

SYNOPSIS

Fifteen-year-old Jack Raab, a Polish-American Jew from the Bronx, New York, is determined to fight Hitler. Using his older brother Irving's birth certificate, Jack manages to enlist in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1944. No one suspects Jack's true age, which he is careful to conceal. At gunnery school, Jack becomes best friends with Chuckie O'Brien, an Irish-American youth who is also from the Bronx. During training in Louisiana, Jack gets to know his other crew members while he eagerly and impatiently learns the necessary skills for combat flights while dreaming of the heroic exploits in his future. Homesick but unable to write home (he's told his family he's traveling out west), Jack calls an eighteen-year-old girl from Brooklyn he met during basic training, Dotty Landon. They promise to write. Jack spends the day with Dotty on a final furlough before shipping out, and they share a kiss goodbye that thrills Jack. Jack and his crew are sent to Northumberland Air Base in England. Their first bombing mission is over Berlin. As they enter the bombing zone and enemy flak surrounds them, Jack is terrified, but the crew and their plane return safely. The missions pile up, one after another, and Jack finds he is increasingly nervous and jumpy in between missions, his stomach knots up during flights, and he is always dead tired. His dream of destroying Hitler fades. He simply lives through the war day by day and thinks of going home and seeing Dotty and his family at war's end.

By late April 1945 the Allied armies are closing in on the Germans. Concentration camps are liberated, and Jack reads about the gassing and the ovens, and sees the pictures of the stacked bodies and skeletal survivors. Just after Jack turns sixteen, his crew is sent on a bombing mission to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Their plane is hit. Chuckie's head is blown away. Jack and Dave Gonzalez, the ball-turret gunner, bail out. Germans on the ground shoot at the airmen as they float down in their parachutes. Dave seems to be hit, but Jack makes it to the ground and evades the soldiers for two days before he is captured and brought to a military air base. Brought from there to a hospital with other wounded American airmen (Jack's feet are severely blistered, and a bullet grazed his leg), Jack expresses disgust with and hatred for the Germans he encounters, even though the wounded German soldiers at the hospital are friendly toward him. All Jack can think of is what the Nazis have done to the Jews in the camps, and what happened to Chuckie and the rest of his crew.

Two German guards, Willy and Karl, march Jack and a fellow American flier, Stan Wakowski, south toward the Austrian Alps. The rest of the Germans in Czechoslovakia are also headed south, fleeing the approaching Russian troops. Willy says he and Karl are planning to surrender to the Americans when they reach Allied lines. On the week-long trek, and on his trip back to Munich as a freed POW, Jack is disturbed at the pervasive

nonmilitary devastation the Allied bombing has caused, a result he'd never thought about before. He begins to see the "enemy" as fellow human beings who have also been severely injured by the war's violence.

Back home, after the initial joy of reunion with his family, Jack finds himself restless, tormented by doubts about the future and disturbing memories of the death of his entire crew, cut off by the gulf of experience from his high school peers and his family members. He finds solace in close friendship—not romance—with Dotty and in relaying to his classmates the lesson he has learned: "War is stupid...one stupid thing after another. It's not about heroes. It's about awful, sad things. I hope war never happens again."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Harry Mazer (1925-) is a professional writer of juvenile fiction and father of four, who lives in New York City with his wife, author Norma Fox Mazer. Before becoming a writer, Mazer worked at various blue-collar jobs—including sheet metal worker, longshoreman, railroad worker, and welder—and also taught English. Several years after their marriage, both Mazers decided they really wanted to be writers, so they began writing in the very early morning hours every day, while their children were asleep. Both became successful authors; Harry Mazer has been a full-time writer since 1963, although he finds writing a difficult process and claims he has no natural talent for it. He has a particular interest in writing about young people's survival, whether physical (as in *Snow Bound*) or moral/ethical—(getting through a crisis in your life). *The Last Mission* is based on Mazer's experience of being shot down over Czechoslovakia in a B-17 bomber during World War II.

