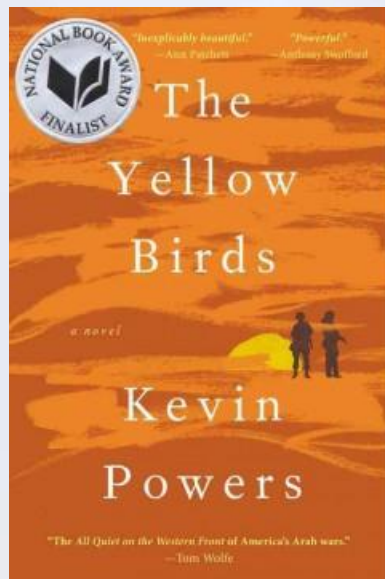
Common viewpoints

- Change with Vietnam War
 - Minorities featured more prominently
 - Men sent as replacements
 - Veterans isolated, alienated, loyal to each other



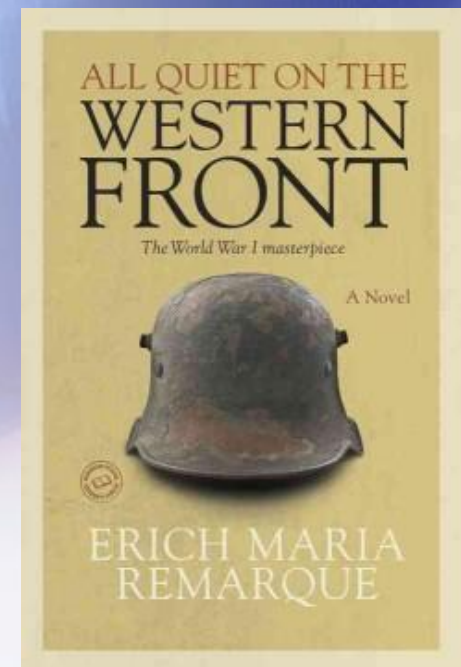
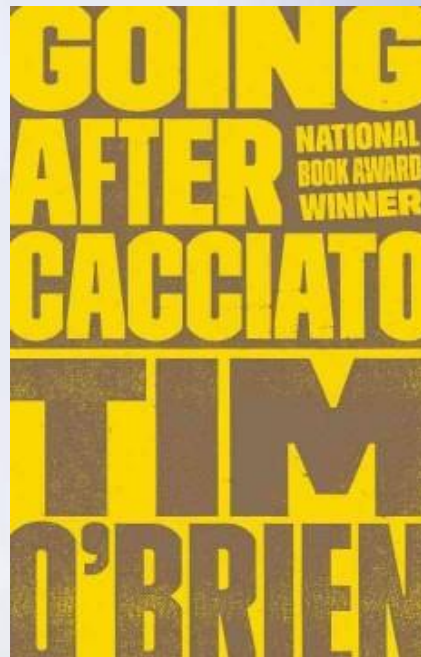
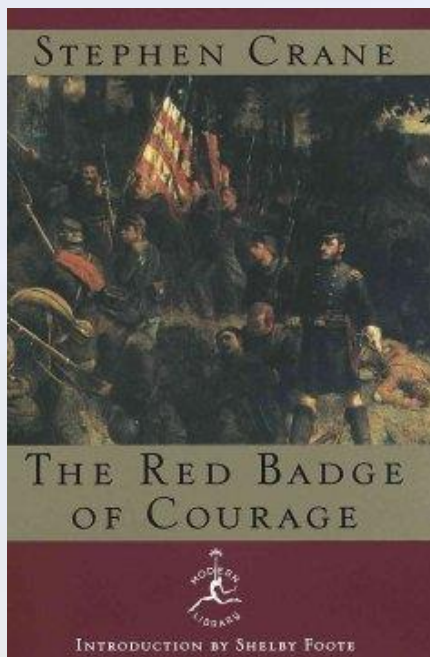
Common viewpoints

- Middle East
 - Soldier and journalist memoirs most common
 - Fiction tends to be soldier-focused
 - First person or close third person



