

War Novels

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[Octavian Nothing, by M.T. Anderson](#)

Various diaries, letters, and other manuscripts chronicle the experiences of Octavian, a young African American, from birth to age sixteen, as he is brought up as part of a science experiment in the years leading up to and during the Revolutionary War.

[The Boy in the Striped Pajamas , by John Boyne](#)

Berlin 1942: When Bruno returns home from school one day, his belongings are being packed in crates. His father has received a promotion and the family must move from their home to a new house far far away, where there is no one to play with and nothing to do. A tall fence running alongside stretches as far as the eye can see and cuts him off from the strange people he can see in the distance. But Bruno longs to be an explorer and decides that there must be more to this desolate new place than meets the eye. While exploring his new environment, he meets another boy whose life and circumstances are very different to his own, and their meeting results in a friendship that has devastating consequences.

[Code Talker, by Joseph Bruchac](#) (J Bruchac)

Throughout World War II, in the conflict fought against Japan, Navajo code talkers were a crucial part of the U.S. effort, sending messages in an unbreakable code that used their native language. They braved some of the heaviest fighting, and with their code, saved countless American lives. Yet their story remained classified for more than twenty years. But now their stories are told through Ned Begay, a sixteen-year-old Navajo boy who becomes a code talker. His grueling journey is eye-opening and inspiring. This deeply affecting novel honors all of those young men, like Ned, who dared to serve, and it honors the culture and language of the Navajo Indians.

[Postcards from No Man's Land, Aidan Chambers](#)

Alternates between two stories--contemporarily, seventeen-year-old Jacob visits a daunting Amsterdam at the request of his English grandmother--and historically, nineteen-year-old Geertrui relates her experience of British soldiers's attempts to liberate Holland from its German occupation.

[Phantoms in the Snow, by Kathleen Duble](#)

In this gripping journey, a fifteen-year-old pacifist must decide what he believes as he faces the reality of World War II. The year is 1944, and fifteen-year-old Noah Garrett's parents have died from smallpox. Without any other family nearby, Noah is sent to live with his uncle, whom he has never met, in Camp Hale, Colorado. There is one small problem with this decision: Noah has been raised a pacifist, and Camp Hale is a U.S. military base for a little-known division of winter warfare soldiers called Phantoms. Can a boy who's never seen snow and doesn't believe in war survive among these soldiers?

[B for Buster, by Iain Lawrence](#) (J Lawrence, I.)

Nicknamed after his hometown of Kakabeka, Canada, Kak dreams of flying with the Allied bombers in World War II. So at 16, underage and desperate to escape his abusive parents, he enlists in the Canadian Air Force. He is trained as a wireless operator and sent to England, where he's excited fly his first op. He thinks the night ops over Germany will be like the heroic missions of his favorite comic-book heroes. But his first time out, in a plane called B for Buster, reveals the ops to be a harrowing ordeal. One hit and B for Buster, along with the crew, could be destroyed. He can't confide his fears to his crew. Kak find an unlikely friend in Bert, the slovenly caretaker of the homing pigeons that go on every op. Bert seems to understand what the other men don't talk about--the shame, the sense of duty, and the fear. As Kak befriends Bert, he finds the strength to face his own future.

[I Pledge Allegiance, by Chris Lynch](#)

Four best friends serving in the Vietnam War make a pledge to one another that they will do all they can to return home safely together.

[*Fallen Angels*, by Walter Dean Myers](#)

Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry, just out of his Harlem high school, enlists in the Army in the summer of 1967 and spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam.

[*Sunrise over Falluja*, by Walter Dean Myers](#)

Robin "Birdy" Perry, a new army recruit from Harlem, isn't quite sure why he joined the army, but he's sure where he's headed: Iraq. Birdy and the others in the Civilian Affairs Battalion are supposed to help secure and stabilize the country and successfully interact with the Iraqi people. Officially, the code name for their maneuvers is Operation Iraqi Freedom. But the young men and women in the CA unit have a simpler name for it: WAR

[*What World is Left*, by Monique Polak](#)

Anneke Van Raalte is 14 when the Germans deport her family from Holland because they are Jewish. Despite hunger, crowding and other deprivations, Anneke is told how lucky she is to be at the concentration camp Theresienstadt, which lacks gas chambers. Her father, a former Dutch newspaper illustrator, has an important position in the camp and protects the family from the worst fate: being sent on a transport "east" (which almost invariably means death). But Anneke wonders at the justness of her father's behavior, particularly when he participates in the commandant's "embellishment" program, designed to trick the Danish Red Cross when it comes for an inspection--and, when that plan succeeds, to make a propaganda film.

[*Johnny Got His Gun*, by Dalton Trumbo](#)

This was no ordinary war. This was a war to make the world safe for democracy. And if democracy was made safe, then nothing else mattered--not the millions of dead bodies, nor the thousands of ruined lives.... This is no ordinary novel. This is a novel that never takes the easy way out: it is shocking, violent, terrifying, horrible, uncompromising, brutal, remorseless, and gruesome...but so is war. *Johnny Got His Gun* is one of the classic antiwar novels. Published in 1939, Dalton Trumbo's story of a young American soldier terribly maimed in World War I--he "survives" armless, legless, and faceless, but with his mind intact--was an immediate bestseller. This novel was a rallying point for many Americans who came of age during World War II, and it became perhaps the most popular novel of protest during the Vietnam era.

[*Out of the Shadows*, by Jason Wallace](#)

Twelve-year-old Robert Jacklin comes face-to-face with bigotry, racism, and brutality when he moves from England to Zimbabwe with his family. Robert is enrolled in one of the country's "most elite boys" boarding schools. Newly integrated, the school is a microcosm of the horrible problems faced by the struggling new country in the wake of a bloody civil war. The white boys want their old country back and torment the black Africans. Robert must make careful alliances. His decision to join the ranks of the more powerful white boys has a devastating effect on his conscience and emerging manhood.