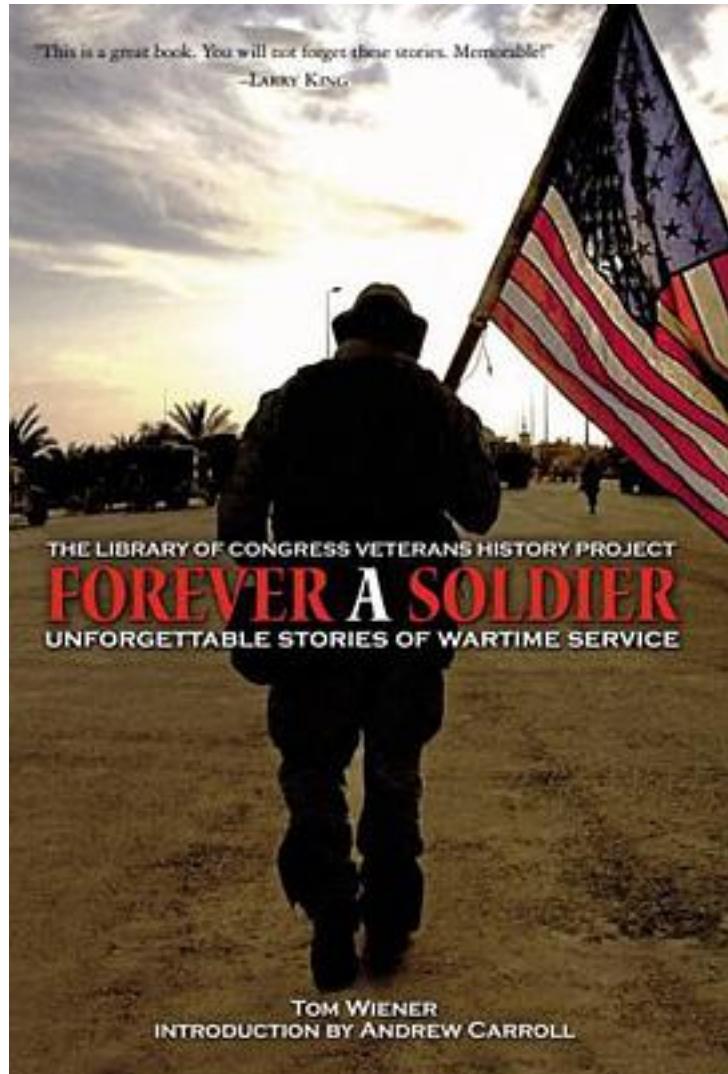


Forever a Soldier



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Forever a Soldier captures the personal side of war in 37 extraordinary narratives that bear eloquent witness to both the life-changing experience of battle and to the unflagging spirit that sustained countless ordinary Americans plunged into the bloody conflicts of the deadliest, most destructive century in human history. Culled from letters, diaries, private memoirs, and oral histories collected by the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, their stories paint an unforgettable group portrait of our country's armed forces.

Some tell of frontline action: a doughboy's 1918 baptism of fire: a battleship gunner's grim duel with Japanese planes; a female fighter pilot's capture by Iraqis during the Gulf War. Others evoke moments of relief and reflection, or recall deeply moving episodes: two wounded soldiers—one German, one American—clasping hands in the wordless brotherhood of pain; a POW whose faith gave him the strength to endure torture in the notorious "Hanoi Hilton;" a GI's lifelong grief for a buddy killed on the last day of World War II in Europe.

Forever a Soldier presents famous incidents like the sinking of the USS Indianapolis and her survivors' terrifying ordeal in the shark-infested Pacific, and heroic figures like John McCain, but it's the long-untold stories of unheralded patriots that best reveal the universal truths of war: courage and fear, horror and exhilaration, sorrow and triumph—the shared legacy of every American veteran, and a debt of honor the rest of us must respect but can never repay.

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