

THE PRESENTATION OF WORLD WAR I IN
CERTAIN AMERICAN NOVELS

by

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B. S., Kansas State College
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1942

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of English

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1947

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FORWORD

A better understanding of this thesis is possible if a short resume is made of the authors and their backgrounds. The subject will be dealt with here only briefly because to do so at great length would be to repeat what is brought out fully in later chapters.

One of the first things that becomes apparent after a study of these novels is that they fall into two groups; those written by authors from actual experiences at the Front, and those written by authors who were not on duty at the Front, or who were not even in the Service. Of the first group are John Dos Passos¹, who enlisted as an ambulance driver, and later served in the Medical Corps. His novel, Three Soldiers, was one of the earliest to debunk the so-called glory of the World War². Thomas Boyd, author of Through the Wheat, fought at Belleau Wood, Soissons and St. Mihiel, until put out of action by a gas shell at Mont Blanc. His novel is not bitter, but it definitely shows the nerve strain and disillusion of the soldier after he has been in weeks of continuous battle, for it is in reality the war as

¹ Dos Passos, John, Three Soldiers, George H. Doran and Company, New York. 1921.

² Kunitz and Maycraft, Twentieth Century Authors, W. W. Wilson Company, New York. p. 332. 1942.

lived by Boyd³.

Mrs. Fisher was a non-combatant, of course, but did splendid war work back of the lines in Paris, and also on the edge of the war zone⁴, and this gave her much knowledge of the War at first hand.

In the 1920's and early 1930's, a spirit of disillusionment and denial⁵ began to be reflected in the work of prominent writers. Amen, American novelists, revolt took the form of demanding truth at any cost⁶, and this revolt was fostered by the war. In addition to the writers mentioned, Laurence Stallings was another example of this type of writer. His novel, Plumes, is one of the first novels debunking the war. As a captain of Marines, he lost a leg at Belleau Wood. "Plumes", said Robert Littell, "is about one of these men who don't see what the world got in exchange for their leg."⁷ Unlike Dos Passos, whose novel is a crusade against the idiocy of a war which encroaches on the individual freedom of the "little man", Stallings' complaint is against the idiocy in general which forced the soldier of any rank to participate in war. Stallings and Dos Passos both stress the fact that war destroys the spirit of man, and Stallings

³ Ibid. p. 173.

⁴ Williams, Blanche Colton, Our Short Story Writers. p. 45.

⁵ Frederick, John K. Introduction to Present Day Stories. Chas. Scribners' Sons.

⁶ Marble, Anne Russell, A Study of the Modern Novel. D. Appleton Century Company. p. 388. 1937.

⁷ Littell, Robert. "Review of Plumes", New Republic. 40: 394. Aug. 27, 1924.

also stresses the fact that it may injure him physically for life. That this, in turn, cripples him spiritually, is his message. Another example of the revolt group of the 1920's and early 1930's is Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Her knowledge of battle was almost as great as that of these writers just mentioned for her husband served in the ambulance corps in the French army even before America entered the war, and she, herself, was in Paris at the time aiding in the war effort, working with the blinded French soldiers, and the French refugee children from the German occupied territories of France. Her novel, The Deepening Stream, is a revolt, not so much against the fighting of a war as against the politicians whose avarice and arrogance in the peace treaty that followed the war destroyed every ideal which the soldiers had died for, and made their deaths a sacrifice in vain. The general tone of her novel is one of defeat and disillusion, with the conviction that all war is futile.

John P. Marquand also saw action at the Front. He was a First Lieutenant in the Fourth Brigade, Field Artillery, A. E. F., and participated in the Meuse-Aisne, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne offensives. And although he was of this generation of writers who took an active part at the Front, his novel, So Little Time, lacks the bitterness of those previously discussed. The reason may be found in the fact that his novel appeared almost 20 years after the war closed, and that time had softened his memories of any injustice he

may have suffered, and the many unbearable sensations that seem to afflict these writers. One noticeable result in Marquand, in common with the other soldier-writers who saw action, however, is the general feeling that war left wounds of the spirit that could never heal, and that it should never have been fought.

Struthers Burt was a writer who was also a soldier, but he was never sent overseas. His novel, The Interpreter's House, expresses his belief that the war had been a vast, incomprehensible madness. His book, which appeared in 1924 along with those of revolt and defeat, expressed defeat, but it was the defeat of a world which had been torn up and could not get back its old faith and goodness, and was lost in a new freedom which it could neither appreciate nor understand. His criticism of the war was that it was futile, that it was characterized by a vast absurdity and lack of definition, and that in this weakness lay the seeds of the difficulty Americans had in adjusting themselves to peacetime conditions.

Willa Cather, author of the war novel, One of Ours which appeared in 1922, is one of the civilian writers of this group. Owing to her lack of personal experience, her novel lacks the authenticity of those discussed, yet it has value because it depicts the life of thousands of soldiers as they lived it in the war. Miss Cather makes the point that war may sometimes prove an avenue of escape from an unpleasant

situation or an unhappy home life. This value is discounted by their death, of course, but since not all who found such a value died, her point is still true. Both Marquand and Van Wyck Mason also make the point that war was sometimes a means of escape for the soldier. After such strong reading as Plumes, Three Soldiers, or Through the Wheat, Miss Cather's novel is a soothing, if rather too optimistic and colorless. picture of the war.

Joseph C. Lincoln is the other civilian writer of this group. Lincoln was in his middle forties, and past draft age during the World War, and like One of Ours, his novel is optimistic in tone, on the whole. For his preoccupation is not with war, as such, but with the change for the better that it made upon the character and life of Albert Speranza.

Even the method of approach to the war is different with the writers who saw combat duty and those who did not. The non-combatants, Mrs. Fisher, Miss Cather and Lincoln, employ the first half of their books in a picture of civilian life and a discussion of the causes leading up to war, while those who saw war at its worst, Dos Passos, Stallings, and Boyd, enter almost at once into the subject of war.

Marquand also saw combat duty, but his novel was written 20 years later than those of the other combatants, and Burt, who was in the Service but not at the Front, like Marquand, writes more of the after-effects of war upon the veteran than he does of the war itself.

CHAPTER I. PREWAR AND WARTIME AMERICA

Of the eight novels studied in this thesis, only two devote much space to prewar and wartime attitudes in America. These novels are The Deepening Stream by Dorothy Canfield Fisher, and One of Ours by Willa Cather. Joseph C. Lincoln gives some space to this subject in The Portygee, Dos Passos makes a few references to it in Three Soldiers, and John P. Marquand, in So Little Time, has some excellent flash-backs on this period of history. These novels give the trend of thought in America just prior to the war, and show a number of well-defined attitudes that grew out of the war situation. They discuss America's ignorance of the European situation and the resulting indifference of the average American. They portray the gradual awakening of knowledge as to the state of affairs, and the causes of this awakening. They also show how war propaganda acted to get the American people into the psychological mood for fighting when the day came that Germany forced war upon them with her ultimatum of unrestricted submarine warfare. Of the earlier writers of this group, Dos Passos and Stallings regard this propaganda with bitterness; Willa Cather and Lincoln consider it the natural outcome of Germany's actions, and Mrs. Fisher, ten years later, agrees with the two latter. Marquand, 20 years later, is rather skeptical of what he terms "the propaganda of gallant rebuke."

But all of the novels show some well-defined attitudes and trends of thought in America just preceding and throughout the war. Other features noted by the novelists were profiteering and the attitude of pacifism.

America became war-conscious only gradually. When Austria and Serbia went to war in 1914, the majority of Americans saw no significance in it. One group which did, however, were the native-born German and Bohemian immigrants living in America. Ernest Havel, according to Claude Wheeler, ".....was stirred up about the murder of that grand duke and said the Austrians would make trouble."¹ When French troops began concentrating along the frontier, the movement did not seem significant to the ordinary Americans, with the exception of bankers, like the Fords, and even their first uneasiness was lulled into a false security by the fact that the stock market showed that Wall Street was easier.² Even after Germany and Russia broke off diplomatic relations, Great Britain ordered mobilization, the French troops fought with the Uhlans at Petit Croix, and France was expected to declare war within a few hours, it meant little to Americans. "Most people were much more interested in the out in the price of Fords than anything else," according to Mrs. Fisher.³ They read without

¹ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 161.

² Ibid., p. 198.

³ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 201.

comprehension or much interest the war news, with such comments as "I see the French government was moved to Bordeaux yesterday. Looks as though Paris was a goner, doesn't it? Isn't it terrible! My! Aren't we lucky to be out of it!.....How thankful we Americans should be to have no connection with all that."⁴ It was not that they meant to be inhuman or indifferent,⁵ but that they did not see what was happening. In the Quaker town of Rustdorf, New York, the inhabitants were so far removed from the outside world that the news of the death of 1000 Austrians did not mean as much to the people as did the news that a former German neighbor who had moved back to Germany had been killed in battle with the Russians. The people Rustdorf had not sensed that war meant death until this friend of theirs had been killed.⁶

Conditions were the same all over America. Claude Wheeler, in the Middle West, read of the invasion of Luxembourg, and ".....he didn't know where Luxembourg was, whether it was a city or a country; he seemed to have some vague idea that it was a palace!"⁷

But if two people of the Middle West were ignorant of war and of the situation in Europe, they had an excellent opportunity to learn the true state of affairs from their neighbors, many of whom were Germans and Bohemians. Claude's best friend

⁴ Ibid., p. 205.

⁵ Ibid., p. 206.

⁶ Ibid., p. 206.

⁷ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 161.

was Ernest Havel, who had come over from Bohemia when he was 14. He explained the situation of his people and of the Germans, in general, to Claude, and made plain to him that in Germany war involved everyone, and military service was compulsory:

If I were at home.....I would be in the Austrian army this minute. I guess all my cousins and nephews are fighting the Russians or the Belgians already. How would you like it yourself, to be marched into a peaceful country, like this, in the middle of harvest and begin to destroy it?

I wouldn't do it, of course. I'd desert and be shot.

Then your family would be persecuted, your brothers, maybe even your father, would be made orderlies to Austrian officers and be kicked in the mouth.

I wouldn't bother about that. I'd let my male relatives decide for themselves how often they would be kicked.

Ernest shrugged his shoulders and remarked:

You Americans brag like little boys; you would and you wouldn't. I tell you, nobody's will has anything to do with this. It is the harvest of all that has been planted. I never thought it would come in my lifetime, but I knew it would come.⁸

Average Americans like Claude could not feel as the immigrants did because they had nothing behind them to shape their opinions or color their feelings about what was going on in Europe. Claude had always been taught that the Germans were admirable, that their ideals were as high as the average American's. His acquaintance with the Ehrlich family while studying at the University of Nebraska had shown them to be

⁸ Ibid., p. 165.

charming, cultured and friendly,⁹ and their family comradeship and understanding to be far different from anything he had ever known in his own barren childhood. He remembered with pleasure the happy hours he had spent in the Yoeder home; and Mrs. Voigt, who ran the restaurant in a nearby town, was a good friend of his.¹⁰ It was, therefore, with bewilderment that he read newspaper accounts of German atrocities. But his talk with Ernest Havel made him see that the stories told of the German invaders might be true.

Germany's unnecessary cruelty, provoking as it did hostility towards Germans in the American mind, brought another unfavorable reaction. American hostility provoked an answering antagonism on the part of those German-Americans who heretofore had been loyal American citizens. This attitude was encountered among those Germans who had emigrated from Germany. Willa Cather is the only author of this group who stresses it. There is an account of the trial of two German-Americans in One of Ours. Troilus Oberlies, a German immigrant, was tried in the courts for saying, among other things, that "The United States would be licked, and it was a good thing; America was a good country, but it was run by fools, and to be governed by Germany would be the best thing that could happen to it..... he hoped the German submarines would sink a few troopships; that would frighten the Americans and teach them to stay at

⁹ Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 245.

home and mind their own business."¹¹

August Yeoder had said "he hoped the United States would go to Hell, now that it had been bought over by England." When the witness had remarked to him that if the Kaiser were shot it would end the war, Yeoder replied that "charity begins at home, and he wished somebody would put a bullet in the President."¹²

These remarks, justifiable from the immigrants' viewpoint, only served to increase the anti-German sentiment which mounted to an almost hysterical pitch during the time America was at war. The kindly old German woman who ran the restaurant was stoned by the small boys of the neighborhood, who seemed to consider it patriotic;¹³ Fritz Tannhauser, a young German-American who died on shipboard going overseas, was always afraid of persecution because of his name.¹⁴

After war was declared, American extremists regarded the German race as "Beasts and barbarians who are proud of their beastliness", according to Francois Gilbert. He wrote his sister Katey of an incident in one of the moving picture theaters in which "the leader of the orchestra had been hissed out of the theater for playing music by a composer with a German-sounding name."¹⁵

But not all Americans were so enthusiastic about an all-out effort to win the war. An opposing group was the pacifists;

¹¹ Ibid., p. 239-240.

¹² Ibid., p. 240-241.

¹³ Ibid., p. 245.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 255.

¹⁵ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 284.

this group included both persons opposed to war on moral grounds and those who were later known in World War II as isolationists. These people were pacifists for various reasons. Ignorance of the European situation was Leonard Dawson's reason for being a pacifist. He knew nothing about the real situation of the countries at war nor their backgrounds, and therefore cared nothing about which side won. He felt that he ".....had as soon one got wiped off the map as another."¹⁶ Francis Gilbert felt the same way, but both changed as the war progressed in Europe. Bayless Wheeler was a pacifist, and his reason for wanting America to stay out of war was that he thought the country would be better off financially, and come, in time to have control of the capital of the world.¹⁷ Adrian Fort, a Quaker, was a pacifist on religious grounds, and his convictions were still stronger after months of service overseas in the ambulance corps. He had come to realize that men not only die for their convictions, they also kill for them, and he decided that ".....there is nothing strong in the world but the wish to hurt.....I suppose a real pacifist might have refused to obey orders. But my orders were to pick up broken and bleeding men. I couldn't buy my self-respect at that price.....My self-respect wasn't worth that much."¹⁸

¹⁶ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 202.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 232.

¹⁸ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 361.

Another example of Americans who were interested in the war because of friends in the war areas was that of Matey and Adrian Fort. Matey had lived as a child for a year in the home of the Vinet family in Paris and had come to love them as her own people. Adrian, her husband, had studied art for a year and a half in Paris and had made friends there, especially with the French student, Marceau. It was his interest in Marceau that caused him to decide to join the French army as an ambulance driver. He expressed his feelings to Matey about the war:

.....It makes a man feel like a dog to be wallowing here in comfort and safety, while.....other men, old friends, old comrades.....I don't suppose I'd fight, though that would be the logical thing to do --the way I feel. No.....I suppose I'd compromise, try to help out somehow short of actually taking my share.....There's the Belgian relief.....I can drive a Ford.¹⁹

In the end, both the Forts went, Adrian to work with the ambulance corps, and Matey to do what she could to help the Vinets for by now Paul was dead; Mimi's husband was gone, her home was invaded by Germans, and she was forced to work at the plumbing factory in his place; and Ziza had been lost when Louvain was destroyed. Madame Vinet, herself, was almost destitute and Henri was away in the army.

Even at the beginning of the war, the interest that a few Americans, and the foreigners with relatives in the war areas felt in the plight of France is illustrated by a do-

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 212.

scription of the passengers aboard the ship which carried the Forts overseas:

The first class was almost deserted. People with money enough to travel in comfort naturally stayed away from France because of the trouble there. It was, of course, the trouble there that was taking back the second-class passengers. The men, mostly no longer young, were going to help out women relatives left manless, or get in the crops; to hold small businesses together till the head could get back from the front; to do, in short, what there was no one to help Mini to do. Many of the plain, self-supporting women were doing just what Matey was doing, going back to take with service and money the place of members of the family dead, or buried alive in the regions occupied by the Germans.²⁰

Besides those people who were interested in the war because of friends and relatives, there were those who were interested in the war from a financial standpoint. It was Adrian Fort's and his father's position as bankers that made them so keenly aware of the situation in Europe long before their fellow townsmen understood what it was about.²¹ Mrs. Wheeler understood this when she remarked, during the discussion of the rising price of wheat: "I don't see why it should affect the market. Surely those big bankers in New York and Boston have some way of knowing rumor from fact."²² Her husband was able to judge the seriousness of the war by the rising price of wheat. At first he thought the war was just a scare; but after England declared war, he decided not to sell his wheat immediately, for, as he told Claude, "If

²⁰ Ibid., p. 225-226.

²¹ Ibid., p. 197-198.

²² Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 160.

this is a sure enough war, wheat will go higher. I've thought it a bluff until now."²³ Months later, when Germany announced her policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, Mr. Wheeler, whose people were sea-going men, realized that America would soon be involved in the war, for, as his wife explained, "He knows what it means when our shipping is told where it can go on the ocean, and where it cannot. It isn't possible that Washington can take such an affront to us."²⁴

If the rise in prices could help the farmers and bankers to see the trend the war was taking, there was still another financial angle that was not so creditable. This was profiteering. Francis Gilbert wrote his sisters, Matey and Pricilla, that every American manufacturer who had anything to sell was going to make money; that the people in the foods businesses were feeling the upward trend. His interest was in steel, and he wrote: "This war is going to last lots longer than most people think. The European factories can't begin to supply their demands." He urged his sisters to put their money in steel, adding that he had sold everything and mortgaged his house heavily to buy stock.²⁵ He felt no compunction about getting rich off the war, for, as he told Matey: "..... There's not a pennyworth to choose between the two sides in this war. They are all in it for what they can get out of it,

²³ Ibid., p. 166.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 227.

²⁵ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 216.

and they all brought it on themselves."²⁶

Claude Wheeler's brother, Bayliss, had dreams of profiteering on a national scale. He "kept telling people that if the United States would stay out of this war, and gather up what Europe was wasting, she would soon be in actual possession of the capital of the world."²⁷ Marquand cites profiteering as one of the grievances of those who were eager for President Wilson to declare war: "We would go on playing the part of poltroons and cowards, making money out of war contracts until we had someone besides a college professor in the White House."²⁸

Another factor in arousing Americans' interest in the war was their sense of fair play and their kindness. Stories of German atrocities, though perhaps exaggerated, yet had some foundation and induced in the people a strong feeling of resentment. Willa Cather cites an example in Ernest Dawson, a Nebraska farmer. Upon being told that the Germans had torpedoed an English ship, he commented: "That's all right. Maybe Americans will stay at home now and mind their own business. I don't care how they chew each other up over there, not a bit! I'd as soon one got wiped off the map as another."²⁹ But as the war continued and the stories of

²⁶ Ibid., p. 224

²⁷ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 232.

²⁸ John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 203.

²⁹ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 202.

German cruelty in Belgium were brought to him, when the Lusitania was sunk and Edith Cavell was shot, he changed his mind and announced his intention of enlisting. "There's a limit", he told Claude. "I've been ready to go since the Lusitania."³⁰

The newspapers were a factor in bringing the war home to America, and in making Americans war-minded. The radio was not in common use, and the newspapers were the only source of news mentioned by these writers. Each afternoon the war communique was sent out through the Associated Press. These releases and the editors' gleanings from newspapers such as the London Times, the Paris Matin, and the London Evening Post kept the people informed on the progress of the war.³¹ The effect of the war news upon the people was powerful. Katey read from the papers each day the accounts of the German advance into Belgium which "lasted as long as Katey's youth."³² She resolved that she would not again read a single word of the description of the bloody defense of Liege, and every day read every word of it.³³ And in Claude Wheeler's world "Even to the quiet, wheat-growing people, the siege guns before Liege were a menace; not to their safety or their goods, but to their comfortable, established way of thinking. They introduced the greater-than-man force which afterward

³⁰ Ibid., p. 236.

³¹ John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 202.

³² Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Loosening Stream, p. 202.

³³ Loc. cit., p. 203.

repeatedly brought into this war the effect of unforeseeable natural disaster, like tidal waves,.....or the eruption of volcanoes." As these newspaper accounts of destruction of civilian populations continued to pour in, the feeling grew that "Something new, and certainly evil, was at work among mankind."³⁴ "It began to be plain that the Allies were not going to defeat the Germans by themselves. There was a dread which lay behind nearly every one's thoughts and words-- a mass emotion, and perhaps this was all that ever caused a war."³⁵

Another strong factor in keeping the war before the Americans' eyes was rumor. Submarine blockades and attacks without warning on our shipping could be substantiated; but rumor was theatrical, and therefore interesting, even to those who, for any reason, did not read the newspapers. Rumor said that the German soldiers were being driven to slaughter, but at the same time they possessed barbarous vindictiveness. "They cut the hands off little Belgian children and they had crucified British soldiers. There was even a story that they had rendering plants in which they manufactured soap out of their own dead."³⁶

Thus, as the war progressed and the people began to see

³⁴ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 187.

³⁵ John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 203.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 202. Thomas Boyd also gives credence to this story in Through the Wheat, p. 180. In a little German village where 24 hours earlier, German soldiers had been quartered, "a peculiar, disagreeable odor hinted at great and ruthless thrift. The Germans had been careful of their dead. None had remained lying in the street."

the efficient war-machine that the German nation had made of itself, they began to wish for action. The causes mentioned above contributed to their interest in the war, and stirred them to restlessness. They ridiculed President Wilson's suggestion that a nation could be too proud to fight, and interpreted it to mean that the nation was afraid to fight.³⁷ "We were a soft nation of cowards, who did not know there was such a thing as national honor. The Germans, they said, were laughing at us in Berlin, for after sinking the Lusitania, they knew we wouldn't fight. We would go on playing the part of cowards, making money out of war contracts....."³⁸ Every-where was heard the expression made by Marquand's Mr. Nichols, who ".....wished to heaven that he were ten or twenty years younger. He wished that he were Jeffrey Wilson's age and he would not be wearing out the seat of his pants in any office." This "propaganda of gallant rebuke", as Marquand designates it, was prevalent. It left the impression "as though it were all our fault, as though we were slackers letting our blood brothers down while they were fighting the Hun."³⁹

Not all Americans accepted this challenge thrown at them by people who, like Mr. Nichols, were too old to fight and by the British. Marquand says of these challengers, "They should have known that no people went to war for anything like that except a few like Minot who followed the book of rules."⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid., p. 203.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 203.

³⁹ Loc. cit., p. 203.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 240.

Stallings is also skeptical. He gives an example of one who followed the "book of rules" and afterward described his action as "a romantic brainstorm." This was Kenneth Gary, who was working for an American concern in Australia at the outbreak of the war, and who joined up with the Angacs and was crippled for life in the fight at Gallipoli.⁴¹ Lincoln mentions that when Albert Speranza told his grandfather that he was going to enlist, he added, "If it hadn't been for you, and our promise.....I think I should have joined the Canadian Army a year or more ago."⁴² Mrs. Fisher mentions young Americans who won the praise of Adrian's friend, Marceau, because they voluntarily went to France to drive ambulances without even their expenses paid.--"Lads who could be at home in comfort with their girls."⁴³ Apparently they were fired by this "gallant rebuke" propaganda, although Mrs. Fisher does not think of it in those terms. Like Willa Cather, she has only praise for these war efforts, and does not go beneath the surface looking for motives. Victor Morris is an example of the young man who enlisted before America entered the war from love of adventure and the desire to get away from the boredom of small-town life. At Toronto, "enlistment was going strong and he saw an avenue of escape from the bank and the strawberry bed. The air force seemed the most brilliant and

⁴¹ Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 122.

⁴² Joseph C. Lincoln, The Portygee, p. 233-234.

⁴³ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 210.

attractive branch of the service. They accepted him, and here he was."⁴⁴

By the end of 1916, there was a definite change in American opinion about the war. Men like Leonard Dawson and Francis Gilbert, who had at first declared that there was no choice between sides in the war, now definitely became pro-Allies in belief. Leonard was ready to enlist,⁴⁵ and Francis was writing to Matey with hot enthusiasm for the cause of the Allies and great indignation against the Germans.⁴⁶ Matey and Adrian dreaded to hear of this change in the American attitude because they had first-hand knowledge of the horrors of war; and yet they realized what America's entrance into the war would mean to France, whose man-power, never too numerous, seemed to be approaching exhaustion. "'We have come to the end of our rope, almost,' people said to each other in talk. Never in print."⁴⁷ Soldiers were threatening mutiny, to ".....drive the Cabinet Ministers who write books about war up to the front to take our places."⁴⁸ Even Adrian was beginning to doubt the motives which had brought him to France and to wish that he had never countenanced war even to the extent of helping the wounded.⁴⁹ And when spring came, all France lived through a period of frenzied waiting to see

⁴⁴ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 308. See also Marquand's So Little Time, p. 174.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 236.

⁴⁶ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 284.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 237.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 243.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 258-259.

whether the United States would continue diplomatic relations with Germany in spite of ever-increasing friction. When the break finally did come, Katey never knew whether she hoped it would mean war for her own country or not, so divided were her interests between France and her own country.⁵⁰

In America, when Germany announced that unrestricted submarine warfare would be resumed, every one looked questioningly at his neighbor, for they knew what it meant when America was told where her shipping could go and where it could not.⁵¹ America was supplying the Allies with food and munitions, and to submit to Germany and stop helping the Allies was to withdraw that aid and that would be equivalent to helping Germany. On the other hand, to declare war, even if a raw army could do anything, the question was, How was it to get over there with the ocean patrolled by submarines? These were some of the questions that America was asking itself⁵² but it had not long to wait. Washington refused to take the affront offered in Germany's ultimatum. Said Lincoln, "A long-suffering President throw patience overboard and answered that mandate in unmistakable terms. Congress stood at his back and behind them a united and indignant people. The United States declared war upon the Hun."⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 275.

⁵¹ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 227.

⁵² Ibid., p. 227-228.

⁵³ Joseph C. Lincoln, The Portygee, p. 232-233.

To older men, this declaration was a subject to think and converse about, but to boys like Claude Wheeler, Albert Speranza, Anderson, Chrisfield, Hicks, and others, it was life and death.⁵⁴ Every community became wildly excited. On the streets great flags flew and on the stages vaudeville patriotic numbers, and an avalanche of popular patriotic tunes appeared.⁵⁵ Crowds cheered⁵⁶ as boys marched by on their way to army camps or to embark for overseas.⁵⁷ The slogan, "Make the World Safe for Democracy" was seen and heard everywhere, and many business men enlisted so as not to become known as slackers and spoil their position as well as to make the world safe for democracy. Boys like William Hicks joined the army, the navy, and the Marines, under the spell of professionally decorated recruiting officers who told them, "Join the marines and see some real action", or words to that effect⁵⁸ while their mothers, who had been such good patriots before their sons enlisted, cried and their uncomprehending, puzzled sons remonstrated: "But mother, you were such a good patriot before I enlisted, and now you don't want me to go. What kind of patriotism is that?"⁵⁹ Young wives, like Emma Plume, more realistic than patriotic, were willing for their husbands to go only because they knew that it would spoil the husbands'

⁵⁴ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 229.

⁵⁵ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 207.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 38.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 38, 207.

⁵⁸ Thomas Boyd, Through The Wheat, p. 1-2.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 101-102; Joseph C. Lincoln, The Portygee, p. 235-251; and Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 235.

lives if they didn't go. For public opinion would forever brand men as slackers, and if they stayed at home and fought a draft board, they would never get over it.⁶⁰ Young men like Claude Wheeler, Richard Plume, and Albert Speranza, whose families were ardently patriotic, enlisted without waiting for the draft. They had been brought upon the belief that if there was a war it was a man's place to go.⁶¹ For this was at the beginning of the war, when it was considered more patriotic to enlist than to wait for the draft.

According to the authors, the sweethearts of these soldiers played an important part in their lives. Albert Speranza was fortunate; Madeline wrote to him faithfully⁶² and mourned when she thought him dead.⁶³ Pugh's and Fuselli's⁶⁴ sweethearts found someone else; and so did Louella Barnes, to the relief of Jeffrey Wilson.⁶⁵ Sergeant Harri-man's sweetheart threatened to marry someone else if he did not come home soon, and he was so demoralized by the letter that he shot himself in the foot in order to be invalided home.⁶⁶

Women played an important part in war activities. Wealthy society matrons like Mrs. Fletcher Fosdick, prominent club-women, laid aside their interests in literary fields and began organ-

⁶⁰ Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 54.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 51-52; Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 248; and John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 249.

⁶² Joseph C. Lincoln, The Portygeo, p. 256.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 273-274.

⁶⁴ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 407.

⁶⁵ John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 217-218.

⁶⁶ Thomas Boyd, Through The Wheat, p. 148-149.

izing war work in the Red Cross, canteens, etc.⁶⁷ Helen Kendall's work was in the Red Cross in Boston, and in camp hospitals. During the influenza epidemic such help was greatly needed.⁶⁸ Lael Sartori drove an ambulance.⁶⁹ These ambulances met the daily trains to take the soldiers to other hospitals. Mrs. Fisher, in The Deepening Stream, tells of the splendid work the women did in the American Red Cross in France after war was declared. America was making a stupendous war effort, and money spent by the American Red Cross was staggering. Even before the American soldiers could be trained and sent to France, the civilian war workers came to Paris, and the accounts of American war relief work were like a fairy tale to the French people. The stenographers came, and with the telephones came women to operate them, and in France also appeared "self-possessed ladies in khaki uniforms to bind up the wounds of war on a large scale."⁷⁰ These American women received applicants in "one or another of the several American ways of making contacts, some of them easy, comradely, some of them woundingly brusque and business-like; breezy and familiar in one organization, in another bound about stiffly to the eyes with red tape and card catalogues. Not one of them, however, gave the appraising European caste-glance at the quality of her (Matsy's) gloves or shoes."⁷¹

67

Joseph C. Lincoln, The Portycee, p. 255.

68 Ibid., p. 326.

69 Struthers Burt, The Interpreter's House, p. 63.

70 Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 291.

71 Ibid., p. 291-292.

Young American girls came, interested in everything, unaware of the existence of reticence or caution, helping with even the French children, bringing them toys to the train when they were sent to the convalescent home and when work was over for the day, going with young American officers to the places of amusement left in Paris,⁷² during the war. Even the children of America helped, denying themselves candy and toys and wearing their old clothes in order to send more help to the French and Belgian children.⁷³ Less creditable was the part played by the Mrs. Whitlocks of the day, grown rich off their investments in steel and munitions, who came over as members of the Peace Delegation and took a ghastly pride in being the first American woman allowed in the trenches before any cleaning-up had been done - "you know--the real thing, I can tell you.....where there had been hand to hand.....".⁷⁴ But even Mrs. Whitlock had her uses, for she was able to exert enough influence to save the undernourished children from being sent back to their homes in the colder part of France, where the cold would have meant death.⁷⁵ Mention has already been made of Matsy and other American women like her, who went overseas shortly after war was declared to help out with money and to take the place of those who had died or were in the army.⁷⁶

⁷² Ibid., p. 299.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 302.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 333.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 307-308.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 225-226.

Once in the war, America, according to Mrs. Fisher and Joseph C. Lincoln, exerted every effort toward the war work.

Splendid reports came from America. Every letter, every newspaper, was full of the spectacle of a mighty nation, united to the last citizen, rousing itself for a crusade. Priscilla's letters told of the change in American cooking, the use of cornmeal for wheat, all Rustdorf subscribing to Liberty Loans. Francis' letters were on fire with patriotism. He was at the head of one drive after another.⁷⁷

The news of the greatness of the "American effort" was constantly more impressive, more expansively described in the newspapers. Heatless days, lightless nights, automobiles emptied of their gasoline, wheatless bread, voluntary rationing of all kinds, wild bursts of enthusiasm, tremendous drives for the new loans. Matsy was swept along with her French companions in their flight from the cold tragic realities about them into the Utopian conception of a golden America entirely inhabited by selfless philanthropic crusaders of the ideal.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 300.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 302. Also John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 392.

Conclusions

From this chapter, the following conclusions may be drawn. All of these novels show some definite trends of thought and action prevalent in America during and just before the war. America went through the various phases of indifference, then an increasing consciousness of the fact that there was a war, and next the stage of violent anti-German feeling, extending even to the German-Americans. Then when war seemed imminent because of Germany's high-handed methods of submarine warfare and her attempts to dictate to the United States where she should go on the seas, Americans began clamoring for war and denouncing President Wilson because of his slowness in taking action. Young men were told by older men that if they were young enough to fight, they would be fighting. When war was presently declared, before the draft got under way, many enlisted to the slogan of "make the world safe for democracy." American feeling of indifference as to which side won gave way to active patriotism; help of every kind was offered to the Allies, and at home no sacrifice was considered too great to help win the war. Women were active in canteen and Red Cross work in America, and the Red Cross sent supplies and help generously overseas to the stricken war areas.

CHAPTER II. THE AMERICAN SOLDIER

A vital subject to be considered in any war novel is the character of the soldier. Certainly it is a concern of the writers of the novels being studied. The appearance of the soldiers, their motives for enlistment, their ease or difficulty of adjustment to army life, and the effect of previous life upon these adjustments are some topics disclosed in the present chapter.

The first Americans to go overseas after war was declared were the professional fighters of the regular army. They were browned by long exposure to the sun on the Mexican border, and hardened by years of army life. According to Mrs. Fisher, they seemed perfectly trained, ".....compact of bone and gristle and grim insensitiveness"; they gave an impression of power that was badly needed to boost the morale of the exhausted French people. As Adrian Fort aptly expressed it, "No collection of worthy citizens could have given that war-tired crowd such a swig of the raw whiskey of hope as was poured out by that bunch of roughnecks."¹

Mlle. de Courcy, representative of the French Red Cross, expressed the French opinion of these troops to Claude

¹ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 287-288.

