The Beauty and the Sorrow: An Intimate History of the First World War  
By: Englund, Peter  
D640.A2 E5413 2012  
Review from: Library Journal October 15, 2011  
Englund (The Battle That Shook Europe), a Swedish historian, gives us an intimate “anti-history” generated from the feelings, experiences, and moods of 20 men and women of widely ranging nationalities, ages, and wartime occupations, selected from available published primary sources. The narrative reads chronologically, often paraphrasing the individuals’ words, but with actual quotations as well. The effect is riveting, as the entries—contrived from letters, diaries, and memoirs—offer glimpses into the daily lives of schoolchildren, mothers, nurses, infantrymen, pilots, and civilians as they subjectively process events across the whole theater of war and survival. VERDICT Englund adds a rich representation of voice and an opportunity for empathy not found in most studies of World War I. Although the stories seem stacked too dramatically, this is still a rewarding read.

Forgotten Ally: China’s World War II, 1937-1945  
By: Mitter, Rana  
D577.53 .M555 2013  
Review from: Choice May 01, 2014  
This is an outstanding history of China’s eight-year war with Japan. Mitter (Oxford) presents a complicated story clearly and with compelling detail. In doing so, he draws on both recent scholarship and newly available sources, including Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek’s diaries and the memoir of a common soldier who fought as a 16-year-old in the bloody Burma campaign. The book dissects the successes and failures of Chiang and his Nationalist government while paying attention to Mao Zedong’s Communists and, more unusually, to the career of Wang Jingwei, the Nationalist Party elder who tried to save China by collaborating with the Japanese.

Japan 1941: Countdown to Infamy  
By: Hotta, Eri  
D767.2 .H67 2013  
Review from: Choice April 01, 2014  
Despite the volume of literature examining the outbreak of the great Pacific War in 1941, almost all of it published in the US concentrates on politics and decisions in Washington, DC. Now, Hotta provides a riveting account of the simultaneous process in Tokyo. Her book is not an attempt to justify or whitewash Japan’s responsibility for the war. Rather, it recounts the discouraging story of a dysfunctional government continuously stumbling, miscalculating, and blustering its way toward a war that almost all its leaders knew was unwinnable. Japanese diplomats, military leaders, and politicians remained too focused on their own ideological misconceptions and superficial awareness of the outside world to halt the drift toward war.

Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin  
By: Snyder, Timothy  
DJK49 .S69 2010  
Review from: Choice July 01, 2011  
As Snyder (Yale) points out in this history of eastern Europe between the Soviet collectivization of agriculture through the end of the Holocaust, 14 million people living on this land—roughly between Berlin and Moscow—died at the hands of Stalin’s Russia and Hitler’s Germany. Although the most famous example of mass murder in the “bloodlands” was the gassing of Jews in Nazi death camps, Snyder points out that the victims perished in every way imaginable, especially starvation and as the result of mass shootings in places such as Babi Yar.

Here Is Where: Discovering America’s Great Forgotten History  
By: Carroll, Andrew  
E159 .C32 2013  
Review from: Booklist April 01, 2013  
During the Civil War, at a railroad stop in New Jersey, Abraham Lincoln’s son was saved from a near accident by John Wilkes Boothe’s brother. Historian Carroll had traveled through that spot many times, unaware of its significance; once he learned of it, he wondered how many more such places there were across the U.S. He set out on a journey via car, train, plane, helicopter, boat, and bike to find historically significant places that have long been forgotten. Among his discoveries were a Civil War-era maritime disaster on the Mississippi River that was worse than the sinking of the Titanic but was overshadowed by the assassination of Lincoln two weeks earlier, and the crash-landing of a Japanese plane on the private island of Niihau in December 1941 that led to divided loyalties as Japanese-born residents protected the pilot from Hawaiian natives, even as they learned of the attack on Pearl Harbor. From coast to coast, Carroll presents completely fascinating and rambling history lessons, as well as the quirks that account for what goes into the history books and what is left out and later forgotten.
A Fighting Chance
By: Warren, Elizabeth
E901.1.W37 A3 2014

Review from: PW Annex Reviews        April 21, 2014
Warren, the freshman senator from Massachusetts, turned Democratic rock star, serves up a frank and lively account of how she became the banking and finance industry's fiercest nemesis. Warren's passion is rooted in her personal history. As a young girl in her native Oklahoma, she saw her family's fortunes nose dive after her father's heart attack, losing car and house in quick succession and forcing her mother back into the job market at age 50. Warren pursues herself through college, marries, grows weary of stay-at-home motherhood, and furtively decides to enroll in law school, inspired by “television lawyers who were always fighting to defend good people who needed help.” She develops an expertise in bankruptcy, becoming one of the country's go-to experts. In these pages, she displays a down-home charm and an effortless rapport with everyday people that makes her story more engaging than the average political tome. ...

The Perilous West: Seven Amazing Explorers and the Founding of the Oregon Trail
By: Morris, Larry E.
F880 .M67 2013

Review from: Library Journal          February 1, 2013
Morris here focuses on the early 1800s Western fur trade, beginning with Robert McClellan and Ramsey Crooks, both of whom started up the Missouri River in 1806, each meeting the returning Lewis and Clark expedition. Despite the title, the adventures of many more than seven major historical figures are presented here in a single integrated narrative about the search for a new overland route to reach the Oregon country. Prominently featured is Marie Dorion, the Iowa Indian wife of interpreter and hunter Pierre Dorian Jr. In 1811-12 she became the second woman in recorded Western history to travel cross-country to the Pacific Ocean, with voyageurs employed by St. Louis fur merchant Wilson Price Hunt. Marie Dorion's adventures parallel those of Sacagawea of the Lewis and Clark expedition; the two women even seem to have befriended each other between 1809 and 1811.

The Tribunal: Responses to John Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid
By: Stauffer, John and Zoe Trodd, editors
E451 .T75 2012

Review from: Choice               May 01, 2013
With The Tribunal, Stauffer and Trodd have assembled a fantastic collection of speeches, letters, newspaper articles, and journal entries that respond to one of the most significant antebellum moments. Following an erudite overview that proffers an excellent introduction to John Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid of October 1859, the core of this anthology is divided into five sections. ...

The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832
By: Taylor, Alan
E445 .V8 T38 2013

Review from: Choice               February 01, 2014
Taylor's acclaimed The Civil War of 1812 depicted the war along the US-Canadian border as a conflict between immigrant groups, with Native Americans in the middle. His new work presents the southern sector as equally politicized and riddled with internal conflicts, but more significantly as an explosive segment in the long struggle between Chesapeake slaves and their owners. In the mid-1800s, England stationed ships along Virginia's shoreline, and slaves knew that the British Navy might provide refuge. After war erupted, British officers found the escapees useful partners: most were young men who led troops through the swamps at night back to their plantations to free relatives. ...

The World until Yesterday: What Can We Learn from Traditional Societies?
By: Diamond, Jared
DU744.35.D32 D53 2013

Bestselling author Diamond delves deeply into the world of humanity's ancient roots by exploring modern traditional societies still practicing hunting and gathering and subsistence agriculture. He skillfully examines the important lessons that technologically advanced societies can learn from traditional ways of life while taking an objective rather than a romanticized look at traditional cultural practices. His extensive examples come from many areas of the globe, with some of the most interesting coming from his own field research in the highlands of New Guinea. ...