

# The Soldier's Experience: Letters from Four American Wars



*Men from the 320th Regiment Infantry, 80th Division, relax in Saulty, France, 1918. (National Archives, Id. 55202854)*

Created through a partnership with the Veterans Legacy Program



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration

THE GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

TL TH TEACHING LITERACY  
THROUGH HISTORY



# The Soldier's Experience: Letters from Four American Wars

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## UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit has been developed in conjunction with the National Cemetery Administration's Veterans Legacy Program and is a part of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History resources, designed to align to the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate original documents of historical significance and to recognize how those documents reflect the shared experiences of American Veterans, many of whom are honorably laid to rest in National Cemeteries across the country. Students will learn and practice the skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on visual and textual source materials.

Over the course of the four lessons in this unit, the students will analyze and assess letters and other documents by American soldiers who fought in the Civil War, World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. The objective is to have students recognize the similarities and differences in soldiers' experiences across wars that took place more than one hundred years apart and to understand the human element across time. The documents cover four distinct themes: Draft/Enlistment, the War, the Home Front, and Returning Home. The students will examine and evaluate the meaning, mood, message, and theme of each. Once they have read all sixteen they will select phrases to create a "found" poem or letter that expresses the soldier's experiences in one of the four categories across time. As a final extension activity, students will research a local Service Member or Veteran buried in a National Cemetery, using a step-by-step process that will demonstrate their ability to work with and organize data, analyze and access primary and secondary sources, and write a memorial to honor the service of their chosen Service Member or Veteran.

**NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS:** 4

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 7–12

## UNIT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Analyze primary source documents
- Infer subtle messages from primary source texts
- Summarize the meaning of primary source texts

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

To what extent did soldiers in different wars share a common experience?

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.2: Analyze the purpose of information in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.B: Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2.B: Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.



## LESSON 1

## The Civil War

### OVERVIEW

In the first lesson, the students will learn about the four themes that will form the basis of their discussion of the soldiers' letters, and in a few cases, diary entries and interviews, featured in all four lessons. For each war, the documents will align with the following themes: Draft/Enlistment, the War, the Home Front, or Returning Home. Once the students have discussed what each of the themes means, they will read four letters written by Civil War soldiers and identify the theme that best fits each letter. At the end of the lesson, the class will come together to discuss the letters and the theme they believe each letter best illustrates.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Civil War was, by its very nature, the bloodiest conflict in American history, with death-toll estimates surpassing 700,000. As historian James McPherson has stated, "Americans of the Civil War generation lived through an experience in which time and consciousness took on new dimensions." Many of the soldiers who lived through the experience talked of nothing else. Northerner Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The war . . . has assumed such huge proportions that it threatens to engulf us all." The experiences of the Civil War soldiers are unique and at the same time typical of many soldiers' experiences throughout time.<sup>1</sup>

When the Civil War began in 1861, the Union army consisted of approximately 16,000 soldiers and the Confederacy relied on local militias. As they scrambled to build up their military ability, both sides modeled their tactics, organization, dress, and names after the French military of the Napoleonic period, but evolving technology revolutionized warfighting. The average age of the soldiers was 25, and most were away from home for the first time. These soldiers were, as historian Allen C. Guelzo has noted, "surprisingly religious and literate."<sup>2</sup> They looked forward to letters from home, in the absence of other forms of communication, and their own missives were not censored as happened during later wars.

### MATERIALS

- Themes
- Analyzing a Civil War Soldier's Letter activity sheets
  - o Excerpts from a letter from Lysander Wheeler to "Parents, Bro, and Sister," May 26, 1865, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC07460.121.
  - o A letter from George W. Tillotson to his daughter Georgianna Tillotson, February 16, 1862, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC04558.11.
  - o Excerpts from a letter from Watson Squire to his parents, May 21, 1861, Watson C. Squire papers, Accession No. 4004-001, Box 16/23, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.
  - o Excerpts from a letter from Thomas D. Christie to his father, James C. Christie, October 18, 1862, James C. Christie and family papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>1</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Allen C. Guelzo, "The Civil War Soldiers," Lecture, Gettysburg College, July 7, 2018.





## PROCEDURE

1. Display and discuss the Themes with students. Caution: Some of the documents may have crude language or intense scenes of violence.
2. Place students into pairs or small groups and hand out the Analyzing a Civil War Soldier's Letter activity sheets.
3. You may want to "share read" the letters before they complete the rest of the activity. To share read the text, have the students follow along silently while you begin to read aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to read aloud. This technique will support struggling readers and English language learners (ELL).
4. Have students complete the activity sheets.
  - Students will create a title that summarizes the content of the soldier's letter. Students will cite textual evidence to support this title.
  - Students will identify which theme—Draft/Enlistment, the War, the Home Front, or Returning Home—best defines each letter. Students will cite textual evidence to support their answer.
  - Each of the four soldier's letters must be paired with one theme.
5. When they have completed all four Analyzing a Soldier's Letter activity sheets, have the students discuss their findings and support their decisions citing textual evidence from the letters.



## LESSON 2

## World War I

## OVERVIEW

In the second lesson, the students will read three letters by and one interview with World War I soldiers and identify the theme that best fits each document. At the end of the lesson, the class will come together to discuss the texts and the theme they believe each best illustrates.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

World War I was, as esteemed historian John Keegan said, “a tragic and unnecessary conflict. . . . The train of events that led to its outbreak might have been broken at any point during the five weeks of crisis that preceded the first clash of arms, had prudence or common goodwill found a voice.”<sup>3</sup> The First World War was a war of enormous scale that grew to involve thirty-two countries with fighting spread across three continents: Europe, Africa, and Asia. More than 150 billion dollars were spent prosecuting the war. However, the cost in human lives is the most appalling, with estimates reaching as high as 22 million, 117,000 of them American Service Members.

America’s official entry into this seemingly unceasing quagmire of attrition did not happen until April 1917, nearly three years into the conflict. The US Army and its soldiers were unprepared for war in April 1917, and had to catch up, quickly. The experiences of the American soldier, though similar to their British and French counterparts, was uniquely American, but as historian Jennifer Keene argues, “The First World War’s significance, in American history, defines what it will mean to serve in the military for much of the twentieth century.”<sup>4</sup>

## MATERIALS

- Themes
- Analyzing a World War I Soldier’s Letter activity sheets
  - o Excerpts from a letter from Adelbert Treadway to his family, November 26, 1918, Id. 225299, World War I Coll. #49, Box 45 Kansas Soldiers, Kansas Historical Society.
  - o Excerpts from “How Negro Officer Felt about Fighting,” in J. A. Jamieson, *Complete History of the Colored Soldiers in the World War: Authentic Story of the Greatest War of Civilized Times and What the Colored Man Did to Uphold Democracy and Liberty* (New York: Bennett & Churchill, 1919), p. 157.
  - o A letter from C. B. Lyons to Helen Lyons, April 9, 1919, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC07810.072.
  - o Excerpts from a letter from Robert Lincoln O’Connell to Ellen O’Connell, August 23, 1918, Robert Lincoln O’Connell papers, Archives & Special Collections, American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives.