Wheeler:

But you do come,--so many, and from so far!..... I was in Paris on the fourth day of July, when your Marines, just from Belleau Wood, marched for your national fete, and I said to myself as they came on, 'That is the new man! Such heads as they had, so fine.....Such discipline and purpose. Our people laughed and throw them flowers, but they never turned to look.....eyes straight before. They passed like men of destiny.'²

After the regulars, the volunteers and the drafted men began coming over. Coming mostly from private homes, and as yet unspoiled by the war, they were entirely different "with their Anglo-Saxon tongue-tied shyness, their frank boy's eyes, their sprawingly kind American manners."³ Willa Cather describes this group as they appeared on the American troop ship as "all young, all bronzed and grinning.....That howling swarm of brown arms and hats and faces looked like nothing but a crowd of American boys going to a football game somewhere."⁴

Many of the first soldiers who came after the regulars were volunteers. Volunteering was a typical procedure during the first months of the war.⁵ After America entered the war, Americans like Francis Gilbert abandoned the argument that there was not a pennyworth of difference to choose between the two sides, that the Europeans were all in it for what they could get out of it.⁶ Such Americans now began to

² Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 390.

³ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 284.

⁴ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 274.

⁵ Ibid., p. 311.

⁶ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 224.

be intensely patriotic.⁷ Patriotism ranged from the honest zeal of Claude Wheeler and Leonard Dawson and Captain Zelotes Snow to the belated follow-the-crowd enthusiasm of Francis. "Make the world safe for democracy",⁸ was the printed and spoken slogan of America, and many men enlisted under its spell. When there was war, it was considered a man's place to be in it, and if he was not, he was thought of as a slacker and "yellow".⁹

The products of this type of thinking were such soldiers as Albert Speranza,¹⁰ the undertaker mentioned by Dos Passos,¹¹ Fuselli,¹² Claude Wheeler and Leonard Dawson,¹³ Sergeant Harriman,¹⁴ Richard Plume,¹⁵ Adrian Fort¹⁶ and Kenneth Cary.¹⁷ Of this group, all except Albert Speranza and those who died early in the war came through the war embittered. Kenneth Cary and Richard Plume were bitter because the war had left them life-long cripples, and because they felt that the war had not settled anything.¹⁸ Sergeant Hicks was embittered at a war which

⁷ Ibid., p. 284.

⁸ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 205.

⁹ Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 54.

¹⁰ Joseph C. Lincoln, The Forty-two, p. 234.

¹¹ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 205.

¹² Ibid., p. 205.

¹³ Willa Cather, One of Ours.

¹⁴ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat.

¹⁵ Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 54.

¹⁶ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream.

¹⁷ Laurence Stallings, Plumes.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 124-132.

could take his favorite officers, Lieutenants Wheeler and Gerhardt and give the glory their death had won to Captain Maxey, whom he disliked.¹⁹ William Hicks was disillusioned by the humiliating demands of "soldiering with a shovel"²⁰ and his morale and nerves wrecked by weeks of continuous battle. Dan Fuselli's patriotic enthusiasm was dampened by the drudgery,²¹ and the discomforts of army life, by officers who ordered him around as if he were a slave and by the gradual fading of the hope of some day being an officer.²² Adrian Fort's bitterness lay in the realization that he had not really accomplished anything by driving an ambulance except to help "patch up the wounded" so that they could "go back and kill some more".²³ Throughout the war and afterwards, this view of his conduct depressed him. Like Richard Plume and Kenneth Gary, he also felt that the war had accomplished nothing, and that he had given his services to no purpose.²⁴

An important factor in the soldier's adjustment to army life was his childhood upbringing and environment. That the soldier's background was considered important is demonstrated by the fact that most of these writers trace some connection between the soldier's former life and his success in the service. Lincoln, Burt, Marquand, and Stallings limit their soldiers to one or two, but Dos Passos and Boyd require a

¹⁹ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 455-456.

²⁰ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 2.

²¹ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 62-63.

²² Ibid., p. 32-47.

²³ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 360.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 360.

greater scope, both geographically and socially. Boyd requires many soldiers to demonstrate the deteriorating effect of camp life and battle conditions upon even the well-balanced soldier. Dos Passos also requires many types of soldiers to demonstrate the effect of what he considers a blundering, undemocratic, disciplinary military system upon the minds and morals of the soldiers. Apparently he has purposely chosen the maladjusted type to demonstrate the fact that the army should never accept them in the service.

Dos Passos shows the effect of early environment and background upon the soldiers more clearly than any other of this group of authors. Especially is this demonstrated in the case of John Andrews. Andrews was an only child in a once wealthy Virginia home, brought up by a thwarted, embittered mother who made him the center of her universe.²⁵ He was badly spoiled; as a child a reprimand from an older person was sufficient to throw him into a rage.²⁶ As a result, he was ungracious at the home of friends,²⁷ and when alone, he spent many bitter hours hating the whole army system. Living in a region where slavery had once flourished,²⁸ it was inevitable that he should associate the ordinary tasks of yard-cleaning and window washing with hired help and slavery. And to have orders barked at him by a whining little Italian corporal while working completed the feeling that he was a slave.²⁹

²⁵ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 31.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 340-341.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 318-319.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 31-32.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

He hated asking favors; he hated the young officers, and the cold, suspicious glances with which he fancied they were trying to put him in his place; he hated having to salute them "not from civility, but from fear of being punished."³⁰ It reminded him unpleasantly of older boys who had bullied him at school and of how he had wished he could get back at them.³¹ Contempt for army regulations led him to go out without his papers or a pass,³² and this in turn led to his arrest and the crowning humiliation of all, imprisonment in a military work camp where he was forced to work under the eyes of a guard like an ordinary convict. He deserted and told Henslowe and Walters, who begged him to reinstate himself, that he had got to a point where he did not care what happened to him, not even if he were shot, he was so sick of being ordered around.³³

Chrisfield is Dos Passos' second example of what befalls the maladjusted soldier in the army. He was hot-headed, and when drunk, likely to kill anyone who incurred his displeasure. He had almost killed a man in a drunken brawl before he went into the Service,³⁴ and after he went into the army he fought with Private Anderson and would have killed him but for the intervention of bystanders. This started a feud between the two men which grew more bitter as Anderson rose in rank while Chrisfield remained a private. Chrisfield hated

³⁰ Ibid., p. 223.

³¹ Loc. cit.,

³² Ibid., p. 249.

³³ Ibid., p. 393.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 25-27.

Anderson's patronage and resolved to kill him. The murder was finally committed although it was unobserved, but Chrisfield lived in such fear of discovery that he finally deserted.³⁵

The third misfit was Fuselli. He had grown up around the water fronts of San Francisco and his ideal of fun was to associate with the wrong kind of girls.³⁶ He carried this trait into the army, consorting with the girls in the French shops and cafes and presently he contracted the venereal disease which was to keep him in the army indefinitely for apparently he could not be cured nor could he be discharged until he was.³⁷ His other weakness was fear. He was afraid of not getting to be a corporal;³⁸ of being shell-shocked; of being killed in the medical corps;³⁹ of getting pneumonia when forced to sleep on the ground.⁴⁰ He was afraid of being implicated in a plot,⁴¹ and of being drowned as they crossed overseas.⁴² When the time came to go to the front he joined that branch of the medical unit which was being kept at Coane.⁴³ In the end, as has been stated, he wound up on what was apparently permanent K. P. duty. As Meadville expressed it,

³⁵ Ibid., p. 390.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 302-303.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 48, 50, 63.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 57.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 61.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 94, 114.

⁴² Ibid., p. 57.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 113.

Fuselli was one of those who were ".....just made to be sheep."⁴⁴

Thus Dos Passos demonstrated that the army was the loser in spending time, money and equipment in taking these maladjusted ones into the service, for one became a murderer and a deserter, another a deserter, and the third wound up a permanent loss to the army which could not discharge him.

Only one of Boyd's soldiers is maladjusted and that is Sergeant Harriman. He had had three years' training in a small Midwestern college and as a result he was egotistical, unduly meticulous and petty about small things.⁴⁵ His egotism led him to avenge himself on soldiers who talked back at him, by giving them extra drill until they were exhausted.⁴⁶ He had not the attitude necessary for making a good soldier.

When his sweetheart wrote threatening to marry someone else if he did not come home, he shot himself in the foot in order that he might be invalided home. "Then he remembered he had done it himself.....Court martial and disgrace. And he had only meant to get back home. He began to whimper."⁴⁷

The story of Albert Speranza is an excellent example of what the right kind of home environment may do for the soldier. If he had gone into the army as the spoiled, egotistical son of a famous opera singer he was at 18, he would probably have met the same fate as John Andrews. He would

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 45.

⁴⁵ Thomas Boyd, Through The Wheat, p. 11.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 48.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 149.

probably have deserted for he was high strung and could not have borne the discipline of army life any better than did John Andrews. But three years at the home of his level-headed, honest, domineering grandfather had taught him many things--restraint, the folly of class-consciousness, and the secret of getting along with people. He learned in his grandfather's lumber yard how to handle cranks like Issacher Price,⁴⁸ and how to appreciate the good qualities of men like Laban Keeler. He was months in a German prison camp; but he remembered that back home Laban, too, was fighting a battle for the sake of the war--the fight with the drink habit.⁴⁹ Albert was one of the few soldiers mentioned in this group of novels who survived through battle, wounds, and months of the horrors of starvation and brutality of a German prison camp without bitterness.

The military rank which a soldier held when he entered the army had something to do with his reaction to army life also. Gulian Wyre, chief character in The Interpreter's House, was brought up in much the same sort of atmosphere as John Andrews. Both came of a family above the ordinary walks of life. In their childhood both had had much freedom to dream, and to think things out for themselves; both were allowed to do much as they pleased, John by his adoring mother, and Gulian by his father whose policy was to let his children

⁴⁸ Joseph C. Lincoln, The Portygee, p. 188-189.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 251.

make their decisions for themselves, right or wrong. Both John and Gullian were moody, and inclined to violent fits of temper in childhood. Both were well educated, but Andrews went into the army a private and had no important responsibilities whatever. His life was one continual round of menial tasks, drill, and harsh discipline with few, if any, privileges, while Gullian entered as a captain with an officer's responsibilities and privileges that made army life tolerable. As a captain, his life was so free of restraint as to be almost the normal civilian life, while Andrews, with much the same taste, training, and background was forced to see army life at its worst, from the bottom looking up. Both men seemed equally gifted, equally talented and educated, equally headstrong and passionate and spoiled, but the difference in their positions in the army brought one through with honor and without bitterness, and the other as a deserter facing sentence in a Federal penitentiary.

The type of officer with whom the soldier worked had much to do with his attitude toward military life. This was not always the officer's fault, for, according to Van Wyck Mason, "The task of being an officer in World War I was rendered harder by the fact that America's not having been a highly military people, the soldiers resented authority."⁵⁰

Rebellion against authority forms the nucleus of John

⁵⁰ Mason, Van Wyck, Introduction to "World War I", Fighting Americans, Reynal and Hitchcock, New York. p. 618. 1943.

Dos Passos' novel, Three Soldiers. Not all officers were inferior or unkind, however. There is little, if any, indictment against officers in The Deepening Stream, The Party-ree, One of Ours, The Interpreter's House, or So Little Time.

A study of Three Soldiers and Through the Wheat reveals officers with many unpleasant characteristics--the too-ambitious officer, the intolerant type, the officer lacking in sympathy and understanding, and the egoist.

Dos Passos begins his novel with the Sergeant who snarled at his men using his curt voice like a whip, and the bandy-legged Italian, who was fawningly subservient to his officers and naggingly superior to his men. If the men grumbled at their treatment, the officer would take revenge in extra drilling. Thomas Boyd, while not a sarcastic writer, refers to the corporals as "pompous, authoritative corporals."⁵¹ Sergeant Anderson was especially disliked by Chrisfield because Anderson never missed a chance to bully him.

Another thing which made a difference in the serviceman's opinion of military life was the branch of service to which he belonged. Boyd's chief character, William Hicks, was a marine. As such, he was in the worst of the fighting, and after months of this became simply an automaton, a fighting machine, his soul numb. He was convinced that a war which could make ".....the French hate the English and the English hate the Americans and the Americans hate the Germans" was

⁵¹ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 223.

crazy and ridiculous, and all wrong.⁵²

He had done about enough in this war, he thought, wondering vaguely whether there were no chance of escape. The thought of the sound of the guns depressed him, their monotonous tom-tom beating in memory on his skull like water dripping slowly on a stone. Disgusting! And no letters from home, no change of scene, no clean clothing, nothing but the hopelessness of routine, the bullying of petty officers, the prospect of the front.⁵³

On the other hand, in the Air Service, men like Jeffrey Wilson found life exciting and not too strenuous, apart from the danger of flying. The fliers were more or less fatalists. "In the air service," said Victor Morris carelessly, "we don't concern ourselves about the future. It's not worthwhile."⁵⁴ Marquand expressed the flyer's status, in the recollections of Jeffrey Wilson:

Fliers were apart from the rest of the show, consecrated for a special purpose. They could hear the gunfire up ahead, but that was not their problem.... The M.P.'s very seldom troubled them no matter what they did. The M. P.'s must have understood, and so did the colonels and generals, that they did not have much time, and the ground mechanics and the mess orderlies all knew it.⁵⁵

If you were used to it, you did not sleep so badly, either. Sometimes you could hear the gunfire, but you hardly noticed. It seemed to Jeffrey that his dreams were always happy, if he dreamed....⁵⁶

There was not the tremendous let-down of morale after a battle that Hicks and his group felt, for the airmen were seldom forced to see the result of the damage their firing

⁵² Ibid., p. 216.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 223-224.

⁵⁴ Willis Cather, One of Ours, p. 306.

⁵⁵ John P. Marquand, No Little Time, p. 232-233.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 232-233.

inflicted, as were the infantry and the marines. The airmen simply fought in the air and disappeared back to their bases; and even if shot down, were either killed instantly or they usually managed to land in isolated territory away from the scene of the fighting.

When he heard aviators long afterwards discuss the war, Jeffrey realized that most of them had only observed a battlefield from the air. Most of them had never stood on the ground in an advanced position. Few of them had ever walked through the hideous terrain where there had been fighting. He had been through war, without ever facing war's full implications except for one day. He had only on one occasion ever encountered the dead on the battlefield.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 218, 219, 232-233.

Conclusions

A summary of the facts revealed about the American soldier shows that the first troops overseas were the seasoned troops of the regular army. The soldiers which followed were the new recruits. They were ordinary American youth, not yet hard, but nevertheless trained into an efficient fighting force. The draft had not yet begun to work in full force, and many of the first recruits were volunteers. Many had volunteered because it seemed to be expected of them, others from the crusader spirit, some because it would look better for their business after the war, they thought, if they could say they were veterans, many to escape unhappy home conditions, and many more for the adventure, and, in the Air Service especially, for the glamour. Most of the soldiers were able to come through the experience still sound in mind, if not in body. The exceptions were those whose wounds still pained them, the shell-shocked group, and the soldiers who, for various reasons, had been maladjusted when they entered the service. Military rank sometimes played a part in the soldiers' reactions to army life, for the officers had better quarters and food, more dignity, more privileges; and the additional responsibility of an officer's position called forth a greater loyalty to the army. The branch of service which the service man chose also had a bearing on his reactions

toward military life, for some branches of the service were more strenuous than others. According to these writers, the marines and the infantry were the most strenuous and dangerous branches and the Medical Corps was more strenuous and dangerous than is commonly supposed. The Air Service was the most glamorous, and the least strenuous so far as physical work was concerned, but so hazardous that the aviators tended to be fatalists.

Six of this group of writers pictured the normal individual, both in the war and after he had been through the war. Bitter, disillusioned soldiers were pictured by Dos Passos and Stallings, both of whom had seen much bitter fighting, Stallings at the Front, and Dos Passos in the Medical and Ambulance Corps.

CHAPTER III. ARMY LIFE

The eight novels under discussion present an unvarnished picture of army life. They show that the conditions under which the soldiers lived were far from ideal. The authors point out many features which contributed to the soldiers' dislike of army life. Chief among them was the inadequacy of housing overseas which often reduced the soldiers to sleeping in the open, even in the rain. Other bad features stressed were the food and the food service, and the trenches, which were often deep in mud and crawling with vermin. A source of discontent also stressed in the drill and inspection, and the unpleasant duties of K. P. and labor battalions. The novels draw an unflattering picture of arrogant, glory-mad officers. They picture the moral and physical effect upon the soldier of weeks of fighting and months in hospitals. The Peace Conference is discussed, and the disillusion of both the soldiers and the civilians over the mercenary spirit displayed by its leaders is stressed. The authors also show the inadequate recreational facilities of the army, and present a picture of the part played by the Y. M. C. A. overseas.

Of the eight authors studied, Struthers Burt is the only one who does not mention these points. His theme is the chaotic economic and social conditions prevailing in America after the war. Lincoln refers only briefly to the army and

battle, as do Stallings and Marquand, whose references are in flash-backs. It is by Dos Passos, Boyd, Willa Cather, and Mrs. Fisher that the most detailed information is given. Of the four, Boyd's battle scenes are the most complete and authentic, for Through the Wheat is an account of his actual experiences.

