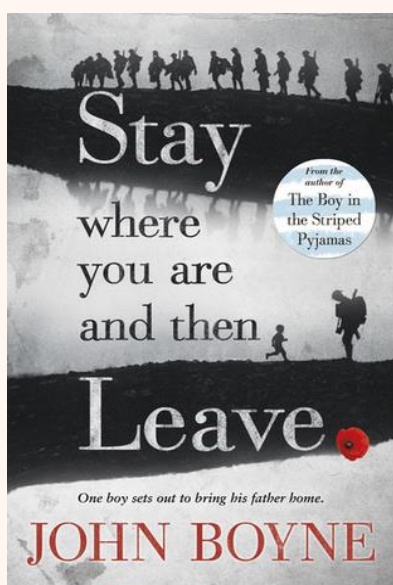


War-Torn Worlds Reading List

by



November is the month of remembrance, and this year much attention has been focused on the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I. The tragedy of that prolonged war continues to inspire writers and John Boyne's latest novel, describing life on the home front, contrasts with the trench warfare described in classics like *Birdsong* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*. As time passes, historians and writers begin to reassess the conflicts of the past. The genocide of the Baltic states, suppressed for so many years under the Soviet regime, has inspired the much-praised *Between Shades of Gray*. Other novels on this list, including Elizabeth Wein's excellent pair, focus on the dangerous and active roles women had in war-time. Conflict is necessary in any novel, but there is particularly rich subject material to be found in *War-Torn Worlds*.

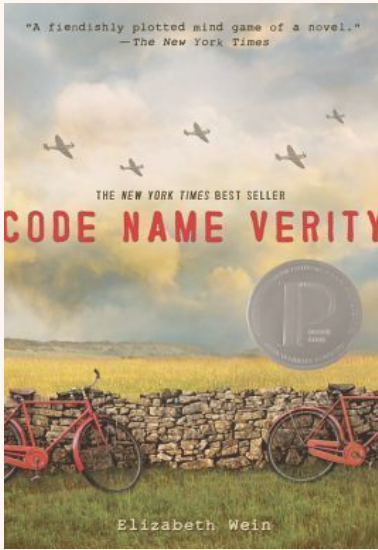


Stay Where You Are and Then Leave, by John Boyne

This recently published war novel gives young readers a perspective of World War I from the home front. Just as he did in his best-selling classic, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, Boyne makes effective use of a naïve narrator in the form of Alfie, a young Londoner. Through Alfie's increasingly less innocent eyes, Boyne examines some complex war-related themes – from xenophobia and poverty, to conscientious objectors and shell-shocked soldiers. This thoughtful and sensitive book seems particularly relevant as we commemorate the First World War Centenary.

Reading and interest level: 12+

Genre: historical; war; World War I; family; London



Code Name Verity

by Elizabeth Wein

Two young British women, both of them trapped in Nazi-occupied France in 1943. Two friends, one a pilot and the other a spy. Nazi interrogation will force one girl to give up her secrets, but how much of her story is truth – and how much lies? This compelling story of friendship and bravery combines a wealth of historical research with a thrilling plot.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: historical; war; World War II; action; thriller; friendship

This story contains some graphic descriptions and emotionally upsetting content.



Rose Under Fire

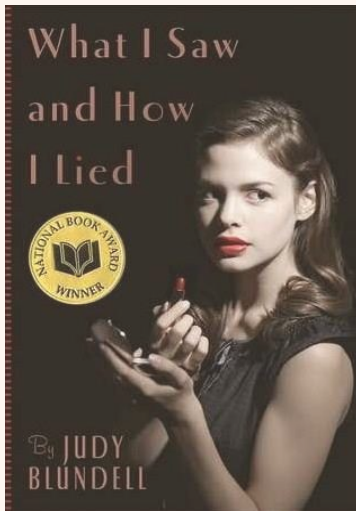
by Elizabeth Wein

This gripping sequel to *Code Name Verity* tells the story of a young American pilot named Rose Justice. When a risky flight manoeuvre results in Rose's capture by the Germans, she finds herself in Ravensbrück– one of the notorious Nazi concentration camps. There, Rose is befriended by a group of political prisoners who have survived unimaginable atrocities. Together, they will use the power of stories, poetry and friendship to overcome the horror and despair of their situation.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: historical; war; World War II; poetry; friendship

This story contains some graphic descriptions and emotionally upsetting content.



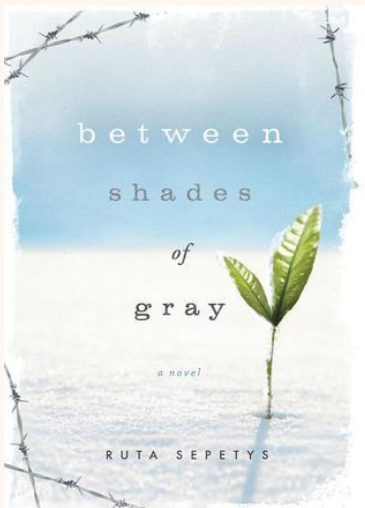
What I Saw and How I Lied

by Judy Blundell

When Evie's step-father Joe returns home from World War II, it seems like the family's troubles are over. But during an unexpected and mysterious trip to Palm Beach, Evie gradually realises that nothing is as it seems. Everyone is hiding something – including the mysterious Peter Coleridge, Joe's old war-buddy and Evie's first real crush. In the shadows of anti-Semitism and covered-up war crimes, Evie will face the ultimate test of love and loyalty.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: historical; war; World War II; Jewish; romance