CRITICS' CORNER

Mazer's writings for young people are widely admired and have won many awards. *The Last Mission* was named by the *New York Times* as both an Outstanding Book of the Year and a Best Children's Book of the Year for 1979. It also made the ALA's Best Books for Young Adults (1981) and Best of the Best Books (1970-83) lists. The *Horn Book* praised the novel as "a vivid and moving account" and "a skillful, convincing portrayal of [Jack's] misgivings." The *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* found the book to be "a taut, dramatic story that shows in convincing fashion the gradual change from a zealous, idealistic would-be hero to a tough, tired veteran who has seen enough of death and destruction....[T]he details of the story have an authentic quality....[T]here's little moralizing, but the book is an indictment of war as well as a vivid story." Kenneth Donelson, writing in *Voice Of Youth Advocates*, called *The Last Mission* "a brilliant addition to adolescent literature....[I]t conveys better than any other young adult novel...the feeling of war and the desolation it leaves behind....[T]his book is a remarkable achievement, both for its theme and its portrait of a young

THE LAST MISSION

man who searches and acts and finds the search futile and the actions incoherent."

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To gain an understanding of Hitler's war against the Jews
2. To explore the nature of courage, fear, and heroism
3. To analyze the true nature of war and to consider if and when it is ever justified
4. To discuss the experience and effects of war, on both combatants and civilians
5. To consider the difficulties veterans have in readjusting to civilian life after combat, and the reasons for those difficulties
6. To examine the dynamics of camaraderie in dangerous situations
7. To analyze the complexities of family relationships, and the way they change as children mature

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To identify Jack's reasons for enlisting in the army at the age of fifteen
2. To analyze the effects that Jack's Jewishness has on him
3. To understand how and why Jack's ideas about war change
4. To trace Jack's process of maturation
5. To attempt to account for Jack's difficulties in readjusting to civilian life after his return from the war
6. To examine the ways in which Jack's family relationships change because of his wartime experiences
7. To consider the role Dotty plays in Jack's life
8. To gain an understanding of the experience of flying bombing missions over Germany and German-held territories during World War II

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each as it relates to the book. Use the page numbers given in parentheses to reread the term in context if you wish.

1. Nazis (p. 10)
(Members of the National Socialist party, or Nazis, the party of Adolf Hitler that espoused anti-Semitism. Once the Nazis took power in Germany, they began their campaign of persecuting and then eradicating Jews and other ethnic groups, a process they expanded to the countries they took over during World War II. Jack is strongly motivated to enter the war to fight the Nazis and Hitler.)
2. in 1939 when the Germans occupied Poland (p. 10)
(After Hitler secured Austria and Czechoslovakia, he turned to a campaign against Poland. Without warning, his air and ground forces invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. This triggered the outbreak of World War II, as England and France honored obligations to Poland and declared war on Germany. The United States later entered the war after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and now Jack has joined the armed forces to fight Hitler.)
3. the men bailed out, and their chutes opened (p. 22)
(Bailing out of an airplane means descending from a plane via parachute as shown by the phrase "their chutes opened"—this foreshadows Jack and Dave's parachuting out of their crippled plane on the last mission.)

4. "You can expect intense antiaircraft fire." "...his first flak." (pp. 64, 68)
(On bombing runs over Germany, Allied planes faced defense barrages attempting to shoot them down. Flak is another word for antiaircraft guns and also for the bursting shells fired from them. Flak penetrated Allied planes and wounded and killed airmen. Jack is almost hit by flak, and takes the flak fragment along on subsequent missions as a lucky piece.)
5. swastika (pp. 86, 124)
(A swastika is a Greek cross with the ends of the arms extended at right angles in the same rotary direction. It was the symbol of the Nazis. Jack finds it unreal when he sees his first, huge swastika on the side of a German warplane.)
6. milk run (p. 95)
(A milk run is a routine, uneventful run-through of a standard procedure. Fliers call a bombing run that they expect to go through without any antiaircraft fire or significant opposition a "milk run." Chuckie is especially fond of saying that each mission is going to be a milk run.)
7. dog tags (p. 123)
(Every soldier wears metal military identification plates, called dog tags, with the soldier's identification number. In case of the soldier's death in combat, the dog tags will identify the body. Jack feels naked without his dog tags after he is captured, stripped of his identity as a soldier.)
8. Yiddish (p. 123, 133), Hebrew (p. 126)
(Yiddish is the language of East European Jews, a mixture of Hebrew, German, and other languages. Jack is familiar with Yiddish, the language of his grandmother, and worries about speaking any Yiddish in front of the Nazi soldiers for fear they will know he is Jewish. The H on Jack's dog tags stands for Hebrew, meaning he is Jewish.)
9. POWs (p. 151)
(POW stands for prisoner of war. Once Jack and Stan were captured by the German soldiers, they became POWs.)
10. concentration camps (p. 132), death camps (p. 135)
(During World War II, the Nazis collected Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, and other "undesirables" from Germany and the countries they occupied and sent them to camps, where they were both worked—often to death—in concentration camps and exterminated in gas chambers, in death camps. Jack is haunted by what he's learned about the existence of concentration and death camps since Allied forces have started to liberate the camps.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important, and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Literal Level