The most complete accounts of actual conditions in the army are found in the novels of Boyd, Dos Passos and Willa Cather. They stress the discomforts to which the soldiers were subjected, one of which was the inadequacy of housing. In America, the soldiers were billeted either in barracks¹ or tents² and could be fairly certain of a dry shelter. But overseas there had not been time to erect proper shelter in some cases, and the troops were forced to sleep in the barn³ of some farmer while the officers were quartered with the farmer's family. Sometimes the men were forced to sleep in haystacks, or shell holes,⁴ or even in the rain.⁵ Pup tents were used or tents just large enough for two men; then they pooled their blankets and managed to keep warm with this extra bedding and the warmth of their companions' bodies.⁶ Dos Passos mentions instances of this kind of shelter and

¹ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 23.

² Ibid., p. 6, 132.

³ Ibid., p. 137; Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 422.

⁴ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 44, 91.

⁵ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 421; John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 181, 132.

⁶ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 132.

method of sleep.⁷

The American soldiers who followed the Germans were welcomed by the French people, but sometimes even the grateful French people did not welcome the thought troops, however friendly, being billeted with them since they had grown so tired of the German occupation of their homes.⁸ David Gerhardt mentioned this fact to Claude in the case of the Jouberts.

The trenches afforded a shelter of sorts.⁹ There were dugouts, usually walled in with planks, when possible, and provided with bunks for the soldiers off duty. They provided office quarters for the officers, and a place of recreation for them.¹⁰ There was also a place for heating water in some of the dugouts.¹¹ But even the poor shelter of the dugouts could be made worse by the presence of rats and vermin.¹² They got on the tables, slept in the beds, and ate the men's shoes. The soldiers slept with their shoes under their heads, "to keep, as Hicks almost truthfully remarked, the rats from carrying them away."¹³

Trenches deserted by the Germans could not be considered adequate shelter because of their deplorable condition. Dos Passos describes such a trench in which the dugout contained the bodies of dead Germans.¹⁴ Willa Cather gives a revolting

⁷ Ibid., p. 132, 61, 62.

⁸ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 346, 414.

⁹ Ibid., p. 424, 368.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 368.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 365.

¹² Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 25.

¹³ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 84.

¹⁴ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 371.

picture of a trench that had been captured from the Germans:

It was easy taking--empty of everything but vermin and human discards; a dozen crippled and sick, left for the enemy to dispose of, and several half-witted youths who ought to have been locked up in some institution. Fritz had known what it meant when his patrols did not come back. He had evacuated, leaving behind his hopelessly diseased, and as much filth as possible. The dugouts were fairly dry, but so crawling with vermin that the Americans preferred to sleep in the mud, in the open.¹⁵

Another thing that made the trenches unfit for occupancy was the mud, which grew hip-deep, so that duck boards had to be laid for the men to walk upon. Trenches often wound around so tortuously that it took a retiring company all day to get clear of them.¹⁶

Another source of discomfort stressed by these authors is lice. Dos Passos mentions a delousing machine¹⁷ but apparently it was not too efficient or in wide use, for almost every author of this group stresses the discomfort of these vermin. They infested the trenches and the bodies of the men.¹⁸ Mrs. Fisher recounts the story of the soldier who wet his head and let his hair freeze, hoping to get rid of the lice that way.¹⁹

Another discomfort stressed by Boyd, Willa Cather, and Dos Passos was the rain. It rained as much as three weeks at a time, filling shell and cellar holes in which soldiers some-

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

¹⁶ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 161.

¹⁷ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 158.

¹⁸ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 424; John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 155-156.

¹⁹ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 271.

times drowned.²⁰ Army trucks and cars, passing soldiers on the march, splashed them from head to foot. Their clothes, caked with mud and soaked, had no chance to dry and this was a source of much sickness and discomfort, especially when lack of shelter forced the soldiers to sleep in the open. Mud mired down the army trucks and delayed the food for hours or days,²¹ and mention has already been made of how the trenches often became hip-deep in mud.²²

Lack of facilities for keeping clean and washing their clothes was another trial stressed by these authors. Shell holes of water were often their only means of bathing and of washing their clothes and these were likely to be contaminated by the bodies of the dead, buried in the mud at the bottom of the shell hole.²³ Drinking water was scarce at times, too, and the soldiers dared not drink from apparently pure wells of water, for they also might be found to contain the bodies of German dead.

Boyd mentions the heat as an added source of discomfort:

The helmets of the men were like hot frying-pans. Sweat soaked through the padding in the helmets and down the men's faces in tiny, dirt rivulets. Their skin, beneath their woolen shirts and breeches, itched unbearably. At the knees, where the breeches tightly fitted, the shell powder had soaked through and was biting the flesh.

In battle the sun burned upon the helmets and

²⁰ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 380, 423.

²¹ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 44, 57.

²² Ibid., p. 20; Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 367.

²³ Ibid., p. 125.

clothing of the men; perspiration stung the scratches, bruises and burns with which their bodies were covered.²⁴

Heat also intensified the odor of decaying corpses.²⁵

Another source of dissatisfaction mentioned by these novels was the food, which was not always good even in the camps in America. It was too often a "thin, reddish stew, surlily thrown at them....."²⁶ They had to wash their own mess kits in cold water usually covered by a greasy scum and bits of food left from the dozens of other mess kits. Dos Passos mentions the long tables and the board floors of the mess tents which "had a faint smell of garbage mingled with the smell of the disinfectant the tables had been washed off with."²⁷ At breakfast the soldier's oatmeal was "flopped" in his mess kit, and the scalding coffee smelt heavily of dish rags."

The transport ships had their food troubles also. Willa Cather discusses this situation in One of Ours. The ship belonged to the British government and was manned by British seamen. The United States government had provided the meat, eggs and fruit for the American troops but the English steward appropriated the eggs and fruit for the purpose of selling them at a profit at the ports the ship touched and it was only by

²⁴ Ibid., p. 193-194.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 132-134.

²⁶ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 10, 363, 115, 84; Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 87, 123-125, 142-143, 153, 159.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

threat of exposure that he was induced to surrender enough oranges and eggs to feed one sick soldier.²⁸

Food was the subject of many jokes and much grumbling among the soldiers,²⁹ and was referred to as "slum", which Boyd agrees was not an inaccurate description. In battle, food was often delayed and the soldiers were forced to go without for many hours, or even a day or more.³⁰ Their emergency rations, according to Boyd, were often indigestible tins of Argentine beef; after battle they often ransacked the knapsacks of the dead Germans for food, finding canned salmon, black bread, or perhaps chocolate.

According to Boyd and Dos Passos, to physical discomfort was added another trial almost as hard to bear and that was boredom. This boredom and mental stagnation was the result of months of drilling³¹ and bayonet practice.³² To the monotony of necessary practice was added more drill by some officers, as a form of punishment.³³ Also, they were often ordered to stand unnecessary inspection.³⁴ The monotony of endless practice made soldiers like Hicks wish to get into action, for ".....in conflict, he felt, would arise a reason for his now unbearable existence."³⁵ John Andrews expressed much the

²⁸ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 315-317.

²⁹ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 40; Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 84.

³⁰ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 445.

³¹ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 12, 13.

³² Ibid., p. 16.

³³ Ibid., p. 177-178.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 47, 50-54.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

same sentiment to Chrisfield in the words: "Say, Chris, I'm sick of this business. Almost like you'd rather shoot yourself than keep on."³⁶

According to Dos Passos and Boyd, a part of the soldier's dissatisfaction with army life lay in his resentment at having to do manual labor for the soldier also resented cleaning, K. P. duty, digging, and most other forms of labor. Boyd makes this point clear in his novel. For nine months William Hicks had been in France, working as a stovedore beside evil-odored blacks, building cantonments for the soldiers arriving from the States, and doing many other construction tasks. He muttered: "Soldiering with a shovel. A hell of a way to treat a white man." There were plenty of people to dig holes in the ground, but not many of them could qualify as sharpshooters. So he asked himself, "Was this war? Was this action? Was this for what he had come to France?"³⁷ Fuselli also resented having to clean camps and officers' rooms,³⁸ and Chrisfield and Andrews resented having to clean the barracks grounds.³⁹ Andrews washed windows and the incident came back unpleasantly to his mind again and again.⁴⁰

But not all of the soldier's dislike of labor was due to the labor itself; part was due to the arrogance and insolence of the officers who directed the work. Chrisfield,

³⁶ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 154.

³⁷ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 4.

³⁸ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 62, 63, 121.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 23-24.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 320.

picking up cigarette stubs under the caustic orders of a "bandy-legged Italian corporal," muttered: "Ah didn't get in this here army to be ordered around by no.....wop."⁴¹ A military system which allowed an officer to reprimand his men, "using his curt voice like a whip,"⁴² for what was often a slight offense, inspired rebellion in the soldiers. Dos Passos mentions many instances of officers' insolence and the soldiers' resentment. Dos Passos' experiences in the army had made him an ardent partisan for the "little men", therefore he has no great or good officers in his novel. They are arrogant,⁴³ or snobbish, or obsequious, or overbearing,⁴⁴ taking advantage of their rank to persecute or humiliate the men beneath them in rank: they drink, and go A. W. O. L., and give the soldiers orders to shoot their prisoners instead of bringing them in to headquarters.⁴⁵ Naturally, these types of officers kept the soldiers angry, unhappy and bitter. The men were filled with a furious, hopeless despair,⁴⁶ and drank to drown their troubles; and even, as in the case of Chrisfield, killed the officer whom they detested.

Not all officers were of this type, however, The type of officers described in these novels differs according to the

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁴² Ibid., p. 17.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 227.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 341-393.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 169, 210.

⁴⁶ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 210-211.

experiences of the writers. Most of Willa Cather's officers are idealized. Lts. David Gerhardt and Claude Wheeler were loved by their men; Captain Maxey, though not so well liked, was conscientious; Barclay Owens was a braggart, but he amused the men;⁴⁷ General Scott was the ideal officer and courteous to all.⁴⁸ Victor Morris, the air ace, had an arrogant air which made him disliked by some and his private life was not above reproach but he was brave.⁴⁹

Thomas Boyd's officers are rarely cruel, but Sergeantn Harriman was officious and, like many other officers,⁵⁰ laid too much emphasis on drill even using it as a form of punishment. Captain Ryan resented as much as did the soldiers the fact that officers, hoping for glory, sent men to their deaths in attacks which they knew must fail.⁵¹ Boyd's general opinion of officers is expressed in the reactions of Sergeant Hicks:

The grinning weakness which men called authority had followed him since the day of his enlistment at the beginning of the war. It had turned thoughts of valor into horrible nightmares, the splendor of achievement into debased bickering.....Most of the men, it seemed to him, had not entered the army to further the accomplishment of a common motive.....(but for) the purpose of aiding their personal ambitions.⁵²

The exception to the rule was Major Adams. He knew how to be merciful as well as just. He "belonged to that type of

⁴⁷ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 372.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 345.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 306.

⁵⁰ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 152, 50-54.

⁵¹ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 83-84.

⁵² Ibid., p. 4-5.

officer, each of which you meet with the feeling that he is the sole survivor of the school of regular soldiers....He was adored and held in awe by half the battalion."⁵³

None of the remaining writers of this group has any criticism to make of the officers. Of these, Marquand saw active duty as an officer and Struthers Burt was in the Service in America. Like Miss Cather, Mrs. Fisher and Lincoln were civilians.

One of the first things that become apparent in the novels of Dos Passos, Miss Cather, and Boyd is the eagerness with which the soldiers awaited their time to go to the front, "to that vague place from which men returned with their mutilated bodies."⁵⁴ Private Moadville's remark is typical of the feeling of the majority of soldiers when he says: "I'd give the best colt on my ranch to see some action."⁵⁵ Dos Passos, Boyd and Miss Cather all mention this attitude of the soldiers. It was due partly to the boredom of camp life, as mentioned, and partly to a desire for adventure. Many, like Sergeant Harriman, Claude Wheeler, Hicks, and Chrisfield, also had high ideals of service when they went into the army.

Even though the soldiers were eager to get into battle,⁵⁶ when the time actually arrived they looked with dread to what lay before them. Both Dos Passos and Boyd mention this fact. According to Boyd, upon the soldiers' being told for the first

⁵³ Ibid., p. 26.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 46, 111.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 12-13, 72.

time that they were being sent to the front, there was little comment. Men smiled, but "their smiles lacked certitude," and even after they had packed their bags, "the pall remained, vaguely hanging over them, drawing them together in their common aversion from the future."⁵⁷ As the hour for battle approached, each man drew inside himself, with his own private thoughts.⁵⁸ On the eve of battle the men talked in low tones, as if they were afraid of speaking aloud.⁵⁹ Andrews, while waiting, remarked: "This is the damndest fool business ever--"⁶⁰

The war was also a war of nerves. For while the sight of the dead might be something to which one might grow accustomed, the sounds of live, screaming shells were a fresh assault on the ear drums each time a gun was fired, for the shells came like shrieking, maddened demons--⁶¹ black, screaming spirits.⁶² If sudden attacks came, the bottom seemed to drop from the sky,⁶³ and the men were stunned by the bombardment. The noise of the shells was brain-piercing;⁶⁴ they came like a flash of lightning, hurtling and resounding "like the shriek of some lost soul."⁶⁵ At Soissons the firing was described as "heavy

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 18-19.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 75.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 18; John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 181.

⁶⁰ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 180; Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 130-140.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 130.

⁶² Ibid., p. 180.

⁶³ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 115.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 125.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 130.

artillery battering away like enormous drums."⁶⁶

Gas was always a source of horror and dread. Boyd describes a typical gas attack:

The smoke in the air was stifling them, burning out their lungs. Their eyes were shot with blood, and tears streamed unceasingly down their cheeks. Their throats felt as if they had swallowed handfuls of fine dust.....Hicks gulped. Immediately his throat and lungs were on fire.⁶⁷

Dos Passos, Boyd, Gather and Stallings each mention the effects of gas. From Stallings comes this statement by Richard Plume: "I've been in wards in France where convoys of gassed men came in. Ghostly veils over their faces, sodden with vaseline. Nights filled them with the hum of millions of bumble bees.....their breathing."⁶⁸

In Three Soldiers, Daniels describes the effect of mustard gas: "I've seen fellers with their arms swelled up to twice the size like blisters from it. Mustard gas, they call it."⁶⁹

Boyd gives a similar description: "Thick yellow gas clung to the ground. Wherever the gas had touched the skin of the men, dark flaming blisters appeared. Like acid, the yellow gas ate into the flesh and blinded the eyes."⁷⁰

Another nerve-shattering experience was the sight of comrades killed beside them. Daniels, in Three Soldiers, relates a harrowing experience:

I had a buddy who was split right in half by a piece of a shell. He was standin' as near me as you

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 146.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 117-118.

⁶⁸ Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 338.

⁶⁹ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 112.

⁷⁰ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 159.

are and was whistlin' 'Tipperary' under his breath when all at once there was a big spurt o' blood an' there he was with his chest split in half an' his head hangin' by a thread like.⁷¹

Soldiers often lived under the continuous strain of battle for days, and even weeks. Boyd gives an instance in which the men were trapped in a ravine for two weeks, subjected to heavy bombardment. Men called for stretcher bearers until it seemed as if there were no more men to call, and thick, pungent shell smoke blinded and choked them. One attack described by Hicks began with machine gun fire, which was taken up by the German artillery. After German airplanes rose into the air and fired signals, the shells that followed found their targets, shrieking along the lines of freshly dug dirt erected by the Americans. A shell backfired, tearing off part of Hayes' back and Hartman, his companion, although not hurt, was so shell-shocked that he had to be carried to the dressing station.⁷²

Another type of shell-shock is described by Boyd. The men were trapped in a wheat field with shells exploding all about them. A machine gun began and more men fell, but the rest marched stolidly on, closing in the gaps until the original four lines had become one. Then the German bombing planes went into action, the bullets zinging off the steel helmets of the men or boring their way through the skull.

⁷¹ John Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, p. 112.

⁷² Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 136-140.

This was too much for the nerves of one of the men who began to laugh unpleasantly, then to sob violently, as the result of shell-shock.⁷³

The two cases of shock reacted similarly, but were brought about differently, for the first was Hartman's first experience in battle, while in the second case the soldier was a seasoned veteran and his nerves had given way under the continuous strain of battle.⁷⁴ Continuous battle weakened the nerves of even the strongest.

There was a sameness about the expressions on the men's faces.....The mouths had set in certain rigid lines.....The lids of the eyes were narrowed, and beneath them the pupils reflected only a dull apathy. Of each man the shoulders sagged as if bowed down with a dreadful weight.⁷⁵

Lack of adequate first-aid dressing stations increased the hazards of war. The first-aid station was usually hastily constructed near the battle zone, and since the doctors were forced to have a light to work by, this exposed them to enemy fire.⁷⁶ The doctors were usually crowded for space. Boyd tells of an incident in which Hicks and Pugh carried a wounded Frenchman to the dressing station and becoming angry because the doctor protested that as soon as the new attack started, he would have more American patients than he could take care of.⁷⁷

According to Boyd, the doctors gave first preference to

⁷³ Ibid., p. 80.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 194.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 148-149, 92, 294.

