

**11<sup>th</sup> Grade American Literature – *The Things They Carried***

**Letters of War**

This is creative and empathetic in nature. We have read stories from *The Things They Carried* including Spin, Enemies, Friends, How to Tell a True War Story, Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong, The Man I Killed, Ambush, Speaking of Courage, Notes and In the Field. Each of these stories has a purpose: “That’s what stories are for. Stories are for joining the past to the future. Stories are for those late hours in the night when you can’t remember how you got from where you were to where you are. Stories are for eternity, when memory is erased, when there is nothing to remember except the story” (38). I want you to tell some stories, using what you have learned about soldiers at war from the novel, and tell them in a particular way – as epistles. An epistle (vocab word) is a letter.

You will choose to write two letters (each 2-3 pages); one letter will be from the perspective of a soldier writing home to either a parent or a “significant other,” and the other letter will be from the perspective of a parent or “significant other” writing to a soldier at war. In either case, both the letter writer and recipient will have not seen each other in months. In either case, the writer will want to carefully share their “present” with the recipient. Ideas and concerns to write about include but are not limited to:

Emotions (I love you! I miss you! I hate you! )

Questions (what is it like at home/war? How are you feeling? Who are you with?)

Fears (dying, being wounded, cheating, financial worries)

News (what’s happening at home? What’s happening at the front?)

The future (what will we do when I come home? What will we do when you come home? How will our lives change?)

If you are artistically inclined or believe your writer is, you might include drawings or photos.