

## BOOK STATS

Grades: 6-9 Ages: 11+

Reading Level: 970L Pages: 148

Genre: Nonfiction Narratives

Subject/Theme: Heroes, War, World War II, Patriotism

Common Core Standards	Reading	Writing	Listening & Speaking	Language
Grade 6	RI.6.1, RI.6.2, RI.6.3, RI.6.4, RI.6.6, RI.6.7	W.6.1, W.6.7, W.6.8	SL.6.1, SL.6.4, SL.6.5	L.6.4, L.6.5, L.6.6
Grade 7	RI.7.1, RI.7.2, RI.7.3, RI.7.4, RI.7.6	W.7.1, W.7.7, W.7.8	SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.5, SL.7.6	L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6
Grade 8	RI.8.1, RI.8.2, RI.8.3, RI.8.4, RI.8.6, RI.8.7	W.8.1, W.8.7, W.8.8	SL.8.1, SL.8.4, SL.8.5, SL.8.6	L.8.4, L.8.5, L.8.6
Grade 9	RI.9.1, RI.9.2, RI.9.3, RI.9.4, RI.9.6	W.9.1, W.9.7, W.9.8	SL.9.1, SL.9.4, SL.9.5, SL.9.6	L.9.4, L.9.5, L.9.6

## OVERVIEW

### Book Summary

The inspiring heroes in this book were everyday citizens who answered the call of their country during World War II. After the United States entered the war in December 1941, these soldiers showed incredible courage in the face of enemy fire. Based on true stories, the narratives are heart-pounding tributes to patriotism and heroism.

Chief Petty Officer John Finn manned an anti-aircraft gun on the morning of December 7, 1947, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Private First Class Jack Lucas was an underage enlistee who fell on two grenades to protect his combat buddies on Iwo Jima. Sergeant Forrest “Woody” Vosler saved the lives of his fellow crew members on a B-17 after dogfights over the flak-filled skies of Belgium. And Second Lieutenant Vernon Baker rose above the racism against black “Buffalo Soldiers” in the U.S. military to lead his unit on a crucial offensive against a German stronghold in Europe.

Most of these soldiers received the Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor in the face of combat—above and beyond the call of duty.

### Teaching the Book

This riveting collection of true tales introduces readers to World War II through the stories of ten brave heroes. The book gives students the opportunity to explore the theme of heroes, practice summarizing, and examine the meaning of words related to war. Activities engage students in argument writing, creating time lines, and creating an award for heroism.

**Theme Focus:** Heroes

**Comprehension Focus:** Summarize

**Language Focus:** Words of War

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allan Zullo has written more than 100 nonfiction books on a broad range of subjects. He has published two best-selling series for middle grade students. *Haunted Kids* features eerie stories that are inspired by real-life reports of the supernatural. *Ten True Tales* tells about extraordinary people, often teens, who have survived life-threatening situations. For more information about the author, visit: <http://www.allanzullo.com/>

# Get Ready to Read

## Pre-Reading Activities

**The War and Its Heroes** The introduction to *World War II Heroes* provides a brief overview of the causes of World War II, how the United States became involved, and the brave soldiers who became the heroes of the conflict. Lead students in a shared reading of this brief overview to build background. For more information about World War II, presented in a concise format, visit <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/world-war-ii-overview>.

**Documentary Video** Another excellent introduction to the book is the documentary footage of World War II available at <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/videos>. The film on the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor shows footage of the “day that will live in infamy.” The soundtrack is Franklin D. Roosevelt’s famous speech to the nation, marking the United States’s entry into the war. Footage of soldiers readying for battle provide students with concrete historical images of the men they will be reading about.



“Yesterday, December 7, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.”

— *Franklin D. Roosevelt*



## BIG QUESTION

**Critical Thinking** Ask students to think about this question as they read. Write the question on chart paper or the whiteboard.