⁷⁶ Willa Cather, *One of Ours*, p. 397-399.

⁷⁷ Thomas Boyd, *Through the Wheat*, p. 82-83.

the wounded over the shell-shocked and the gassed patients. Hicks, who had been burned by gas, reported to his comrades upon his return from the hospital that the doctor, upon learning what was the matter with him, had said: "Got up, you coward. What do you mean by taking a wounded man's place?"⁷⁸ Hicks also reported that the orderlies stole the patients' money and possessions, and made them clean up the place.

During bombardments from planes, soldiers were forced to see wounded comrades lie exposed to the firing, powerless to help them. Boyd describes such an incident when one of the men lay for hours with a large hole torn in his back by a shell. "Since then he had lain--alive."⁷⁹

Marquand, Dos Passos, Cather and Boyd describe the aftermath of battle. There are many descriptions of the dead soldiers, in grotesque attitudes, their haversacks ripped open and the contents scattered about, exposing the pitiful treasures to the world in a way that Marquand describes as "senseless and indecent."⁸⁰ But worse was the mutilation, where men lay dead and dying. "The ground was a dump-heap of bodies, limbs of trees, legs and arms independent of bodies. There yesterday's crosses had been erected, a shell had churned a body out of its shallow grave, separating the torso from the

⁷⁸ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 170-171.

⁷⁹ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 194-195.

⁸⁰ John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 233.

limbs, and the crosses themselves were blown as flat as if a wind had blown them over."⁸¹

After-battle scenes, with their vivid pictures of the horrid mutilation of the dead, are described many times, especially by Boyd, who saw so much action at the front, and one scene is pictured by Marquand, who also saw much action. This scene is after a battle in which an American doughboy had died. "A fragment of a high explosive shell had blown the top of his head clear off, just above the eyes.....There was too much which no living decent person was meant to look at."⁸²

Such experiences had their effect on the soldiers. After an attack they were tired, hungry, and nerve-racked, their senses bludgeoned.⁸³ After the battle of Soissons, according to Boyd, they were "dejected, vapid-minded, a look of full pain in the eyes of each." He sums them up as:

The tired, worn-out, hungry soldiers; the dirty, blood-smeared, lousy soldiers; the red-eyed, gas-eaten, mud-caked soldiers; the stupid, yellow, cowardly soldiers;.....the pompous, authoritative corporals; the dreary, valiant, faithful soldiers.⁸⁴

These tired men with their jangled nerves were a part of the toll of war. The wounded often lay for months in the hospitals, some recovering slowly, if at all. Stallings describes the wounded Richard Plume as he appeared to Fano, his wife, after several months in the hospital:

⁸¹ Thomas Boyd, Through the Meat, p. 130.

⁸² John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 233-234.

⁸³ Thomas Boyd, Through the Meat, p. 162.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 209-209.

A man she had never seen before lay flat upon his back.....The sick man's faded red hair was straggly and the back of his head was rubbed..... bald.....from moving upon a thousand pillows. The face was immobile, hawk-like, dead putty white, and the mouth was drawn, the mouth of a man about to be flogged.⁸⁵

Even after a period in the hospital, the condition of the men was pitiable. Willa Cather describes the men wounded at Belleau Wood, as they appeared months later:

Their skin was yellow or purple, their eyes were sunken, their lips sore. Everything that belonged to health had left them, every attribute of youth was gone.⁸⁶

The condition of the French soldiers who had been in German prison camps was perhaps among the worst. They were gaunt and listless, unshaven with dirty, bird-claw hands, and stooping skeleton frames draped around with rags too worn and drab to guess whether they had ever been uniforms. Some had tuberculosis of the bone after an amputation, many lacked limbs. "Some answered the necessary questions the doctors and officials asked and wept feebly as they gave their names and homes. Some were crazed and brutalized by suffering, and some were without even an animal's expression, the eyes open on vacancy."⁸⁷

This group were the prisoners who were filtering back into France after the Armistice. Germany, exhausted and unable to feed them, had merely opened the gates of the prison-

⁸⁵ Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 65-66.

⁸⁶ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 335.

⁸⁷ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 340-342.

camps and let the inmates make their way home the best they could.⁸⁸

Mrs. Fisher and Dos Passos are the only writers of this group who go into details about the activities of the Peace Conference. Dos Passos mentions it briefly immediately after the Armistice, but Mrs. Fisher paints a depressing picture of the political situation even before the Armistice was signed. She pictures the idealization of President Wilson by the French people,⁸⁹ and the fears of Matey Fort that the people would be disillusioned later on, as they were. She shows the gradual loss of faith in Wilson, and describes the air of contempt with which the Peace delegates regarded him. She shows that they had no respect for him, referring to him as "the old man," and stating their intention of ignoring him at the peace table.⁹⁰ Her picture of the delegates shows the delegation to have been partly composed of such war profiteers as Francis Gilbert and Mrs. Whitlock, who had made their fortunes in steel.

As the Peace Conference proceeded, the mercenary spirit displayed by the Allies created a bitterness in the hearts of those French who had lost their men in the war. To know that they had died for a just cause at least added dignity to sorrow; but to have the ideals for which they died descend into

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 339-342.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 329.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 335.

a debased bickering for power and material advantages at the peace table made them feel that the men had given their lives for nothing. The sight of it was enough to send Matey and Adrian Fort back to America disheartened, and feeling that all their work in France had been in vain.

The Armistice brought with it inactivity and restlessness. Dos Passos presents a depressing picture of the boredom of the troops, now left with little to do. If they drilled, it was without purpose, and therefore doubly irksome. The only thing the soldiers could say for it was that it was better to drill than to loaf around the billets all day, thinking and cursing and wishing they were at home.

Left idle, the soldiers became a prey to peacetime rumors, and Dos Passos mentions the anxiety and despair of the men when word got about that they might be kept in the Army of Occupation for as much as 15 years.

Of the scene in the United States when the returning soldiers reached home, little mention is made. Lincoln and Willa Cather are the only authors who give any light on the subject. Lincoln mentions that when Albert Spornza returned home, the townspeople would have liked to celebrate the occasion, but were firmly voted down by his grandfather, who thought Albert would not like a display.⁹¹ Willa Cather mentions the fact that when the soldiers docked at New York, a parade had been planned for them.⁹²

⁹¹ Joseph C. Lincoln, *The Portyree*, p. 231.

⁹² Willa Cather, *One of Ours*, p. 435.

Since the soldier's opinion of army life, and his physical and mental well-being depended a great deal upon the use he made of his leisure time, this subject is given a prominent place in those novels which are concerned chiefly with the actual theatre of war. On this subject of recreation, Dos Passos, Willa Cather, and Boyd have most to say. Lincoln, Burt, and Stallings do not mention it at all, and Mrs. Fisher and Marquand only briefly.

As had been shown by Dos Passos, the lack of adequate recreational facilities in camp and the dislike of the eternal military drill and bayonet practice contributed to the let-down in morale. Boredom, disgust, and the search for liquor and better food led them to frequent cafes. These were often of questionable character, and constant association with this sort of life and people affected the lives of the soldiers, both morally and physically.

Both Boyd and Dos Passos indicate that drinking was common. In America, the soldiers drank because it seemed the obvious thing to do in the company of their comrades. In France, to this motive were added others. Dos Passos mentions one instance in which Chrisfield and Judkins, sickened and dismayed by the order which came to kill the Germans rather than take them prisoners, sought to drown their disgust in drink.⁹³ Boyd illustrates another motive. Hicks, after weeks

⁹³ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 169.

of continuous battle, drank to forget battle scenes, to ease his tortured nerves, to bolster up his failing courage, and to drown the feeling of depression and futility that war had left with him. Another reason brought out by Boyd is the fact that wine, champagne and other liquors were easily obtainable at the French villages, and the soldiers found it a pleasant addition to the army food and the food in the village, which was often unpalatable. Also good water was scarce and not always pure, and wine was drunk more freely for this reason. Dos Passos describes the scene of the Armistice in Paris, where in the general rejoicing restraint was cast aside in a wild orgy of drinking and merrymaking, when even the higher military officials went A. W. O. L. and became hilariously intoxicated. Heineman expressed the general feeling when he said: "A man who don't drink just cumbars the earth."⁹⁴

Leaves and passes to nearby towns brightened army life. Villa Catner mentions two occasions upon which Lieutenants Wheeler and Gerhardt obtained a few days' leave after action at the front, and Boyd mentions one instance of how the soldiers spent their evenings. They would gather in the cafes and talk over their grievances; the slowness of the mails, the cruelty of the M. P.'s in Paris, the "rotteness of the Y. M. C. A., upon which all but two were agreed.....One, now and then, would bring a pocket-worn photograph forth and show

⁹⁴ Ibid.,

it to those whom drink had made his closest friends. In all, a fairly pleasant existence."⁹⁵

Through John Andrews' activities in Paris, Dos Passos gives a very good picture of the American soldier on leave. He drank some, but he also enjoyed sight-seeing, concerts, and the pleasure of strolling about Paris alone, watching the crowds, looking at the shop windows, and talking to the street vendor who sold mechanical rabbits.⁹⁶ Andrews is more typical of the ordinary American soldier in Paris, for while many seemed to be satisfied with life in cafes and bars, he found pleasure in simple things like walks and picnics in the country. Like Claude Wheeler and David Gerhardt, he made friends among the French people. Among them was Genovieve Rod, whose family were musical, like himself. Through their interest in music, he was given an outlet for his musical talent and an understanding that he had never found in the army. His verdict was, "It is pleasanter to live here than in America."⁹⁷

Mrs. Fisher has little to say of the recreations afforded the soldiers, her preoccupation being with the plight of the French. Madame Vinet's home, of course, was thrown open to both French and American soldiers on leave at all times, and here they could sleep as long as they liked, and make friends with Matey's children; what most of the French soldiers seemed to miss most in their lives was their home and children.

⁹⁵ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 218.

⁹⁶ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 277.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 326.

At first when the American soldiers appeared, Macey tried to make friends.

But once arrived in Paris, it was by no means home life they sought out. These.....young men were brothers to the girl from Iowa (A Red Cross worker) and shared heartily her opinion of the relative advantages of their home towns and of Paris, agreeing warmly with her dictum that this was the life.⁹⁸

Marquand writes of Jeffery Wilson's memories of leaves in Paris:

Marie Bouchet.....She must have been one of the girls you knew on those few promiscuous nights in Paris when you knew that your number was coming up sometime soon, and when you took any chance you could to forget it for a while. They had understood about the war; the French had been kind to the Americans in those days.⁹⁹

Montmartre.....A suite at the Crillon.....the BoisThe Dome.....Voisin.....Foyot.....

"Come on," he could hear Minot calling him on mornings after. "Take a pull of this".....He could still hear the urgency in Minot's voice, and Minot was handing him a tumbler of brandy. "It's ten o'clock. Let's go."

There was no use sleeping when you were on leave. You did not have the time.¹⁰⁰

The American soldier was friendly, and quick to fraternize with civilians with whom he came in contact. Examples are John Andrews and Lieutenants Gerhardt and Wheeler whom the French people everywhere seemed especially to like, and with whom the young men felt more at home than with their own native

⁹⁸ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 299-301.

⁹⁹ John F. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 215.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 221-222.

countrymen. Like Andrews, Claude Wheeler felt that he would rather live here than in America.¹⁰¹

The French villagers were grateful to the Americans who drove out the Germans and friendly to them. Willa Cather mentions the friendliness of the people in the town of Beaufort after the Americans took it from the Germans. All the men were in the army, and had not even been home on leave for four years. "The Americans found themselves in the position of Adam in the garden."¹⁰²

Of recreational facilities in the army camps little is said. Dos Passos mentions a picture show at the Y hut, but the picture was a story of German atrocities, --anti-German propaganda-- and had little entertainment value. Dos Passos also mentions the Y hut, where the soldiers met to read and talk. Boyd mentions the recreations in camp that the men provided for themselves; singing, playing the guitar, conversation and gambling. The soldiers made forays on the nearest villages, buying whatever the villagers could spare, and shared their food and liquor with their comrades in these evenings in camp.

The Y. M. C. A. was an important factor in the recreational side of the army. The program mapped out by this organization was an excellent one, but if the comments of the soldiers are to be accepted, the "Y" was looked upon with

¹⁰¹ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 406.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 436.

aversion by most of them. Boyd mentions this fact several times,¹⁰³ and Dos Passos gives at least four instances of the unfavorable impression the Y. M. C. A. left upon the mind of the soldier.¹⁰⁴ The reason is found in the personnel of the Y. M. C. A., which, according to these two writers, was composed of slackers,¹⁰⁵ humbugs,¹⁰⁶ and social climbers.¹⁰⁷ They were proachy, and their conversation was full of meaningless patriotic phrases.¹⁰⁸ They had no real sympathy for the problems of the soldiers and no real desire to help them.

Dos Passos gives the most complete information concerning these men. According to him, the "Y" secretary was inconsistent. Dos Passos also indicates that the "Y" man's patriotism was only on the surface, and that he was platitudinous; there was something unreal about his way of looking at life and the war.¹⁰⁹ Dos Passos and Boyd considered him mercenary, and conceited.¹¹⁰ Of an evening, when the men would gather in the cafes and talk over the grievances which the day had brought, one of them was "the rottenness of the Y.M.C.A."¹¹¹

However, the Y. M. C. A. did maintain recreation huts

¹⁰³ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 43, 75, 211, 218.

¹⁰⁴ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 217.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 200-210.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 244-245, 257-259.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 156-157.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 156-157.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 243-244.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 218.

where motion pictures could be shown, where visiting clergymen could preach, where candy, hot chocolate, cigarettes, and other scarce articles might be purchased, and where a piano.¹¹² free books, magazines and newspapers furnished diversion for the soldiers.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 243.

Conclusions

A summary of this chapter reveals the fact that all the writers except Struthers Burt, whose theme is postwar America, present the war realistically. The authors, particularly Willa Cather, Dos Passos, and Boyd, point out the discomforts of the inadequate housing, vermin, mud, heat, hunger, thirst and bad food. They describe the boredom of the soldiers after months of drill and bayonet practice. They paint a picture of blundering officers, whose desire for glory sometimes led them to order an attack for which they were unprepared, thereby causing the needless death of hundreds. They also show the other type of officer--the brave, valiant, understanding type for whom his troops would give their lives, if necessary. These authors point out the fact that the troops were anxious to get into action, but that they also entered it with a feeling of dread. Battle was all that they had feared; it shattered the nerves; the smells were nauseating; gas ate into their flesh and lungs and blinded them. Nerve shock and shell-shock and wounds wrecked mind and body. The writers show that the hazards of war were increased by the lack of proper facilities for caring for the wounded.

The Armistice brought cessation of fighting and a measure of relaxation in discipline but the boredom of the soldiers was increased, if anything, while waiting for their discharge. In America, and in France, particularly, disillusionment set

in with the coming of the Peace Delegates, after it became apparent that there was no real harmony among them. Civilians and veterans, realizing the avarice of the Peace delegates, grew bitter when they realized that the lives of their relatives and comrades who died had been given in vain.

The Armistice brought with it much peace time madness in celebration of the event, for, in many cases, soldiers had been deprived of any chance to relax. Recreation in the camps had been inadequate; facilities were lacking, and even the rest camps had proved to be more drill-camps than rest-camps. The "Y" man, who might have been of so much help to the soldier, was often incompetent or selfish or snobbish or cowardly, and was so disliked by the men that he defeated the purpose for which he was sent overseas by this organization. However, the "Y" hut did offer a place where the soldier might relax and read; and sometimes it offered for sale luxuries that the soldier could not have enjoyed otherwise.

CHAPTER IV. THE VETERAN IN POSTWAR AMERICA

Since upon the war veteran rested to some extent the future of America, some of the authors treated in this discussion have found it desirable to devote some space to the postwar phase of his life. Some aspects presented are his difficulties in adjusting himself to changed conditions in the world to which he returned, partly because of the change within himself. The authors also discuss the changes in the business and social world after the war, and the efforts of the government to aid the veteran in readjustment to civil life. The authors' political views, as seen through the eyes of the veterans, are also presented.

The only novel which does not discuss the soldier after the war is that of Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat. The reason is obvious: the book comes to a close while the war is still in progress. Willa Cather devotes only the last chapter to the postwar period, and there is almost nothing about the veteran, for the story ends with the returning soldiers still aboard their vessel. Mrs. Fisher has little of the veteran in The Deepening Stream; only the last chapter is devoted to the Ports in America. Lincoln has much to say of Albert Speranza after the war, but the reactions are confusing, since the reader is never sure whether they are the natural result of

Albert's war experiences, or of his preoccupation with his fading love for his fiancée. On the other hand, all except the first three chapters of Plumes is the story of Richard Plume after his return from overseas, and almost half of Three Soldiers concerns the soldiers in peace time, but before they were discharged. So Little Time has valuable information about the veteran's place in America. This novel and The Interpreter's House are the only ones which are exclusively a study of the veteran in postwar America.

