



# Heroes Don't Run: A Novel of the Pacific War

*Harry Mazer*

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**Heroes Don't Run: A Novel of the Pacific War** Harry Mazer

**"I WANTED TO SERVE, TO BE PART OF THIS THING MY FATHER HAD GIVEN HIS LIFE FOR. I DIDN'T WANT THE WAR TO END, AND ALL I'D BE ABLE TO SAY WAS, *NO I DIDN'T SERVE, I WAS RIGHT HERE THE WHOLE WAR, SAFE IN BAKERSFIELD.*"**

Adam Pelko witnessed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that killed his father, a lieutenant on the USS *Arizona*. Even though Adam is underage, he defies his mother's wishes and enlists in the Marines. Sent first to boot camp, then to Okinawa, he experiences the stark reality of war firsthand -- the camaraderie and the glory as well as the grueling regimen, the paralyzing fear, and death. And at every turn, Adam must confront memories of his father.

In the concluding volume of his World War II trilogy, Harry Mazer masterfully illustrates Adam's journey as he navigates brutal circumstances that no boy should know.

## Heroes Don't Run: A Novel of the Pacific War Details

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# From Reader Review *Heroes Don't Run: A Novel of the Pacific War* for online ebook

## Foxtrot says

This book is about a 17 year old boy named Adom Pelko who joins the marines. Adom takes a train to his grandfathers house from California all the way to New York. when he arives he talks to his grandpa about signing up for war. When he first tells him what he was planning to do, his grandfather said no because he was hurt in war a long time ago. After a week of thinking about it, Adoms grandpa went and singed him up.

After signing up, Adom went to basic training. When Adom was through with boot camp,he gets on a train to an ocean linner heading to a small island called Okinawa. Adom was not alone on this trip, he made two friends, Roy and Ben. His comander, Rosie was a brave soldier who tried to protect Adom.

I think this book was great, I couldnt put it down. I would truely recomend this book, because it is exciting and thrilling. It really changed the way I thought about war. Before I read this book I wanted to join the army, but now I get scared just saying the word. I really recomend this book its great.

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## Christopher says

This book was about a teenager named Adam Pelko. His dad died in Pearl Harbord. Adam and his two friends survived.

Later he feels like he has to join the Marines. Then he goes to his granpa's house. His grandpa doesn't have an arm. Well he went to sign up for the for the Marines and he got a paper that needed a parent signiture. He went back to his grandfather's house and told him if he could sign for him. His grandpa said no, but then he changed his mind that night. He sign for him. Then Adam went to train, it was very difitcult for him. Then when he finished training the marines went Okinawa to fight the Japanese. His friend Tex and Ben died. Adam was about to die but his friend Rosie helped him and Rosie died. He got wounde. but survived. He went home after he was fine.

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## Trevor Fletcher says

### Personal Response

The book *Heroes Don't Run* by Harry Mazer was a great book. I enjoyed this book because it's based on true history and events that happened in World War II. The book made me think about what I would do if I was in his situation.

### Plot

The plot of this story mainly took place in Okinawa. Some place by Japan. Okinawa was the main military base for U.S soldiers to station to. The book started off in the United States when the main character, Adam Pelko, was at his house somewhere in the West by California. When Adam turned seventeen, he knew what he wanted to do. He wanted to follow his family's footsteps by joining the military. His father, grandfather, and great grandfather were all in action in a war that involved the U.S. His father died in action when Adam was a younger boy. When he made his decision to go to the military, his mother would sign the parental

sheets for the military. Then Adam told his mother that he was looking forward to seeing his grandfather on the East in Virginia. She let him visit by himself and he got his grandfather to sign the sheets. His mother later found out and was upset with both Adam and his grandfather.

#### Characterization

Adam Pelko is a seventeen year old stubborn kid. He is very patriotic kid that just had to join the military and wouldn't take no as an answer. His mother did not want him to get involved with the war, so he managed to get in behind her back by manipulating his grandfather into signing the entry sheet. He went to the military for basic training and education and passed all of the courses and classes. He was later shipped to Okinawa, a base near Japan. He met his best friend Tony in the military. They always stayed close to each other until the day Tony got shot and got killed in action (KIA). Adam was devastated and fought harder for his country in revenge of his best friend's death.