**What makes some people heroes during wartime?**

## Vocabulary

**Words of War** The book is full of vocabulary that describes military operations, soldiers, and weaponry. As they read, encourage students to add to the list of words on **Resource #1: Vocabulary Cards** on p. 8. Pass out the list of words that are organized into four categories: Soldiers, Military Operations, Weaponry, and War Verbs. Encourage students to use context clues and check definitions as they read.

Use **Resource #1: Vocabulary Cards** on p. 7 and distribute copies to students.

### Soldiers

officer  
sniper

### Military Operations

trenches  
mission

### Weaponry

grenades  
ammo

### War Verbs

crouched  
dodged

# As You Read

## Reading the Book

**Independent Reading** The engaging narrative format of the book lends itself to independent reading by students. Assign students to do a silent reading of the book on their own. Confer with students as necessary to answer questions and clarify comprehension issues.

**Chunking the Book** Assign the book in three sections, or chunks, for independent reading. After reading a section, check in with students to monitor comprehension with the “Questions to Discuss” for each section found on p. 4.

Chunk #1: pp. 5-46

Chunk #2: pp. 47-104

Chunk #3: pp. 105-146

## Comprehension Focus

**Summarize.** Remind students that a summary is a short statement of the most important ideas in a reading. The steps of summarizing include: identify the topic of the text, find the most important details about the topic, and restate the topic and important details in a short summary, using your own words. Explain that summarizing helps readers understand and remember a text they read.

Use **Resource #2: Summarize** to model for students how to restate a short summary in your own words. Pass out copies of the resource to students to use for subsequent chapters of the book. Then model for students how to summarize a text, filling out the organizer as you do.

**Model:** First, I’ll identify the topic of “We’ve Got to Fight Back” on pp. 5-17. The narrative is about John Finn, an officer on Hawaii on the morning of the Pearl Harbor attack. What are the important details? Finn was on the scene when Japanese planes attacked his air station. Finn grabbed a machine gun and shot back at the enemy planes. Despite being injured, he organized and inspired other soldiers to fight off the invaders. He fought on, bleeding and in pain, until the Japanese planes flew off.

Give students a brief oral summary of the story in your own words. Encourage them to summarize the rest of the stories as they read.

# After You Read

## Questions to Discuss

Lead students in a discussion of these focus story elements. Ask them to provide text evidence to support their answers.

### After Reading Chunk #1

- 1. Heroes** What motives drove Jack Lucas to his brave actions? (*patriotism and revenge*)
- 2. Summarize** How did Richard Antrim show his heroism? (*He risked his life to stand up for the human rights of another POW.*)
- 3. Words of War** What kind of soldier is a *medic*? (*One who provides first aid to wounded soldiers.*)

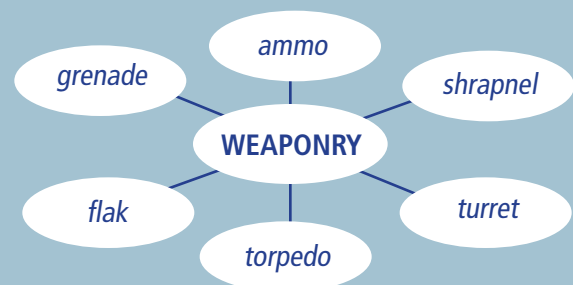
### After Reading Chunk #2

- 1. Heroes** What do you think of the risks that Commander Ramage took to torpedo the Japanese ships? (*He risked his own life and the lives of his men. This would have been tragic if he didn’t succeed.*)
- 2. Summarize** Why is Private Desmond Doss called a “Hero Without a Gun?” (*He wouldn’t use weapons because of his religion.*)

## WORDS TO KNOW

### Words of War

Draw a concept map for each of the word concepts— Soldiers, Military Operations, Weaponry, and War Verbs—using chart paper or a whiteboard. Ask students to suggest words from their lists that connect to each concept. As you add a word to the map, have students explain how it connects to the concept.