1. What does Jack learn in training in the United States, and where, before he is sent overseas?
(First, he attends basic training in Miami, where he learns basic military skills and discipline, like how to make his bunk taut enough to bounce a quarter on. Next, he attends gunnery school in Nevada, where he learns to be a gunner on a B-17. Finally, he goes to Louisiana for eight weeks of intensive crew-training, where he actually trains in the air

THE LAST MISSION

with his crew, practicing operation of the two machine guns in the plane's waist. Jack also learns to smoke, to swear, to act less like a kid, and to cope with homesickness and separation from his family.)

2. Describe the members of Jack's crew.
(The pilot, Lieutenant Martin, is short and bouncy. The copilot, Lieutenant Held, is bear-like. The navigator, Lieutenant Seppetone, is a rumped, sleepy-looking man with heavy eyelids. Chuckie O'Brien, the radio operator, is Jack's best friend from gunnery school, a red-haired Irish boy from the Bronx. The two Southerners are Dave Gonzalez, the ball-turret gunner from San Antonio, who can be moody, but comes back up quickly; and Billy Eustice, the flight engineer, who angers Dave by asking what kind of American he is but is easy-going and ends up friendly mostly with Dave. Paul Johnson is the tail gunner, a sharp-faced sharp-tongued youth from Saginaw, Michigan. "Old Man" Fred Pratt is the nose gunner, the only married enlisted man, steady and dependable, careful with his money; his wife has a baby just before the crew ships out to England.)
3. What about the war experience is positive for Jack?
(Jack experiences moments of elation at being able to help in the fight against Hitler. He gains self-confidence and the satisfaction of achievement as he develops military skills. He enjoys the bonds of deepening comradeship with his fellow crew members. He gains, if only for a short time, a best friend. He develops an enduring friendship with a girl.)
4. How do the various Germans and Czechs Jack meets react to him? How does Jack react to them?
(The wounded German soldiers in the hospital make friendly overtures to Jack and Stan, but Jack rejects them with disgust, declaring, "I hate all Germans." Civilians in Klattau spit at and hit Jack, and most of the retreating German soldiers want nothing to do with the "Verdammt Amerikaner." The two guards, Willy and Karl, treat Jack and Stan fairly on the march south, and Jack begins to feel sorry for the hordes of miserable civilians, especially the children. A priest gives Jack a hard-boiled egg, and Jack shares it with a child, deciding it doesn't matter whether the child is a Nazi or a Jew—he's just a hungry kid. When a German soldier who hates Jews is killed, Jack feels no more hatred, seeing the young man as just a dead human being. Once the war is over, the German soldiers are happy to let Jack and Stan leave to join their fellow Americans—the Germans prefer Americans to the advancing Russian troops.)

Interpretive Level

5. How does Jack's attitude toward war change in the course of the novel?
(At the beginning of the novel, Jack is eager to go into combat, dreaming of heroic exploits and daring missions to destroy Hitler. War is a meaningful, exciting quest. The reality gradually changes Jack's attitude. The routine grind of bombing missions leaves Jack eternally tired, his stomach knotted with fear, unable to visualize his flights as strikes against Hitler but rather to be endured as just one more day of the war, a necessary succession that will end only when the war is over. When Jack sees the devastation the Allied bombing has wreaked in Czechoslovakia and

Germany, among civilian populations and habitations and landscape, he turns entirely against the concept of war as heroic in any way. War may be necessary at times—for instance, to stop a Hitler—but it is stupid. "War is one stupid thing after another," Jack says, and it kills millions of ordinary people. "War isn't like the movies. It's not fun and songs. It's not about heroes. It's about awful, sad things." Jack is even able to see parallels between the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Germans' killing of Jews.)