#### Settings

The settings of the story was in a military base near Japan during World War II. It also was taking place in Japan during the on ground combat between the United States and Japan. This was during World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The U.S didn't want to get involved with World War II. Which is not usual for the U.S because the country seems to be getting into every kind of conflict there is. The book started on the West side of the U.S then towards the middle they were transferred to Okinawa. They fought against the Japs for years. Adam only fought there for two years then the war was coming to a hult. A couple of months before the war ended the U.S was taking back some of their troops at a time because they could fit all of them on the ship at one time. Adam was the second group to go out back to the States. Then before the bombs were dropped on Japan the rest of the soldiers were able to come back home and retreat with their family.

#### Recommendation

I would recommend this book to high school students around the Sophomore/ Junior age group. This book would be better for males that love America and would fight for it no matter what the consequences are. If the readers have determination to fight for the United States, they would love this book.

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### **Morgan says**

This book Hero's Don't Run By Harry Mazer, was about Mazer scary adventure and he can see the perspective of a 14 year old and just got to hawaii tiger the chaos surrounding the Pearl Harbor in 1941, and he has a strong passion of Adam's transformation with Both a standing out account of the attacking.

My personal opinion is I thought the book had a lot of meaning and it felt like somewhere the reader was talking for himself and it was a very passionate book but if it had way more detail it would be a really good book and it was a really fast book when you get into it but overall I think it was a pretty good book.

I would recommend this book to people who are interested in Pearl Harbor and anything that has to really do with war this would be a good book but some people who like war might not like this book because you would probably want more details and more about the book so it is hard to tell if some people would like this book.

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## **Ricardo says**

This book is a blast. It was a very adventures book. A boy named Adom, 17 joined the army. It is lame in the begining but once you start reading farther in the book it is amazing.

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## **Danny says**

### Personal Response:

I gave the book a three star review because the book was pretty boring and not entertaining to read. The book did not have a lot of action, although it was a World War II book. Also I thought the book should have been a lot longer and should have included more details about the war. Although there were not that many details about the war, there were plenty of details about the characters and their backstories.

### Plot:

The book started out with Adam and his mother talking about joining the Marines. His mother started saying she didn't want him joining because of his father dying in war. Then he went to his grandpa's house where he persuaded him to sign the enlistment papers so he could join. Adam and his friend went out to celebrate, and Adam found someone he wanted to go out with. After he joined, he got sent to boot camp where he was training for a few months. During boot camp, he sent letters out to his mother and his friend, Davi, who was in the Army. Then after a few months, he got sent out to fight. When he got there, he went straight into battle. Adam got through the first battle just fine, but when the next battle came, he got injured badly. After Adam got injured, he got sent back to the states to get medical attention, and he ended up being fine. His mother came to the hospital and was mad at him for joining without her permission. Then they all went back to their hometown: Bakersfield.

### Characterization:

Adam was the main character in the book, and he did not change that much throughout the book. In the beginning, all he wanted to do was join the Marines, like his father. Towards the end of the book, he could not stay in the Marines. He was injured during the war, so he had to get medically discharged.

Adam's mother did not want him to join the Marines throughout the whole book. She told Adam she would not sign the papers to get him enlisted because of what happened to his father. After she found out her dad signed Adam's papers, she was not happy with either of them. At the end of the book when he was in the hospital, she was still not happy and told him to never go behind her back again.

### Setting:

Adam's hometown was in Bakersfield, California on a family ranch. In 1943, he signed up for the Marines. He was assigned to boot camp in West Virginia at this time. Then he was stationed somewhere in the Pacific on a island. It was important because the book was mainly about what Adam went through in war. It was also where Adam was injured.

### Recommendation:

I would recommend this book to middle school students because of the lower reading level; however, high school students would be more appropriate because of the gory details. I would not recommend this book to anyone who does not like war, because that was all what this book was about. I would also recommend this

book if anyone needed to read a short story, because it was a fast read. I would recommend this book to males because the main character is male.

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### **Austin says**

Well, it was alright. Kind of short, and he wasn't very detailed with the war part of the book, as in, it was too short. Not much caught me by surprise. I knew a couple of the guys were gonna die.

But I other than that, I liked it. It was interesting enough to keep me reading it.

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### **Andrew Mangiaracina says**

I most enjoyed this book. I liked how a young boy was so eager to join the military and serve for his country even though he was under age. Also, I thought the conflict between him and his mother was interesting because she didn't want him to join up, so he forced his grandpa to sign his paper without telling his mother. Overall, this book covered the main ideas of World War 11 and the tragedies cause from it.

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### **Abe says**

HEROES DON'T RUN is about a boy whose dad worked on Pearl Harbor and was a US Naval officer. He died when Pearl Harbor was attacked. The boy wants to go fight in WW2 but his mom won't let him so he takes a trip to his grandparents' house and his grandpa says he can go.

