



Small Press & Self-Published Books about WWII

Your moment of truth, your chance, could happen like this. You see a very small press release in your local news paper:

Author to sign book about Iowa guerilla. In honor of Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on Sunday, a book about an Iowa World War II soldier will be featured at a book signing in Ames. The book, *Lang: The WWII Story of an American Guerilla on Mindanao, Philippine Islands*, was written about Dick Lang, an Iowa farm boy who, after the island where he was serving was invaded, joined the Filipinos as a guerrilla to fight the Japanese. The author, Norman Rudi, also an Iowan, will sign copies of his book from 1-3 p.m. Saturday at Waldenbooks in Ames.

You think—perhaps this book about an Iowan in WWII would be a good inclusion to my collection of WWII titles for my eighth grade WWII unit. Ames is just down the road. I should look into this. Maybe Dick Lang lives there and speaks to classes of students studying WWII. You decide to investigate before making the trip to Ames, and you land at Amazon.com ordering information and customer reviews:

Product Information:

Paperback: 151 pages
 Publisher: McMillen Publishing:
 (November 2003)
 ISBN:1888223529
 Usually ships in 24 hours
 List Price: \$14.95
 Buy new: \$14.95 Used & new from \$8.00

Reviewer 1: a reader from IA United States:

An unbelievable story of one man's journey through the war in his early 20's. I found this book to be very intense and emotional and very realistic. I have had the joy of having known Richard Lang for many years and have had to experience my own sorrow after his recent passing.

So, the book sounds promising but no visit from Mr. Lang. Like too many of his generation, he has died. Then, something troubling in the review:

I did see a few typographical errors and the story was somewhat choppy in areas, but it was so easy to look beyond that considering the adventure you are experiencing on his behalf.

The second review echoes similar themes:

Reviewer 2: a reader from Ames IA United States:

This is a great story of courageous men. I've met Mr. Lang and am inspired by what he has done. He is truly one of the great Americans of the greatest generation. The book is rather choppy and I was surprised to find so many typographical errors. Personally, I was willing to overlook that because of my interest in the story.

What do you do? Even though you have lost your chance to invite Mr. Lang to speak in your class, the story about his service sounds phenomenal, at least to two people from Ames who knew the man. Along with reading about what happened to Anne Frank and Eli Wiesel in WWII, your students could read the story of someone from their state, their county even. They could read about WWII in the Pacific theatre (not too many books in your collection about that). So, do you think like an American, an Iowan, a person interested in the history of WWII and interested in making that history come alive for your students—and buy the book? Or do you think like an English teacher and say, "I am not buying any book from some vanity press

full of spelling errors!” (It’s McMillen, not Macmillan).

We say buy the book while you have the chance. We say buy the next one you hear about too, and follow up on that one to see if the veteran who wrote it can come to your school to talk to your students. Such a move could become one of the most rewarding actions you take in your teaching career. Our thesis in the column is that books about WWII, especially first-person accounts by veterans from your local area, are likely to come from small press or self-published sources rather than the Scholastic catalog. Bringing these diamonds in the rough into your classroom often requires quick action and a leap of faith. In this column Virginia Broz and I will discuss some of those leaps of faith we have taken and the rewards those leaps have brought. We will also review the publications we talk about, some of which you can buy. But our primary purpose here is to alert you to the treasure hunt in your own back yard. We estimate that no less than six times a year, the newspaper this small state of Iowa depends on, *The Des Moines Register*, carries a press release like the one above. Many more such press releases are carried only in city and regional papers. But we all know that there will be fewer and fewer of those press releases. The common figure in published accounts is that sixteen million American men and women served in WWII. About four million are alive today. They are dying at a rate of 1,000 per day.

Virginia Broz is a national board certified teacher of early adolescent English Language Arts and a twenty year veteran of the

middle school classroom. Her story about one of those leaps began about ten years ago with a letter to the editor in *The Fairfield Ledger*, our local county newspaper in rural southeast Iowa.

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Our Eighth grade literature of WWII and the Holocaust unit, which had focused on just the Goodrich and Hackett play based on *The Diary of Anne Frank* in 1977 when I began teaching, had expanded to include hundreds of memoirs and novels by 1995. My theory is that the veterans and others who experienced WWII were deciding to tell their stories before it was too late. Many of the stories were told from the point of view of young people near the ages of the students in my classes, and students found the books accessible and interesting and often mesmerizing and moving.

