Name:

Period:

Fighting in the Pacific: Eugene Sledge

Directions: Answer the questions using the quotes and video segments. Please answer all questions in COMPLETE SENTENCES.

**Peleliu**

“Until the millennium arrives and countries cease trying to enslave others, it will be necessary to accept one’s responsibilities and be willing to make sacrifices for one’s country - as my comrades did. As the troops use to say, ‘If the country is good enough to live in, it’s good enough to fight for.’ With privilege goes responsibility.”

- Eugene Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*

1. What privileges do you have as an American?
2. As a country, what did we expect out of our young men?
3. What do you think the young men are thinking before landing on the beach?
4. For those who survive, how do you think they view the words sacrifice and responsibility?

**Looking Down Into it**

“Would the war dehumanize me so that I, too, could ‘field strip’ enemy dead with such nonchalance?”

- Eugene Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*

1. How does Sledge view his fellow soldier that “field strips” the enemy?
2. What moral code does Sledge seem to feel has been violated?
3. How might Sledge change over the course of the war?

**Peleliu Airfield**

“I concluded that it was impossible for me to be killed, because God loved me. Then I told myself that God loved us all and that many would die or be ruined physically or mentally or both by the next morning and in the days following.”

- Eugene Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*

1. After viewing the fighting at the airfield, how do you think Sledge and other fellow soldiers viewed their own mortality?
2. If they were religious, how do you think they viewed God?
3. After viewing this scene, do you think Sledge believed in a “greater good”?

If so, how would he reconcile what he saw around him with God?

**Bad Germs**

“To the non-combatants and those on the periphery of action, the war meant only boredom or occasional excitement, but to those who entered the meat grinder itself the war was a netherworld of horror from which escape seemed less and less likely as casualties mounted and the fighting dragged on and on. Time had no meaning; life had no meaning. The fierce struggle for survival in the abyss of Peleliu had eroded the veneer of civilization and made savages of us all.”

- Eugene Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*

1. The scene showing the pieces of coral being tossed into the skull of the dead Japanese soldier is described vividly in Sledge’s book, *With the Old Guard*. It is a key moment in the book and I would guess in the author’s life. What “thin veneer of civilization” is Sledge talking about?
2. What line is or is almost crossed here?
3. Has the war made Sledge and his fellow soldiers”savages of us all” or does some moral compass still remain intact?
4. Are bad germs what deter Sledge from crossing into the abyss or is something else drawing him back? Explain.