

CONCERNING WAR

VOLUME 1:

A Collection of Recollections
with Room for Ruminations

Written, Compiled & Edited by

ANGELA HUNT

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Also by Angela Hunt

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Concerning War - Volume 1: A Collection of Recollections with Room for Ruminaton  
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# Dedication

For the conscripted  
Volunteered  
Enlisted  
Drafted  
Signed-up  
Served  
And yet to serve;

For the families  
Of all the above.

In honor of freedom of speech,  
Which people have fought  
And died to preserve;

And for those quiet Minnesotans  
Who exercised it,  
Offering comment  
About their experiences  
In service to our country.

# In Appreciation

Thank you, Tim, for challenging me to try a full-sized book and for believing that I would have something to say. That really means a lot to me. So in a way, it's all your fault.

To the amazing team at Range PrintWorks, my patient and computer-savvy husband, Jim; savant proofreader and historical contributor Gary White; beta-reader Shannon Wetzel, the writing community of Carver County who listened, read, and offered advice; to all who asked or consented to be interviewed. It takes a village to birth a book. Thanks especially to Linda, who cooked those meals while I stewed over verbiage, then picked bones out of the text amid computer glitches.

Thanks to John Thornberg, a former U.S. Coast Guard Reservist and poet from Chisago City, MN, for 4 contributions. Also included is an essay by Jim Kane, Vietnam veteran of Chanhassen, MN, published in the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of Talkingstick. Both are members of the Jackpine Writer's Bloc, Park Rapids, MN.

Selections based on War by Sebastian Junger and Suicidal Veterans by Vic Montgomery are used by permission.

With great appreciation to Jesse Hunt for contributing his knowledge and expertise on weapons and gear functionality. Artifacts and uniforms are from his military memorabilia collection and from family archives, unless otherwise noted. Any sensitive artifacts have been declassified.

With gratitude to mentor Barbara Colhapp for teaching me to ask questions and then let someone else's words come out.

Thanks especially to my mother, Elaine, for her forethought to preserve family stories and stuff, and to all the generations before her who were packrats.

# Introduction

This book is a series of Studs Terkel-style personal stories about what it looks like to be in service to our country: in war, in its aftermath, from home. The book started with a phone visit with my Vietnam-Era combat-vet cousin. It grew. Most of the over 100 people who were interviewed I'd not known before starting this project. I have tried to be accurate in tone, word and intent, to honor their opinions or conclusions. The accounts remind us others have come home to pick up their pieces. They wanted to say that readjustment is possible. Stories help those who have *not* experienced service to realize its indelibility; battle accounts help those at home to understand the depth of war's stain.

There is moral ambiguity surrounding war; this book wants to honor that, too. People can hate war and serve honorably; people can be energized by war and show great compassion. Depending on what they were called to do, people can see their service as a rite of passage, a heavy difficulty, a privilege, an embarrassment, a career, an interruption—all in the same tour of duty. Ambivalence was often expressed: "On the one hand, I'm glad we have a system for defense set up. On the other hand, I wish..." In that spirit, opposing viewpoints are presented.

This book is also based on my family, who started arriving to the New World in 1535 to build a new life, so it seemed important to include a snippet of early history to view how wars affected migration to Minnesota. I also wanted to honor my Iroquois, Mohawk, Chippewa/Ojibway ancestors who, of course, were already here and graciously welcomed settlers into their tribes through marriage. The King Philip's War section includes details from their artifacts, family accounts, oral history, and corroborative period histories.

Civil War contributors were two of my great-great-grandfathers. Subsequent wars have netted individual written accounts, recollections gathered from oral history, letters from the deceased, and verbal interviews from currently living soldiers and their families. Contributors are identified as they asked to be; some wished to remain anonymous.

Even though certain of their stories have become free verse poetry and other accounts have been set in abbreviated prose, I have tried to remain faithful to the spirit and intent of their messages. The project has become a microcosm of opinion about war, service, patriotism, dissent, objection, encouragement, and healing. I hope you will appreciate how average Minnesotans in remarkable circumstances have dealt with war. The way our Christian faith has helped. The stories were generously provided. Any errors are mine alone.