Adam Pelko is 14 years old when arrives in Okinawa. He is very nice to his sister. He is funny. He is also brave.

I recommend this book for readers who like suspenseful books.

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### **Eric Chmlela says**

At seventeen Adam is ready to do his duty. He feels that he cannot wait until he is eighteen to enlist in the armed forces and that he has to do his best to get into the fight against "the Japs" as soon as possible. Since his mother will not sign the necessary paperwork, Adam travels across the country to upstate New York to see his grandfather. Adam is sure that the old man, once a soldier himself, will sign the papers that will let Adam do what he thinks he must.

Thankfully Adam's grandfather agrees and soon Adam is in the marines, training in boot camp for the battles ahead. Though the training is gruelling, often humiliating, and sometimes confusing, Adam takes pride in his progress and works hard to do his best and to honor his father who died aboard the USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor in 1941.

This is not a story for the faint hearted because its action and descriptions are intense and bloody. Nevertheless, I would recommend the book to any reader who wants to glimpse the madness Marines experienced first hand on the Okinawa battlefield during the waning days of WWII. It is easy to see why so many fighters who return home don't want to talk about war. All these men are heroes.

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### **Devin Kuenzi says**

#### Personal Response *Heroes Don't Run*

I think that this was a good book because it is an easy read. Also, I like the book because it was a good war book. I think that the author did a good job writing it. I think that the author did a good job on the main character, Adam. I like how he went out of his way to become a Marine. I think that he should not have got hurt, so he could stay and win the war.

#### Plot

The main part was how Adam wanted to join the Marines. He joined up and went out to the training camp. In the book Adam had lied to his mom so he could join the Marines. He went to his Grandpa's house and worked for him, so he would sign him up. When he joined up he was only 17 years old. He never finished his school year, but when he came back from the Marines he finished his school year. He got hurt while fighting in the war.

#### Recommendation

I would recommend this book to a middle school student or like a freshman. The book was not really that long, it just has a little bit harder content. I would think this book is a great book for people that like to read about war.

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### **Drew Vandervest says**

#### Personal response:

I decided to read this book, because I completed the first book in the series. This book wasn't as good as "A Boy No More" in my opinion. I liked how the author wrote about Adam getting enlisted into the marines. The author did a great job portraying the chapters about bootcamp and about war. I liked how Adam joined the marines for a remembrance of his father who had died in the Pearl Harbor attack.

#### Plot:

Adam had been 14 years old when he witnessed the death of his father. Adam still carried the terrible memory that happened three years ago. Adam had a vision that his father told him to serve for his country. Adam had his grandfather enlist him into the marines, because he was too young and he didn't want to wait longer to serve in the military. Adam had been shipped to fight in the Okinawa battle during World War II.

#### Character analysis:

*Adam is the main character of the book. Adam decides to join the marines. Adam was 17 so he could not enlist himself. Adam wants to enlist for his dead father. Adam's father had been killed in the Pearl Harbor attack. Another character in the book is Adam's mom. Adam's mom didn't want her son to join the military, because she was afraid that he'll die. Adam did not listen to his mother. Adam had his grandfather enlist him into the military.*

*Setting:*

*The setting first took place in Bakersfield, California. When Adam was in California he lived with his mother and sister. Adam took a train to Syracuse to have his grandfather enlist him into the marines. Adam attended boot camp in Point Royal, South Carolina. Once Adam finished boot camp, he got shipped into Okinawa to fight in World War II.*

*Recommended:*

*I recommend this book for teenagers 14 and up, because it's not that hard to read. I recommend this book to anybody who likes war books, because this book has great descriptive war scenes. I recommend this book to both genders, because it's a great book overall. I recommend this book for anybody who wants an easy book to read, because the book is worth it. It has a nice story to it.*

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## **BRANDON SCHEER says**

**Personal Response:**

I thought this was a great book. It got down to the nitty gritty details of what life was like as a soldier during The Great War. It showed how much bravery it took along with physical and mental strength.

