

## **War Stories Summaries**

### **WS162U Bomber Boys by Patrick Bishop**

Patrick Bishop looks back at the lives, human realities and the extraordinary risks that the painfully young pilots took during the strategic air-offensive against Germany from 1939-1945.

### **WS171U The Very Thought of you by Rosie Alison**

England, 31st August 1939: the world is on the brink of war. As Hitler prepares to invade Poland, thousands of children are evacuated from London to escape the impending Blitz. Torn from her mother, eight-year-old Anna Sands is relocated with other children to a large Yorkshire estate which has been opened up to evacuees by Thomas and Elizabeth Ashton, an enigmatic childless couple. Soon Anna gets drawn into their unhappy relationship, seeing things that are not meant for her eyes - and finding herself part-witness and part-accomplice to a love affair, with tragic consequences. A story of love, loss and complicated loyalties, combining a sweeping narrative with subtle psychological observation, *The Very Thought of You* is a haunting and memorable debut.

### **WS172U Dragoons by Garry Douglas Kilworth**

South Africa, May 1879. Ensign Sebastian Early of the 24th Foot is warming to his role as the Provost-Marshal in the British army encampment at Landman's Drift. When an unidentified corpse turns up in camp after a reported hunting accident and is hurriedly buried, Sebastian quickly discovers that the man, a lieutenant, was in fact killed in an illegal duel, which means that his death should be treated as manslaughter, or even murder. However, his attempts to find the perpetrators are continually thwarted when the officer classes close ranks behind a gentleman's code. As the army prepares to march on the Zulus, Sebastian must find a way to break through the wall of silence before the trail goes cold....

### **WS173U Battle Flag by Bernard Cornwell**

The epic battle for control of the Confederate capital continues through the hot summer of 1862. It's a battle that Captain Nate Starbuck, a Yankee fighting for the Southern cause, has to survive and win. He must lead his ragged company in a bitter struggle, not only against the formidable Northern army, but against his own superiors who would like nothing better than to see Nate Starbuck dead.

### **WS177U Death or Glory - The Flaming Sword by Michael Asher**

EGYPT, OCTOBER 1942: The battle for North Africa rages along the coast... Punching their way deep behind enemy lines, the newly formed SAS carries out daring raids against the Germans.

Lieutenant Tom Caine leads a squad of SAS men on a desperate mission into hostile territory. His brief - to sabotage a terrible weapon being secretly developed by the Nazis in the desolate Libyan Hills. If he fails, the Axis forces will be unstoppable.

Caine faces the full force of German military might, but what he doesn't know is that there is a traitor amongst his own men. Ultimately his fate will rest in the hands of one woman, Special Ops agent Betty Nolan. Only one thing is certain in this war - who dares wins...

### **WS178U Coward at the Bridge by James Delingpole**

Lt Dick Coward returns to join Operation Market Garden in this thrilling sequel to Coward on the Beach.

**WS179U**     **All quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque**

The book tells the story of Paul Bäumer, a German soldier who—urged on by his school teacher—joins the German army shortly after the start of World War I. His class was "scattered over the platoons amongst Frisian fishermen, peasants, and labourers." Bäumer arrives at the Western Front with his friends and schoolmates (Leer, Müller, Kropp and a number of other characters). There they meet Stanislaus Katczinsky, an older soldier, nicknamed Kat, who becomes Paul's mentor. While fighting at the front, Bäumer and his comrades have to engage in frequent battles and endure the treacherous and filthy conditions of trench warfare.

**WS180U**     **The Pacific by Hugh Ambrose**

The real-life stories behind the HBO miniseries.

Between America's retreat from China in late November 1941 and the moment General MacArthur's airplane touched down on the Japanese mainland in August of 1945, five men connected by happenstance fought the key battles of the war against Japan. From the debacle in Bataan, to the miracle at Midway and the relentless vortex of Guadalcanal, their solemn oaths to their country later led one to the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot and the others to the coral strongholds of Peleliu, the black terraces of Iwo Jima and the killing fields of Okinawa, until at last the survivors enjoyed a triumphant, yet uneasy, return home.

Hugh Ambrose focuses on the real-life stories of the five men who put their lives on the line for our country. Some considered war a profession, others enlisted as citizen soldiers. Each man served in a different part of the war, but their respective duties required every ounce of their courage and their strength to defeat an enemy who preferred suicide to surrender. The medals for valour which were pinned on three of them came at a shocking price—a price paid in full by all.

**WS181U**     **The Collaborator by Margaret Leroy**

In the darkest hours in history, no choices are simple.

The Channel Islands, June 1940.

The Nazis are bombing Cherbourg. In her secluded house on Guernsey, Vivienne de la Mare waits fearfully. And then the Occupation begins. Nothing is safe anymore. Vivienne's husband is fighting on the frontline, and she has two young daughters and her mother-in-law to care for; and her new life is one where the enemy lives next door.