These writers all agree upon one point: There was no glamour in war, in the opinions of these soldiers and veterans. Even Claude Wheeler, most normal of all the soldiers, asks his friend David: "You don't believe we are going to get out of this war what we went in for, do you?"¹ And David himself expressed the opinion that war had killed everything.² Willa Cather also says of the homeward bound soldiers on the transport: "Some are melancholy, many are indifferent.....They are not the same men who went away."³

Lincoln gives what is perhaps the best picture of the beneficial changes that war made upon the soldier. Albert Speranza went into the army a rather egotistical, dreamy, impractical poet; he was wounded, and after months of confinement in a German prison camp, returned home a serious, mature man. At first he was restless and unsettled. He was no longer

¹ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 409.

² Ibid., p. 418.

³ Ibid., p. 455.

elated over the success of his modest book of poetry, and he regarded these poetic effusions with loathing.⁴ He turned his creative efforts toward serious prose, and when his friends asked him to permit his name to be used as a party nominee for Congressman, he consented. The shallow socialite, Madeline Fozdick, no longer attracted him, and he returned to his first love, a girl from his home town.

The seriousness, moodiness, and restlessness which troubled Albert when he first returned home were characteristic of the returned soldier, apparently, for they are mentioned by most of the writers of this group. One of the causes, according to the writers, was to be found in the memories of battle wounds and battle scenes. This was true of Richard Plume; like Albert, he disliked to speak of the circumstances of his wounding, wishing only to forget it.⁵ The war, which had steadied without embittering Albert, had aged and embittered Richard. His wound pained him constantly, and his suffering made him bitter toward war in all its phases. He considered that war had victimized him, and that his enlistment was a ghastly mistake. Like his friend, Kenneth Gary, he regarded war as an imbecility, and had a sardonic thrust for everything patriotic.⁶ Both he and Adrian Fort⁷ regretted that they had children that would perhaps have to suffer in another war.⁸

⁴ Joseph C. Lincoln, The Portygees, p. 306.

⁵ Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 77-78.

⁶ Ibid., p. 112, 123.

⁷ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 257.

⁸ Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 67.

Both Richard Plume and John Andrews complained that war had destroyed their spirit, and Richard said that he never intended to cultivate any spiritual growth, except that of rebellion.⁹ War had left him undecided as to future plans, but, like Albert, he knew that he did not wish to return to his former way of life. Part of his anger was at himself for refusing to go back to Esme's parents' home and thus sparing her the drudgery of living in dreary, inadequate apartments in Washington. He pitied her more than himself; the sight of her roughened hands after working to make one of these grimy apartments livable oppressed him. For the housing situation was another of the married veteran's troubles. Habitable apartments in Washington were ninety dollars a month, and the eighty dollar ones were such that, to have lived in one, the Plumes would have had to suppress every grace of background and instinct they possessed. The only reasonable apartment that they would have liked could be rented only if they were willing to buy the furniture of the girl who was moving out; she explained that, even if she did not have a thousand dollars' worth of furniture in the apartment, she could always sell it for that price, for it was the lease that was valuable.¹⁰

Adrian Port's reactions were similar to those of Richard. He felt the ground giving way under his feet. War

⁹ Ibid., p. 198-199.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 159.

was wrong, he was convinced, and to abet it by even so much as helping the wounded was wrong too, he felt. Of what was the right thing to do, he said:

Probably there isn't any answer. At least none we are willing to accept. I keep wondering if we're ever going to find any basis for going ahead.¹¹

Unlike Albert and Richard, however, he planned to go back to his former way of life in the civilian world and try to "pick up a few pieces in this mess of a world."¹²

Struthers Burt, in The Interpreter's House, emphasizes the spirit of restlessness in Gullian Myre, who "was inclined to blame the war for a good deal of his uneasiness." He acknowledged war's "vast absurdity and lack of definition." War had given Gullian a more mature frame of mind also. He found that "many of the things that once pleased him no longer pleased him at all. He had not wanted to return to his father's home, or to America,.....but he could think of nothing else that might quiet the vague restlessness that had recently overtaken him."¹³ After the war he had tried writing poetry but had abandoned it; then he had gone into the diplomatic service, but that did not satisfy him either, because "One saw too near at hand and too depressingly one of the contributing causes of the world's idiocy. Besides, any man who had served two years in any army had had enough for life of the lack of the ordinary frankness and common

¹¹ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 358.

¹² Ibid., p. 361.

¹³ Struthers Burt, The Interpreter's House, p. 17-18.

sense that makes civilian intercourse possible."¹⁴

Another thing that oppressed the veteran who had seen death so many times was the feeling that death was always imminent, that he had not much time to live, and that he must make the most of the time he had. Gulian was subject to this feeling:

Gulian's time-sense had been destroyed, as had been the time-sense of all men past their first youth. He had an impression of ages spent and of comparatively little time left.¹⁵

Marquand mentions this fact also, and makes it the subject of his novel, So Little Time. Jeffrey Wilson, a war veteran, had even after 20 or more years, the feeling that there was not time enough to do what he had to do.¹⁶ Marquand emphasizes this feeling in flash-backs of the first World War, and carries the theme into the world of 1941, when Jeffrey Wilson was middle-aged.

One reason that the soldiers were unhappy upon their return home was that they were returning to a world of restlessness. Gulian noticed that even the solid, business-like men like his brother Philip felt it. "You received the subtle impression.....that the carefully restrained gestures and speech were the very essence of restlessness."¹⁷

What Gulian did not then know was that Philip, tempted by the easy money that was floating around in this period of

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 17-18.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁶ John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 75, 369, 494.

¹⁷ Struthers Burt, The Interpreter's House, p. 33.

prosperity, had invested the bank's money, and had become so heavily involved that there was no way out except eventual suicide.¹⁸ For huge war profits had made men reckless plungers in the stock market, buying--mostly on margin--worthless securities.¹⁹ Fortunes were being made and lost every day.

The war had created a demand for commodities that had made millionaires of the middle class. Drusilla explained to Gulian: "It isn't the old New York.....there're large ungrammatical persons about now you wouldn't have met fifteen years ago."²⁰ These were the newly rich; sturdy, dependable, not yet quite sure of themselves or their manners in the sophisticated society to which their new wealth entitled them, but sincere, and making a place for themselves among the older families in the upper circles of society.²¹

Prohibition had come into effect, and violation of the law was common. People brought their own liquor flasks to night clubs and restaurants, explaining blithely that, since their government had become so childish, they had to take their "pleasures by hook or crook--mostly crook."²²

Of the women in the postwar world, Gulian's sister Drusilla said: "They're restless. I should say that at present they are finding too much subjective adventure and, at the same time, too little".²³

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 389.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 400.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 62.

²¹ Ibid., p. 62, 69, 70.

²² Ibid., p. 72.

²³ Ibid., p. 88.

This restlessness was affecting everything. Immediately preceding and during the war, jazz was in vogue, and dancing was "a barbarism that had for a few years overwhelmed the blond nations with the darkness of tom-toms and shuffling feet."²⁴ The new freedom of the postwar period allowed girls to go to the many "questionable and parasitical dancing places" to dance unchaperoned. Gulian asked an acquaintance, "Do nice girls come to a place like this alone with a man to dance?" His friend replied: "I imagine that nowadays they go any place along with a man."²⁵

The war also opened new avenues in the business world for women. The scarcity of manpower after the draft gave women opportunities to hold many positions in business that had heretofore been considered too strenuous, or beyond their intellectual power to grasp. Many of them continued in their positions after the war, because they found that they liked to work outside the home. This, of course, created a still worse problem in the unemployment situation of the veterans. Mimi, the daughter of Madame Vinet, is an illustration of this point. When her husband was called to the war she was forced to run their plumbing factory and made such a success of it that she continued to run it after the war.²⁶ Ziza, too, went to work in the bank to support her invalid husband.²⁷

²⁴ Ibid., p. 66.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 324.

²⁶ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 318, 347-348.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 345.

Matey Fort, in America, went to work in the bank with her husband, and the arrangement was what they both needed in order to help them adjust themselves together to the postwar world.²⁸

Burt's opinion, expressed through the thoughts of Gulian Eyre is:

Not only Lael, but all her sisters ought to work. In the impersonal fever of the professional attitude lay their one hope of happiness. There wasn't any danger of their forgetting their main business, which was marriage. But of course they wouldn't go to work till they were forced to. No one did.²⁹

Stallings mentions these women war workers in Washington who partly supported themselves in war offices, and were partly supported by politicians whose mistresses they were. When Wilson's administration went out, these politicians, now out of a job, left Washington, and "the girl-clerks, having relinquished joyously a virginal condition which counted nothing in a single economic standard of the war years, were terrified at the prospect of a return to mid-western double-standard morality with its inquisitory elders. It had been a great war for these folks, a burstin' of limited horizons, and they had not reckoned on this untimely end. A few of the girls sat upon the benches of the wide parks and swallowed bichloride....."³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., p. 393.

²⁹ Struthers Burt, The Interpreter's House, p. 212.

³⁰ Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 91.

The women's preemption of jobs that had up to now been in men's field created another hazard in the veteran's problem of getting work. But there was some recompense, for the United States Government adopted measures to help the veterans. Dos Passos mentions the opportunity that was given the enlisted men who had not finished their college courses, to go to the French universities. Dos Passos mentions that John Andrews took advantage of the offer and was granted permission to study music at the Ecole Cantorum of the University of Paris. He was enrolled at the Sorbonne School Detachment.³¹

The Government also gave graduate students \$115 a month if they wished to attend a university and study for a doctorate.³² In the matter of Government aid, Stallings says that the politicians and patriots devised thousands of schemes for reclaiming the disabled man for the land.³³

There were legislative enactments by almost every state. It would have required months to read and digest the Congressional proposals alone. There were hundreds of plans, almost as many as there were politicians, for granting largess and aid to the soldier. These schemes ranged from proposals to offer spot cash to all who had been in ranks, to involved plans for homesteads, credits and farms for the permanently disabled. California was planning one community enterprise, wherein the disabled men were to live in dormitories and do work best fitted to their handicaps, in a wholesale scheme for raising poultry. Chambers of Commerce seemed to assure any man who ever heard the sound of guns a certain prosperity in the midst of an irrigated desert.³⁴

³¹ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 245, 249, 253, 353.

³² Laurence Stallings, Plumes, p. 107.

³³ Ibid., p. 239.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 239.

Most of the veterans wished to work, but there were some discharged soldiers who, as Stallings expresses it, "would be ex-soldiers until death. Some were boys who were so young when they enlisted that they had not as yet had a chance to decide upon their life work, and who, when they were discharged, found all fields so crowded that they had no chance to enter an occupation to find out what they were fitted for. And there were disabled soldiers whose wounds had made them so bitter that they snarled at all attempts of the Government to help them. "Some even went into politics, for astute politicians were combing the crippled ranks for sons-of older statesmen, sensible of their vote-getting qualities. Still less occasionally, some disabled soldier was rehabilitated by his Government and thrown back into the spawning pool of life. Washington swarmed with them."³⁵

At first, "while the nation gasped over the supreme sacrifice,"³⁶ the soldier had a better chance to get work than later on, when the country, back in the solid self-interest of a normal life had time to reconsider and began once more to take account of the veteran's physical fitness when he applied for work. This proved the case with Richard Plume. He had the promise of a position as laboratory assistant in a chain drug store, but when the manager saw that he was crippled, he hesitated. "Suppose you drop back in about six months," he said kindly.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid., p. 92.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 91.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 103.

A study of these novels reveals that the authors were divided in their opinions about where the blame lay for America's entrance into the war. Roughly, there are three schools of thought: (1) President Wilson and the politicians were to blame; (2) It was a collective thought, a mass hysteria; (3) The war was bought on by Germany's actions, and no one was to blame in America. It was unavoidable.

In Plumes, Kenneth Gary blamed President Wilson personally, and he said to Richard: "I was in your frame of mind at the inaugural too. Emma burned my soul to a cinder there, too, when she clapped her hands for Wilson." At Harding's inaugural parade in which Wilson rode down the street, showing plainly his physical weakness, Gary whispered: "Paker.....Wants to prevent war. But still got the hundred men in prison who also tried to prevent it." Richard did not wholly agree with Gary. He said that Wilson had swallowed the same aphorisms that were fed the soldiers. "But I won't admit that he did not speak the truth afterwards at Versailles."

"What does it come to, this shouting the truth?"

"Well, it's the first time it's been shouted loudly by politicians," was Richard's reply.³⁸

Dos Passos' soldiers make no direct accusation against Wilson personally, referring vaguely to the politicians "who got us into war," and wishing the war had gone on till everyone who had got the country into war had been killed in it.³⁹

³⁸ Id., p. 220.

³⁹ John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers, p. 214.

Boyd, who saw as much action at the front as did Dos Passos or Stallings, is singularly devoid of bitterness toward the President for his part in the war. The only reference to him is made by Hicks. When Hicks slept on duty and was facing the possibility of a court martial, he thought: "But no, wasn't there a general order recently made to the effect that no one in the Expeditionary Forces could be executed without permission of President Wilson?.....Good of old horse-face to think of that."⁴⁰ Once, in battle, "he thought of the Allied armies waiting for the war to be over, so that they might return to their homes and children, and he felt protective toward them. He thought of President Wilson, bearing the burden of the saving of civilization on his thin, scholarly shoulders, and he felt paternal toward him."⁴¹

Struthers Burt is also one of the earlier writers who does not blame Wilson for the war. Burt was in the Service, but was not sent overseas. Perhaps this accounts for his tolerance, but whatever the cause, the difference between his opinion of the President and that of Stallings is striking, for the two books appeared the same year. Stallings' service and his would may have made him bitter; but whatever the reason, Burt has the more tolerant outlook:

Gulian thought of the really great and sick man in his retreat in Washington. A brooding eagle; a real American of the ponderous decline; not the 'one hundred per cent American' of small towns and smaller meannesses, but the American with the falcon nose of the breed which had pushed forward frontiers of land and thought.

⁴⁰ Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat, p. 30-31.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 239.

Nothing left of this brooding eagle much but flame. Selfish, near-sighted where other men were concerned, inhuman, Jesuitical, but brave to folly, great-horizoned, a poet, an artist, a passionate lover of his nation, an emperor, a bagle call. The world rewarded well its rarer spirits. No man could attempt to tell the ultimate truth and not be slain....⁴²

Mrs. Fisher whose novel appeared almost ten years after some of this group takes a tolerant attitude about the parts Wilson played in the war. She stated the attitude of the French people, which was almost worship of the president when he first declared war. His pictures were everywhere in France, and only praise was heard of him. His Fourteen Points won universal admiration. But as time passed and he was unable to fulfill all the promises he had made, the French people lost faith in both him and their own grasping, selfish leaders. At the dinner given by the Peace Delegation in Paris, Matey was disgusted to hear her own countrymen speak so lightly of Wilson when they said:

Our policy.....is to let the Old Man talk. He loves to.....makes a nice occupation for him. When it comes to what is going to be done he won't have a look-in! He can't! the big world is no college campus!⁴³

The French opinion of Wilson is shown in the world of Madame Vinet:

I've seen, too, that the older diplomats hated him. Already the tone of our newspapers is changing, is hostile, belittling to him.....It is natural that the materialists should be in power in America too. Your President may go down to complete failure at the Peace Conference. All those in power want him to fail

⁴² Struthers Burt, The Interpreter's House, p. 315.

⁴³ Dorothy Canfield Fisher, The Deepening Stream, p. 335.

and will find a way to make him fail. But what if it? Did you ever hear of a man with a noble idea who succeeded in his own lifetime? What he is doing..... is sowing a seed that no European in power would dream of sowing.....⁴⁴

Thus Mrs. Fisher, writing several years after those who were so bitter against Wilson, seeks to explain his failure in national terms instead of in personal vituperation of the man himself.

Marquand, like Dos Passos, Boyd and Stallings, saw much action at the front. Like Boyd, he was not embittered by his experiences. His novel, written more than twenty years after the war, has the advantage of a larger perspective on the veteran's angle and the political situation. He does not blame President Wilson for getting America into the war. He lays the blame upon the people. He says that as the war in Europe progressed and it became plain that the Allies could not win it unaided, "there was a dread which lay behind nearly everyone's thoughts and words--a mass emotion--and perhaps this was all that ever caused a war--a mass contagious thought shared by all the people.....the phenomenon of a people drifting into war.....it had been a collective impulse beyond the power of any group to stop.....there was nothing you could do about it." Marquand illustrates how the war movement was furthered. Jeffrey Wilson worked for a newspaper, and each day as new atrocities came to them or Germany

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 351-352.

grew more demanding, the newspaper men said among themselves that "it was a good thing that election was coming, for there might be a few men left in the country who were not glad that Woodrow Wilson had kept us out of war."⁴⁵

Willa Cather too recognized the collective impulse that drove America toward war. She described effects of the German guns, with the statement that the sound of these guns "introduced the greater-than-man force.....giving warning that an unprecedented power of destruction had broken loose in the world."⁴⁶ This was the mass fear of which Marquand speaks. Miss Cather does not blame Wilson personally for getting America into war. Instead, when Germany delivered her mandate of unrestricted warfare, Willa Cather says, through Mrs. Wheeler: ".....It isn't possible that Washington can take such an affront for us."⁴⁷

Lincoln, too, believed that war was brought about by the actions of Germany herself and that the people desired it, as illustrated in the following passage from The Portygee:

Germany delivered to our Government its arrogant mandate concerning unlimited submarine warfare. A long-suffering President threw patience overboard and answered that mandate in unmistakable terms. Congress stood at his back and behind them a united and indignant people. The United States declared war upon the Hun.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ John P. Marquand, So Little Time, p. 203-204.