<sup>3</sup> John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Jennifer Keene, “What Did It All Mean? American Soldiers in World War I,” Lecture, National WWI Museum and Memorial, November 4, 2017.



## PROCEDURE

1. Display and/or review the Themes with students.
2. Place students into pairs or small groups and hand out the Analyzing a World War I Soldier's Letter activity sheets.
3. You may choose to share read the letters as described in Lesson 1.
4. Have students complete the activity sheets as in Lesson 1.
5. When they have completed all four activity sheets, have the students discuss their findings and support their decisions citing evidence from the texts.



## LESSON 3

## World War II

## OVERVIEW

In the third lesson, the students will read excerpts from two letters, a memoir, and a diary written by World War II soldiers and identify the theme that best fits each document. At the end of the lesson, the class will come together to discuss the documents and the theme they believe each text best illustrates.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

America was shaken out of its isolationist slumber following the First World War by the surprise attack on the US naval and army air bases in Hawaii on the morning of December 7, 1941. This “day of infamy” as President Franklin Roosevelt called it, would place the United States in the middle of the Second World War. Although the origins of World War II were embedded in the first, this war would be fought in an altogether different manner. Gone were biplanes, gas masks, and the quagmire of trench warfare. In their place were heavy bombers, aircraft carriers, and the blitzkrieg [lightning war]. Nevertheless, the Second World War seemed all too familiar. The principal characters were familiar, the locations were familiar, and the reasons for the war seemed to be familiar. But this war was different. The greatest difference was, as historian A. J. P. Taylor put it, “Hitler. He planned the second World war. His will alone caused it.”<sup>5</sup>

Much like the war itself, the American soldier’s experiences during World War II felt both familiar and different. For one, the United States was nearly unanimous in its support for the war, unlike the First World War. Secondly, the American soldiers who fought in this war found themselves fighting in two very different theaters of war. In the Pacific, they fought the Japanese. In Europe and North Africa, they fought Germany and Italy. Their battles were scattered across the planet in places like Tarawa, Sicily, Iwo Jima, and Normandy. In all, 16 million Americans served in World War II; just over 405,000 made the ultimate sacrifice.

## MATERIALS

- Themes
- Analyzing a World War II Soldier’s Letter activity sheets
  - o Excerpts from a letter from Morris “Moe” Weiner to Sylvia Weiner, June 6, 1944, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09414.1108.
  - o Excerpt from a memoir by John G. Baker, April 8–August 1, 1945, John G. Baker Collection (AFC/2001/001/46563), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, p. 7.
  - o Excerpt from a diary by Edward Duncan Cameron, June 2–8, 1944, Edward Duncan Cameron Collection (AFC/2001/001/06555), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.
  - o Excerpt from a letter from Sidney Diamond to Estelle Spero, ca. 1942, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09120.028.

<sup>5</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2005), p. 11.





## PROCEDURE

1. Display and/or review the Themes.
2. Hand out the Analyzing a World War II Soldier's Letter activity sheets. The students may work independently, in pairs, or in small groups.
3. When they have completed all four activity sheets, have the students discuss their findings and support their decisions citing evidence from the texts.



## LESSON 4

## The Vietnam War

### OVERVIEW

In the fourth lesson, the students will read excerpts from a letter, a diary, a memoir, and a notice of injury from the Vietnam War and identify the theme that best fits each document. The class will come together to discuss the documents and the theme they believe each Poem or Letter best illustrates. The class will then synthesize what they learned throughout the previous lessons by creating a “found” poem or letter using phrases from the sixteen texts provided in this unit.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Vietnam War remains mired in controversy. Even the beginning of American involvement in the war is hotly debated to this very day. As a Cold War conflict, the war took on global proportions although the fighting itself was contained to the Southeast Asia region. Vietnam, unlike World War II, did not enjoy popular support among Americans. In fact, the Vietnam War was widely protested on streets and college campuses around the nation. Some young people burned their draft cards as a form of protest. American soldiers in Vietnam, unlike the previous wars, fought in a racially integrated army. This integration added to the complex tapestry of the conflict. The war in Vietnam was folded into larger discussions about the international Cold War and the national Civil Rights Movement. This was the backdrop for the American soldier heading to Vietnam in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

### MATERIALS

- Themes
- Analyzing a Vietnam War Soldier’s Letter activity sheets
  - o A letter from Richard J. DiChristina to Joyce Robinson, January 3, 1970, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC009626.10.03.
  - o Excerpts from a diary by Louis Raynor, September 24–25, 1967, Private Vietnam Diary of Louis J. Raynor, courtesy of Sharon D. Raynor.
  - o Excerpt from an interview with Maxwell Barner, III, October 2, 2012, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.89316transcript?ID=mv0001>
  - o Official Notice of Injury, March 19, 1968, Department of Defense, Christopher D. Ammons Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- Shared Soldiers’ Experience Poem or Letter activity sheet
- Teacher’s Resource: SAMPLE Shared Soldiers’ Experience Poem or Letter activity sheet

## PROCEDURE

1. Display and/or review the Themes.
2. Hand out the Analyzing a Vietnam War Soldier's Letter activity sheets.
3. When they have completed all four activity sheets, have the students discuss their findings and support their decisions citing textual evidence from the letters.
4. Students will then synthesize materials from all four lessons to create a "Shared Soldiers' Experience" poem or letter. They will choose two phrases from one or two letters written during each war (a total of 8 phrases). They will insert the phrases into the Shared Soldiers' Experience Poem or Letter activity sheet to create a "found" poem or letter centered on one of the themes: Draft/Enlistment, the War, the Home Front, or Returning Home. Give the students some latitude in their selection of sentences or phrases and the order in which they use them.
5. Students will provide a brief summary of their poem or letter's message to explain how it fits their chosen theme.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Telling a Soldier's Story

### OVERVIEW

Using the resources of the National Cemetery Administration as well as local and state resources, students will apply what they have learned from Lessons 1–4 to research the history of a local Service Member or Veteran buried in a National Cemetery. In a step-by-step process, individual students or student groups will apply research skills, work with and organize data, analyze and access primary and secondary sources, and write a memorial to honor the service of their chosen Service Member or Veteran. This activity has been designed in the hopes that students will visit the National Cemetery to honor their chosen Service Member or Veteran while they learn about the service and sacrifice of Service Members and Veterans from their own communities.