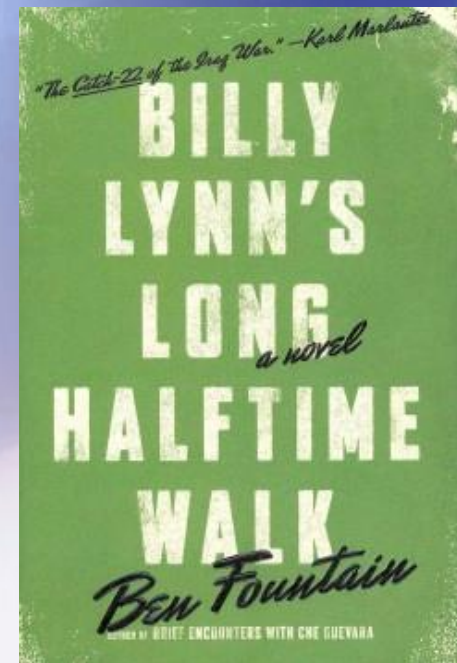
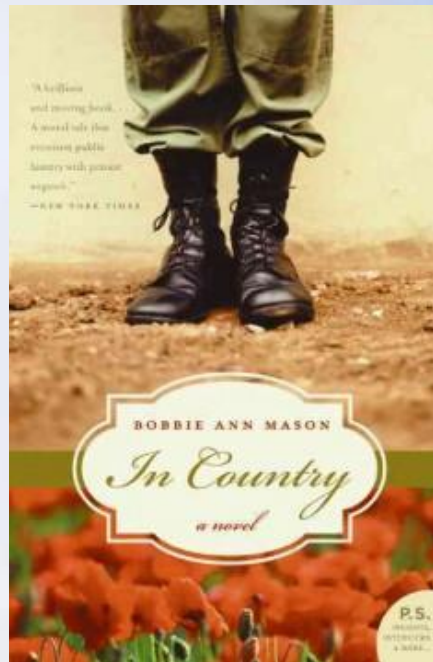
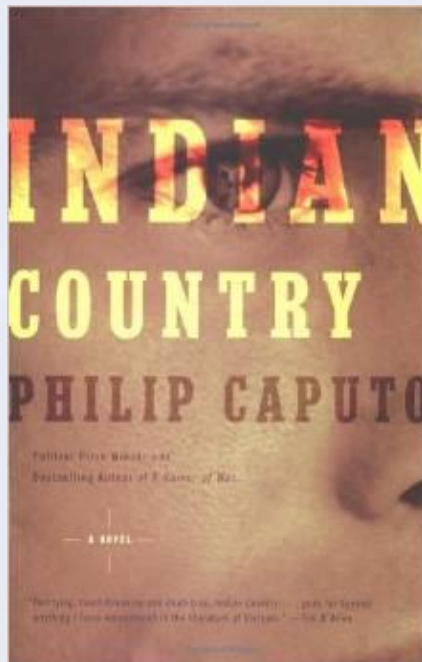
Common viewpoints

- War experience is often personal
 - Individual being tested
 - Becoming a man/coming-of-age



Common viewpoints

- Consequences of war
 - On person, country, culture
 - How do you put war behind you?



Appeal

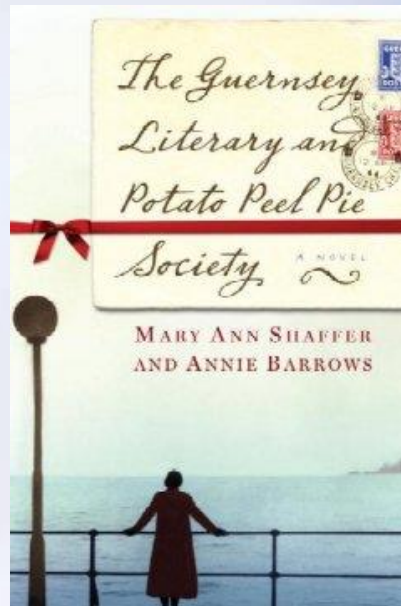
- Better understanding of events
- Students learning about a place/time
- Exploring unfamiliar/exotic cultures
- Current events
- Action-packed books
- Certain author/time period

Appeal

- Shared experiences
 - Combat soldiers/vets, wives/spouses, children
- Details of combat
 - Emotions, physical challenge, soldier skills
- Moral issues

In this webinar...

- Major wars with U.S. involvement
- War is main subject, not just part of the setting
 - See historical fiction for war as setting



In this webinar...

Revolutionary War

Civil War

World War I

World War II

Korean War

Vietnam War

Middle East

Technothrillers

Literary

Alternate History

POWs

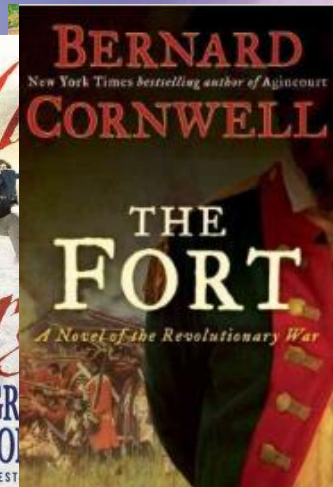
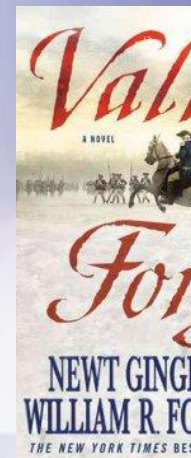
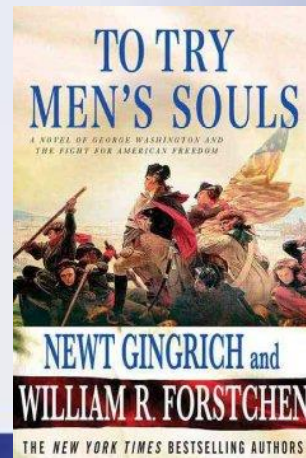
Revolutionary War (1775-1783)

- Also called American War of Independence
- Defining war of American character and experience
- Pamphlets written during war



Revolutionary War novels

- American Revolution series by Jeff Shaara (2001-2002)
- Love and Honor by Randall Wallace (2004)
- The Hornet's Nest by Jimmy Carter (2004)
- George Washington novels by Newt Gingrich (2009-2012)
- The Fort by Bernard Cornwell (2010)