Our service personnel uphold the right to free speech. These few—and many others—have provided the words. I include an overarching view because each war is distinctive, because all wars have a common thread.

To all the people who offered to contribute to this book, thank you for sharing your struggle through times when our nation has been at war. I am full, both of sorrow over what you have had to suffer, and of pride that I now know you. I want returning vets and their family members to be helped in some way through this effort, if only to say, "There, they've said it and we can, too."

—Angela Hunt





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<sup>1</sup>Most conflict dates provided by <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/html/search/search.html>. These official dates may vary from other sources.

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# 0.1 PREQUEL:

## EARLY SETTLEMENT IN THE NEW WORLD

**PRE-1675**

A glimpse of early immigration to the New World, based on the author's family history:

“When the first of your people came,  
They were part of the Creator's plan.  
It was not our place to deny them,  
Because it was not our right to control them.  
They were searching. We both learned.  
We fed them and helped them.  
They were like raindrops that fell out of the sky.”

—“Dan”, A Dakota elder's perspective from Neither Wolf Nor Dog by Kent Nerburn, p. 46.



Reproduced from “Map of the World” by Claudius Ptolemy c. 150 A.D. Ulm Edition, 1482 (points west).  
Reproduced from the original in the Edward E. Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library. Family archives.



Landing of the Pilgrims Tercentenary stamp 1620-1920.

## They Came, 1621<sup>1</sup>

Some were led, some were pushed,<sup>2</sup>  
A frightening few were dragged,<sup>3</sup>  
At least two were held,<sup>4</sup>  
Picked apart by the ague, rickets, pellagra,<sup>5</sup>  
Who knows why in the world—  
But they came.



Reproduction of hand-drawn  
Mayflower. From family archives.

<sup>1</sup>The original Mayflower is thought to have made just one protracted trip (starting out 3 times), but was one ship of many. The significant difference was it came for colonization rather than for trade and assimilation.

<sup>2</sup>Besides practice of faith and avoidance of political persecution, unfair inheritance law was a major motivator. Families across Europe had divided and re-divided inherited land, favoring the firstborn male for generations. Those who had to feed large families on only a sliver of property found the promise of free land—in spite of danger and probable death—lucrative. A very few in the 16th and 17th centuries looked up from their situation, saw the opportunity, had the means to take it, and actually survived.

<sup>3</sup>Indentured servants could legally be brought along by families without assent. In a shockingly few years, many, many more human beings were sold down the river, shipped and brought as slaves to the home of the free.

<sup>4</sup>A baby in arms. The ship's manifest reported births during the voyage. "Oceanus" and "Pergrine" were both born on the Mayflower. The author is the descendant of 2 persons who arrived on the Mayflower.

<sup>5</sup>3 common diseases contracted on extended sea voyages. Ague: acute regularly returning fever; rickets: weakening bones due to vitamin D deficiency (because of extended time below decks); pellagra: a niacin/B3 deficiency characterized by dermatitis, diarrhea, dementia, and death.

## Land Ho! 1639

Thomas, 29, and Emma, 27,<sup>1</sup>  
Green, fresh from the sea voyage,  
Youth and inexperience revealed in such circumstances,  
Nonetheless came, certain it was the Providence of God;  
Started a family: Samuel, Sarah, John, Thomas, Dinah, Zechariah, Emma.<sup>2</sup>

With others who'd bonded over the harshness of the venture

Founded Stratford, Connecticut, “Settlers of Catan,”<sup>3</sup>  
With no defense in the war against the cold, the croup,  
Willing to learn<sup>4</sup> from Native peoples,  
Staking their young English lives on that generosity.