Occasionally students invited grandparents or great grandparents to visit the classroom to share their experiences, and I was always on the lookout for community members who might be willing to come to school. That’s why I cut out a letter to the editor one September day and stuck it in the December pages of my desk calendar. The letter-writer mentioned in passing that he was a WWII veteran. He sounded like an articulate person, and I thought I might give him a call when we were reading *Night* and *Maus* and *The Cage* and *Farewell to Manzanar* and the dozens of other titles students would chose from.

That phone call went something like this: “Mr. Yellin? You don’t know me, but I teach eighth grade English and reading here in

Fairfield. I saw a letter to the editor you wrote a few months ago that indicated you are a WWII vet. My students and I are reading books about the war, and I wondered if you’d be interested in visiting one or more classes. . . .”

Jerry Yellin, whose WWII experiences included flying off Iwo Jima to escort bombers to Tokyo, did come to class that year. It turned out that he had just written about his story in a book called *Of War and Weddings*. Over the years, he continued to visit, and he has brought dozens of copies of his book for our classroom collections. He has brought videotape and photographs. He has even brought two vintage P-51 airplanes to our little local airport to demonstrate strafing maneuvers as 150 eighth graders watched, shading eyes from the sun, holding ears to muffle the roar of the low flying Mustangs. This veteran has spoken with hundreds if not thousands of Fairfield students by now, as well as with students in other schools in Iowa and in other states. Every time he does, he brings history to life. His memory of his war years is crystal clear. His analysis of his feelings and beliefs, both then and now, is insightful and wise. His hope for the future is bright, and it is reflected back to him in the thoughtful and hopeful eyes of thirteen-year-olds who are at an age where they are both realistic and idealistic about the future.

For Jerry Yellin, now 80 years old, the invitation to speak to school children led to very significant experiences:

I had never given much thought to my status as a veteran in the eyes of youth until I was asked to speak to eighth

grade classes in a middle school. That experience opened my eyes to my own youth and the general lack of interest I had in hearing about WW I from my uncles who had served. I wondered if the generation I would be speaking to would feel the same about me as I felt about vets from the First World War. I learned that being a war veteran was important to the students and sharing my experiences with them was meaningful. Many of them had grandparents who served who had never spoken about their experiences. Because I came to their classes they had something to say to or ask of their grandparents. This opened up dialogue that gave understanding to the students of what war and the effects of war had on all of us who served.

Jerry also learned a few things about his book and about the insights of eighth graders:

I realized that my book was viewed differently by a younger audience after listening to those students who had read it question me. The girls were much more interested in the romance between Robert and Takako, the wedding and the family. The boys clearly had more interest in the “warrior” aspect, the flying and the shooting, the life on Iwo Jima. I learned more from the young people I spoke to than they could ever learn from me. They, in their innocence and absolute fascination with my wartime experiences as well as my reconciliation with my enemy through my son’s marriage, asked deep and thoughtful questions. The answers came from my heart because the questions came from theirs. I found them interesting, thoughtful and more profound than I expected. They had the ability to respond to an adult talking to them as an equal, in a very mature way. I have a great deal of respect for these youngsters and the teachers who have raised their level of understanding.

Not only was Jerry moved by what the students said to him in class, but also by the hundreds of letters they have sent him. Here are

excerpts from two of those letters, first a tough observation from a young man and then the expansive manifesto of a young woman:

(Student 1): . . . Something I am also thinking about is that when you came back and you went to give your friend’s belongings to his parents. His mother was mad at you because she thought that you should have gone down instead of him. I thought that was weird and rude, because you usually see in the old educational films the soldiers come back from the war and they are being hugged and welcomed back, but you do not see the soldiers getting yelled at for not dying in someone else’s son’s place. . . .

(Student 2): Right now I am reading your book *Of War and Weddings*. . . I’ll begin by telling you that I became obsessed with finding out what happened in Europe during the war because nobody told me.

Here is a quick history about my elders: my grandma from my mom’s side. . . grew up in occupied Netherlands and still lives there today . . . My grandpa from my mom’s side is part Indonesian and Chinese. He spent most of his childhood in a Japanese POW camp. That is when he started hating the Japanese. . . . The things I really want to know about are what your feelings were for the Japanese during the war. Did your feelings affect your fighting? Did you ever wonder about the wives and children of the men whose planes you may have shot down? As you can see, I want to find out about emotions. I know enough dates and places!

Readers of this column might not find a veteran as cool as ours, but then again you might. (We hope many of you have made such a connection already.) While Jerry Yellin is not local to the students in Fairfield in the sense that he did not grow up in the area or even live there until he was well into his sixties, he is local in the sense that

he lives there now, students see him on the street and in the grocery store, and have heard him speak in the town square on Memorial Day. But sometimes local history and local geography figure heavily in the content and potential impact of these books.