Civil War (1861-1865)

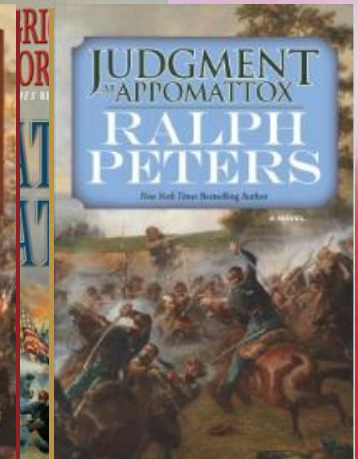
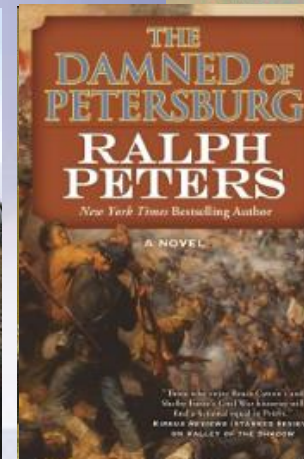
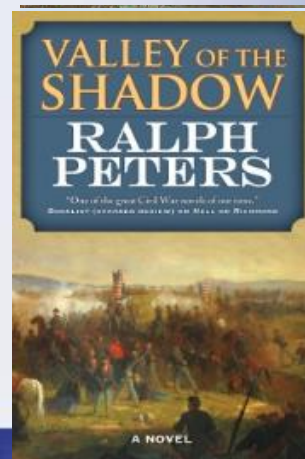
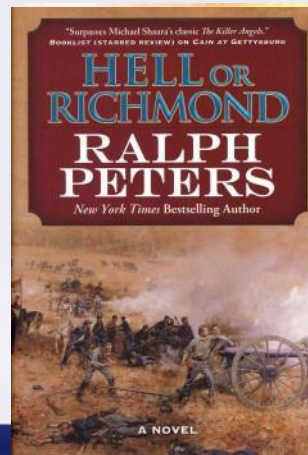
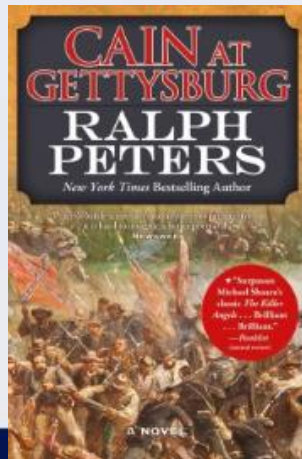
- Popular military fiction topic
- Early novels focused on romance of the South
 - Gone With the Wind by Margaret Mitchell (1936)
- Very few Civil War veteran authors
 - Reasons are debated



ASSAULT ON FORT SANDERS.

Civil War Novels

- Civil War trilogy by Jeff & Michael Shaara (1974-1998)
- The March by E.L. Doctorow (2005)
- The Battle of the Crater by Newt Gingrich (2011)
- Novels of the Civil War by Jeff Shaara (2012-2015)
- The Battle Hymn Cycle by Ralph Peters (2012-2017)



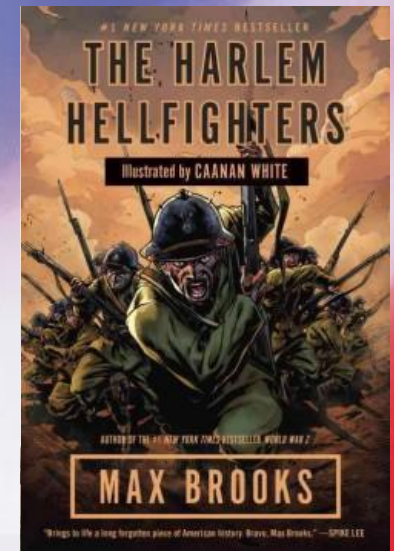
World War I (1914-1918)

- U.S. joined late, in 1917
- “Lost Generation” writers
 - Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Dos Passos, Faulkner
- Mass casualties led to criticism, disillusionment
- Introduction of realism
- Hemingway most associated with this time period
 - A Farewell to Arms (1929)



World War I novels

- Flanders by Patricia Anthony (1998)
- To the Last Man by Jeff Shaara (2004)
- The First of July by Elizabeth Speller (2013)
- 1914 by Jean Echenoz (2014)
- The Harlem Hellfighters by Max Brooks (2014)