⁴⁶ Willa Cather, One of Ours, p. 137.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 227.

⁴⁸ Joseph C. Lincoln, The Portygee, p. 233.

Except for Willa Cather, these authors make no attempt to go into the economic causes of the war. They confine themselves to the soldiers' personal reactions toward the war and their personal opinions of President Wilson.

Conclusions

A summary of this chapter shows that the authors' aims are to present the veterans' difficulties in adjusting themselves to the world they found upon their return home from the Service. All of the authors discuss the veteran except Thomas Boyd, whose novel, Through the Wheat, closes before the war ended. Some characteristics common to the returned veterans, according to the writers, were moodiness, restlessness, and an unwillingness to speak of their experiences in battle. Another result of their experiences was the destruction of their time-sense. It left them with the feeling that there was so little time left to do all the things that they wished to do, and made short those years that were to follow. Another attitude of the veterans was anger at themselves for what they considered their stupidity in submitting to being sent to war without at least a protest. Another cause of the soldier's bewilderment after the war was that he returned to a world whose social attitude had changed. The women were discarding many of the social restraints with which they had bound themselves in the past; the freedom with which they went about was a disturbing note to the veteran who had been away several months or years. A more practical disturbance where women were concerned was the fact that they had usurped many of the business positions in the absence of

the men, and their refusal to give them up and retire once more to their homes had added to the unemployment situation among the men. Rents and food were high, and this added to the veteran's troubles. The employment situation had changed, and apparently for the worse, as time went on. The world, which could not do enough for him in wartime and immediately upon his return home, was forgetting him rapidly. If he wanted work, the employer thought first about his physical fitness for the work, and often ended by not employing a disabled man. This unfair discrimination only served to make the veteran more bitter. Comparison of the veterans' opinions on politics leads to the inference that the authors themselves held widely varying opinions as to the part President Wilson played in the entrance of America into the war. Some held President Wilson and the politicians wholly responsible. Others thought that the mass hysteria of the people pushed the nation into the war, and still others took the more widespread opinion that the aggressions of Germany finally proved to be more than a self-respecting nation could endure.

CONCLUSION

Each preceding chapter of this thesis has discussed in detail the various phases of World War I as found in the eight novels, The Portygee, Three Soldiers, One of Ours, Through the Wheat, Plumes, The Interpreter's House, The Deepening Stream, and So Little Time. An attempt has been made to blend the information conveyed in these books into a consistent picture of World War I. Certain definite trends have been clearly revealed by this study which have led to the following conclusions:

1. These eight novelists ably presented their views of World War I.
2. These authors take seriously their responsibility for giving an accurate picture of the war as they saw it.
3. The novelists have each written on the phase of the war with which they were most familiar. Joseph C. Lincoln presents the New Englander's outlook on war, in The Portygee. The American doughboy in France is pictured by Thomas Boyd in Through the Wheat, and John Dos Passos, in his novel, Three Soldiers. France and French people are pictured in The Deepening Stream and One of Ours. The city of Washington and its political significance are seen in Plumes, and fashionable New York is pictured in The Interpreter's House. Connecticut and the surrounding vicinity twenty years after World War I are

pictured in the setting for So Little Time.

4. Soldiers from the varied walks of life have been presented by these authors: the "poor white" of the South and the descendant of Southern aristocrats; the farm boy from the Middle West or New England and the New York socialite; the middle-class soldier from San Francisco and the backwoods lout from the Indiana hills; the farmer, the musician, the office worker, the doctor, the teacher, the wealthy playboy, the reporter, the bank cashier, and many others. These have been subjected to critical analysis by their creators.

5. The psychological, human, social and political side of the soldier and of war have been well presented in these novels.

6. Joseph C. Lincoln portrays war and the war hero as the normal civilian saw it at the time of his writing, and the picture was true of the civilian and of many thousands of the returned soldiers. Albert Speranza, the soldier, was not permanently embittered by his months in a German hospital and prison camp, and this was true of many of the soldiers.

7. John Dos Passos pictured the exceptional, almost morbid types of soldiers in his novel, Three Soldiers. His picture is not a picture of the majority of soldiers, but their counterparts were too numerous to ignore. His book is a psychological study of the effect of army discipline and boredom on the exceptional soldier and the book shows Dos Passos to be a

pacifist and a propagandist at heart. The book leaves the reader feeling depressed and frustrated.

8. Willa Cather's pictures of French villages and the French people are more true to life than her soldiers and battle, for with the first she had had practical experience, and with the second she had not. Her officers are too good, her soldiers too cooperative, too satisfied with army discipline to be true to life. One of Ours leaves one with the feeling that her knowledge of her subject was second-hand, and not her own experience. The book has been labeled a comparative failure, although it won the Pulitzer Prize in 1922.

9. Thomas Boyd has been called the "gallant reporter", and his novel, Through the Wheat, is a day-by-day reporter's account of battle. His novel has the ring of authenticity. It is an excellent psychological study of the crushing effect of continuous battle on human nerves and mind. He proves his ability to see the drama in battle. His picture is of the normal doughboy who goes along day by day. He fights, and drinks, and complains about the food, the Y. M. C. A., the officers, the slowness of the mail, the hospitals and the orderlies. He fights and dies, accepting battle as a part of war. He shares what he can find or buy with his buddies and expects the same kindness of them. If his comrade is wounded or gassed or shell-shocked, he takes him to where he can get treatment, even under shell-fire.

10. Laurence Stallings wages a warfare of bitter propaganda against war. Plumes is an indictment of the stupidity of higher officials and politicians who push a nation into war. Stallings' chief concern is the safety of the younger generation and what can be done about keeping them out of war. Like The Deepening Stream, Plumes leaves the reader feeling depressed and insecure.

11. Struthers Burt presents a picture of a hectic, disorganized, and demoralized postwar world. He pictures the bewilderment of the veteran who, after four years' absence, comes home to New York, where the postwar unrest is exaggerated because of the size and sophistication of the city.

12. Dorothy Canfield Fisher gives a sympathetic and pathetic picture of French civilians and soldiers during World War I, and she gives generous praise to America for her aid with soldiers and supplies, and with the services of the Red Cross. She has almost a divided philosophy; Matey shows her gladness that the United States has come to the aid of France, but Adrian shows disillusionment, and a feeling that the war was all wrong; that nothing ever is gained by force and that he would have been more true to his conviction that war is wrong if he had not even come over to drive an ambulance, but had stayed at home and gone to prison for avoiding the draft, rather than enlisted to help. The Deepening Stream is one of those books that leave the read-

er as confused on the subject of war as Adrian Fort himself, and almost convinced of the hopelessness and futility of trying to carry on. But The Deepening Stream has been judged one of Mrs. Fisher's finest works.

13. In So Little Time, Marquand presents a problem that is probably universal with war veterans: that of trying to forget an unforgettable past. He shows how the past confronts him at every turn--like an old phonograph record that is played twice. He notes the similarity of the campaign slogans of Presidents Wilson and Roosevelt: "Keep our boys out of war". His memory of the shortness of time for soldiers prompts him to come to the support of his son Jim when Jim wishes to marry before being sent overseas. So Little Time draws a convincing picture of the similarity of the preliminaries to World War I and World War II.

14. A survey of these novels shows that the early bitterness of Stallings and John Dos Passos toward President Wilson and their tendency to blame him for failure to establish a permanent peace has given way, by 1930, to the more fair and restrained viewpoint of Dorothy Canfield Fisher and that the blame is beginning to shift to his foreign and American political associates. By 1945, when So Little Time appeared, the President is no longer blamed for starting the war; the blame is laid on the people, the newspapers, British war propaganda, and the insolence of Germany whose ultimatum concerning submarine warfare left America no choice but to fight for her right to freedom of the seas.

15. In only two of these novels is there a conventional happy ending. These are The Portygee and The Interpreter's House. The remaining six are pacifistic propaganda and come to no definite or optimistic ending.

16. Four of the authors present war from the viewpoint of "one who knows." Dos Passos served in both the ambulance and Medical Corps. Stallings was a captain of Marines and lost a leg at Belleau Wood. Boyd fought at Belleau Wood, Soissons, and St. Mihiel until put out of action by a gas shell at Mont Blanc. Marquand was a first lieutenant and participated in the Meuse-Alsne, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne offensives. Although Mrs. Fisher was not near the front, her husband drove an ambulance in France and she was in France for three years during the war, first helping blinded French soldiers and later at a convalescent home for refugee French children.

17. Three Soldiers was a school of literature marked by profanity and immorality which came into vogue in 1924-25. The tone of his times perhaps accounts for the unusual frankness of the writer.

A study of the novels of Stallings and Dos Passos seems to indicate that they considered war a futile, horrifying disaster in which Americans should never have allowed themselves to become involved. Mrs. Fisher indicated the same viewpoint in Adrian's reaction. Lincoln and Willa Cather indicate that there was no other course open to America except war.

18. America's part in the war, as revealed by these authors, shows a country so absorbed in its own affairs and so ignorant of the situation of affairs in Europe that it was slow to respond to the fact that a war was being fought. But through immigrant friends, through propaganda appeals for supplies from the foreign countries, particularly England, through newspaper accounts of German atrocities, and finally through the sinking of American ships, America became war-conscious. When the German ultimatum concerning submarine warfare came, America declared war. After war was declared, the civilian did his part by enlisting, by purchasing Victory Bonds, by observing heatless and meatless days, by Red Cross activities, and in many other ways. The pacifists were summarily condemned. There was the less praiseworthy side of America - profiteering, pro-German and anti-German attitudes.

19. A study of the American soldier as presented by these writers shows a composite picture of the enlisted man, the American doughboy, who fought, drank, gambled, joked with his comrades and railed privately at his superior officers. He stood by his comrades in trouble. Some were cowards, some foolhardy; but the majority fought and died bravely. His philosophy of life was much the same as that of his comrades; that he was foolish either to have allowed himself to be drafted or to have volunteered for service, and if he lived through this war no power could make him get into another. He went into the war at first eager for action but after a few weeks of battle

his nerves were wrecked and he had lost many of his first illusions and ideals.

20. The officers, like the soldiers, were as apt to come from the working world as from the leisured classes. Often, the sergeants and corporals were more pompous and intolerant than the commissioned officers. Some officers were kind and generous; some were inclined to take advantage of their authority to make life harder for the men over whom they had charge. A few, for the sake of glory, ordered their men into attacks without a protecting barrage, where they were needlessly slaughtered by the hundreds. The M. P.'s were the most hated of all, and in Paris after the Armistice with good cause, for their horrifying brutality. Both Boyd and Dos Passos mention this fact.

21. The conclusions drawn from a study of these books are that battle was horrifying and nerve-wracking, often driving the soldiers into insanity. It mutilated their bodies and the different types of gas burned their flesh, blinded them, or destroyed their lungs. In battle, the water sometimes gave out and food could not be brought to them for hours or days. The dugouts were infested with rats and lice, and the trenches deep in mud. Rain and the resultant mud made for hard traveling, for filty, discomfort and sickness. The heat also brought suffering to men penned in trenches or in the open under fire; it heated their helmets as hot as frying pans; sweat blinded them and soaked their clothes, and made

them miserable. The heat aggravated the odor of decay from the unburied dead, which was almost overpowering at best.

22. The universal opinion of these writers who saw action overseas is that the food was bad. Referred to as "slum", it lived up to its name. It was most often a stew consisting of potatoes and bad meat. After battles in which the Americans were successful, they searched the dead Germans' packs for canned salmon, bread, chocolate, and other tasty foods. In battles that lasted for days, when there was no chance to cook, the soldier ate canned Argentine beef which was so unpalatable as to be nauseating. After eating, the soldier had to wash his own mess kit in a greasy tub where hundreds of other kits had been washed. Sometimes the soldiers were able to obtain good food at the French towns near where they were camped, but not often for the French themselves were short of good food. Wine could usually be obtained, however.

23. The soldiers' amusements were few. They had passes at times and could spend a few hours in nearby towns. There were picture shows in the camps, but these were sometimes war propaganda showing German outrages and therefore could hardly be classed as amusements.

In France, soldiers could go to the villages on leave or perhaps to Paris. The soldiers who landed in Paris were avid for the amusements the town offered, and some went on the mild adventure of sight-seeing tours. Paris was new, and they wanted to see all that was possible of that city while

there. French cafes often offered a doubtful form of entertainment detrimental to the soldier's morals and his health. But the French civilians often entertained the soldiers at their homes and were courteous and kind to them. The farmers allowed the armies the use of their barns for shelter and they sheltered the officers in their homes. The Y. M. C. A. hut afforded a meeting place for the soldiers, and was sometimes able to offer magazines and such prized articles as chocolate, soap, cigarettes and stationery. Unfortunately, the "Y" secretary was not always liked, and this discounted the good he might have done. He was often suspected by the soldiers of having entered this work to avoid the draft and for this they had a hearty contempt for him. He was often mean-spirited and mercenary. His idea of patriotism was to urge the soldiers to fight harder and he labored under the delusion that the soldier liked killing his enemy. He was tactless with the soldiers and fawningly affable to the officers.

24. Study of these novels reveals that Dos Passos does not picture postwar America at all, nor does Thomas Boyd. Willa Cather devotes the last chapter to the soldier after his return to America, but it is superficial and of little help in diagnosing the situation. A part of Lincoln's novel is of the postwar world, and his analysis of Albert Speranza as the sobered, down-to-earth veteran gives an excellent view of the changes wrought upon the veteran after he had been through some of the worse experiences of war. Flumes gives valuable insight into the mental outlook and the economic status of the returned

veteran. The Deepening Stream devotes very little space to postwar America at home, but gives interesting views of the political situation as it was shaping up in Paris, and a depressing picture of the Peace Conference delegates from America. The Interpreter's House and So Little Time are staged entirely in the postwar era, the former about 1921, the latter in 1941, with frequent flash-backs to the periods just preceding the war, through the war, and after peace was declared.

25. Stallings shows a picture of President Wilson, out of power, broken in health and spirits by his failure to negotiate satisfactory peace terms and by the failure of the United States to enter the League of Nations. The Democrats were out and the Republicans were in, and Wilson, a broken old man, was retiring, while Harding, personally attractive but lacking financial and political acumen, was taking his place. The business world was not so secure as it seemed on the surface, and there was the attitude, as Struthers Burt expressed it, of "getting business by hook or crook - mostly crook." There were thousands of unemployed veterans. Some of these would never be able to hold a job permanently because war had made them unfitted to do so. They were either resentful of all efforts to help them or had been so young when they entered the war that they had not had time to decide upon a life work, and now found themselves at a loss as to the type of work they were best fitted to do or would prefer.

26. Socially, the world had changed also. The jazz

craze that had existed prior to and during the war was replaced by the languid, tired effect; cabarets and questionable night clubs flourished, along with their ally, the bootlegger; cults like New Thought came into vogue.

27. Socially and in the business world, woman was coming into her own. Even in the higher social circles she went unchaperoned to night clubs, questionable and otherwise. The working woman lived much the same sort of evening life and worked in offices in the daytime. Sometimes she lived in an apartment paid for by her lover. In Washington, when the Democratic administration gave way for the Republicans, those politician lovers left, and the girls whom they had supported were forced to go back home and face "inquisitory elders." Some committed suicide rather than face home disapproval. In the business world, women were coming into their own. The manpower shortage had made an opportunity for new types of work for them and opened new fields for the business side of their nature. Some women ran their husbands' business after they went into the Service, and if the veteran came home crippled or otherwise incapacitated, the wife might prove to be as capable, or more so, than he and continue in her occupation. Thus the war, which ruined so many men, paved the way for greater opportunities for women.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Deep appreciation and thanks are expressed to Miss Helen Elcock, Major Instructor, for her untiring help and advice, and for her assistance in the selection of authors and supplementary material for this thesis.

Thanks are also extended to the staff of Kansas State College library, and to the East Texas State Teachers College library staff, particularly Miss Lora Smith, for her interest in securing needed books from libraries elsewhere and for her suggestions for supplementary material.