Suppose you are a student who has spent all of your school days at the rural campus of the Pekin Iowa School District in south central Keokuk County about twenty miles northwest of Fairfield and twenty miles northeast of Ottumwa. Since you have been old enough to wonder about such things you have puzzled over the fact that the buildings of your small rural school district with a total enrollment of less than 600 students K-12, sit on three or four acres of concrete. The expanse of cement between the school buildings and the football field looks like the parking lot outside a major college stadium. The vehicles of every person living in the school district could be parked there at once. Yes, you heard something about WWII planes landing there, but it did not quite compute. WWII planes in the middle of Iowa?

Then during your ninth grade literature unit on WWII your teacher book-talks a book called *Carrier on the Prairie* by Elsie Mae Cofer, a retired elementary school teacher from Ottumwa. Your teacher says that during WWII planes from the Ottumwa Naval Air Station practiced landings and take-offs right where you are sitting now. Your teacher has six copies of the book and says that the author is coming to your classroom in two weeks. You begin reading the book and see names of places you know

on nearly every page. You learn that 6,656 Navy pilots trained in Ottumwa (1,200 miles from the Atlantic Ocean and 2,000 miles from the Pacific). On one day in 1945 “students and instructors on training hops logged 2,205 hours” in the air. The concrete on which your school now sits was one of the 19 outlying fields where pilots practiced and one of two permanent air fields. From what you read, the 162 acre grass field #4 must have been on or near your grandfather’s farm near Libertyville. You call him up one evening and discover that he knows all about it and even helped build the field, and can show you where it was on a neighbor’s farm next time you visit. When the author comes, you are ready to ask questions and do, but are disappointed to find out that the woman is too young to have been in the military during WWII and never personally saw the Ottumwa Naval Air Station in action. Then she says, “No, I wasn’t in Ottumwa during WWII. I was just about your age growing up on a potato farm in North Dakota. But I do have my own WWII story for you. On my farm we had German prisoners of war!”

Even college students are not immune to the excitement of WWII stories created by local authors with local stories. In his college liberal arts core, required literature class, Bill has for several semesters used a geopolitical criteria for selecting the readings—works by Iowans about Iowa. He even tries to use works written by faculty members (if they are Iowans). One of these is set primarily on the University of Northern Iowa campus: *Sleeping with the Enemy*

by Nancy Price. Every couple of semesters, Nancy Price, who has lived in Cedar Falls since she was fifteen years old, finds time to come to class just after students have finished *Enemy*. The last time she came she also talked about her latest novel about WWII, called *No One Knows*, which she has self-published under her own mark, Malmarie Press. When she began to talk, everyone in the room was captivated. “Imagine this building, Lang Hall in 1942, with almost no men in any of the classes, at least no able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and fifty. You young women, imagine that many of your female friends are writing to family members and boyfriends overseas and hoping that those loved ones will come back.” In her novel *No One Knows*, Price recreates Cedar Falls and the UNI campus, then Iowa State Teacher’s College, as the historical setting for a love story about the struggles of young people on the home front during WWII. Price knows this territory like someone who lived it—because she did. Her father, Malcolm Price, became UNI’s fourth president in 1940, a post he held until 1950, guiding the university through the war years. College and high school students have heard parents and grandparents talk of WWII, and have lived through turbulent times themselves. The lives of Price’s characters will fascinate them. Fine local, self-published and small press books about WWII, told by those who remember, are everywhere.

We now want to shift gears a bit to praise our NCTE conference programs and to urge readers to keep their eyes out for special

WWII sessions there. When we see a session in the NCTE conference program that mentions WWII at least one of us always tries to go to it. In 2003 in San Francisco it was the session on the book, *The Children of Willesden Lane: Beyond the Kindertransport: A Memoir of Music, Love, and Survival* by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen. A young woman, Lisa Jura, was sent out of Vienna alone, on the famous Kindertransport that sent 10,000 Jewish children to England at the beginning of WWII. There Lisa survived the blitz to become a concert pianist. Author Golabek is Jura’s daughter and a noted concert pianist in her own right. In the conference session Golabek was stunning. She narrated portions of her mother’s story and punctuated them with dramatic keyboard performances on a grand piano from the stage of the conference room. This is not a small press book, and you can find it easily on Amazon. But if you did not go to the conference session which was sponsored by the Milken Family Foundation, you might not know that the foundation makes available, through its project Facing History and Ourselves, a “Teacher’s Resource to *The Children of Wellesden Lane*” which includes a curriculum guide and recordings of classical piano pieces performed by Mona Golabek. As further noted on the foundation’s website www.mff.org, “The foundation is making both the curriculum guide and the recordings available free-of-charge on [its] website.” You can use the book as a read aloud and download the music to play in class.