**3. Words of War** Use context clues to figure out the meaning of the word turret in the narrative about Woody Vosler. (*A dome containing a gun*)

### After Reading Chunk #3

**1. Heroes** What is the author's point of view about the heroes in this book? (*The author admires and glorifies their courage in the face of death.*)

**2. Summarize** Summarize the challenges Vernon Baker experienced in the military and how he reacted to them. (*He was the victim of racism but never let that interfere with his patriotism.*)

**3. Words of War** Give an example of a mission in World War II. (*The airmen flew out on a bombing mission over Germany.*)

### Questions to Share

Encourage students to share their responses with a partner or small group.

**1. Text to Self** What is your favorite story in the book? Why do you like it best? How did the person show courage in the face of war?

**2. Text to World** Do you think people's attitudes toward war are different today from how people felt during World War II? Why or why not?

**3. Text to Text** How does each story in the book connect to the others to give a complex picture of heroism?

## Extension Activities

### Reading/Writing Connection

**Argument Essay** Ask students to write an argument essay about the hero in the book whom they think was most courageous. Remind them that an argument essay states a claim, supports it with evidence, and restates the author's position in the conclusion. Encourage them to reread the story of the hero whom they choose to find supporting text evidence. Have students present their essays to the group to critique and compare.

Don't forget the



### BIG QUESTION

**Critical Thinking** Give each student an opportunity to answer the big question. Encourage students to support their answers with details and evidence from the text. Tell them there is no one right answer.

**What makes some people heroes during wartime?**

## Content Area Connections

**Science** **Fighter Planes** Challenge interested students to research one of the fighter planes used during World War II, such as the North American P-51 Mustang, the British Supermarine Spitfire, and the German Messerschmitt Bf-109 "Gustav." Invite students to present their research results to the rest of the group, using formal English and speaking at an appropriate pace.

**Social Studies** **World War II Timeline** Pair students to work together to create a timeline of the major events of World War II. Have them create their timeline on the computer and add illustrations, if possible. For a concise timeline of the war, visit <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/world-war-ii-timeline>.

**Arts** **War Memorials** Have students research major war memorials in Washington, D.C. They might choose the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, The World War II Memorial, or the Iwo Jima Memorial. Students can present their research with photos and a summary of the memorial to the rest of the class.

### BIG ACTIVITY

**A Hero Award** Ask each student to create a hero award for a type of person whom they admire. The award could be for a soldier, for an athlete, or for an everyday person who stands up for some important value. Pass out the Big Activity printable to students and clarify the steps of the activity.

Name

Date

## **BIG ACTIVITY:** A Hero Award

### **Step 1:** Kind of Hero

This award is for a hero who

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### **Step 2:** Criteria for Award

The criteria for the award include:

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### **Step 3:** The Award

Description:

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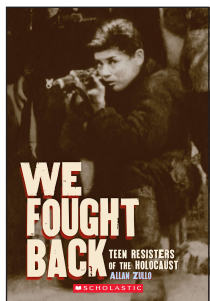
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## READ MORE AND LEARN MORE

Use these books and other resources to expand your students' study of the book or theme.

### Author Connections



#### **We Fought Back: Young Resistors in the Holocaust**

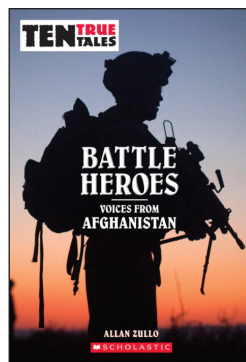
Allan Zullo

**Ages:** 9-14 **Grades:** 4-9

**Lexile Level:** 1090L

Fifteen-year-old Paul just helped blow up a Nazi supply train. Can he escape the Germans hunting him for revenge? Fifteen-year-old Sarah has lost many loved ones to Nazi murderers.