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APPENDIX

Summaries of the Novels

The Portygee, 1920. The Portygee is the story of the growth of understanding, love, and respect between a bluff old retired sea captain and his half-Spanish grandson. Albert Speranza, the son of the famous opera singer, Miguel Speranza, and Jane Snow, finds himself orphaned and penniless at the age of eighteen. He came to live with his grandfather in the small New England village of Harniss. Captain Snow hopes to make a business man of Albert and sets him to work as assistant bookkeeper in his lumber yard. He soon discovers, to his disgust, that Albert likes to write poetry, while Albert shows little progress in the business world. One who appreciates his poetry is Madeline Fosdick, wealthy society girl, to whom he becomes engaged. After America's entrance into the war, he enlists and is reported killed. The rumor is false; he returns after the war but he is changed; his poetry no longer appeals to him. He and Madeline no longer share the same interests and feelings, and he becomes engaged to his first love, Helen Kendall, a girl from his own town.

Little space is devoted to Albert's part in the war, but as war information the book is valuable. It shows the patriotism of small towns and the common American, and there is also information concerning the returned veteran and his reactions to conditions as he finds them at home. (The

Portyree was a "best seller" in 1920, see Fifty Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1945).

Three Soldiers. Three Soldiers, which appeared in 1921, is the story of three soldiers of widely differing temperaments and their reactions to the war. Dan Fuselli, employee of a medical company in San Francisco; Chrisfield, a hot-headed, impulsive farm boy from Indiana; and John Andrews, a musician and Yale graduate from Virginia, comprise the trio.

Fuselli likes to fancy himself a man about town and boasts of his past association with women who were "toughies", but when he enlists he is engaged and says he has dropped his wild ways. In the army he dreams hopefully of the time when he can be promoted to the rank of corporal, and he tries hard to be a good soldier. But his lack of character betrays him for he is afraid of so many things. When the time comes to go to the front, he has himself transferred to a place in the medical division which never sees action at the front. His promiscuous adventures end in a venereal disease, and since the army cannot discharge him until he is cured--a remote possibility--he is put on permanent K. P. duty. He is not dissatisfied with the life, for, as he explains to Andrews, he has two days a week off, "no drill, good eats."

Chrisfield is also one of the trio of Three Soldiers. He enters the army with the handicap of a violent temper, and the record of having almost killed a man in a drunken quarrel. Early after enlistment he becomes involved in a fight with a

corporal, Anderson, and attempts to stab him. Andrews rises in rank, while Chrisfield remains a private, and at each successive rise, Anderson becomes more patronizing and overbearing, and Chrisfield increasingly resentful. Chrisfield is courtmartialled after a quarrel with Anderson. After this punishment, Chrisfield hates him more than ever, and during a battle, opportunity offering, he kills Anderson. He feels no remorse but becomes obsessed with the belief that a sergeant knows what he has done; this fear preys upon his mind until he finally deserts from dread of being exposed.

Andrews is the third of this trio. Spoiled from childhood by a thwarted, unhappy mother, he enters the army with a hatred of discipline that amounts almost to a mania. Army routine bores him; the tasks around the camp appear to him the meanest of slavery; he hates all discipline and those whose duty it is to enforce it. He dreams only of music. The Armistice comes in time to save him from desertion, and he is given permission to study music at the University of Paris. But he is caught without a pass, is sent to a prison work camp in Paris, and there escapes and deserts. He is recaptured, and his probable fate is a Federal penitentiary.

One of Ours. One of Ours, which came out in 1922 and won the Pulitzer award for that year, is the story of Claude Wheeler, a Nebraska farm boy. He is frustrated in all that he attempts to do in life; he is forced to attend the wrong college and marries Enid Royce, a pale creature interested in

missionary work and prohibition, and not at all in Claude. She leaves him alone to nurse her sister, who is a missionary in China, and Claude, deserted, finds consolation in army life. Here he merits and wins the respect and friendship he could never find in his cramped life at home. Army life offers to him a challenge; he likes it. In France he finds in the Jouberts and de Courcys the sort of friends he has always dreamed of, and he plans to make his home in France some day. But he does not live to carry out his plans for he dies in the battle of the Argonne.

Through the Wheat. Through the Wheat, which was published in 1923, is the story of Sergeant William Hicks, a marine from Ohio, whose enlistment was inspired by the sight of the campaign ribbons of the recruiting sergeant. After nine months of waiting, Hicks goes into action in the Battle of Soissons. The ensuing weeks are a day-by-day account of what befalls the ordinary soldier at the front, with death everywhere, the thunder of continuous artillery fire in his ears, and the sights and smells of the too-long-unburied dead. Added to that are the intense heat and the discomfort of hours of fighting in a wheat field under a blazing sun, too little rest, and poor food. A sleeping comrade is killed by the falling limb of a tree, and this, added to what has gone before, proves too much for Hicks. His nerves give way; he sees in this misfortune the vengeance of an angry God, and for the first time he begins to be afraid, and to question the rightness of a war which

forces men and nations against their will to hate one another. But he fights doggedly on, and at the end, with soul and senses too numbed to feel fear, he walks directly toward the advancing line of the oncoming Germans.

Plumes. Plumes is the story of Richard Plume, instructor in a small southern college. He is the descendant of a long line of fighting Plumes and when America goes to war, he considers it his duty to enlist, "to follow his ancestors to battle."¹ Months later he is sent home, wounded, a hopeless, suffering cripple, bitter about what he considers an unnecessary war, and bitter about the politicians who made it. He refuses to return to his small denominational college because of his uncertainty as to what he thinks. He works for some time in a government laboratory with another wounded veteran who is even more bitter about the war than himself. He endures two successive stays in the hospital and deep dissatisfaction with the unpleasant housing and the conditions for his wife and child. After his wife has returned to her relatives, he stays in a hostel for unemployed soldiers run by a conscientious objector. He finally gives up and returns to his teaching position.

The Interpreter's House. The Interpreter's House, pub-

¹ Krutch, Joseph Wood, "War and the Willing Victim", Nation, 119: 644, 1924.

lished in 1924, is the story of the perplexities of the Gulian Eyre upon his return from World War I after an absence of four years, part of which was spent in the army, and part in the diplomatic service in Turkey. In New York, he is confused by the new social order which allows so much freedom for women that they themselves are bewildered and unhappy about it. He wishes to enter his father's banking business but is discouraged by his elder brother Philip, whose secret reason is to keep from Gulian the fact that he has embezzled his bank's funds and ruined his father and others involved. So Gulian enters the brokerage firm of his brother-in-law, and there remains until Philip, the business and religious leader of his set, kills himself as a result of his business entanglements. Gulian takes over the business and manages to straighten out the affairs at the bank, with heavy loss but without too much scandal to the family. He makes a success of his efforts and takes over the work, finding in it and in his love for young Lael Satori, a satisfaction that he has never experienced before.

The Deepening Stream. The Deepening Stream was published in 1930. The part important to this study is the story of World War I from the viewpoint of two Americans, Matey Fort and her husband Adrian. At the outbreak of the war, Matey and Adrian are living in the little Quaker town of Rustdorf, New York. Matey and Adrian are immediately responsive to the war situation because of former associations with the French people. Adrian decides to drive an ambulance in France soon

after war is declared. Since he is a Quaker, his conscience forbids him to fight, so he does the next best thing he can conceive of, enlistment for ambulance service. Matey goes with him to aid her friends, the Vinets. She finds much to keep her busy, but Adrian is increasingly dissatisfied with his part in the war. He hates the brutality of it and is ashamed that he finds a secret elation in the business of war. He is convinced that all war is only the wish to hurt and wishes he had never compromised in war even so much as to drive an ambulance. Matey, who has begun to have misgivings also, is made more unhappy yet by this talk. The Armistice brings with it delegates to the Peace Conference, and Matey has a close view of them and their materialistic ideas. When she sees the spectacle of the defeat of Wilson's ideas and ideals at the hands of all the Peace delegates, the disillusionment of the French people, their shattered faith in their leaders and in Wilson, and their heartbreak in the realization that their loved ones died for a lost ideal, she is ready to return home. Adrian, too, is unhappy and disillusioned, so they return to America, not happy but resolved to take up life and do their duty. She goes to work in the bank with Adrian, and in working together they find a measure of contentment.

So Little Time. So Little Time, which was published in 1941, is the story of Joffrey Wilson, a veteran of World War I, and of his reactions at the approach of World War II. The story links clearly the two wars by means of flash-backs and

interprets the approaching war in the light of the first war. Jeffrey sees in the war propaganda of "gallant rebuke" merely an old record being played over again. He sees again, in the visiting Englishmen who come to America for aid, the intimation of England in the first World War that she is fighting with her back to the wall and that the Americans are letting their blood brothers down. He sees the similarity between Wilson's and Roosevelt's election campaign slogans, "Keep our boys out of war." As World War II approaches, it brings to him memories of scenes of horror from his own battle experiences, and he suffers in the knowledge that his son Jim will probably have to undergo similar experiences. When Jim falls in love, he encourages him to marry because he realizes that with war impending, Jim may not have much time to live. He wishes Jim to have life and love while he can. He himself tries to enlist, but is rejected.

The Authors

Since the attitudes toward war of the authors considered in this thesis seem to run parallel with their experiences in the war, it has been considered best to give a brief biography of each author to explain his picture of World War I.

Joseph Crosby Lincoln (1870-1944), American novelist and humorist, was born in Brewster, Massachusetts on Cape Cod. He spent his winters as a boy in Boston and his summers on the Cape. After high school, he worked in a broker's office, later in the commercial advertising business, and afterwards as editor and publisher of a small paper, The Bulletin. He began writing poetry, and in 1905 published his first novel, Cap'n Eri, and became famous.¹ He wrote many stories of the Cape Cod region. Since he was in his forties during World War I, he did not see service. His novel, The Portygee, story of World War I, was on the 1920 list of "Best Sellers."

John Dos Passos (1896-), American novelist, was born in Chicago. He graduated from Harvard, and afterwards went to Spain to study architecture. When the United States declared war, he enlisted as an ambulance driver, and later served in the Medical Corps. After peace was declared, he formed part of the group of expatriates who wrote in Paris, among them Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway. He worked also as a

¹ S. J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft, Twentieth Century Authors, W. W. Wilson Company, New York. p. 829. 1942.

newspaper correspondent and free lance writer in Spain, Mexico, New York, and the Near East, as well as in London, Brussels and Paris. His first novel, One Man's Initiation, was mediocre; but his second, Three Soldiers,² has been considered one of the more powerful and effective indictments of war. His travels and experiences had given him a wide sympathy for the "little man", and it is of the little man that he writes in Three Soldiers. His later novels, Manhattan Transfer, and the trilogy, U. S. A., are more experimental in style but exhibit the same disillusion as Three Soldiers. Dos Passos also has considerable non-fiction to his credit, such as essays, verse, and travel lectures. When not traveling, he lives on Cape Cod, writing, drawing or painting.³

Willa Cather (1875-1947), American novelist, was born in Winchester, Virginia but moved to Red Cloud, Nebraska when a very small child. She was educated at the University of Nebraska. Later she became editor and dramatic critic of The Daily Leader. After wards, she taught English in a high school in Pennsylvania. She published a volume of verse and several short stories, was for a time editor of McClure's Magazine, and worked as a free lance writer in New York. She traveled a great deal in Europe and America and was in Europe when the second World

² Joseph Collins, "Taking the Literary Pulse", George H. Doran and Company, New York. p. 160, 1924.

³ Kunitz and Haybroft, op. cit., p. 392.

War began.⁴ She has received five honorary degrees from different universities. She was awarded the Pulitzer prize for her novel, One of Ours, but it is not considered, by critics, to be her best novel. She has many novels to her credit, but has written comparatively little in recent years.

Thomas Boyd (1898-1935), novelist and short-story writer, was born in Defiance, Ohio. He left school at eighteen to enlist in the Marine Corps. He fought at Belleau Wood, Soissons, and St. Mihiel, until put out of action by a gas shell at Mont Blanc. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre.⁵ After his discharge in 1919, he worked in a newspaper office in St. Paul, along with Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, and others. Through the Wheat, his first novel, appeared while he was literary critic of the St. Paul News. Afterward he lived in Woodstock, where several of his historical and biographical studies were written. Other novels appeared, among them The Dark Cloud, Points of Honor, and Shadow of the Long Knives. Some of his works have been published posthumously, among them a continuation of the story of Sergeant Hicks, hero of the war novel, Through the Wheat. This continuation of the story of Hicks is In Time of Peace, and represents Hicks, the discharged, disillusioned veteran, after his return to civilian life.

Laurence Stallings (1894-), American playwright, novelist and critic, was born in Macon, Georgia. He was edu-

⁴ Kunitz and Haycroft, op. cit., p. 258.

⁵ Kunitz and Haycroft, op. cit., p. 173.

cated at Wake Forest College and at Georgetown University. As a captain of Marines in World War II, he lost a leg at Belleau Wood. After the war he did newspaper work in Washington. Later he went to New York, where he worked first as copy writer on the New York World, and in a short time became dramatic critic, then literary editor. While working on the World, he met Maxwell Andersen, and from Captain Stallings' war experiences they made together the play, What Price Glory? Later came Plumes, sometimes referred to as propaganda. "Plumes", Mr. Robert Littell is quoted as saying, "is about one of these men who don't see what the world got in exchange for their leg."⁶ The novel sold rather well on the reputation of What Price Glory?, but it came a little too early for the vogue of novels debunking the war,⁷ and did not have the success it deserved and therefore Stallings did not attempt another.⁸ He turned to motion pictures with The Big Parade, which was a sensation. Later he was editor-in-chief of the Fox Movietone System, and is now editor and compiler of a photographic history of the war. He is still writing for the movies, in Hollywood.

Maxwell Struthers Burt (1882-), American novelist, poet, and short story writer, was born in Baltimore and

⁶ Robert Littell, "Plumes", New Republic, 40:394-395, 1924.

⁷ Kunitz and Haycraft, op. cit., p. 392.

⁸ Krutch, Joseph Wood, "War and the Willing Victim," Nation, 119: 644, 1924.

brought up in Philadelphia. A graduate of Princeton University, he spent a year in the University of Munich, and a year and a half at Oxford. He returned to teach at Princeton, and during the summers he went west and wrote poems and stories. During the war he served in the aviation corps, but he never went overseas while in service.⁹ Finally he settled in Wyoming where he has a ranch. His stories are autobiographical.¹⁰ The war impressed him as is shown in Shining Armor (Harper's, July, 1919), and The Blood Red One (Scribner's, November, 1919). The Interpreter's House is also influenced by the war. It is the story of the chaotic conditions of New York after the Armistice, both in a social and in an economic sense. It also pictures the bewilderment of the war veteran who returns to New York a year or so after the peace. Struthers Burt is also the author of verse, and short stories, and articles. He wrote an excellent series on American seaports, and Philadelphia: Noble Experiment? is a book-length history, which he describes as "not a history but a novelistic civic biography".¹¹ This appeared in 1941.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher (1879-), American novelist, and short story writer, was born at Lawrence, Kansas. Her father

⁹ Kunitz and Hayercroft, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

¹⁰ Blanche Colton Williams, "Our Short Story Writers", Dodd, Mead and Company, New York. p. 367, 1925.

¹¹ Wayne Card, "Review of Philadelphia: Noble Experiment", Dallas News, April 8, 1945.

had been president of two universities before he became librarian at Columbia. She had a year's schooling in Paris at the age of ten, at which time she learned to speak French fluently. She is a graduate of Ohio State University, has earned a doctor's degree at the Sorbonne and Columbia, and is a member of the National Institute of Arts and letters. Before and during the war she lived much in France. In the First World War she went to Paris and did war work in France helping refugee French children and blind French soldiers.¹² Her husband also went to France before America declared war, and drove an ambulance. After the war they returned to America, where for many years she has lived among the hills of Vermont. The stories of her work in France are embodied in the book Home Fires in France. The Deepening Stream is also an autobiographical account of her experiences in France, woven into a novel. The story of the war is only a part of the plot, however, the latter half only being devoted to the war.

John Phillips Marquand (1893-), was born in Wilmington, Delaware.¹³ He is a novelist, short-story writer, author of detective fiction, and winner of the Pulitzer Prize. After graduating from the Newburyport High School, he graduated from Harvard in 1915. Afterwards he was a reporter on the

¹² B. A. Heydrick, Americans All. Harcourt, Brace and Co. New York. p. 222, 1921.

¹³ Henry Seidel Canby, "So Little Time", Book of the Month Club News, August, 1943.

Easton Transcript. During the war, he was a First Lieutenant in the Fourth Brigade, Field Artillery, A. E. F., and participated in the Meuse-Aisne, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne offensives. After the war he worked in the magazine department of the New York Tribune. He wrote many stories for the Saturday Evening Post. He writes novels, short stories, magazine serials and articles, and he still writes for the Post. He now divides his time between Kent's Island, Newburyport, Massachusetts, and New York City. His novel, So Little Time, a best seller in 1943,¹⁴ is perhaps his best. Its treatment is unique, linking as it does World War I and World War II through the memories and experiences of Jeffrey Wilson, veteran of World War I.

¹⁴ Alice Payne Hockett, Fifty Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1945, R. R. Bowker Company, New York. p. 125, 1945.