Amazing as the above book and the music are, they are not the

coolest thing about WWII we have ever found at an NCTE conference. It may be that you will never be able to get one of these books; maybe someone reading this column can change that prospect. It was at a spring conference in Cincinnati. Virginia was not there and I wanted to get some kind of special present to take back to her. She was the one who was way into WWII. I was just getting interested. The program catalog said the session was about the WWII Japanese Internment Camp, Manzanar. It was at the time that people were just starting to talk about *Snow Falling on Cedars*. In the session room a very gentle and soft spoken California high school teacher, Diane Honda, was talking about resources available for teaching about the Japanese American experience of WWII. She was talking about Manzanar and showing great slides. In particular she said that Manzanar had a high school and that high school had a yearbook. Somehow, surely through every fault of my own, I was not getting the point of the presentation until the end when I realized that

she was saying that this yearbook, the 1943/1944 yearbook from Manzanar High School, called *Our World*, had been reprinted. She had a stack of them there. I could buy one! This is what we meant when we said that your quest for these resources might require quick action. The book made a great present for a WWII searcher. It cost only \$25. As it lies on my desk now, it looks like any yearbook-USA. The kind of thing we all bought in high school.

Faint in the background of the cream-colored cover is a map of eastern California showing the detail between the towns of Independence and Lone Pine on Route 395, in the remote Owens Valley, in the shadow of Mt. Whitney. The title, simply *Our World—Manzanar, California*, begins a reading/learning experience like no other I have ever had. I feel the same way every time I open the cover.

From the "Dedication:"

From a dusty wasteland to a lively community, Manzanar had progressed

to become an exciting chapter, developing from World War II. This part of the story depicts the temporary wartime life of 10,000 tireless, self-sacrificing residents living in one square mile of barracks. . . .

From the "Forward"

Since that first day when Manzanar High School was called in session, the students and faculty have been trying to approximate in all activities the life we knew "back home." With the publication of this yearbook, we feel that we have really come closer to our goal In years to come, when people will ask with real curiosity "What was Manzanar?" we can show them this volume. . . .

The first few pages of montage photos seem pretty ordinary for an old yearbook, teachers posing in front of blackboards, students behind lab tables sporting chemistry apparatus, girls at student events in sweaters and bobby sox. The first things that really rock readers are the senior pictures. Of course, we know the seniors are all Japanese. What we do not think about until we read the captions under the graduates names is that they all should be graduating from some other, normal California high school. Each name is accompanied by the name of the high school that student would have graduated from if he or she had not been imprisoned—"North Hollywood, San Pedro, Van Nuys, Santa Monica, Herbert Hoover, Theodore Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, Venice, San Fernando." These are all young Americans who just happen to be of Japanese ancestry. It's a yearbook, an American school yearbook, just like the ones your students want their parents to buy for them this year. There are sections and pictures for



Photo taken by Archie Miyatake. Reprinted in the "Our World", Manzanar HS yearbook, 1944 with permission from Toyo Miyatake, Inc.

baton club



Top right corner is Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, author of “Farewell to Manzanar”. From the 1998 reproduction of the 1943 Manzanar HS yearbook, “Our World”. Reprinted with permission from Diane Honda.

each grade down through the seventh, student activities—music, drama, science club, and of course a big section for the journalism and yearbook students. It seems the sports, like sports in any prison, were all intramural. One thing you begin to notice is that almost all of the group shots are taken outside, with the snow-capped Sierras in the background. It would not do to show the temporary, knocked together buildings—and no shots of guards, guns, or barbed wire were allowed—but guards, guns, and barbed wire were part of the Manzanar experience.