6. How does Jack's being a Jew affect his actions and feelings?
(Jack enlists in the army even though he is only fifteen years old because he has a burning desire to fight and destroy Hitler because of what the German leader is doing to the Jews. When he is captured by German soldiers, Jack worries about what they will do to him if they find out he is Jewish. At the hospital, Jack hesitates to take a shower, use the soap, or accept clothing because of his knowledge about the concentration camps. As a POW, Jack is prepared to hate all Germans and Nazi sympathizers he encounters, and is troubled by his recurring nightmare of the Nazis coming to his home to take his family away. It is difficult for Jack to view the people he meets as a POW, including the civilians, with anything other than hostility because of the Nazi treatment of Jews and because of how he thinks they feel about him as a Jew.)
7. Why is Jack so restless when he gets back home?
(His experiences have created a gulf between him and his old existence. He no longer fits in with boys his own age, who seem so much younger. His family wants him to get on with his life, but Jack doesn't know what he wants to do with his future. His parents still try to put restrictions on his actions and behavior as if he's a boy. Perhaps worst, Jack is troubled by memories of the final mission, of his comrades' deaths—particularly Chuckie's, and Dave's being shot in the parachute just above Jack—and the question of why he lived and they all died.)
8. How does Jack mature in the course of the novel?
(Jack starts out being quite childish—dreaming his visions of dramatic heroics as the daring Jewish Kid, smoking in just the right way to appear manly, raising his hand and entering with the enthusiasm of an eager child into all the routines of military training, feeling uncomfortable swearing in front of grownups. As training progresses, Jack begins to gain self-confidence in his skills and abilities. Once he is flying combat, Jack realizes that war is a numbing, nonheroic process; he performs his job in a steady, adult manner without the eager, childish, gung-ho approach he started with. Finally, Jack gains an understanding of the common humanity of all people and the senselessness of killing. By the time he comes home, he is a young man, not a boy.)

Critical Level

9. In what ways is this novel autobiographical?
(Harry Mazer's parents were Polish-Jewish immigrants, like Jack's, and like Jack, Mazer grew up in an apartment building in the Bronx. He joined the Army Air Force during World War II [however, at the prescribed minimum age of eighteen], attended gunnery school, and trained as a ball-

THE LAST MISSION

turret and waist gunner. He was a member of a crew on a B-17 bomber. They were shot down on their last mission, over Czechoslovakia; only Mazer and one other crew member survived. Like Jack, Mazer wondered why he had survived while the others did not.)

10. One critic has called *The Last Mission* "a superficial story about stock characters." Other critics have called it "a taut, dramatic story" and "a vivid and moving account of a boy's experiences during World War II." Which view do you agree with? Why?
(Answers will vary.)

Creative Level

(Answers will vary.)

11. Jack's brother Irving gives a number of reasons why it was wrong of Jack to enlist in the army. What do you think? Discuss the pros and cons, and then give your opinion on whether it was right or wrong for Jack to enlist.
12. How well does Jack eventually adjust to civilian life? Write one or two paragraphs on how Jack's life develops in the years after the war.
13. How does Jack's relationship with Doty eventually work out?
14. Write a letter from Jack while he's in England flying combat missions to his parents in the Bronx explaining what he's done, and why.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Science

1. Jack finds his way after he parachutes into enemy territory by using the Big Dipper, then the North Star and using that as a guide. Try this yourself to find your way. Then explain how this is done, and why the North Star can be used as a directional guide.
2. Prepare a booklet or a series of pamphlets illustrating World War II aircraft. Label parts of each and give technical details that make clear the different physical characteristics and purposes of each. Be sure to include the B-17, and show the locations on it of each member of Jack's crew. (Also Art.)
3. On a map of your local area, draw a series of circles showing the effects of an atomic bomb strike like the one at Hiroshima, from the most devastating at ground zero and rippling out from the center in degrees of intensity. Explain the degree of destruction that would occur within each area. (Also Math.)
4. Jack sends a telegram to tell his family he is alive and well; he expects it will take a week for the telegram to get from Europe to the United States. Explain the technology of sending transcontinental messages as it existed during World War II, trace the scientific advances in trans-Atlantic communications since then, and describe current and expected future technology and how it works.

Music

1. Find sheet music or recordings of songs that were popular during World War II, especially the songs mentioned in the novel on pages 7, 25, 59, 72, and 99. Play the recordings or perform the music for and/or with classmates.