<sup>1</sup>2 of the author’s English ancestors arrived in 1639 and were aligned with the Reformed Movement of England after 1517. Thomas was a founding citizen of Stratford, CT. He was elected deputy of the General Court in 1654 and in 1664, and was 4 times nominated for Assistant Governor, was a merchant and owned a home on what is now Elm Street, Bridgeport. —The History of Stratford, Connecticut 1639-1939 by William Howard Wilcoxson.

<sup>2</sup>All survived childhood. Samuel was the 1<sup>st</sup> white child born in Stratford, Connecticut.

<sup>3</sup> Settlers of Catan: Reference to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century popular board game where players assess raw materials and the skills of those available to develop a settlement in the New World.

<sup>4</sup>Oral history suggests a New World Indigenous teenager, Squanto, had been kidnapped, sold, and taken back to England as a slave. Over 14 years he learned the language, cultivated a Christian faith, and was so charming he won the hearts of all he met, eventually being introduced to the royal family as a curiosity. They were so impressed with him they offered his freedom and free passage back to the New World.

Squanto would have returned about the time of Thomas and Emma and to the same region. Though his tribe had been nearly wiped out by smallpox, he could converse with a neighboring tribe, and became an interpreter between that tribe and the English settlers. The story is reasonably corroborated in One Nation, published in the late 1970s.

Note: a similar situation occurred in the Old Testament with Joseph being sold as a slave, having to learn the language and culture of Egypt, also being introduced to Pharaoh. He told his brothers years later, “And now do not be distressed and angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. God meant it for good.” —Genesis 45:5. A magnanimous forgiveness must have been given by the young brave above, as well.

### *La Famille du Robideau I*

Individuals, willing to try (1664)  
Wanting to plant roots;  
*Pierre et Julia Robideau,<sup>1</sup> oùi, les immigrants*  
Hoping only for a place to be, to survive  
Without persecuting or being persecuted.  
Are we like them?



Wooden bowl and metal chopper.

Having sons, *les jeunes hommes*  
 The same as any other,  
 Forging alliances, friendships, matrimony  
 With Native tribes;<sup>2</sup> learning, trading,  
 Wanting the same for all lives:  
 Peace, safety, livelihood:

Banding together;<sup>3</sup> they, like us?  
 Seeing a land:  
 Promising. Available? Forbidding!  
 Arriving,  
 Entreating Him to protect, defend, bless;  
 Are we like them?



Huguenot-Walloon Tercentenary  
 Stamp, 1624-1924.

<sup>1</sup>Some early French settlers were also Huguenots escaping European religious persecution. Some early (1535) fur traders (as apparently Peter Robideau was) were brought wives (“the King’s Daughters”) who were young volunteer French women paid by the King of France for the voyage and provided passage to the New World by ship. Unfortunately many lost teeth, weight and hair due to the poor diet *en voyage*. Still, they were a sight for sore eyes according to the Frenchmen awaiting their arrival [genealogist Teresa Mercier, 2010]. Others married into local tribes.

<sup>2</sup>French intermarriage with indigenous people was common. See French & Indian War section.

<sup>3</sup>Tadadaho, the Onondaga (“keepers of the council fire”) leader, was “the last chief of the 6 [Iroquois] Nations converted to the ways of Peace by the Great Peacemaker, 1722,” near present-day Syracuse, NY. This conversion reinforced a miraculous event bonding the “5 Nations, or the Great League of Peace formed by the Peacemaker” in the 15th century among the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora nations. (<http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iroquois>). Apparently there was a spiritual awakening among these tribes. The author is not aware of white settler influence upon these events 139 miles from where the author’s French-Indigenous ancestors lived in Mohawk territory.

## A Native’s Perspective

“Our whole people were ruined  
 By your whole people.  
 But there are good people in the middle.  
 There always have been.  
 We used to help settlers. They would help us.  
 We thought we could all live together.  
 But we were so different.”



Toddler moccasins made by  
 Maryola Anderson of Labrador in  
 the old ways, for Elizabeth, from elk  
 hide, rabbit fur, and wool.

—“Dan”, Dakotah Elder, *Neither Wolf Nor Dog* by Kent Nerburn, p. 42.