Some other incredible special features will grab you. On page 00 we see the Baton Club, the first squad decked out in skirted uniforms and majorette hats, the second squad in back in white tops and dark skirts. On the end of the line is a much younger girl, not a secondary student, a kind of mascot. This, according to Diane Honda, is Jeanne Wakatsuki, Jeanne Wakatsuki who was inspired by this yearbook to write, *Farewell to Manzanar*. And what about first semester senior class

officer Ralph Lazo. Not a Japanese name, not a Japanese face. To quote some of the new supplementary material in the back of *Our World*, after stowing away on the internment train, “Ralph [. . .] went with his buddies from Belmont HS in Los Angeles to Manzanar. [. . .] the only Mexican-Irish American to voluntarily place himself in camp out of loyalties to his buddies.” Fellow Manzanar senior William Hohri eulogized Lazo at the 50th class reunion saying: “When 140 million Americans turned their backs on us and excluded us into remote, desolate prison camps, the separation was absolute—almost. Ralph Lazo’s presence among us said, No, not everyone.” The unique features of this teaching artifact go on and on. Some of the wide-angle shots of the Sierras seem really well done—many were taken by a very talented Japanese professional photographer (also interned) Toyo Miyatake. And then of course there was Ansel Adams who was invited by camp director Ralph Merritt to take photographs for historical purposes. Not every high school yearbook has photo-

graphs like that.

The last page of the original yearbook just makes me want to jump up and cheer. As I remember it, Ms. Honda said that as the yearbook was being prepared to send to the publisher, the political climate was changing; it was suspected that this imprisonment was about over. After the



Senior class photos from the 1998 reproduction of the 1943 Manzanar HS yearbook, “Our World”. Reprinted with permission from Diane Honda.

yearbook's paste up was approved and before it was sent away, as high school students do some times, they slipped in another page—a photograph of a guard tower, barbed wire, and a hand using a wire cutter!

I really think this is one of the most powerful teaching artifacts I have ever seen or ever used. Virginia gives it to middle schoolers reading *Farewell to Manzanar*. Demonstrating a thematic literature unit, I taught *Snow Falling on Cedars* to a college literature methods class at Western Illinois University in 2000. Before reading that book, more than half of Illinois' finest in that class were very uncertain about the Japanese-American WWII experience. After following Hatsue to Manzanar in *Cedars*, I handed them *Our World*. It blew them away.

The original first seventy-one pages of *Our World* are supplemented by ten additional pages that tell about the lives of the yearbook editors, Ralph Lazo, and the Presidential apology signed by George H. W. Bush in 1990, all great teaching tools. The final page tells about Diane Honda's efforts to get this document republished, including support she received from the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund and the Journalism Education Association. It also says that for \$25 dollars plus \$5 for shipping and handling, *you too* can own one of these. But you can't any more, at least not now. Ms. Honda says that the original run was for 1000 books, of which 400 went to former internees. The rest were bought by people like me. Herf Jones Yearbook Company of Logan, Utah., which graciously cooperated with

the first republication, still has the plates to print more books. Ms. Honda thinks that \$5000 could generate a new run of 200 books. If you want one, and we promise you we have not exaggerated how cool these books are, write to Bill Broz at the address below, express your commitment to buy so many copies at \$25 each plus \$5 for shipping and handling (send no money now), and included complete contact information including phone and email. If this invitation produces 200 orders, Ms. Honda will try for a new printing. If any reader knows the right philanthropist or book publisher, contact Bill. NCTE or Herf Jones with whom we English teachers do a great deal of business, or somebody has to make this national treasure readily available. Remember, the students in Manzanar stated clearly in the "Forward" to *Our World*, "In years to come, when people will ask with real curiosity 'What was Manzanar?' we can show them this volume. . . ." When they wrote this, they were thinking about your students.

As you can tell, we could go on and on about these books that teachers need to find and make available to students. If their authors are alive and willing and local, make them available too. The following reviews cover the books mentioned above, plus a very neat and unusual book called *Pacific Skies*. But most of the books we mention here have their most powerful significance locally. Find your own self-published and small press WWII books significant to your own locality. Find your own veterans, before it is too late.

As a P.S. to this column, we

invite readers to send Bill 200-300 word reviews and purchase information on self-published and small press WWII books you have found and used that other teachers should consider. That information will be published here when several titles have come in.

Virginia Broz reviews the following books:

***Of War and Weddings: A Legacy of Two Fathers* by Jerry Yellin**

Most war veterans return home carrying haunting memories. Many find small compartments of their minds in which to store the memories and lock them away. Jerry Yellin returned from the war in the Pacific in 1945, and for forty years he did not speak of his experiences as a fighter pilot. For forty years he held fast to his hatred of the Japanese. Yellin was forced to confront his prejudice when his son went to Japan to teach English and fell in love with a Japanese woman, a woman whose father had fought the United States. Fifty years after World War II, Jerry Yellin sat down to write about his experiences. The result is his memoir *Of War and Weddings: A Legacy of Two Fathers*.