### PROCEDURE

1. To prepare for this activity, visit your local National Cemetery to collect names or contact local historical societies and libraries, read obituaries in historical newspapers, contact local Service Members or Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) and Veteran social groups. Some students may have family members or otherwise have a personal, family, or community connection with a specific Service Member or Veteran or their family and they may prefer to choose that individual.

Often in researching Service Members and Veterans, some students may find lots of information and others may find little information. In the latter cases, it may be appropriate for students to research the time period and world events that would have affected this Service Member or Veteran and write a tribute based on what their experiences might have been: What would they have felt, thought, heard, experienced?

2. You may choose to have students work independently or in pairs or small groups.
3. You may assign a Service Member or Veteran to each student or group, allow them to choose from your prepared list, or have them conduct research to identify a local Service Member or Veteran buried in a National Cemetery on their own.



#### 4. Conducting Research

- o You may wish to conduct research into a few of the Service Members or Veterans first, in order to help students find the most fruitful sources.
- o Once the students have examined online sources such as the ones provided below, you may find it useful to work with state and local historical societies. Often these organizations will have digitized useful information, cataloged historical photographs or newspapers, or developed projects focusing on soldiers from your state or community.
- o Below are a few websites that could prove useful for researching soldiers' stories. Please be aware that websites like Ancestry, Family Search, Fold3, Newspapers.com and others may require payment, but it is worth checking whether your school or local library system provides free access to those sites.
  - i. US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) resources
    - National Gravesite Locator: <https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov>  
Search for burial locations of Service Members or Veterans and their family members in VA National Cemeteries, state Veterans cemeteries, various other military and Department of Interior cemeteries, and for Service Members or Veterans buried in private cemeteries when the grave is marked with a government grave marker.
    - Veterans Legacy Memorial: <https://va.gov/remember/>  
The Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) is an online memorial space for Service Members and Veterans managed by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) of the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). NCA manages 140 National Cemeteries as shrine spaces to honor our Nation's Service Members and Veterans and extends memorialization of the 3.7 million Service Members and Veterans interred in NCA cemeteries to this digital memorial space, providing a VLM profile page for each. Interment location and headstone data fields can be helpful when trying to locate obituaries, which often contain more leads into the life of the Service Member and Veteran.
  - ii. Armed Services websites
    - US Army Heritage and Education Center: <https://ahec.armywarcollege.edu/>
    - Naval History and Heritage Command: <https://www.history.navy.mil/>
    - Marine Corps History Division: <https://grc-usmcu.libguides.com/marine-corps-archives/main>
    - Air Force Historical Research Agency: <https://www.afhra.af.mil/>



- US Coast Guard Historians Office: <https://www.history.uscg.mil/>

iii. Other useful websites

- Library of Congress Veterans History Project: [loc.gov/vets/](http://loc.gov/vets/)
- National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/veterans/online>  
Most of the military records at the National Archives are not online, but you may find some useful records here that have been digitized.
- Military Indexes: <https://www.militaryindexes.com>  
This site is run by an individual genealogist. Select the war you are researching and scroll down to the “Records by State” section.
- Find a Grave: [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)  
This website is run by private individuals and compiles crowd-sourced information.
- Familysearch.org  
This site is free but requires an online account.

5. As they conduct their research, the students will need to keep a record of where they acquired their knowledge, take careful notes, and organize and verify their data through a variety of sources. When all information has been confirmed, the students will write their Service Member’s or Veteran’s story, being certain to use their own words. Construction of the story should follow the simple format below.

- o The first paragraph should cover the Service Member’s or Veteran’s military service, including
  - Name and other names or spelling of names the person went by
  - Rank(s), company, regiment, and state(s) of service
  - Battles the unit fought in and any honors received
- o The second paragraph should cover the Service Member’s or Veteran’s personal information, including
  - State of birth or residence
  - Relatives/family
  - Occupation
  - Burial location

To make the research more engaging for the students, encourage them to add a statement of honor or some personal information about the Service Member or Veteran that the student found compelling.

- o The last component is a complete list of the student’s sources.

6. If possible, bring the class to the National Cemetery and have the students present their stories at the Veteran’s gravesite. This activity could include students’ families, Veterans’ families, and other community members. If it is not possible to



visit the Cemetery, the presentations could be done in school or at a memorial or monument in the community.

7. Below, is an example of a Vietnam War soldier's story with sources:

*Sergeant Candelario Garcia Jr. fought in the Vietnam War. He enlisted in the US Army in 1963, and was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, which was referred to as the "Big Red One" during the Vietnam War. While Garcia was awarded several honors due to his service, including the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and Purple Hearts. However, he did not receive the Medal of Honor until March 14, 2014, a year after his death. He was finally awarded the medal in recognition of his actions on December 8, 1968, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above the call of duty. While acting as team leader, his company came under heavy fire near Lai Khe, and Garcia eliminated two enemy machine-gun positions and initiated an attempt to aid wounded comrades, opening himself to enemy fire.*

*Garcia was born in Corsicana, Texas, on February 26, 1944, and died in the same town on January 10, 2013. He was one of nine siblings, and his father, a private in the US Army, was killed in action in Europe in 1945. Candelario Garcia Jr. is buried in Section 107, Site 209 of the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery. He has been honored with a bronze statue in Corsicana.*

Sources:

- "Sergeant Candelario Garcia." Valor 24, US Army, <https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/valor24/recipients/garcia/?f=recipients&l=name>
- "Division CSM accepts Medal of Honor on veteran's behalf." US Army, March 24, 2014, [https://www.army.mil/article/122466/Division\\_CSM\\_accepts\\_Medal\\_of\\_Honor\\_on\\_veteran\\_s\\_behalf/](https://www.army.mil/article/122466/Division_CSM_accepts_Medal_of_Honor_on_veteran_s_behalf/)
- Daniel Rothberg, "Obama will award Medal of Honor to 24 overlooked Army veterans," *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 21, 2014, <https://www.latimes.com/nation/politics/politicsnow/la-pn-obama-medal-of-honors-veterans-20140221-story.html#axzz2u0hD4kAA>
- Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/126825299>
- "Sgt. Candelario Garcia," First Division Museum at Cantigny Park, <https://www.fdmuseum.org/about-the-1st-infantry-division/medal-of-honor-recipients/sgt-candelario-garcia/>
- "Candelario Garcia," American Battle Monuments Commission, <https://www.fold3.com/record/529874551-candelario-garcia>
- Mary Drennon, "Voices of Valor: Candelario Garcia Jr., Manuel Flores," Waco (TX) *Tribune-Herald*, May 22, 2016, [https://www.wacotrib.com/news/veterans\\_profiles/voices-of-valor-candelario-garcia-jr-manuel-flores/article\\_beca19b8-364c-5d5f-8648-d9bb20e32b5e.html](https://www.wacotrib.com/news/veterans_profiles/voices-of-valor-candelario-garcia-jr-manuel-flores/article_beca19b8-364c-5d5f-8648-d9bb20e32b5e.html)
- Janet Jacobs, "Medal of Honor: Garcia to be Honored Tuesday for Bravery under Fire," *Corsicana (TX) Daily Sun*, March 16, 2014, [https://www.corsicanadailysun.com/news/local\\_news/medal-of-honor-garcia-to-be-honored-tuesday-for-bravery/article\\_d86c4a54-d8d6-580f-bb6e-0678a33bad0b.html](https://www.corsicanadailysun.com/news/local_news/medal-of-honor-garcia-to-be-honored-tuesday-for-bravery/article_d86c4a54-d8d6-580f-bb6e-0678a33bad0b.html)
- Randy McIlwain and Leah Johnson, "North Texas Soldier Awarded Medal of Honor Years after Death," NBC DFW, June 12, 2014, <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/north-texas-soldier-awarded-medal-of-honor-years-after-death/2000452/>



## Themes

**Draft/Enlistment:** Letters in this category cover experiences of soldiers entering the war. These letters will cover being drafted and voluntarily enlisting for service. These experiences may vary widely depending on the war, from the burning of draft cards during the Vietnam War to enthusiastic enlistment after the attack on Pearl Harbor during World War II.

**The War:** Letters in this category cover experiences of soldiers during war. These letters will cover everything from the mundane duties of training and other everyday activities to the frantic, chaotic fog of war.

**The Home Front:** Letters in this category cover experiences of soldiers as well as individuals “back home.” These letters will cover everything from love letters (both to and from soldiers), letters to and from parents and siblings, and letters dealing with the everyday issues of life (house payments, home maintenance, etc.).

**Returning Home:** Letters in this category cover experiences of soldiers returning home from war. These letters will cover post war issues like travel back home, dealing with wounds (both physical and mental), and reacclimating to “normal” life.



NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a Civil War Soldier's Letter

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpts from a letter from Lysander Wheeler to "Parents, Bro, and Sister," May 26, 1865

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC07460.121)

Washington D.C.  
Camp of the 105<sup>th</sup>  
May 26<sup>th</sup>, '65

Dear Parents Bro, and Sister,

. . . I must tell you a little about our grand review the 24<sup>th</sup>. We broke Camp near Alexandria at 5 in the morning and started En Route for the Capitol reaching there about 10 O'clock, crossing the long bridge which spans the Potomac River (1 ¼ miles) We left the sacred soil of old Virginia and soon came near the Capitol building after halting a little while we commenced the reviewing march down Pennsylvania Avenue to the front of the President's Mansion where the receiving stand, was thence around on another street where we proceed to camp 4 ½ miles from Washington on the Baltimore Pike where we now are and will probably stop until we leave (as the boys say) To undertake to describe the enthusiasm of the immense gathering to witness a sight (it is probable they will never see the like again) would be impossible for any one in a few words. They were perfectly astonished at the good appearance of Sherman's army supposing we were nothing more than a set of freebooters and marauder who knew how to fight, but had lost all good discipline instead thereof (though not as gaudily attired as the Army of the Potomac) we laid them entirely in the shade which is conceded by the Washington Papers and its gay inhabitants. The streets were literally festooned with wreaths of flowers every state of the North had her delegates with huge mottoes of Welcome to the Western heroes of Gen. Sherman's Army there seemed to be no end to the gratefulness they Displayed towards us Cheer upon cheer went up as we passed. . . .

My love to each Your Son & Brother, Lysander

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

The War

The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_



NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a Civil War Soldier's Letter

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### A letter from George W. Tillotson to his daughter Georgianna Tillotson, February 16, 1862

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC04558.11)

Camp Winfield, [Virginia], February 16, 1862

My Dear Daughter Georgianna,

I was glad to here that you took an interest in your papa letters so I thought I would write to you your Ma will read it to you now but you must hurry and learn to read so you can read letters yourself and write them too. You do not know how glad you Pa would be to get a letter from his own dear daughter but I will tel you what you can do you can tell your Ma what to write or what you want to say to me and she will write it for you. You must think of Pa every day, every night when you go to bed, and every time that you wake up in the morning. Be a good girl to babby and Lucy never strike them nor speak cross to them but always be pleasant and kind to them so that they will be kind to you and above all be kind to Ma and mind her for Ma wont tell you to do anything but what you ought to do. and the better children you are the happyer you will be.

Kiss Ma, Leon and Lucy for Pa every day and your pa will come back as soon as he can but til then your pa will always remember you.

From your affectionate Father,  
George W. Tillotson

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

The War

The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_



NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a Civil War Soldier's Letter

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpts from a letter from Watson Squire to his parents, May 21, 1861

(Watson C. Squire Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries)

Elmira, N.Y.  
May 21st, 1861

Dear Father & Mother,

Your letters have both been received.

I was much grieved at the sad tone of both. Of course we all deprecate war. But since the question of our existence as a nation seems to hang upon a thread, and in case a dissolution takes place war is inevitable. I say let it come when we are best prepared and when we have the national prestige and resources to back us. . . . There if a party fails in a Presidential election it immediately sets up in opposition and usually so with success. What is our government good for if it cannot maintain itself. If the people are to rule in any locality they must do it by majorities. And if it those majorities are to be successfully set a defiance by minorities then the experiment of self-government is at an end. I say we have a greater cause for which to battle now than did our revolutionary sires. They fought against taxation without representation. We fight for the doctrine of self-government. Acquiescence in the demands of the South would be next to disintegration of the whole nation. The irremediable disgrace of us all a feeling of despair in the breasts of freemen all over the globe. . . . Nothing, but a firm resistance to rebellion can save us. . . . If it is successful then indeed will the world sing with shouts of delight, and if not so; we at least save and bind together with Everlasting bonds that band of states which adhere to the general government.