Language Arts

1. Write an essay or participate in a class discussion about the attitudes toward war and battles—both before and after combat—of heroes in other novels you have read. How do they compare with Jack Raab in *The Last Mission*? Do the authors tend to have the same message or different ones about war?
2. Make a glossary of military terms you encounter as you read the novel. List each word—for example, reveille, PX, V-mail, LST, burp gun, WAAF—give a definition of each, and briefly tell how it is used in the novel.
3. Make a similar glossary of words related to aviation—such as prop wash, chocks, and six o'clock low.

Math

1. On a map of Europe, trace Jack's crew's mission to Pilsen from Europe, indicating the course, the number of miles flown, the flight time, the miles per hour, and estimated times of departure and return.
2. Jack crosses the Atlantic from England to Newport News, Virginia, on an LST. The trip takes two weeks. Calculate the number of miles the ship journeys and the rate of speed at which it travels.
3. The German proverb quoted on page 153 of the novel says, "At the end of a war there are three armies. The army of the wounded, the army of the dead, and the army of the mourners." Make a chart showing the numbers of each of these three categories, by country and for civilian and military populations, of each nation involved in World War II.

Social Studies and Geography

1. Jack, like many other people of his time, is horrified by "those pictures"—the photographs that emerged as the Allied forces began liberating the concentration and death camps. Make a class display of a collection of these photographs. Label them appropriately with historical details.
2. Jack is also deeply disturbed by the uses to which the Nazis put their Holocaust victims and their belongings. Read more about this, and prepare an oral or written report on what you find.
3. On a map of Europe, identify the major sites of Allied bombing during World War II, giving dates and durations of bombings and an indication of extent of damage done. How long did it take the bombing sites to recover and rebuild after the war ended? You could include photographs for class display.

Art

1. Patriotic posters were very popular during World War II. Put together a class display of some and/or create an original one of your own. (Also Social Studies.)
2. Make a poster illustrating the various medals awarded to World War II soldiers, with labels explaining how each could be earned. (Also Social Studies.)

Health

1. Jack gets "the GI's." What was this? Why was it nicknamed "the GI's"? How common was it, and why?

THE LAST MISSION

2. Describe the attitude toward smoking in the 1940's, and then trace the changes in this attitude up until the present time. Why were cigarettes so widely available to U.S. soldiers? What medical evidence has accumulated since the 1940's to change the opinion of the medical community and society as a whole about cigarette smoking? What are the medical effects of smoking?
3. The American fliers call the British soldiers "Limeys." Do some research to find out the origin of this nickname. What does this have to do with health?

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Prepare to participate in a class debate/discussion on one or more of these topics:
 - a. Was Jack wrong or right to enlist in the army? Review your responses to this question in the Creative Level of the Comprehension Study for this discussion.
 - b. Is there a valid comparison between the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Germans' killing of millions of Jews and other civilians?
2. With classmates, role-play some scenes from the novel, such as Jack and Dotty's meetings (the first one, the one at camp after the war, one when they discuss Jack's future), a scene between Jack and his parents about his aimless postwar existence, the crew on a bombing run.
3. In a small group, develop a definition of heroism. Then share your definition with other class groups, and see if the class can work out an agreed-on class definition.
4. Stage a class fashion show of World War II fashions, including civilian wear and typical military garb.
5. View the video of *Memphis Belle*, which is about a World War II bombing crew like Jack's. What similarities and differences do you note between this crew's experiences and those of Jack's crew?
6. Write some of the letters from Dotty to Jack, or from Jack to Dotty.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Make a list of the main characters in the novel. Describe each person's physical characteristics, and explain the part each one plays in Jack's life.
2. Trace the events of the novel through Jack's changing attitude toward war. Note each specific event and the effect it has on Jack.
3. Describe the events of the novel through the three phases of Jack's military life: as trainee/recruit; as bomber crew member; as POW. Continue through Jack's life as a returned veteran. Tell how these combine to propel the plot and carry out the theme(s) of the novel.

