Summer Reading Study Guide:

War by Sebastian Junger

The Summer Reading program, sponsored by the English Department at Padua Franciscan High School, is designed to entice students to read and recognize notable contemporary literature. We wish to engage student interest, encourage critical thinking, and challenge our students as readers. As such, some titles on the list may contain sensitive material and deal with more mature themes than some students may have encountered previously. The target audience of all the selected literature is young adults; however, not every book will suit every reader, which is why there are different titles from which students may choose. More information about all of the novels can be found through the local libraries or through amazon.com.

Students are requested to share their Summer Reading choice with their parents and/or guardians. Additionally, the English Department strongly encourages students and parents/guardians to discuss the content, themes, and overall inherent literary value of the selected novels.

Happy Reading!

General Note: These reading questions are meant only as a guide to the novel. These will not be collected or graded. Your grade on the novel will be based on an objective test and a follow-up essay that will be given within the first week of school. For your own benefit, it is highly suggested that you also keep a list of major plot happenings, characters, settings, etc. per chapter. We look forward to seeing you in August!!!

1. How would Sebastian Junger’s relationship be described? Was he treated as an outsider by the soldiers or was he welcomed by the soldiers and respected allowing him to write and describe their lives so intimately?

2. Numerous three letter acronyms are used within the military and detailed by Sebastian Junger, what are some of the main ones used within the book?

3. Why was the fighting in the Korengal Valley so deadly? What made waging war so difficult? Was it the terrain? Was it the enemy? Was it the rules of engagement? Or, was it a combination of the three?

4. Why did Sebastian Junger embed with a company, specifically a platoon? Does this provide him with greater insight into warfare and the details of the men’s lives?

5. Due to Sebastian Junger’s relationship with the men, does he describe the idealistic view of why the men joined the military for “mom, country and apple pie” or for other reasons? While fighting, what is the soldiers’ ultimate goal during combat and who are they fighting for?

6. Sebastian Junger provides details of studies by the Army and an English anthropologist did studies on the human interaction and behavior within groups, what was the number that was settled upon by the English anthropologist in the optimal group number for interpersonal relationships and how does this affect the organization of the Army?

7. The sarcasm and odd forms of humor acted out by the soldiers aids the soldiers in coping with the stress of war and being far away from home and civilization, what are some of the actions performed by the soldiers?

8. When in combat the men describe what combat is like and what happens with the body. How does one soldier describe the effects of combat and what adrenaline does to the body?

9. What is the relationship between men and God in the Korengal? Does religion play an important part of the book or is religion something that is distant for the men?

10. Assaults are continuously present throughout the book. Describe some of the assaults that occurred, and was an assault of Restrepo a significant fear of Sebastian Junger?
**Vocabulary Words**

SAW (n.) – Squad Automatic Weapon

Fobbits (n.) – Soldiers stationed on forward operating bases in Afghanistan (pp. 43)

Lokhay warkawal (n.) – honor code with the Pashtun in Kunar Province that requires an individual be cared for if that individual comes to your doorstep begging for help no matter the cost to the community (pp. 51)

Kevlar (n.) – another name for the helmet worn by the soldiers (pp. 77)

Speedballs (n.) – body bags filled with resupplies thrown out of moving helicopters (pp. 94)

Shura (n.) – a meeting of tribal, village, or religious elders to discuss differences and come to conclusions (pp. 98)

Choreography (v.) - You lay down fire while I run forward, then I cover you while you move your team up (pp. 120)

S-2 (n.) - The designation for the military intelligence officer (pp. 134)

Unadulterated (adj.) - Not mixed or diluted with any different or extra elements; complete and absolute: "pure, unadulterated jealousy" (pp. 145)

Truncated (adj.) - Shortened by or as if by having a part cut off; cut short (pp. 155)

Detainee (n.) – An enemy individual captured on the battlefield (pp. 156)

Contour (v.) – To mold or shape so as to fit a certain configuration (pp. 181)

Fatalistic (n.) – The acceptance of all things as inevitable; submission to fate (pp. 210)

Mefloquine (n.) – A drug used to prevent or treat malaria (pp. 220)

Dopamine (n.) – A neurotransmitter that mimics the effect of cocaine in the brain that gets released when a person wins a game or solves a problem. It exists in both sexes but is stronger in men making men more likely to become obsessed with hunting, gambling and war. (pp. 238)

Ostracism (n.) – Exclusion by general consent from social acceptance, privilege and friendships (pp. 246)

Right Seat/Left Seat (n.) – The process of training a new group of men where one week the old unit leads a patrol. The second week the new unit leads a patrol. The passage of tactical knowledge from one unit to another. (pp. 250)

Pathfinder (n.) – Units designed to clear routes for other units to move in (pp. 261)

Sustenance (n) – The means of livelihood (pp. 178)

Pinned Down (n.) – Being unable to move to another location due to being under fire (pp. 55)