But, I will not dwell longer upon a discussion of these wars. I have not much time to write now, but the tone of your letters grieved me so much that I felt I must write something immediately. I think you are too much concerned about me. I am very glad to have those who care for me, but I cannot bear to have their bosoms rent with anguish. If there could have been anything that would have deterred me from the course I have chosen it would be the thought of plunging my parents into affliction. I appreciate all you have done for me. I shall try to be a faithful steward of what you have bestowed upon me. Of course we none of us know the chances of war. I may return with honor and invigorated constitution.

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

The War

The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_



NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a Civil War Soldier's Letter

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpts from a letter from Thomas D. Christie to his father, James C. Christie, October 18, 1862

(James C. Christie and family papers, Minnesota Historical Society)

Camp near Corinth, Oct. 18th/62

Dear Father,

I begin to despair of ever getting another word from any of you. . . .

I wrote you from Ripley acquainting you with our participation in the Battle of Corinth. . . .

My remembrance of it extends to these items. Country heavily wooded, and intersected by chains of hills, every one of which we defended as long as possible and then fell back to the next, the booming of the guns and bursting of shells, the roar of the rifles and "spat," "spat" of the bullets around us, men limping to the rear or carried by comrades, with here and there a skulker hurrying out of the reach of the musical lead. All this I remember and also that when our gun was heated it was mighty hard work to ram down the charge, which was my duty as I was No. 1. Nothing is so exciting as working a gun in real action. The sound of the discharge almost raises us off our feet with delight. Before the smoke lifts from the muzzle I dash in, dip the brush in the sponge bucket and brush out the bore using plenty of water, then seize the sponge stuff and sponge it out dry. No. 2 then inserts the cartridge which I ram home, then the shot, shell or canister, whichever it may be and it is sent home, then I spring out beside the wheel and fall flat, "Ready" shouts the Gunner, No. 3 (who has been serving vent while I loaded) now pricks the cartridge, No. 4 jumps in and inserts a friction primer, to which his lanyard is attached, in the vent, springs outside the wheel and straightens his lanyard. The Gunner gives a turn or two to the elevating screw, taps on the trail and has it carried round a little, and then, "Fire" "Take that,-----you" says No. 4 as the gun rushes back with the recoil. The other numbers run her forward at the command "By hand to the front" while I load. While you have been reading this description we would fire 3 or 4 shots. . . . The sound of the gun is most exhilarating, it fills us with enthusiasm, and we would die rather than desert her. . . .

I saw James Dempsey on the morning of the Battle, and we had quite a talk about the expected conflict. He was quite cheerful and courageous. Little did I think when we passed the 17th drawn up in Battle line as we went out on the field, that it was the last time I should ever see him. . . .

Hoping that illhealth is not the cause of your long silence, I remain your affectionate son, Tom.



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DATE

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

The War

The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME

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DATE

## Analyzing a World War I Soldier's Letter

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpts from a letter from Adelbert Treadway to his family, November 26, 1918

(Id. 225299, World War I Coll. #49, Box 45 Kansas Soldiers, Kansas Historical Society)

DATE Nov 26/18  
Somewhere Belgain.

Dear Family.

Well I can now tell you more about myself and where I am. Just now we are at Bellefontaine, Belgain, headed for Germany. We have been on the march for the last few days, have been marching about twenty five kilmeters a day. I feel fine but am just a little sore from the march but will be alright as soon as I get a good night sleep. You wanted to know my experience on the water and over here Well I will tell you some of them, Would take a book if told them all. We had a fine trip on the ship. . . .

I have never saw any one from home yet. I missed getting to Chutney Foutz just a little bit, the forty second Division moved out of Pennes just before we moved in so I did not get to see him. As you know we came across as a casual company, and I was sent to the 89th Division and they have sure made good, we were put in the same army corps with regular army and are one of the Divisions picked to come on across the Rhine into Germany. We fi[r]st went up on the Toul front, was on that sector about five week then was sent to the St Mikiel front was in that drive was sent from there to the Argonne-muse front or the Verdeen sector and was there when the Armistace was granted, so you see I saw quiet a bit of the war, at least all I care to see, but I am sure luck to get out of it with out a scratch, for there is lots of American boy that will never get back. But that is part of the game in War. We were in Stenay France when I wrote you my last letter, that is a little town on the Meuse River. There is where we slept in feather beds. Ha Was just like home to have a nice soft bed. I think that is enough war for one time will tell you more next letter. Well how is Sis + Ruth? To Sis. Still with Eg Owens she must be holding him about leavel to stay wiith him as long as she has. I suppose you are getting ready for the Xmas rush. Say Ruth I am glad Old Geo.Go across all right. Well Mother how is the water bucket I will be home soon to help keep it fill up. How are you and Mrs. Leengong getting along. Had two letter from Verna she said she was down to see you. She is a real girl don't you think so. I wrote Dad Xmas letter the 23rd was a day ahead of time but we were going to be on the march The 24th so I was a day to soon. Is Bert back in Olnery yet, I have wrote him a bunch of letter and I just wondered if he ever got them, since he has been moving around. Well tell every one hello for me. I must close hoping to be with you soon.

As Ever Dell.  
Adelbert R. Treadway  
314 Field Seg Bors  
A.P.O.761 A.E.F.



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Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

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Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a World War I Soldier's Interview

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpts from "How Negro Officer Felt about Fighting"

(J. A. Jamieson, *Complete History of the Colored Soldiers in the World War: Authentic Story of the Greatest War of Civilized Times and What the Colored Man Did to Uphold Democracy and Liberty* (New York: Bennett & Churchill, 1919), p. 157)

A lieutenant in the Harlem Hellfighters reported, "One of my men . . . asked me why I had joined the army . . . [and] what I was fighting for. I told him I was fighting for what the flag meant to the Negroes in the United States. I told him I was fighting because I wanted other oppressed people to know the meaning of democracy and enjoy it. I told him that millions of Americans fought for four years for us Negroes to get it and now it was only right that we should fight for all we were worth to help other people get the same thing.

"We are supposed to have had equal rights for fifty years now, but many times we have thought that those rights have been denied us, and many times it has been held that we have never done anything to deserve them.

"I told him that now is our opportunity to prove what we can do. If we can't fight and die in this war just as bravely as white men, then we don't deserve an equality with white men, and after the war we had better go back home and forget about it all. But if we can do things on the front; if we can make ourselves felt; if we can make America really proud of the Ole----th, then I am sure it will be the biggest possible step toward our equalization as citizens. That is what I told him, and I think he understood me."