Readers will go back in time with the author as he sees Japan from the cockpit of a P-51 Mustang in the first "Very Long Range Fighter Escort" of B-29's over Japan. His memory is crystal clear:

There would be over four hundred B-29's and one hundred fighter pilots flying P-51's. Take-off was at 7:00 A.M. We were to be over the target from 10:45 A.M. until 11:30 A.M. and expected to return to Iwo again at 2:15

in the afternoon. We rendezvoused with the B-29's at 18,000 feet over Koju Shima, an island off the coast of the Izu Peninsula. Each fighter was carrying a heavy load, with two 110 gallon drop-tanks. As we crossed the coast of the mainland, we dropped the wing tanks and prepared to face enemy aircraft.

His honesty is disarming. When Jerry is grounded to have his wisdom teeth pulled by the group dentist, his good friend Danny Mathis is assigned to fly a mission in Jerry's place. The one hundred seventy Mustangs that left Iwo Jima on that escort mission encountered a huge storm. Twenty-seven P-51's went down and all but three of their pilots were lost. Among them were Danny Mathis and Jerry's plane, the "Dorrie R." Yellin writes, "The terrible nature of war is that losing Danny was hard, but losing my plane was shattering [. . .] I was more affected by the loss of my weapon than by the loss of my friend."

Of War and Weddings is also a love story. Readers will follow the author's transformation as he returns to Japan, encounters Japanese people and culture, and allows the love between his son and the daughter of his enemy to gradually melt away the hard shell of his hatred. Yellin leaves us with an understanding that by forging personal relationships which cross cultural bridges, prejudice can be overcome . . . or prevented.

Hardcover: 275 pages
Publisher: Sunstar Publishing:
Fairfield Iowa (1995)
ISBN: 0963850253
List Price: \$17.95
Order directly from author:
jaywhy@lisco.com

Lang: The WWII Story of an American Guerilla on Mindanao, Philippine Islands by Norman Rudi

On December 7, 1941, sixty-seven Japanese Mitsubishi 21 Iie bombers released their loads on Clark Field, Luzon, in the Philippines. On the ground below, Private First Class Dick Lang and members of the 19th Bombardment Group maintenance crew were servicing B-17 bombers which had arrived from Hawaii a few days earlier. *Lang* tells the story of the three and a half harrowing years that follow.

On Christmas Eve, 1941, the group abandoned Clark Field and under the direction of General Douglas MacArthur retreated to the Bataan Peninsula. Days later they boarded an ancient, rusty steamer bound for Mindanao Island to service the aircraft located there. On March 15, Lang and seven other airmen were ordered to report for special duty at the airfield to load four B-17 bombers which would take MacArthur and his staff to Australia. On May 6, 1942, all American troops in the Philippines were ordered to surrender to the Japanese. "A campaign to support the military in the Philippine Islands was redirected to Europe, and the men and women who served in the Philippine Islands were sacrificed," writes author Norman Rudi.

Rumors were rampant of Japanese brutality on Bataan. Dick Lang and hundreds of other Americans on the islands decided they would rather take their chances in the hills than in a prison camp. With six compatriots, Lang purchased three water buffalo to pack weapons, ammunition, and all

the food they could find. They traveled on the jungle trails until they had to abandon the pack animals and continue on foot, carrying their supplies on their backs. It would be nearly two years before MacArthur made good on his promise, "I shall return!" During that time Dick Lang fought not only the Japanese, but the treacherous plants, leeches, and malaria-carrying mosquitoes of a jungle which receives up to 200 inches of annual rainfall. Rudi writes, "Walking through the wet plant materials, Lang's army high-top shoes finally rotted out and were no longer wearable. This meant he would have to walk barefoot until a replacement could be found." It would be over a year before Lang received shoes for his by then toughened size 13EEE feet. Lang made his way to the east coast of the island where he organized guerrilla activities, salvaging sunken boats, repairing motors, and scouting for guns and ammunition. He led hit and run attacks on the Japanese invaders, including a daring mission to slip through enemy lines, sneaking back into their enemy-held maintenance building to retrieve a hidden radio.

Lang makes clear to the reader the tenacity of the Japanese war effort in the islands of the Pacific, the courage and ingenuity of the abandoned American guerilla fighters on the Philippines, and the generosity and bravery of the Filipino people. The book, which includes timelines, maps, photographs, and a glossary of Tagalog words, is a wonderfully readable history lesson and an amazing true adventure story which pays tribute to a heroic Marshalltown, Iowa, farm boy who lives to tell his tale.

