

History 225

Primer Notes on Embattled Courage(1987)

Military historian Russell Weigley hailed this book "as the best account in American historical literature of what it is like to experience battle."

Would class agree with this assessment?

Linderman's sources here are the personal letters and diaries of those men on both sides who volunteered for service in 1861-1862. It does not include later groups like conscripts, bounty men, and black soldiers.

Dichotomy--Courage's war. It was courage that was the binding force of the first stages of the war for both sides.

Then came the disillusionment as it does in all wars. Linderman charges that the disillusionment among the men in the Civil War was greater than in any other American war, even the Vietnam war.

The changing nature of the war. From 1861-1863 the war was one of great battles that raged for a day or perhaps several days followed by long protracted periods of reconstitution, refitting, settled camp life, and waiting for the next engagement.

This all changes by 1864 in the east when Grant faces Lee. Then the fighting is continuous; day after day with a let up. It was like being in a train wreck a couple of times a week with a plane crash thrown in every month or so.