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

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Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_



NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a World War I Soldier's Letter

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

A letter from C. B. Lyons to Helen Lyons, April 9, 1919  
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC07810.072)

ON ACTIVE SERVICE  
WITH THE  
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

April 9, 1918

My Dear Wife.

Just received your letter of March 16. and sure was glad to hear from you but sorry to hear of your having the cold.

I am still in Castillon and well as usual.

The mail service seems to be getting slower every day as we are not receiving scarcely any mail at all. And it seems to be as slow going your way.

Margariete sure is getting to be some girl she never will know her daddy if I don't soon get home. Ha. Ha.

I'll bet Mary and Philip are rejoicing over this boy.

We heard today that we are going to get started home in a couple of weeks. but we have heard it so often that we hardly take much stock in it.

But here is hoping that it is true this time.

I am attending a school here now it is on agriculture in the morning and motors in the afternoon. We had a debate here today on which was the most practical light horses or a tractor on a farm of 160 acres and the tractor side won by 9 to 7.



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Well as there is nothing much going on around here to write about I will have to close for this time.

Hoping to be back home with you soon and to hear from you more often than I have been lately I am with lots of Love and Kisses to you all your devoted

hubby C B.L.  
307 Co. T.C. A.P.O #911  
France.

P.S. you said you might ask me to shave off my mustache when I got home. Well I don't want to surprise you but I don't have it now.

I just raised it to have that picture taken to see what you would all say about it. Ha. Ha.

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistmen

The War

The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a World War I Soldier's Letter

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpts from a letter from Robert Lincoln O'Connell to Ellen O'Connell, August 23, 1918

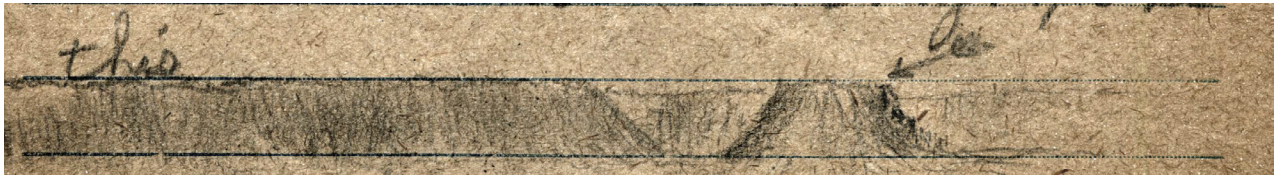
(Robert Lincoln O'Connell papers, Archives & Special Collections,  
American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives)

ON ACTIVE SERVICE  
WITH THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Aug. 23, '18.

Dear Ellen,

Still laying around at # 29. I only had a stack of books and magazines and my pay, I'd manage to worry along while my eyes lasted. You know how I used to read. There are a few books and magazines here and five different papers are delivered daily, besides a French paper. They are the same size as those I sent home and cost four cents each. My little French dictionary is pretty well used up, but I can wade through the French paper without much trouble, thanks to that dictionary an grammar and one of the boys who came over in the company. He was born in Paris and went to the states about twelve years ago and for the last few years he travelled all ove the country. . . . He was the colonel's orderly for awhile and also 'dog robbed' for other officers after we come over, and did considerable interpreting for them, so when he took the examination for interpreter in June, he was well recommended. The papers came back about July 10, with his commission as 2nd lieut. He left on the same day and I don't know where he is now. . . . We had been 'sitting on the world' as they say, at that sector although we didn't realize it, then, and used to swear at Mont. every time we looked at it. Meriden Peak and Mt. Carmel are a good illustration if the latter were moved up in line with the first and about a mile or more to the right, like this



Our trenches were in the lowlands, about where the road come out of the woods about a mile or so beyond the carpet-weavers. . . . The French are mighty clever and knew what we would naturally be thinking of, at Christmas time. That's my own opinion after a year's experience over here with over five months actually within the third line. We even see what a man sized job they have been holding down for four years. I guess both sides have changed their opinion of the other because we looked so young beside them and they were certainly foreigners, to us, a year ago.





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I've had two birthdays over here now, but am hoping for a real celebration on the next one. If I get back, it will be worth the cost and I'll certainly make myself at home for a good many days. I haven't met a single fellow from home or one I had known. Don't forget to write, or the clippings. Rob

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

The War

The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a World War II Soldier's Letter

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### A letter from Morris "Moe" Weiner to Sylvia Weiner, June 6, 1944

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09414.1108)

Tuesday June 6, 1944

Dearest Syl:

It's a little hard to sit down and calmly write a letter, just as though nothing were happening. Of course nothing has happened except the most world shaking event.

Although I'm bursting to talk about it, I can't. Not that I know anything; even opinions are taboo at this particular stage.

However I can say I am glad that the long wearisome wait is over.

How, when and wear did you first hear about it? Did you upon getting up in the morning turn on the radio, as we used to do? Or did you know earlier.

I see by the papers that Rome has been taken. Well, that too is ok. In fact everything taken into consideration things march well.

We've finally managed to hook up Jack's radio and as I write, I'm listening to the programs with half an ear. It's pleasant as a background. Right now a chorus is singing "Night & Day." Remember it? It always has been a favorite of mine. . . .

It's nice for you now, looking forward to weekends, and the chance to spend two quiet relaxing days at home. I used to envy you then when I had to get up at the usual time and crawl into a hot subway, spend a few hours at the office and dive into the by now hotter subway for the ride back. But what a relief to get that first whiff of cool air as I would get out at Sheepshead Bay.

I'd have given something to have been at Sarah Schiff's that evening with that tipsy lady needling Esther (Ellen) and her boy friend. How they must have squirmed. I wonder what her boy friend thinks of Esther's friends' friends?

Last night when I finished writing to you I said I was going to play some ping pong. Well I never did get to it. Just then some fellow from another outfit near us walked into our day room and told us that there was a movie in their mess hall, so we decided to take a look. It turned out to be Wallace Beery in "Rationing" It was mildly amusing, that's all.



NAME

PERIOD

DATE

Saw you had a little bit of the blues that Sunday evening. And attempting to drown your sorrows at Elmans with a fudge sundae, didn't help either, or singing songs. When you're blue, you're blue, so whatta ya gonna do?

