



## A Highly Selective Reading List about the First World War

In support of the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center's Sunday Symposium

“World War One: A Look Back 100 Years”

Veterans' Day, Nov. 11, 2018, 2pm – 4pm

This reading list is only a starting point. It barely scratches the surface of the voluminous body of World War I literature, especially from the European vantage point. The war raged in Europe for over four years, but because the U.S. was in the conflict for just the final twenty months, only a relatively small portion of the historical record focuses on America. Compared to the huge bodies of literature about the Revolutionary War, The Civil War, and World War II, the list of works about America in World War I seems sparse – but *only* in comparison. In practice the list of books pertaining to the U.S. role in the Great War is much larger than even the most prodigious scholar, much less the serious lay reader, could absorb. With that caution in mind, we offer the following:

*Note:* The publication dates below generally refer to the first edition. Many of these works have been reprinted in paperback and/or revised editions.

### ONE VOLUME OVERVIEWS

John Keegan, *The First World War* (1998). Often called the best one-volume overview. See also Keegan's, *An Illustrated History of the First World War* (2001)

Martin Gilbert, *The First World War: A Complete History* (2004). Recommended by Symposium speaker Robert Welborn.

G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone: The Story of the Great War 1914-1918* (2007). Highly regarded.

Scott Addington, *World War I: A Layman's Guide* (2014). The shortest, and therefore most superficial, overview.

### ONE VOLUME OVERVIEWS WITH AN AMERICAN FOCUS

Margaret E. Wagner, *America and the Great War, A Library of Congress Illustrated History* (2017). An authoritative coffee table book for the serious reader. Since it was so recently published, this volume contains an up-to-date bibliography of the literature on WWI.

Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (1998). Probably the best one-volume survey with a focus on the American Army and Navy.

John D. Eisenhower, *Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I* (2002) An easy read popular history.

## **NON-FICTION ACCOUNTS OF ASPECTS OF THE WAR**

Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (1962). The classic Pulitzer Prize winning account of the beginning of the war. See also Tuchman's, *The Zimmerman Telegram*.

David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (1980). The classic account of the home front. See also the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition (2004).

Michael Neiberg, *The Second Battle of the Marne* (2008). Nathan Hunter of Madison was an officer in this turning point battle. See also Neiberg's, *Fighting the Great War: A Global History* (2005).

Justus D. Doeneck, *Nothing Less Than War: A New History of America's Entry into World War I* (2011). A provocative update of the standard account.

Adam Hochschild, *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* (2011)  
About war protest in the UK.

Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: African-American Troops in World War I* (1996). The first full account of the barriers faced by and triumphs accomplished by black soldiers.

Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (2009). A comprehensive view of the War's impact on the black community.

Carrie Brown, *Rosie's Mom: Forgotten Women Workers of the First World War* (2002).

Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*. (2008).

Moina Belle Michael, *The Miracle Flower: The story of the Flanders Fields Memorial Poppy* (1941). Ms. Michael's own story of how she made the red poppy the official veterans' memorial flower. She was born in Good Hope, Ga., and attended school at Braswell Academy in Morgan Co.

## **ONLINE LISTS OF WWI NOVELS AND BOOKS**

Rather than posting our own list of WWI novels, we offer the following suggestions from the New Republic and BookBub: <https://newrepublic.com/article/118470/reading-guide-novels-about-world-war-one> and <https://www.bookbub.com/blog/2016/11/08/historical-fiction-set-in-world-war-i>

A 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary reading list: <http://www.danverslibrary.org/readthis/?p=135120>

*Smithsonian Magazine* recommends these five WWI books: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/five-books-on-world-war-i-199/>