**WS182A**     **The Angel's Command by Brian Jacques**

Ben and his black Labrador, castaways from the legendary ghost ship Flying Dutchman, swore never to go to sea again. But fate casts them adrift once more on a French pirate ship, with two villainous sea captains—and a ghost—in pursuit.

**WS185U**     **1776 America & Britain at War by David McCullough**

Might the Americans have lost the War of Independence? They very nearly did. This book is the story of how close George Washington, as commander of the American army, came to defeat in the terrible year of 1776 which also saw the Declaration of Independence. At the end of that year, he assumed that the British, who had chased him all the way from New York, were about to cross the Delaware River and capture Philadelphia, capital of the revolution. He wrote that all the enemy were waiting for was 'ice for a passage, and the dissolution of the poor remains of our debilitated army'.

**WS186U      The Forgotten Army by James Fenton**

An original and very accessible memoir of a soldier fighting the Japanese in World War II written by a veteran. This is an almost forgotten campaign and this account gives the reader an incredible insight into what life was like on the front line in Burma.

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**WS188U      The Girl who Fell from the Sky by Simon Mawer**

Marian Sutro is an outsider: the daughter of a diplomat, brought up on the shores of Lake Geneva and in England, half French, half British, naive yet too clever for her own good. But when she is recruited from her desk job by SOE to go undercover in wartime France, it seems her hybrid status - and fluent French - will be of service to a greater, more dangerous cause.

Trained in sabotage; dead-drops; how to perform under interrogation and how to kill; Marian parachutes into south-west France, her official mission to act as a Resistance courier. But her real destination is Paris, where she must seek out family friend Clément Pelletier, once the focus of her adolescent desires. A nuclear physicist engaged in the race for a new and terrifying weapon, he is of urgent significance to her superiors. As she struggles through the strange, lethal landscape of the Occupation towards this reunion, what completes her training is the understanding that war changes everything, and neither love nor fatherland may be trusted.

**WS189U      Land of Fire by Chris Ryan**

1982. The Falklands War. Young SAS trooper, Mark Black, risks his life to capture an Argentine girl spy. To knock out enemy bombers a daring mission is planned against a fortified airbase on Tierra

del Fuego, the remote tip of the South American mainland. Black and his fellow SAS are sent in ahead to reconnoitre. Detected by the enemy, they must fight their way out...

Twenty years on and an Argentine military junta is returned to power. They determine to reinvade the Falkland Islands.

Now a senior NCO, Black is back in the South Atlantic, haunted by memories he thought he had buried. British air defences have been knocked out in a sneak attack. Once again Argentine forces are being secretly readied for an assault on the Islands. A team from the crack SAS Mountain Troop is inserted by submarine. But has the mission been compromised from the start? When fate throws Black together with a girl from his past, he is faced with a conflict of loyalties. Can he trust her now? And can they escape in time to destroy the enemy bombers and prevent all-out war?

### **WS193U      Escape from the Deep by Alex Kershaw**

By October, 1944, the U.S. Navy submarine Tang was legendary-she had sunk more enemy ships, rescued more downed airmen, and pulled off more daring surface attacks than any other Allied submarine in the Pacific. And then, on her fifth patrol, tragedy struck-the Tang was hit by one of her own faulty torpedoes. The survivors of the explosion struggled to stay alive in their submerged "iron coffin" one hundred-eighty feet beneath the surface. While the Japanese dropped deadly depth charges, just nine of the original eighty-man crew survived a harrowing ascent through the escape hatch. But a far greater ordeal was coming. After being picked up by a Japanese patrol vessel, they were sent to a secret Japanese interrogation camp known as the "Torture Farm." They were close to death when finally liberated in August, 1945, but they had revealed nothing to the Japanese-not even the greatest secret of World War II.

### **WS201U      Liverpool Angels by Lyn Andrews**

Born at the turn of the twentieth century, Mae Strickland is only a few days old when her mother suddenly dies. Her aunt Maggie brings Mae up together with her own children, Eddie and Alice, and the girls become like sisters. In spite of Mae's unhappy start, life feels full of promise.

Then, as the First World War looms, everything changes. While the local men - including young Eddie - leave to fight, Mae and Alice train as field nurses. As they travel to the front line in the wake of family tragedy, nothing can prepare them for the hardship that lies ahead.

Yet there is solace to be found amid the wreckage of the war, and for both, romance is on the horizon. But it will take great courage for Mae and Alice to follow their hearts. Can love win out in the end.

### **WS202U      Dambusters by Max Arthur**

On the 17th May 1943, nineteen Lancaster bomber crews gathered at a remote RAF station in Lincolnshire for a mission of extraordinary daring and high risk - a night raid on three crucial and heavily defended dams deep in the German industrial heartland. The raiders would have to fly across occupied Europe at a perilously low level and drop their bombs at a mere 60 feet above the water to destroy the dam walls. Eight planes never returned.