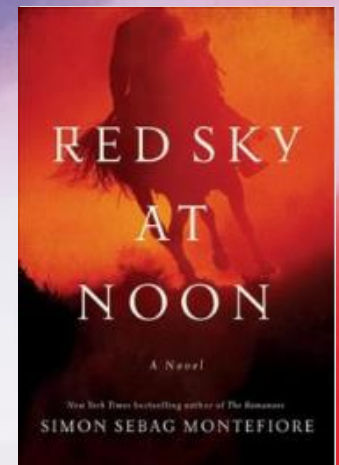
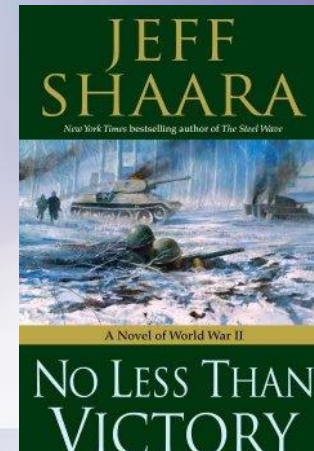
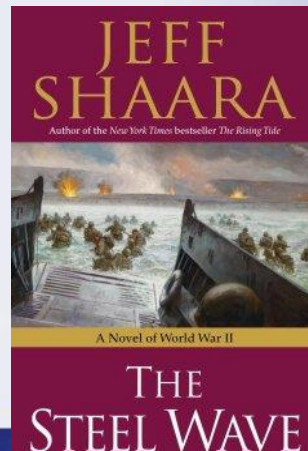
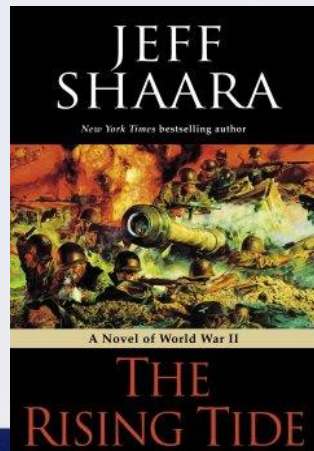
World War II (1939-1945)

- Lots written, varied
- Pragmatic, non-romantic fiction
- Common themes:
 - Battle, loyalty, courage/cowardice, endurance...
- Combat novels are most numerous
- Began seeing books critical of military command
 - The Naked and the Dead by Norman Mailer (1948)
 - From Here to Eternity by James Jones (1951)



World War II novels

- Josh Thurlow novels by Homer Hickam (2003-2007)
- World War II novels by Jeff Shaara (2006-2011)
- Killing Rommel by Steven Pressfield (2008)
- The Commodore by P.T. Deutermann (2016)
- Red Sky at Noon by Simon Segan-Montefiore (2018)



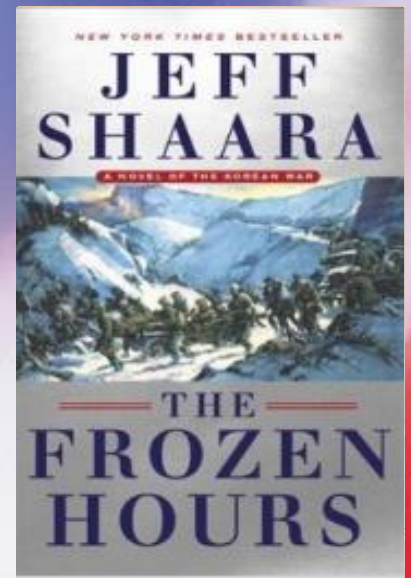
Korean War (1950-1953)

- “The Forgotten War”
- Much written during/immediately following
 - Don't Touch Me by Mackinlay Kantor (1951)
- Resurgence due to Memorial & anniversary
- Focus on Army & Marines
- Most follows whole war or last two years
- Much written by veterans
- Recent works often self-published



Korean War novels

- Retreat, Hell! by W.E.B. Griffin (2004)
- War Remains by Jeffrey Miller (2011)
- Hope in Hungnam by David Watts, Jr. (2012)
- Divisions by Larry Krantz (2013)
- The Frozen Hours by Jeff Shaara (2017)



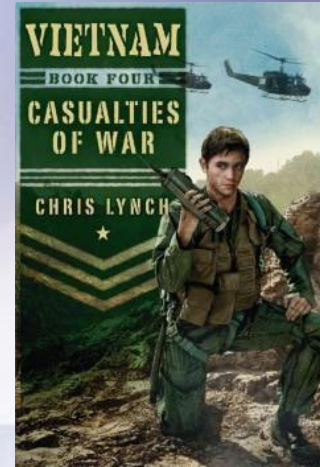
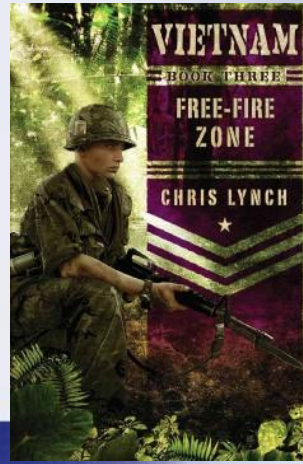
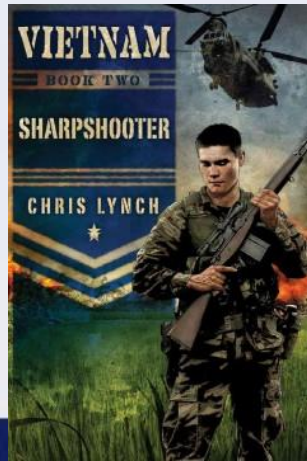
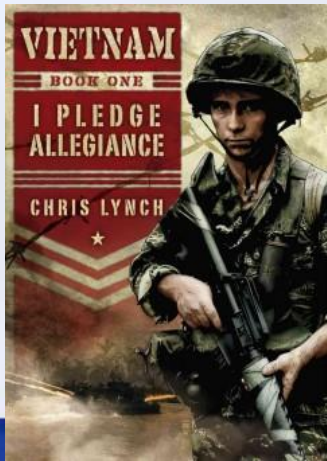
Vietnam War (1954-1975)