OTHER BOOKS BY HARRY MAZER

Guy Lenny (1971)
Snow Bound (1973)
The Dollar Man (1974)
The Solid Gold Kid (with Norma Fox Mazer) (1977)
The War on Villa Street (1978)
The Last Mission (1979)
The Island Keeper: A Tale of Courage and Survival (1981)
I Love You, Stupid! (1981)
When the Phone Rang (1985)
Hey Kid! Does She Love Me? (1985)

Cave Under the City (1986)
The Girl of His Dreams (1987)
City Light (1988)
Heartbeat (with Norma Fox Mazer) (1989)
Someone's Mother Is Missing (1990)

RELATED READING

The American Soldier in World War II. Lee Kennett.
Flight to Victory. Richard Hough.
Friedrich. Hans Peter Richter.
Hitler's War Against the Jews. David A. Altshuler.
Horses of Anger. James Forman.
The Machine Gunners. William Wharton.
Make Me a Hero. Jerome Brooks.
Paper Doll. Jim Shepard.
Smoke and Ashes: The Story of the Holocaust. Barbara Rogasky.
The Survivor. James Forman.
That Mad Game: War and the Changes of Peace. James Forman.
The Traitors. James Forman.
Warriors with Wings. Edward Jablonski.

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Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, March 1980.
Holtz, Sally Holmes, ed. *Fifth Book of Junior Authors & Illustrators.* New York: H. H. Wilson, 1983.
Horn Book, February 1980.
Publishers Weekly, 10 Dec. 1979.
School Library Journal, November 1979.
Something About the Author, Vol. 67. Detroit: Gale, 1992.
Voice Of Youth Advocates, February 1983.

THE LAST MISSION

VOCABULARY TEST

Match each underlined word with its meaning listed below. Write the letter of the meaning in the space next to the sentence number.

- _____ 1. They had to hold the plane steady through all the turbulence.
- _____ 2. Jack was looking out the starboard waist window.
- _____ 3. There were drills, and calisthenics in the sand.
- _____ 4. Jack looked around the chow hall.
- _____ 5. Pratt was unperturbed. "I'm staying close to the phone."
- _____ 6. Dotty looked smart and sophisticated.
- _____ 7. Jack ran out to the latrine, towel around his neck, soap brush and toothbrush in his hand.
- _____ 8. Jack ducked under the wings to pull the wheel chocks.
- _____ 9. An armada of more than a thousand planes going into the air.
- _____ 10. The flak filled Jack with amazement and dread.
- _____ 11. The parachute had softened every fall, Jack felt it would save him, it would even deflect bullets.
- _____ 12. As the night wore on, Jack became more and more indifferent to anything but his weariness and his growing hunger.
- _____ 13. Jack kept up a slow steady monotonous pace.
- _____ 14. The men clamored and swore at the Germans, but the Germans heard nothing.
- _____ 15. Jack was parched. He pushed his face into the water, and drank and drank.
- _____ 16. "That Hitler has to be a maniac."
- _____ 17. Willy was a pilot without a plane—no petrol.
- _____ 18. Along some of the rail lines they passed Jack saw whole towns that were obliterated.
- _____ 19. The boy came closer. He was rank.
- _____ 20. Jack was interrogated three times, twice by Lieutenant Spaid, the third time by a Major Barth.

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| a. toilet | f. madman, lunatic | k. worldly wise | p. foul-smelling |
| b. exercises | g. wiped out | l. turn aside | q. food |
| c. gasoline | h. great fear | m. right side | r. uninterested |
| d. blocks | i. tediously unvarying | n. fleet | s. extremely dry |
| e. questioned | j. irregular motion | o. not disturbed | t. shouted noisily |

THE LAST MISSION

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| a. Chuckie O'Brien | f. Jack |
| b. Lieutenant Martin | g. Dotty |
| c. Dave Gonzalez | h. Willy |
| d. Stan Wakowski | i. Irv |
| e. Fred Pratt | j. Marcia |

- _____ 1. The first officer, the shortest one, a little whip of a guy.
- _____ 2. Not moving, just hanging there, arms and legs straight down, head flopped forward.
- _____ 3. Pretty, nice, really friendly!
- _____ 4. Had been sick a lot, born with a rheumatic heart.
- _____ 5. A bloodstained rag around his forehead and bruises on his face; civilians had attacked him and nearly beaten him to death.
- _____ 6. Had always been big for his age.
- _____ 7. Short, red, and freckled all over.
- _____ 8. The youngest member of the Raab family.
- _____ 9. The younger guard, the one with pilot wings; he was never still.
- _____ 10. The only married enlisted man; his wife was expecting a baby any day.

Part II: Fill-In (30 points)

Write one or two words in each blank to make each statement true.