I can't seem to organize for writing tonight dear, but,

I love you  
Moe

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

The War

The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a World War II Soldier's Memoir

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpts from a memoir by John G. Baker, April 8–August 1, 1945 (Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress)

... We left 8 April 1945 on the SS James H Kincaid, heading south. While enroute, the flag was suddenly lowered to half mast, and the ship PA system announced that President Roosevelt had died. We stopped in the Admiralty Islands, taking on more returnees, including sailors and marines. Finally, we headed home. As one of the ranking non-coms, I was assigned as Sergeant of the Guard, which included a number of confined personnel, due to mental or criminal cases. I did not enjoy this assignment. We, at last, passed under the Golden Gate Bridge on the 13th of May and landed at Angel Island, the Army processing center. There I was issued a uniform, ribbons and stripes. I had my first wholesome meal in years, including a steak with all the trimmings and ice cream.

I had been told that upon arrival at Fort Lewis, I would be offered the option of a 30 day furlough, or discharge. Next I went to the Oakland train station and boarded a train for Fort Lewis. The officer in charge of the troop train came through our car and designated me to be in charge of our car. This became a challenge to keep happy returnees in line, as I didn't want any of them to get in trouble on their way home. One individual got off the train in Oregon and didn't make it back in time. Before I had to report him, he caught up with us at the next stop.

Arriving at Fort Lewis I was offered the option of leave or discharge. I was encouraged to stay in the service as they were interested having combat veterans, of my rank, for training of new recruits. I declined. I was separated from the service on 20 May 1945. Upon return to civilian life, Cherie and I were married June 29th, 1945, and I returned to work in Puget Sound Navy Yard on August 1st, 1945. ...

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

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The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_



NAME

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DATE

## Analyzing a World War II Soldier's Diary

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpts from a diary by Edward Duncan Cameron, June 2–8, 1944

(Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress)

6-2 Fired my rifle in am and Gray snafued -result, broken sight. got an 03. Slept most of the p.m. Had Half hour of cal. Moved out after sandwiches + coffee at 8:30. Boarded LCI (401) at 9:00 It won't be long now. Went right to bed.

6-3 Got up at 7:00 Had chow + listened to records all a.m. read in afternoon, + got more dope on the invasion. Were told tonight that we would invade Sunday or Monday. Feel full of piss + vinegar but for how long?

6-4 Stayed in harbor. Poor weather. Still didn't have any sea legs. Read and slept away the day. Didn't even feel like getting up for chow.

6-5 Rainy weather. Stayed below deck most of the day + read. Water quite rough + I wasn't able to get my sea legs. Sure wish we get it over with.

6-6 Landed at 6:30 a.m. Water up to our necks. Our boat almost got it maneuvering into shore. Plenty of hell on beach. One barrage right over head + I thought surely I got it. Sam, North, Irey, Robbie wounded Lynne killed. Marched all night plenty of close calls.

6-7 Lt, + I dug 2 man foxhole about 5:00 Tired and hungry as hell. M.G. [Machine gun] swept the str we were on + I just got under. was sent up to bombed house as sniper. Left area for new pos. was sent on one man patrol. I accomplished my mission but was scared daffy.

6-8 Took off shoes + cleaned teeth for first time. Moved out at 12 noon + hike until 6. Stopped at a village bivouced at a farm. Pulled 1 of guard 1:45 to 2:45. Got up at 5 about 5 hrs sleep. One Jerry gave up.

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

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Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_



NAME

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## Analyzing a World War II Soldier's Letter

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpt from a letter from Sidney Diamond to Estelle Spero, ca. 1942

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09120.028)

Co " S " 2nd CWS. Trig. Br.  
Monday 9:55 P.M.

'Stella my sweet-

. . . 'Stelle, I've known Bernie since I was nine years old. There were occasions when I'd eat at his home and spend days on end in his company. For four or five years I was with him every evening. The person most influential in forming my adolescent mind was Bernie. The person responsible for my stupid ideals about sacrifice and devotion to country and duty is he! - When my friends were out playing Ball or dancing I was with him listening to his objections to communism. To his opinion of democracy- It's worth- its importance the willingness to die for it. blah, blah. True, I expect no sympathy -true he told me he felt it was not the correct thing to do towards assisting the national war effort- But to make all his advice, all his speeches of glory, love of flag, all his fears about the preservation of our "way of life!" so much garbage- okay - - he can say- "I told you so!" - His influence, I imagine is too deep-rooted to cast off but I know now his lack of understanding of the why's and wherefore's - - again, all he can see is the outward actions of a person - - he never could comprehend a person having a heart - a soul, a mind - - Finally I'm closing this subject now and for all time with a simple Nuts!! I did what I did because I wanted to do it with every ounce of "wanting" there was in me! - I still think I'm Right!

About the negro's and change of attitudes- Possibly you're correct in your assumption that its the whites who should change. As far as I'm concerned every human deserves the right to an education and a fair chance in fair competition for a better position in life. . . .

Stelle, I'm not going to reason from there on. I'd like you to think, however, of the stigmatism hanging on the Jews in the U.S. - - taking advantage of every opening they've been able to succeed - and only a few find it necessary to hide their religion - true, they're not blacks -- but it's something to think about. . . .





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Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

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Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME

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## Analyzing a Vietnam War Soldier's Diary

Give the letter a title:

Cite textual evidence to support your title:

### A letter from Richard J. DiChristina to Joyce Robinson, January 3, 1970

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC009626.10.03)

Hi Darling

Jan 3, 1970

I love you very much and I miss you Lots & Lots & lots. Well Hon we are in Alkin today and I was payd and I send you another 100.00 dollar Darling so you will get 200.00 dollar in about 2 week OK Darling. Well Baby I will be getting my mail soon and I will get a lot of letter because I haved have mail for about 4 day right. Well Hon I am going to shave and I will try and get a shower, but I will write is letter first Ok. will Hon I have clear cloth anyways. Hon would you see if my mother is doing anthink about the letter I need to come home OK Darling – I am going to but my pay sheet in is letter OK and I will but the recived for the check to OK Darling and I do want you to take a 100 dollar and buy yourslef soon thing OK Darling please OK. I will be waited for your letter saying you do it OK Darling Well baby its looks like rain I hope it doesn't because I don't like to be wet right. well Baby it is hot but it is cool to but the time here is about 12:30 and at home it is about 11:30 at night Darling will Baby is will be I short letter because I will like to mail it first OK Darling so please be good OK because I am be good and I love you very much Darling. we will be marriage as soon as I come home right good day Darling

PS I love you and I miss you lots lots lots

XXXXXXXXXXV

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Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

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Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_



NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a Vietnam War Soldier's Interview

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Excerpts from a diary by Louis Raynor, September 24–25, 1967

(Private Vietnam Diary of Louis J. Raynor, courtesy of Sharon D. Raynor)

SEPTEMBER 24 67

The First saddest day of my life so far. It was time for me to depart from the ones I love so deer. To go to spend a 365 day toure in Viet-Nam. 12 months. My family and my Love accompany me to the air port. When I arrived it was to late to catch a plain. I feel better I have one more day to spend home before leaving.