- Tradition of distinguished war literature
 - The Quiet American by Graham Greene (1955)
- Realistic/naturalistic
- Heller's Catch 22 (1961) influenced Vietnam authors
 - The Bamboo Bed by William Eastlake (1969)
- Much written on war's effects on veterans



Vietnam War novels

- Matterhorn by Karl Marlantes (2010)
- Vietnam series by Chris Lynch (YA, 2011-2014)
- Don't Mean Nuthin' by Ron Lealos (2015)
- Viet Man by D.S. Lliteras (2015)
- The Low Bird by David L. Robbins (2016)



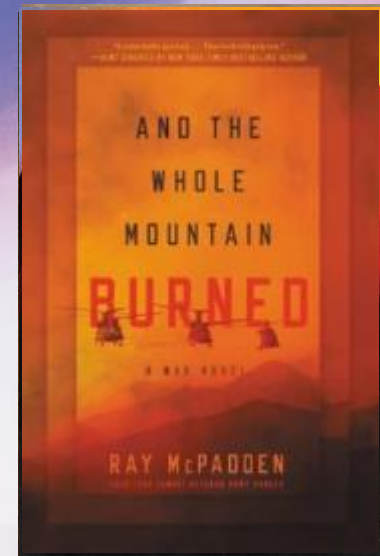
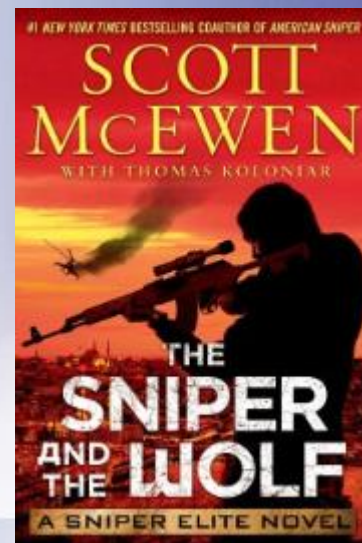
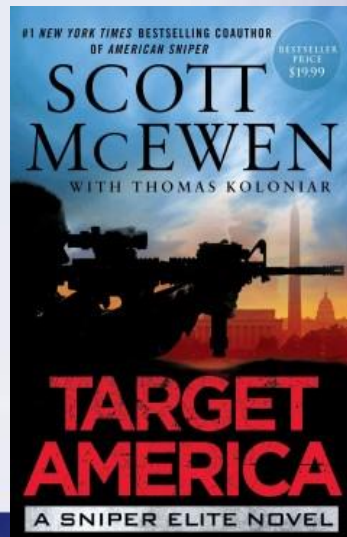
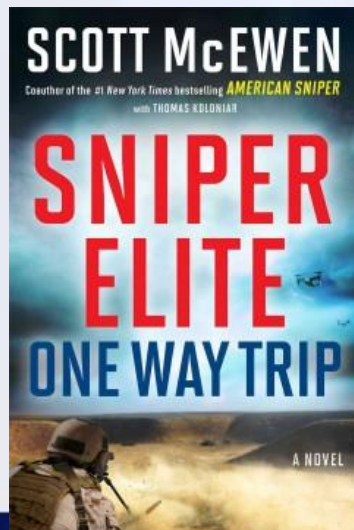
The Middle East (1990-)

- Gulf War, Afghan War/Iraq War/War on Terror
- Cultural and historical appeal:
 - Historical villains (bin Laden, Hussein, Qaddafi...)
 - Birthplace of three major religions
 - Previous conflicts/wars
- Terrorism threat ensures popularity
- Much is set in U.S.
- Focus on individual soldiers



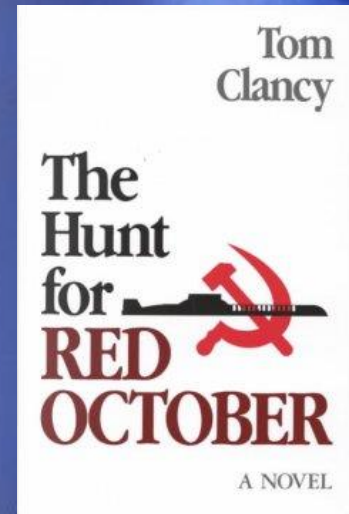
Middle East novels

- Sniper Elite series by Scott McEwen (2013-)
- Fives and Twenty-Fives by Michael Pitre (2014)
- Redeployment by Phil Klay (2014)
- Wynne's War by Aaron Gwyn (2014)
- And the Whole Mountain Burned by Ray McPadden (2018)