Bestselling author Max Arthur has collected together first-hand accounts of the preparation, practise, organisation and the raid itself, and the sense of emptiness and loss at RAF Scampton when 52 men failed to return. From RAF personnel and civilians to Germans who witnessed the raid, this landmark oral history collection paints a moving and personal picture

of one of the most famous operations of the Second World War.

**WS203U**     **Berlin at war by Roger Moorhouse**

Berlin was the city at the very centre of World War II. It was the launching pad for Hitler's empire, the embodiment of his vision of a world metropolis. Berlin was also the place where Hitler's Reich would ultimately fall. Berlin suffered more air raids than any other German city and endured the full force of a Soviet siege. In *Berlin at War*, historian Roger Moorhouse uses diaries, memoirs, and interviews to provide a searing first-hand account of life and death in the Nazi capital -- the privations, the hopes and fears, and the nonconformist tradition that saw some Berliners provide underground succour to the city's remaining Jews. Combining comprehensive research with gripping narrative, *Berlin at War* is the incredible story of the city -- and people -- that saw the whole of World War II.

**WS204U**     **An Act of Courage by Allan Mallinson**

Badajoz: Christmas 1826

Matthew Hervey of the 6th Light Dragoons is a prisoner of the Spanish, incarcerated in the infamous fortress of Badajoz.

As he plans his escape, his thoughts return to the year 1812 when he was a cornet in Wellington's Peninsular Army. He and the Sixth had survived Corunna to endure three more years of brutal fighting that would culminate in one of the most vital and vicious confrontations of the campaign - the siege of Badajoz.

While Hervey paces his prison cell, and re-lives the bloodshed of battles past, friends from expected quarters rush to his aid ...

**WS205U**     **Catastrophe by Max Hastings**

A new history of the outbreak of World War I: the dramatic stretch from the breakdown of diplomacy to the battles--the Marne, Ypres, Tannenberg--that marked the frenzied first year before the war bogged down in the trenches.

Max Hastings gives us a conflict different from the familiar one of barbed wire, mud and futility. He traces the path to war, making clear why Germany and Austria-Hungary were primarily to blame, and describes the gripping first clashes in the West.

Throughout we encounter statesmen, generals, peasants, housewives and private soldiers of seven nations in Hastings's accustomed blend of top-down and bottom-up accounts: generals dismounting to lead troops in bayonet charges over 1,500 feet of open ground; farmers who at first decried the requisition of their horses; infantry men engaged in a haggard retreat, sleeping four hours a night in their haste.

### **WS219      The Very Thought Of You by Mary Fitzgerald**

It is 1944, and three very different girls meet at auditions to join ENSA—the Entertainments National Service Association. Catherine is a singer whose husband is missing in action. She desperately needs to earn money to support her mother and baby daughter. Della is a Liverpoolian show girl. She can dance and sing and is fiercely ambitious. She wants to become a star. Frances is from a titled but poverty-stricken family. She is determined to keep her family seat intact until her brother Hugh is released from POW camp. She joins the troupe to be the organizer's, Beau Bennett, assistant. The girls support each other through the dangers and triumphs that face them, as each find love in the most unexpected places.

### **WS220      The Gunner Girl by Clare Harvey**

Three women, one shared ambition: to join the ATS and do their bit for King and country.

Bea has grown up part of a large, boisterous East End family. But her sweetheart is missing in action, and her mother is controlling her life. She needs to escape.

Eddie inhabits a world of wealth and privilege, but knows only too well that money can't buy happiness. She wants to be like Mary Churchill, to make a difference.

Joan can't remember much of her past or her family, and her home has been bombed in the Blitz. Desperate, she needs a refuge.

Each one is a Gunner Girl: three very different women, one remarkable wartime friendship of shared hopes, lost loves and terrible danger.

### **WS221U      The Cooler King by Patrick Bishop**

The Cooler King tells the astonishing story of William Ash, an American flier brought up in Depression-hit Texas, who after being shot down in his Spitfire over France in early 1942 spent the rest of the war defying the Nazis by striving to escape from every prisoner of war camp in

which he was incarcerated. It is a saga full of incident and high drama, climaxing in a break out via a tunnel dug in the latrines of the Oflag XXIB prison camp in Poland - a great untold episode of the Second World War. Alongside William Ash is a cast of fascinating characters, including Douglas Bader, Roger Bushell, who would go on to lead the Great Escape, and Paddy Barthropp, a dashing Battle of Britain pilot who despite his very different background became Ash's best friend and shared many of his adventures. By weaving together contemporary documents and interviews with Ash's comrades, Patrick Bishop vividly recreates the multiple escape attempts, while also examining the P.O.W. experience and analysing the passion that drove some prisoners to risk death in repeated bids for freedom. The Cooler King and is at once uplifting and inspirational, and stands as a testament to the durability of decent values and the invincible spirit of liberty.