Will partisan fighters accept her into their secret group? Seventeen-year-old Frank and his team are preparing to attack a heavily armed German convoy. Can they succeed against overwhelming odds--and survive? These and other Jewish teens took on incredible risks to fight back against the Nazis in World War II. You will never forget their true stories of courage and survival. **Available as a Storia e-book**



#### **Ten True Tales: Battle Heroes**

Allan Zullo

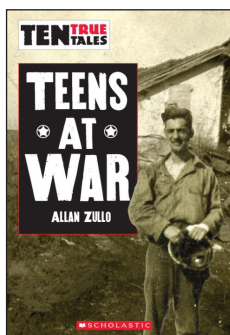
**Ages:** 9-12

**Grades:** 4-7

**Lexile Level:** 1090L

In a remote Afghan village, Marine Lieutenant Stephen Boada picks up a chilling Taliban message on his radio scanner: "The Americans

will never make it out alive." The book tells the story of Boada and other American heroes who risk their lives daily while serving their country in Afghanistan. **Available as a Storia e-book**



#### **Ten True Tales: Teens at War**

Allan Zullo

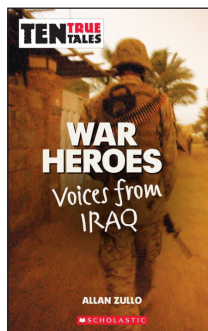
**Ages:** 9-12

**Grades:** 4-7

**Lexile Level:** 1010L

Lucie, a fourteen-year-old Belgian, joined the resistance and saved the lives of downed pilots--until she was captured by the Gestapo. She and other real teens risked their lives to serve their countries in wartime,

and young readers will never forget these incredible true stories. **Available as a Storia e-book**



#### **Ten True Tales: War Heroes**

Allan Zullo

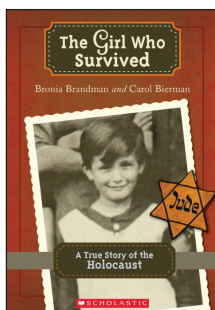
**Ages:** 9-14

**Grades:** 4-9

**Lexile Level:** 1040L

Geared toward young readers, this inspiring book features ten true stories about American heroes who risked their lives serving their country in Iraq. **Available as a Storia e-book**

### Topic Connections



#### **The Girl Who Survived**

Carol Bierman & Bronia Brandman

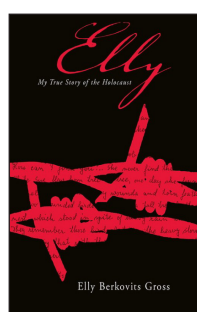
**Ages:** 9+

**Grades:** 4-6

**Lexile Level:** 910L

Young readers will never forget this incredible true story of one of the youngest survivors of Auschwitz, fully illustrated with stirring black-and-white archival photos.

Through courage, luck, and the kindness of a stranger, Bronia lived to tell her amazing life story. **Available as a Storia e-book**



#### **Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust**

Elly Berkovitz Gross

**Ages:** 9-12

**Grades:** 4-7

**Lexile Level:** 730L

When she was just fifteen, Elly, her mother and her brother were taken from their Romanian town to the Auschwitz-II/Birkenau concentration camp.

Elly never saw her family alive again, but she survived the Holocaust. This is her heartbreaking, true story of courage and destiny. **Available as a Storia e-book**

### Other Resources

For a variety of print and other media resources, visit <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/unit/world-war-ii-everything-you-need>.

Go to [www.Scholastic.com/storia-corner](http://www.Scholastic.com/storia-corner) to find PDF versions of the Storia teacher guides and links to purchase the related books.

**Soldiers**

officer  
sniper

**Military Operations**

trenches  
mission

**Weapons**

grenades  
ammo

**War Verbs**

crouched  
dodged

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Ten True Tales: World War II Heroes

Use this organizer to summarize a story in the book.

### Topic:

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### Important Details:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Summarize:

 Use your own words to state the main idea and important details in the text.

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