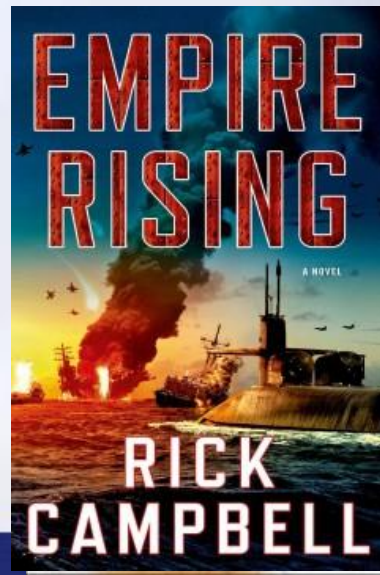
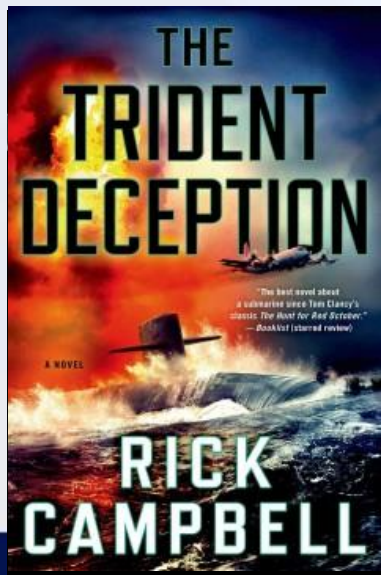
Technothrillers

- The Hunt for Red October by Tom Clancy (1984)
- Plot revolves around military weapons system
- Technology, action, pacing over characters
- High, sustained action; military jargon & acronyms
- Hero fights for truth, justice, America
- Very, very bad guys
- Usually highly researched



Technothriller

- The Last Line by Anthony Shaffer (2013)
- Troy Pearce series by Mike Maden (2013-)
- Trident Deception novels by Rick Campbell (2014-)
- Drone Strike by Dale Brown (2014)
- Tom Locke novels by Sean McFate (2016-)



POW Stories

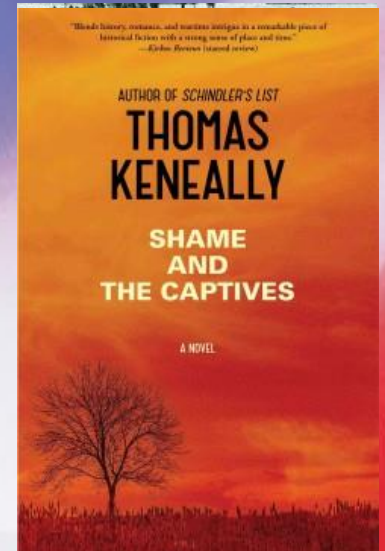
- Stories of human condition, survival
- Overlaps with non-military incarceration tales
- Tough-skinned readers or history buffs



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Foto: Buschel | 1944/10-46 Winter

POW novels

- The Special Prisoner by Jim Lehrer (2000)
- War Trash by Ha Jin (2004)
- In the Shadows of the Sun by Alexander Parsons (2005)
- Dawn of a Thousand Nights by Tricia Goyer (2005)
- Shame and the Captives by Thomas Keneally (2015)



Literary Military Fiction

- Poetic, lyrical language; slower read; character-driven
- Straightforward or experimental
- Good for book groups
- Often critically acclaimed
 - “Literary” refers to style, not quality

Literary Military Fiction novels

- Three Day Road by Joseph Boyden (2005)
- The Judas Field by Howard Bahr (2006)
- The Coldest Night by Robert Olmstead (2012)
- Youngblood by Matt Gallagher (2016)
- Bring Out the Dog: Stories by Will Mackin (2018)

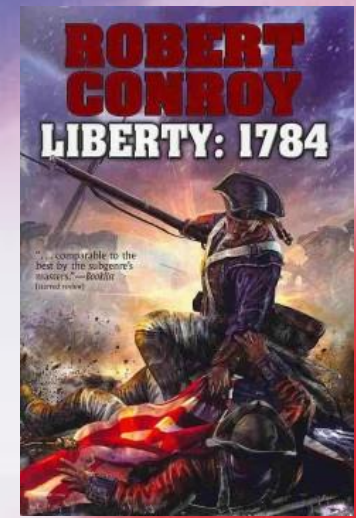
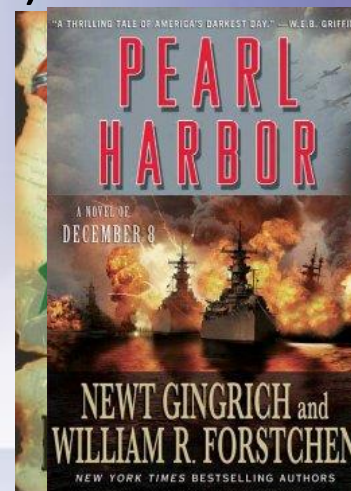


Alternate History

- What if...?
- One event that changes everything
 - Carries out premise in great detail
- Authors typically have good historical knowledge
- Appeal to fans of technothrillers
 - Historical military readers may shun
- May appear under Sci-Fi or speculative fiction