Paperback: 151 pages
Publisher: McMillen Publishing:
(November 2003)
ISBN:1888223529
List price: \$14.95

The Children of Willesden Lane: Beyond the Kindertransport: A Memoir of Music, Love, and Survival by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen

Early in the book, Lisa Jura, a 14-year-old musical prodigy living in Vienna in 1939, is at her piano lesson with her teacher whom she greatly admires when the Nazi occupation of Austria begins to affect her personally.

He looked at her for a long moment, then finally spoke, looking uncomfortable and ashamed: "I am sorry, Miss Jura. But I am required to tell you that I cannot continue to teach you."

Lisa was stunned and unable to move. The professor walked to his window and opened the curtain. He stared at the people in the street. "There is a new ordinance," he said slowly. "It is now a crime to teach a Jewish child." He continued mumbling under his breath, then added in despair, "Can you imagine!"

Lisa felt tears rising.

"I am not a brave man," he said softly. "I'm so sorry."

He came over to the piano, lifted her slender young hands, and held them in his grip. "You have a remarkable gift, Lisa, never forget that."

Conditions in Vienna worsen and Lisa's parents become concerned about the fate of their three children. After the German pogrom of November 1938 known as Kristallnacht, the British government eased immigration restric-

tions, allowing a committee of British Jews to organize the evacuation of what eventually became 10,000 children to England between December 1938 and September 1939. Lisa's family manages to acquire one and only one ticket for the Kindertransport. They are forced to choose Lisa, to send to "safety" in Britain. Lisa, one of the 10,000, ends up in the Willesden Lane hostel in the East End of London. There she struggles to develop her musical talent and keep alive her dream to study music at the Royal Academy. Of course, Lisa is no safer from the blitz than other residents of London.

But Lisa does survive and succeed and give birth to her own daughter, Mona Golabek, who herself becomes a concert pianist and writes this story of her mother's journey and struggles. As noted above, the Milken Family Foundation, at www.mff.org provides extensive teaching resources for using this book, including free downloads of classical music related to the text performed by Mona Golabek.

Paperback: 288 pages
Publisher: Warner Books (November 2003)
ISBN: 0446690279
List price: \$13.95

Bill Broz reviews the following books:

No One Knows by Nancy Price

In *No One Knows*, three young lovers in their teens and twenties live in a Midwestern college town as America enters World War II.

The fear of those waiting at home begins to surround them. Veterans return, changed by the "shell shock" we now call "post-traumatic stress disorder." The story contains romance and a tightly constructed mystery plot. The writing embodies the literary skill of an author who has been publishing for over half a century.

I found many aspects of the book compelling and instructive. Most striking is life in a town and a college emptied of able-bodied men, and the cruelty toward the able-bodied who are not in the war for good reason. Both of the young men who love the heroine, Miranda, face such suspicion. Robert endures the cruelty because he is young for his high school graduating class and attends college as he waits to turn eighteen. Conrad suffers because he must remain at home to manage a family business making war materials. Miranda, orphaned in the Depression, is bright, funny and clever: she learns about fashion, manners and the limited life open to women in the forties.

Conrad and Robert love Miranda as much as they hate each other, and all three main characters must choose, as their lives progress, whether to avenge themselves when they are given the chance. Two of them choose to forgive; one does not, and loses Miranda. And when one of the two men disappears, she keeps his secret. No one knows.

Hardcover: 333 pages
Publisher: Malmarie Press Books,
St. Cloud FL
ISBN: 0974481807
List price: \$27.95

Order from:
Baker and Taylor
1120 US Highway 22
P.O. Box 6885
Bridgewater NJ 08807
www.btol.com

***Carrier on the Prairie* by Elsie May Cofer**

This book is primarily a local story, offering great detail about how and when the Ottumwa Naval Air Station came to be, who built it and how it was built, the lives of the officers, pilots in training, and other military personnel while they were in Ottumwa, and how all of this became a most influential part of the life of Ottumwa, Iowa, between 1942 and 1947. In the “Preface” Cofer writes:

No one is more surprised than I that this book took shape. I first began to listen to NAS Ottumwa tales in order to record and transcribe interviews for Wapello County Historical Museum records. As I shared incidents I heard, the museum staff and volunteers began to say, ‘You really ought to write about this.’ Next an interviewee told me, “If you don’t, who will?” But it was not until the day I drove to the Airport Café to have lunch with a friend that I knew I must draw the facts together.

