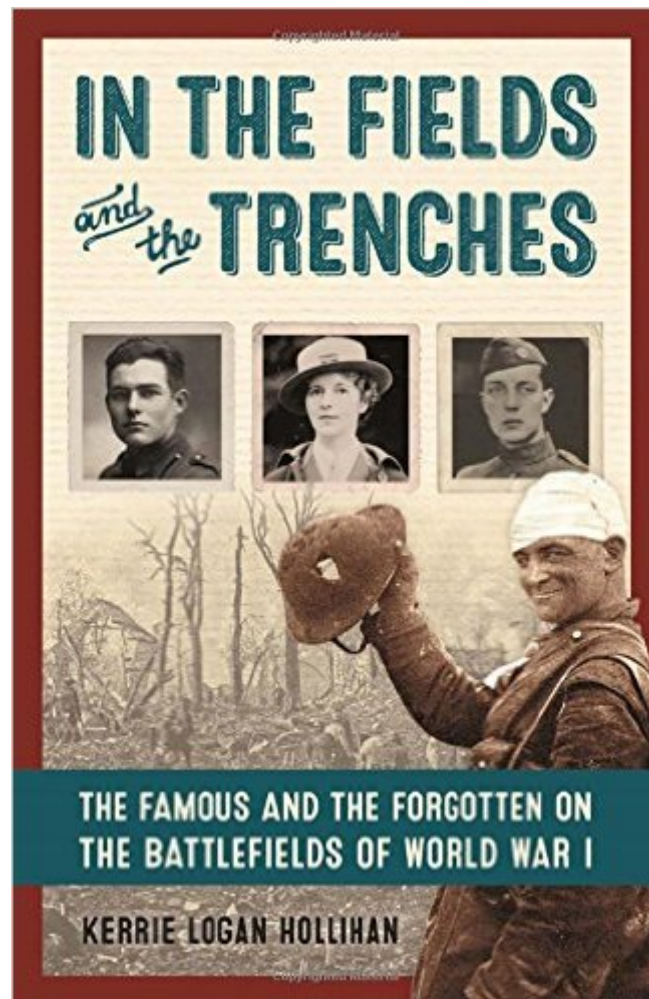


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In The Fields And The Trenches: The Famous And The Forgotten On The Battlefields Of World War I



Synopsis

When it started, many thought the Great War would be a great adventure. Yet, as those who saw it up close learned, it was anything but. In *In the Fields and the Trenches* traces the stories of eighteen young idealists swept into the brutal conflict, many of whom would go on to become well-known 20th-century figures in film, science, politics, literature, and business. Writer J. R. R. Tolkien was a signals officer with the British Expeditionary Force and fought at the Battle of the Somme. Scientist Irène Curie helped her mother, Marie, run twenty X-ray units for French field hospitals. Actor Buster Keaton left Hollywood after being drafted into the army's 40th Infantry Division. And all four of Theodore Roosevelt's sons—Kermit, Archibald, Quentin, and Theodore III—and his daughter Ethel served in Europe, though one did not return. *In the Fields and the Trenches* chronicles the lives of heroes, cowards, comics, and villains—some famous, some not—who participated in this life-changing event. Extensive original material, from letters sent from the front to personal journals, brings these men and women back to life. And though their stories are a century old, they convey modern, universal themes of love, death, power, greed, courage, hate, fear, family, friendship, and sacrifice.

Book Information

Hardcover: 208 pages

Publisher: Chicago Review Press (January 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1613731302

ISBN-13: 978-1613731307

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars See all reviews (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,397,303 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > Modern #101 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Modern #261 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > Military

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

This is an interesting view of various Americans, male and female, in Europe during WWI, some

very well known, others less so, at times speaking in their own words. The book combines elements of history with biography and memoir with excerpts of letters written home by the soldiers, nurses, entertainers, aviators. Some traveled to the war zone well before the United States' entry into the conflict either in non-combatant roles or by joining the forces of other nations. Among the famous are the sons of Teddy Roosevelt, Hemingway, Buster Keaton, and two of the best baseball players of the time. Along with the details of these lives, the author provides a very good amount of information on the start of the war, what it was like on the ground, the political landscape in the U.S. that impeded entry into the war and then forced it, and details of many battles. One of the portraits concerns a German soldier who documented his time at the front with photographs, some of which are included in this book. Now I have a much better idea of what the German trenches actually looked like--a far cry from those of their opposition. I do recommend this book to anyone looking for another view into World War One---this one on a very human level. Although I have read other very learned and excellent books on the war's causes and progress, this book did give me a new, very personal insight into what life on the battlefield was like for many. A copy of this book was provided by the publisher through NetGalley in return for an honest review.

I loved this book from the preface where we learn what 12 idealistic young people were doing when Archduke Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated in Bosnia to the lives of each of these individuals during WWI. It's like "the rest of the story" coined by Paul Harvey. I also enjoyed the diversity of the people Kerrie Hollihan presented. As it says in the sub title of her book, "the famous and forgotten". There is a scientist, cowboy, showgirl, comedian, sportsman, luggage porter, students, pilots, writers, a family, and one who becomes President of the USA. Well done Kerrie Hollihan.

World War One through the most interesting eyes! Hollihan describes the War to End All Wars from the perspective of many whose young lives were transformed by war, and who would go on to become well-known names. Meeting Buster Keaton and Ernest Hemingway as young men and seeing how battlefields may have influenced Middle-Earth for JRR Tolkien is nothing less than fascinating.

The significance of the First World War in shaping--indeed in birthing--the modern world is a worthy topic of study for high school seniors and college students. For younger teens, individual stories of the men and women who served in various ways provide a more meaningful entry into the topic.

This is what *In the Fields and the Trenches* does so well. As its author, Kerrie Logan Hollihan, wrote in her preface, "Wars are fought by young people, and young people fighting wars make history--in ways great and small." Well said. In fact, not all her chapters focus on young people. Two were in their thirties, but the rest were under twenty-five. To Hollihan's credit, not all were Americans. One was British, one French, and one German. (I wish she had included one more British subject, Vera Brittain, whose story is as powerful in its youthful loss-of-innocence as any available.) A little more than half her subjects served in combat, but only a small handful lived in the trenches or ventured into No Man's Land--more credit to Hollihan for this. By telling the stories of well-developed historical personalities, Hollihan introduces her readers to many of the defining elements of World War I: early aviation (Fred Libby, Katherine Stinson, Quentin Roosevelt), primitive radiology (Irene Curie), British socio-military hierarchy (J. R. R. Tolkien), artillery (Harry Truman), No Man's Land combat (Henry Lincoln Johnson), gas warfare (Christy Mathewson), ambulance driving (Ernest Hemingway), and troop entertainment (Elsie Janis, Buster Keaton). Many of the book's subjects would go on to become famous for non-military deeds. A few are worthy of being better known. Together their stories provide the best possible entry for teenage and middle grade readers into the multifaceted experiences of World War I.

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