SEPTEMBER 25 1967

Was the second most sadiest day I have ever live threw. It was the day I parted from the ones I love.

I returned back to the airport Raleigh Durham, North Carolina. I was accompany to the air port by my Mother, Father and one brother, pe-wee. They watch me board the plain. I look back at them I could not help it. it was heard to bear. The plain stoped in Chicago and I called home.

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

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Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_



NAME

PERIOD

DATE

### Analyzing a Vietnam War Soldier's Letter:

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Excerpt from an interview with William Maxwell Barner, III, October 2, 2012

(Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress)

... on August the 13th, I am computing fire missions in the jungle. August the 14th, I'm in base camp getting a shower and clean clothes. I board a plane, and we fly from Bien Hoa in the Republic of South Vietnam. We fly to Guam or -- I don't know, but some island out in the Pacific. Maybe it was Guam. And then we flew into Fort Dix, New Jersey. I got there at 2:00 in the morning, and we were taken off the plane. We are taken into a building for discharge, and they give us new clothes. And I remember asking a question, and the guy that was in front of me said, If you want to go home today, shut up. And by 6:00 in the morning, I'm discharged. I'm out. And just a few hours earlier, I was in the jungle. And I was out and I flew from Fort -- from New Jersey to D/FW. Sandy and her parents greet me, and they think that I'm this person that's been writing them about how beautiful the country is. And I remember walking up to them and thinking, you know, Something's -- I don't know. Something's wrong here. I don't understand this.

One day Sandy took me into the post office in Wedgewood there in southwest Fort Worth right after I got back. She took me into the post office, and here is this lady. And she's just trying to be polite to Sandy's husband, and she asked me, How was it? And in Vietnam we didn't speak English. We spoke profanity. There -- we didn't know any other way to communicate the pain. And I stood there in that post office, and I told that lady what it was like to kill people. And Sandy drug me out of there, and she said, Don't you ever do that to me again. I said, Don't you ever do that to me again. She wouldn't let me drive for a month or so because I would just run over people. I would just drive right down the middle of the road. She would get upset with me, and I would just sit there and look at her and not say anything. And how would we not know that something is really wrong. She takes me to what is now the University of Texas at Arlington in 1968. She takes me to the registrar, and she wants me to go back to college. I remember getting her letter, and it was one of the dry season days when we got -- I got the letter. I remember sitting there in the -- and we are surrounded by this rock wall, and we've got a sniper up here and we've got a Quad .50 over here firing. And I'm reading her letter in the middle of all this, and she's saying, You're going back to college. And I thought, Why? I've already been to Vietnam. . . .

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

The War

The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_

NAME

PERIOD

DATE

## Analyzing a Vietnam War Soldier's Notice of Injury

Give the letter a title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cite textual evidence to support your title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Official Notice of Injury, March 19, 1968, Department of Defense (Christopher D. Ammons Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives)

**WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM**

CTA006 SPS102 CT DONT PHONE, DONT DEL BTWN 10PM

CT WA035 XV GOVT PDB 4 EXTRA=FAX WASHINGTON DC 19 311A EST=

MR AND MRS BENJAMIN T AMMONS, I

133 MADISON TERR CLARKSVILLE TENN= 1968 MAR 19 AM 8 14

THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS ASKED ME TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON PFC CHRISTOPHER D AMMONS WAS SLIGHTLY WOUNDED IN VIETNAM ON 13 MAR 68 AS A RESULT OF HOSTILE ACTION. HE RECEIVED METAL FRAGMENT WOUND TO THE BACK AND HEAD. HE WAS ON A COMBAT OPERATION WHEN ENGAGED HOSTILE FORCE IN FIREFIGHT. DELAY IN NOTIFYING YOU OF HIS WOUNDS WAS DUE TO THE TACTICAL SITUATION EXISTING IN VIETNAM FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS. HE WAS TREATED AND RETURNED TO DUTY.

**WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM**

(20).

SINCE HE IS NOT REPEAT NOT SERIOUSLY WOUNDED NO FURTHER REPORTS WILL BE FURNISHED=

KENNETH G WICKHAM MAJOR GENERAL USA C-2192

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL=

Which theme best describes the content of this document? Circle one:

Draft/Enlistment

The War

The Home Front

Returning Home

Explain your answer and support your answer using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_



## Shared Soldiers' Experience Poem or Letter

Circle the theme of your poem/letter:      Draft/Enlistment      The War      The Home Front      Returning Home

Select two phrases from one or two of the documents from each war to create a poem or letter that demonstrates the soldiers' shared experiences.

<b>The Civil War</b>			
Line 1		Author Date	
Line 2		Author Date	

<b>World War I</b>			
Line 1		Author Date	
Line 2		Author Date	

<b>World War II</b>			
Line 1		Author Date	
Line 2		Author Date	

<b>The Vietnam War</b>			
Line 1		Author Date	
Line 2		Author Date	

Briefly summarize the message of your poem or letter: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Sample of Shared Soldiers' Experience Poem or Letter

Circle the theme of your poem/letter:      Draft/Enlistment      The War      The Home Front      Returning Home

Select two phrases from one or two of the documents from each war to create a poem or letter that demonstrates the soldiers' shared experiences.

### The Civil War

Line 1	<i>Dear Mary</i>	Author Date	<i>Christian Epperly, July 27, 1862</i>
Line 2	<i>...if I could Just be at home this beautiful Sabbath day...</i>	Author Date	

### World War I

Line 1	<i>...I can now tell you more about myself and where I am.</i>	Author Date	<i>Adelbert Treadway, November 26, 1918</i>
Line 2	<i>I saw quiet a bit of the war,...</i>	Author Date	

### World War II

Line 1	<i>I have no regrets, no longings, no homesickness except the gnawing hunger to be near you...</i>	Author Date	<i>Sidney Diamond, ca. 1942</i>
Line 2	<i>...your photograph is a little closer to my heart.</i>	Author Date	

### The Vietnam War

Line 1	<i>I love you Baby.</i>	Author Date	<i>Richard DiChristina, June 26, 1969</i>
Line 2	<i>...kiss, kiss...</i>	Author Date	

Briefly summarize the message of your poem: The message of this letter is the longing to be home with loved ones.

The selected      phrases also show pride in service or letter.