As I rounded the curve of what was once Yorktown Avenue, a feeling of nostalgia touched me. I could sense 3,500 uniformed men and women bustling about, 300 Stearman biplanes noisily soaring overhead, and 60 sparkling buildings passing white-glove inspection. I began to write.

Certainly Iowans and other Midwesterners, along with WWII buffs and flight enthusiasts, would enjoy this book. Taking a primarily chronological approach, Cofer constructs her story with from more

than sixty interviews, eighty photographs, maps, and other data from the period. Readers of this work get the added bonus of being able to answer the trivia question, “Where did Richard Nixon spend WWII?” Answer, Ottumwa Iowa.

Paperback: 318 pages
Also available in hardcover
Publisher: Hawley Court Press,
Ottumwa Iowa
ISBN: 0964992515
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\$25.95 hardcover
Order from:
Hawley Court Press
P.O. Box 1191
Ottumwa IA 52501

***Pacific Skies: American Flyers in World War II* by Jerome Klinkowitz**

From the Preface ix:

But what of the individuals who fought this war—particularly from the air, where photography was often limited to gun-camera footage and pinpoint air reconnaissance, where maps were a business of navigational specifics and target coordinates, and where war correspondents (with their own master narratives) could only on the rarest occasions fly along? For flyers who fought World War II in the skies over the Pacific, a medium other than picture taking or map making would have to convey the special nature of their experience. [. . .] Many [. . .] Army Air Force, Navy, and Marine aviation personnel serving their country [. . .] turned to the one descriptive asset [they] had: words.

In this unique and highly accessible, academic work, Jerome Klinkowitz applies the eye of a literary critic to the content of over 100 Pacific theatre, flyer narratives to weave a composite narrative and

analysis of the air war against the Japanese. Beginning with the military aviation background leading up to December 7th, 1941, and following the air campaign through August 6th and 9th, 1945, Klinkowitz serves up meaty chunks of pilot memoirs on nearly every page. The narrative style of the book works like this. The author addresses a component of the air war experience such as the Japanese “kamikaze” flights. Then he tells readers, here are some important passages written by officers and strategists on both sides, here is how six different American combat veterans, who wrote six different books after the war, describe what it was like to be under kamikaze attack. And even, this is what a Japanese kamikaze pilot wrote about preparing for a mission and how he felt when he was unable to complete it. Readers do not have to read the 100+ books themselves, because the author of *Pacific Skies* does it for you and offers readers an interpretation of the meaning of these events for the people who lived them, an interpretation supported by many layers of first-hand accounts. Though Klinkowitz is a distinguished professor of literature (he is one of the editors of the *Norton Anthology of American Literature*), this work is devoid of academic jargon and very readable. Good readers, eighth grade and above, could enjoy this book and be very satisfied with its comprehensive scope, could even use this book as a guidepost to a personal reading of some of the works referenced within. Klinkowitz’s conclusion addresses the spiritual response many fliers made to their

experiences, several becoming religious ministers and others becoming peace activists, a response that resonates with the book's title, *Pacific Skies*.

Klinkowitz has several other books based on World War II flier narratives including *Their Finest Hours*, *Yanks over Europe*, and *With the Tigers over China*. Secondary literature teachers might also like to know that commentary on the life and works of Kurt Vonnegut Jr., on whom he is the leading international authority, represent Jerome Klinkowitz's earliest and deepest scholarship. Also see, "Jerry

Klinkowitz" for an eclectic collection of works on such subjects as jazz and baseball.

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www.upress.state.ms.us

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Call for Manuscripts

2005 Spring/Summer theme: A Road Less Traveled

This theme is intended to solicit articles about young adult literature and its use that examine people or paths in young adult literature that differ from the norm or majority. This theme is meant to be open to interpretation and support a broad range of subtopics, but some possibilities include examination and discussion of innovative authors and their work, pioneers or turning points in the history of the genre and new literary forms. We welcome and encourage other creative interpretations of this theme. February 15 submission deadline.

2005 Fall theme: Finding My Way

This theme is intended to solicit articles about young adult literature and its use dealing with the search for self. This theme is meant to be open to interpretation and support a broad range of subtopics, but some possibilities include examination and discussion of the approach an author or group of authors take to leading protagonists down the path to self discovery, comparisons of how this is accomplished across subgenres of young adult literature, or how young adult literature compares to developmental or adolescent psychology. We welcome and encourage other creative interpretations of this theme. May 15 submission deadline.

2006 Winter

The theme for our 2006 winter issue will reflect the theme of the 2005 ALAN Workshop soon to be announced. October 15 submission deadline.