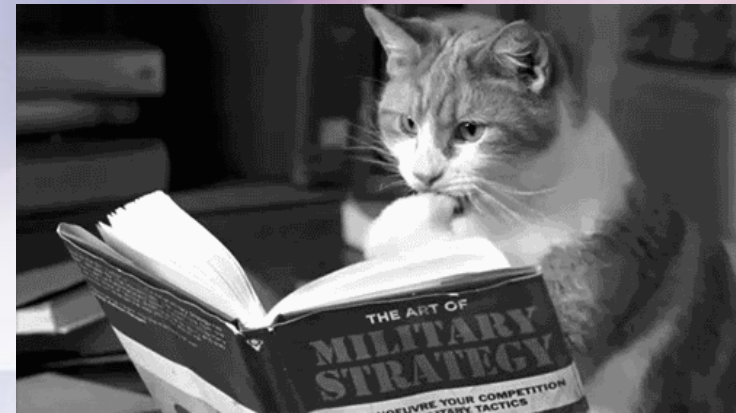
Alternate History novels

- The Great War series by Harry Turtledove (1997-2007)
- The Plot Against America by Philip Roth (2004)
- Pacific War series by Newt Gingrich (2007-2008)
- Leviathan trilogy by Scott Westerfeld (YA, 2009-2011)
- The War that Came Early series by Harry Turtledove (2009-14)
- Liberty 1784 by Robert Conroy (2014)



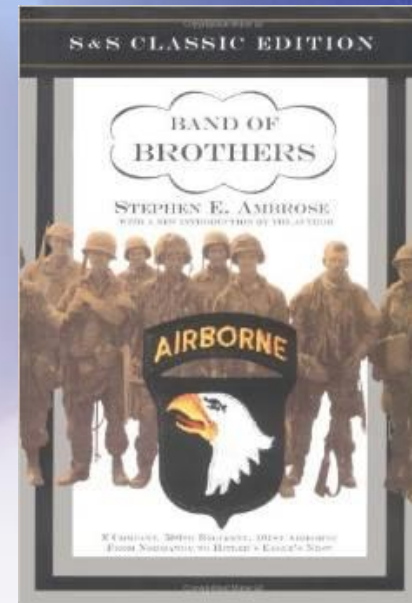
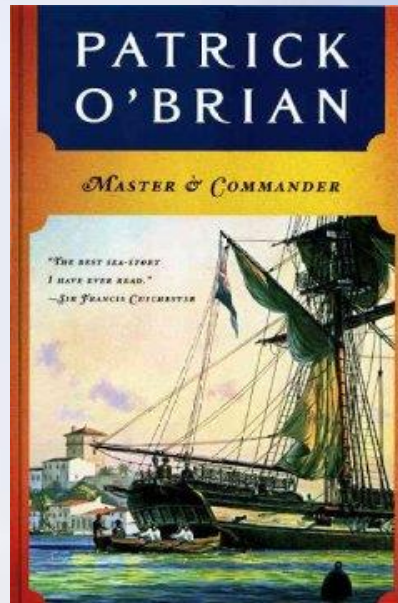
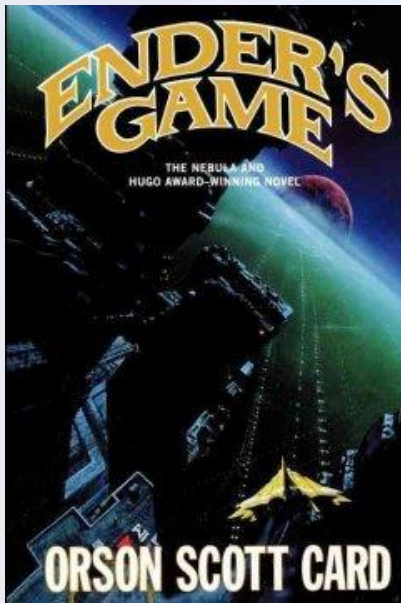
Readers' Advisory Tips

- Military fiction RA = reference interview
- Listen for references to historical accuracy
- Match readers to books based on tone, style, language
- Suggested questions:
 - Time period or theater preference?
 - Land, air, or sea battles?
 - Interest in future/ imaginary battles?



Readers' Advisory Tips


- Has your patron “read it all?”
 - Sci-Fi military fiction
 - Sea adventures = conflicts and history
 - Non-fiction war accounts



Readers' Advisory Tips

- Don't be intimidated... be prepared!
 - Bibliographies/lists
 - By place
 - By subject
 - What-to-read-next
 - Create a bookmark

MILITARY/WAR FICTION



The Military/War Fiction genre takes place in the field of combat or on the home front, where the characters are focused on preparing for or recovering from war.

The genre has roots that reach back to the classical period from Homer's *The Iliad* to the English saga *Beowulf*. The primary focus of the story was to preserve the history of the battles and tactics between warring societies, while at the same time establishing or expanding a collective memory for their people. Other genres such as Historical Fiction and Romance often overlap with Military/War Fiction to create a richer palette. From the Big Sail romances of earlier centuries to the present day high-tech of Special Ops, Military/War Fiction is still as popular as ever.

AUTHORS.....