### **WS222U      Caught in the Revolution by Helen Rappaort**

Between the first revolution in February 1917 and Lenin's Bolshevik coup in October, Petrograd (the former St Petersburg) was in turmoil – felt nowhere more keenly than on the fashionable Nevsky Prospekt where the foreign visitors and diplomats who filled hotels, clubs, bars and embassies were acutely aware of the chaos breaking out on their doorsteps and beneath their windows.

Among this disparate group were journalists, businessmen, bankers, governesses, volunteer nurses and expatriate socialites. Many kept diaries and wrote letters home: from an English nurse who had already survived the sinking of the Titanic; to the black valet of the US Ambassador, far from his native Deep South; to suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst, who had come to Petrograd to inspect the indomitable Women's Death Battalion led by Maria Bochkareva.

### **WS223U      On a Wing and a Prayer by Helen Carey**

Depicting the resilience of ordinary people caught up in an extraordinary war.

Life is hard in London in 1941, and yet Helen de Burrell finds herself volunteering to join the SOE. Nobody knows that her cool exterior conceals such courage ... and such fear. It also means that love, when it strikes unexpectedly, is doubly dangerous.

### **WS224U      Commando Winning World War II; Behind Enemy Lines by James Owen**

June 1940: As Britain's soldiers limped home from Dunkirk, a maverick Army officer was already devising a bold plan to hit back at the enemy. His idea was to revolutionise military thinking and change the face of warfare for ever.

Relying as much on stealth and guile as on courage and stamina, the Commandos brought to the battlefield the skills of the guerrilla. Trained by an unconventional band of experts, and led by a big-game hunter, a film star, a Highland chief and an eccentric wielding a bow and arrow, they became the spearhead of the Allied drive for victory. Weaving together official documents, new research and veterans' own accounts, Commando reveals for the first time the exhilarating full story of WWII's most formidable fighting force.

**WS225U      The Second World War by Antony Beevor**

Over the past two decades, Antony Beevor has established himself as one of the world's premier historians of WWII. His multi-award winning books have included Stalingrad and The Fall of Berlin 1945. Now, in his newest and most ambitious book, he turns his focus to one of the bloodiest and most tragic events of the twentieth century, the Second World War.

In this searing narrative that takes us from Hitler's invasion of Poland on September 1st, 1939 to V - J Day on August 14th, 1945 and the war's aftermath, Beevor describes the conflict and its global reach--one that included every major power. The result is a dramatic and breath-taking single-volume history that provides a remarkably intimate account of the war that, more than any other, still commands attention and an audience.

**WS226U      The Enemy Within by Edward Marston**

Pentonville Prison. Wally Hibbert is serving a long sentence for arson. But after befriending and tricking one of the officers, Hibbert makes an audacious escape. Inspector Marmion, the detective who arrested Hibbert, is warned to watch his back, but it seems that Hibbert has another target in his murderous sights. However, the investigation is mired in confusion, the identities of killer and victim become increasingly ambiguous. An inmate at an internment camp who might be a spy sending intelligence to the Germans complicates matters further, and the multiplying manhunts, as well as Marmion's concern for his injured and withdrawn son Paul, leave the detective desperate and perhaps with too many threads to untangle.

**WS227U      Dust Clouds of War by John Wilcox**

September, 1914. The First World War has already broken out on the Western Front. Thousands of miles away, on the border between Northern Rhodesia and German East Africa, Simon Fonthill is preparing for battle alongside his faithful companion '352' Jenkins and his reliable tracker, Mzingeli.

As they negotiate their way across foreign lands and hostile territories, the Magnificent Trio come under constant fire from enemy forces and at the bequest of Admiral Herbert King-Hall, they undertake their most dangerous mission yet. Sinking the Königsberg, a German cruiser ship hidden deep in the Rufiji Delta in German occupied waters, will test the trio's nerve, courage and determination to the limit.

Meanwhile, Fonthill's wife Alice has been conducting investigations of her own in Mombasa - and when she thinks something is amiss within the camp; she takes matters into her own hands. Amidst the chaos of war, treachery is never far away . . .

**WS228U      When the War is Over by Barbara Fox**

Gwenda and Douglas Brady were among the millions of British children sent to live with new families for their own safety during the Second World War, leaving behind their parents, their friends and all that felt familiar and safe. Evacuation could be a scary experience, but five-year-old Gwenda and her brother were lucky enough to be housed with a kindly schoolmaster and his wife, and soon the realities of the war felt very far away...

----- **all above in Numerical order 23/04/18**