Between Shades of Gray

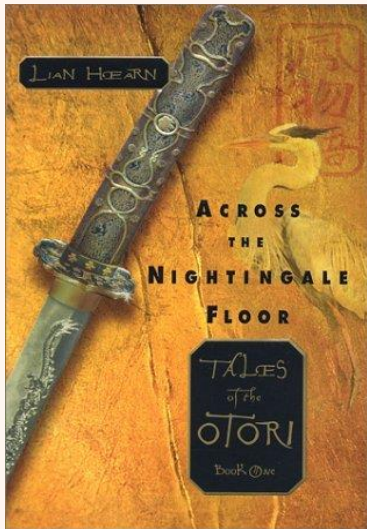
by Ruta Sepetys

On June 14, 1941, Soviet troops arrest 15 year-old Lina Vilkas and her family and deport them from their Lithuanian home all the way to a brutal Siberian work-camp. Many will die or be killed along the way, but Lina clings to life with a strong will, luck and the help of friends. A gifted artist, Lina carefully documents the struggles of her people even as the Stalinist regime would erase their existence entirely. This fictional account of one of the lesser-known genocides of World War II has been drawn from true

accounts and the author's own family history.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: historical; war; World War II; Stalin; Baltic genocide

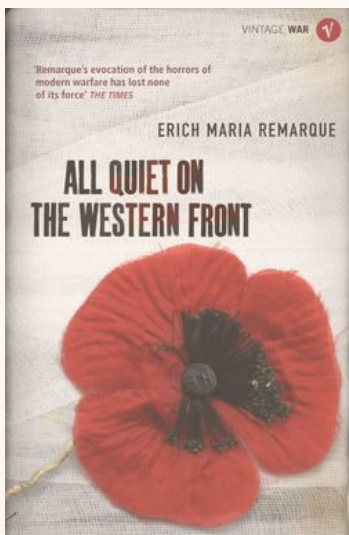


Across the Nightingale Floor by Lian Hearn

In this historical fantasy, political intrigue and romance play out against the fascinating backdrop of the Japanese feudal past. After being rescued from his village's massacre by Lord Otori Shiguru, the young Takeo devotes his life and mysterious talents to his adopted father. But neither honour nor treachery are straightforward in a war of conflicting loyalties. This beautifully written novel is the first of a critically praised trilogy.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: historical; fantasy; war; Japan; romance; magic



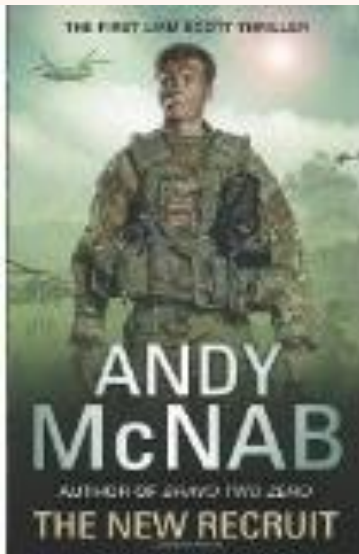
All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque

This classic war novel describes life in the trenches of World War I from the viewpoint of a young German soldier. Controversial from when it was first published in 1929, the book was banned under the Nazi regime. Rather than describing war from the point-of-view of the victor, and in terms of patriotism and bravery, it presented a realistic portrait of a soldier's mental and physical struggles. Highly readable, with moments of black humour, this is a classic with continuing appeal for adolescent readers.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: historical; war; World War I; trench warfare; Germany

This book contains some strong language and disturbing descriptions.



The New Recruit

by Andy McNab

When a tragic accident results in his best friend's death, 18 year-old Liam Scott decides to join the Army. Liam is looking for a fresh start, but the past follows him in an unexpected way. Full of realistic detail, this fast-paced story takes the reader through basic training in England to a remote outpost in Afghanistan. There, Liam must learn to cope with harsh conditions, the Taliban and his fellow soldiers – one of whom would rather see him dead than alive.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: war; Afghanistan; Army; action; friendship

This book contains some strong language and scenes of violence.



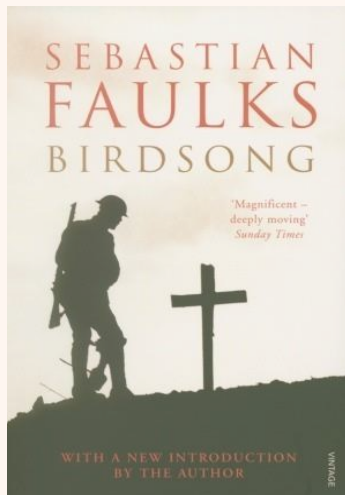
Flygirl

by Sherri L. Smith

Ida Mae Jones dreams of flying airplanes, and when the United States enters World War II she grabs at the chance to be a WASP – one of the select few Women Airforce Service Pilots. During her training in Texas, Ida Mae begins to realise just how much prejudice there is towards female pilots. The job will demand all the courage she can muster, particularly since Ida Mae has a dangerous secret – she is an African-American “passing” as a white woman. If she wants to fly for her country, Ida Mae will have to conceal the truth from even her closest friends.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: historical; war; World War II; friendship; race



Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks

Mature adolescent readers will be intellectually challenged and emotionally moved by this beloved war novel. The structure of the novel encompasses many narratives, from the illicit pre-war romance between Stephen and Isabelle to Stephen's experiences in the trenches of the Marne, Verdun and the Somme. From comradeship to romance, Faulks shows how unlikely alliances are amongst the most enduring legacies of war.

Reading and interest level: 16+

Genre: historical; war; World War I; France; trench warfare; romance

This book contains some mature scenes of sexuality and graphic descriptions.

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