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Chris Stewart—HF, TT
Brad Taylor—M, SO
Brad Thor—M, SO
Lee Tolstoy—Magazines
Hansen Wulsh—HF, W

KEY
HF Historical Fiction
TT Techno-Thriller
W War stories
M Military stories
S Suspense
SO Special Ops

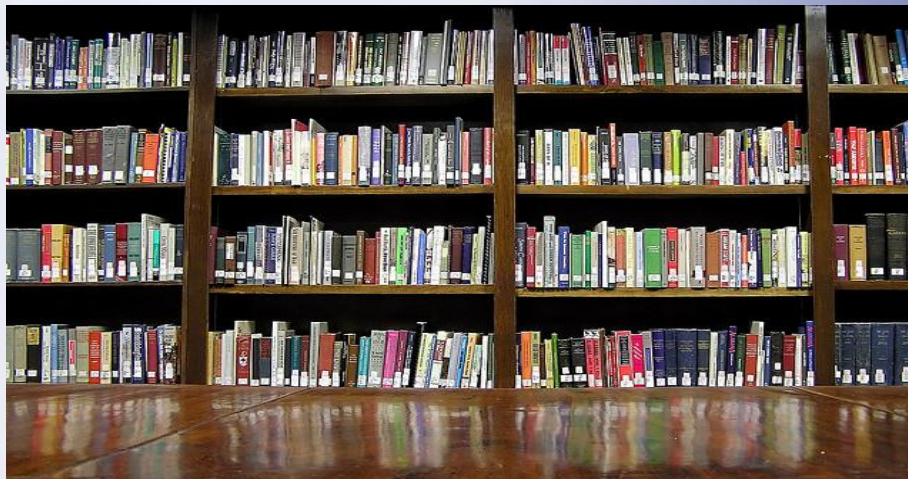
AUTHORS

James Jones—W
Alexander Kent—HF, S
Gordon Kert—M, S
Richard Marcinko—M
Margaret Mitchell—HF, Civil War
Patrick O'Brian—HF
David Poyer—M, S
John Ringo—M, TT
David L. Robbins—HF, W
Patrick Roberson—M, TT
Jill Shuart—HF, W

Larry Bond—M, TT
Dale Brown—M, TT
Tom Clancy—M, TT
Jack Doughton—M
Harold Cayle—HF, M
Stephen Coonts—M, TT
Bonard Cornwell—HF
C. S. Forester—HF, High Seas
Frederick Forsyth—M, S
Paul Garrison—High Seas
Mervyn Gregg—HF, W
W.E.B. Griffin—M, W
Nolan Hobbs—HF, S
Jack Higgins—W, S

Selection Tips

- Scan catalog and stacks
 - Too heavy/light in certain sections?
- Judging historical accuracy
 - Know the “Old Faithfuls”
 - Read reviews
 - Look for bibliographies, notes, epilogues, maps, photos, etc.



by Michael Porter, flickr

Marketing Tips

- Create shelf talkers
 - Recommend other books/authors
- Popular with your patrons?
 - Designated section
 - Genre stickers
- Useful, relevant subject and genre headings
 - War stories, Military fiction, Alternative histories, Techno-thrillers, Literary fiction, etc.



Marketing Tips

- Create a display!
 - Educate your patrons on military anniversaries
 - Mix fiction and non-fiction
 - Movie tie-ins
 - Books featuring veterans
 - Include local history materials
 - Passive programming
 - [Operation Gratitude](#), [Military Missions](#)



Recommended Websites

- D-Day/Battle of Normandy 75th anniversary - dday-anniversary.com/#
- WWI Centennial Commission: worldwar1centennial.org/educate-home.html?edu_page=topics
- Vietnam War Commemoration: <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/>
- Military.com: military.com
- KY Dept. of Veterans Affairs: veterans.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx
- U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs: va.gov
- VetFriends: vetfriends.com/organizations/directory.cfm?state=KY
- U.S. Army Center of Military History: history.army.mil/index.html
- National Military Appreciation Month: <http://www.nmam.org/index.htm>
- Novelist: kyvl.org/novelist

References

Blood, Bedlam, Bullets, and Bad Guys: A Reader's Guide to Adventure/Suspense Fiction by Michael B. Gannon (2004).

Encyclopedia of American War Literature, ed. by Philip K. Jason and Mark A. Graves (2001).

Historical Fiction: A Guide to the Genre by Sarah L. Johnson (2005).

Integrated Advisory Service: Breaking Through the Book Boundary to Better Serve Library Users, ed. by Jessica Moyer (2010).

Read On... Historical Fiction: Reading Lists for Every Taste by Brad Hooper (2006).

The Readers' Advisory Guide to Historical Fiction by Jennifer S. Baker (2015).



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SAVE THE DATE

Register for these and more on the [KDLA CE Events Calendar](#)

E-rate Form 471 for Category One: Funding Year 2019

Wednesday, January 23, 10:00-11:30 pm ET (9:00-10:30 pm CT)

Summer Reading in Rural Libraries

Wednesday, January 23, 1:00-2:00 pm ET (12:00-1:00 pm CT)

Oh, the Places You'll Go!: Travel RA

Thursday, January 24, 2:00-3:00 pm ET (1:00-2:00 pm CT)

E-rate Form 471 for Category Two: Funding Year 2019

Tuesday, January 29, 10:00-11:30 am ET (9:00-10:30 am CT)

Stronger Together: Developing School & Library Partnerships

Wednesday, January 30, 1:00-2:00 pm ET (12:00-1:00 pm CT)

More webinars are available on our **Archived Webinars** page:

<https://kdla.ky.gov/librarians/staffdevelopment/kdlaarchivedwebinars/Pages/default.aspx>

Thank you for attending!

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