**Plot:**

In this novel, a 17 year old boy named Adam, wanted to join the military. His mother would not allow this, so he traveled to visit his grandfather. Once Adam got there, he convinced his grandfather to sign and allow him to join. He joined the marines and made some very close friends during his hard times. Basic training was the hardest time period any of these men have endured by a long shot. Nearing the end of training, the sergeant who had been extremely mean to the others was finally nice to them. He congratulated the soldiers for their hard work and determination. He also stated that they would be fine soldiers and wished them the best of luck. After basic training, Adam and his friends were moved to Okinawa. This was an island very close to Japan. After taking control of this island, it will make it much easier to conquer Japan. While they are on the island, there is real gun fight and explosions. The soldiers had to hide in holes at night and take turns on watch so the enemy couldn't sneak up on them. Along with trying to stay awake, the adrenaline and explosions made it hard to sleep. All of the soldiers looked sick and sleep deprived just a few days after arriving to the island.

**Characterization:**

Adam was the main character of this book. He was 17 years old and lived in California during The Great War. His father died at Pearl Harbor, so Adam wanted to join the military to avenge his father's death. He had his grandfather sign to allow him to join the marines. His mother was furious with him, but she understood why he had to do it. Adam was one of the best marines at his camp. This was mostly because of



his hard work and determination to be the best, but a little help went to the fact that his father was in the military.

Sergeant Bessie was the antagonist in this book. He was the drill sergeant for Adam and his group. This man was extremely hard on the other soldiers. He was especially hard on Adam, because he knew that his father was in the navy. This made Sergeant Bessie angry, because he felt that Adam thought he was better than the rest of the group.

Setting:

Boot Camp was in Georgia. This was where they train to be a true, effective marine. After they graduated, they were moved to Okinawa, which was an island by Japan. The object was to take control of this island. The story took place during The Great War. This was the war that Adam wanted to be a part of and win the war.

Thematic Connection:

I think that knowledge versus ignorance is the best fit for this novel. The idea was to show that even if it wasn't the smartest decision, humans would try to be the hero. Sometimes it was for other people to see them as heroes, and sometimes it was for self glory. Adam wanted to avenge his father's death. His mother wouldn't sign and allow him to be in the marines, so he convinced his grandfather to sign. Adam went directly against what his mother told him to do, so he could be the hero.

Recommendation:

I would recommend this book to 17 and 18 year old males, especially those who have thought of joining the marines. The reason I did this is because that was the age group of men who the book revolved around. It also revolved around men who were in the marines instead of the Women's Marine Corps.

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## **Richard Haas III says**

I pretty much have a like/dislike relationship with this trilogy. The second book is easily the best, while the first is overly simplistic and the third is... nearly pointless. I say pointless because most of the story feels shoehorned in— like after Mazer wrote the second book he was like, “Oh, how about we stick Adam in the Pacific War! And we'll make Adam's mom supportive about him living with his Grandfather (even though it was a major plot point of the last novel that he doesn't go) just so we can get him to connect with his Grandfather (who now is an amputee because he lost his arm in WWI, someone who would most definitely would have needed help in the last book running a farm by himself but we are only just now acknowledging it) all so Adam can join the Marines... even though his father was in the Navy. What contradictions?”

It's further shoehorned by essentially throwing away potential love interest Nancy (who had tons of character development in the second book) and replacing her with rushed love interest Helen. His first date with Helen was super awkward and it made no sense that they instantly became soul mates with nearly zero character development

Additionally, it's structurally awkward that we read the more of the letters Adam writes and less the ones he receives. I'd love to hear responses from his mother, Davi, and Nancy. Without them (in contrast to the letters in the last book) we don't get much from the broader story and it really shows.

I'm beginning to accept that Mazer is an awkward writer (hell, I can be too), but nothing can excuse the

inconsistencies and historical inaccuracies in a period piece meant to inform children about history. Throughout the book, Mazer, from Adam's perspective, mentions World War I by name. In real life they would have referred to it as The Great War because World War II wasn't recognized by that name yet. I know it's a kids book, and you can argue that he did that so his audience knew which War he was talking about, but if that was the case and he felt fine messing with history's smallest details he probably would have been able to exclude all the teenage smoking.

Lastly I'll mention the character development. We're told that Adam went through changes in war and barely shown them. Several of his friends die and he's seemingly over it in a matter of a few pages. War didn't feel gritty or real either, but that one I'm more willing to let slide given the reading level of the book, but still.

Overall it was an okay read. I guess if I can praise this trilogy for anything, it's a good introduction to these topics for younger readers. That's simply what this book is. It can hold your attention, be relatively entertaining, but not much after that.

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### **Niccolo porretta block8/9 says**

I thought that this book was pretty OK. The climax was predictable from the beginning and the actions that some of the characters were not realistic. Overall, the book was a good story with some relate able moments and funny parts but, would not be considered realistic fiction.

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