1. Jack enlists in the U.S. Army _____ Corps.
2. Jack is a _____ gunner on the bomber.
3. Jack hates the Nazis because of what they are doing to the _____.
4. Jack enlists in the army using his brother's _____ as proof of his age.
5. The Raab family lives in this part of New York: _____.
6. Stan's family came to the United States from _____.
7. Jack never misses _____ call during training even though he never receives anything.
8. When Jack and Stan reach the American lines, they say they have been held by the Germans as _____.
9. Jack and his crew name their plane _____, *Incorporated*.
10. A Mae West is a rubber _____.
11. The bombers have to fly through _____ fire.
12. Jack and his crew are shot down over Pilsen, in the country of _____.
13. Jack is _____ years old when he joins the army.
14. The Germans are all rushing south to get away from the advancing _____.
15. Jack enlists in the army because he wants to destroy _____.

THE LAST MISSION

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Marching (30 points)

Read each quotation. In the list below, find the character who speaks the words. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the quotation number.

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| a. Jack | f. Fred Pratt |
| b. Dotty | g. Lieutenant Martin |
| c. Willy | h. Chuckie O'Brien |
| d. Irv | i. Dave Gonzalez |
| e. Marcia | j. Stan Wakowski |

- _____ 1. "I want to get over there. I want to fight! Let's go! Let's get those Nazis!"
- _____ 2. "Well, we made it anyway, Jack. That's saying something."
- _____ 3. "You know what you did was stupid, don't you? . . . I'm glad you're back."
- _____ 4. "I'm a hundred percent American. What are you?"
- _____ 5. "Everyone okay? I want a report from every position."
- _____ 6. "Her name is Patricia. And all you guys are going to be her godfathers."
- _____ 7. "It would be awfully shallow of me to stop liking you because you're younger than I thought."
- _____ 8. "It's going to be a milk run."
- _____ 9. "Alles kaput. Der Kreig ist zu Ende."
- _____ 10. "Jackie! My brother Jackie!"

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Write a one- or two-word answer for each of the following questions.

1. What war is Jack fighting in? _____
2. What country are Jack, his crew, and their plane based in? _____
3. What does the H on Jack's dog tags stand for? _____
4. Jack's mother used to send letters and packages to relatives in what European country? _____
5. What city (Germany's capital) do Jack and his crew fly three bombing missions over? _____
6. What country did Chuckie's family come to the United States from? _____
7. What is Jack's rank in the army? _____
8. What part of New York does Dotty live in? _____
9. What do Jack and his crew members name their second plane? _____
10. After nearly being hit by it, what does Jack carry as a good-luck token? _____
11. What type of bomber do Jack and his crew fly? _____
12. Who does Jack become friends with while both are prisoners of war? _____
13. What is Jack's last name? _____
14. How old is Jack when he leaves the army? _____
15. What nickname does Jack give himself in his daydreams about doing daring, heroic deeds? the _____
Kid

THE LAST MISSION

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Test

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. j | 11. l |
| 2. m | 12. r |
| 3. b | 13. i |
| 4. q | 14. t |
| 5. o | 15. s |
| 6. k | 16. f |
| 7. a | 17. c |
| 8. d | 18. g |
| 9. n | 19. p |
| 10. h | 20. e |

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. f |
| 2. c | 7. a |
| 3. g | 8. j |
| 4. i | 9. h |
| 5. d | 10. e |

Part II: Fill-In (30 points)

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Air | 9. <i>Godfathers</i> |
| 2. waist | 10. life vest |
| 3. Jews | 11. antiaircraft |
| 4. birth certificate | 12. Czechoslovakia |
| 5. the Bronx | 13. fifteen |
| 6. Poland | 14. Russians |
| 7. mail | 15. Hitler |
| 8. POWs | |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. T | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. f |
| 2. j | 7. b |
| 3. d | 8. h |
| 4. i | 9. c |
| 5. g | 10. e |

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. World War II | 9. <i>Godfathers II</i> |
| 2. England | 10. flak |
| 3. Hebrew | 11. B-17 |
| 4. Poland | 12. Stan Wakowski |
| 5. Berlin | 13. Raab |
| 6. Ireland | 14. sixteen |
| 7. sergeant | 15. Jewish |
| 8. Coney Island/Brooklyn | |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F |
| 2. T | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. F |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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