

1. The author chooses to narrate from perspectives on opposing sides of the conflict, of both American and German tankers. In what ways does this humanize war?
2. Clarence views his crew as his “family,” a commonality among the tankers. Can you think of any moments in which they acted like a family?
3. Although many books cover the subject of World War II, very few focus on the perspective of tankers. How does tank warfare compare to other World War II warfare that you may have learned about?
4. Ann Stringer’s article revealed to the public the inferiority of the American tanks. Was unveiling the truth the right thing to do, or might it have been harmful to the war effort?
5. Even in the darkest moments of the war, the tankers found humor. Are there any moments in particular that made you laugh?
6. Clarence and Gustav are on opposing sides of the war, but both are deeply affected by their time as tankers. What are some similarities in their experiences? How do their national allegiances affect their views of the war?
7. What acts of mercy during the tense moments of war stood out the most to you? Were you surprised by any of the compassionate choices the soldiers made?
8. Many of the soldiers and civilians meet tragic deaths over the course of the book. Why do you think it was important to the author to allow us to get to know each individual so thoroughly?
9. While Clarence and Gustav are discussing the harrowing effects of war during their reunion, Gustav says, “It’s war. It’s in the nature of it.” Does this influence how you view the events of the book? Do you agree with his view?
10. Buck and Clarence both have romantic encounters with women they meet during the war. What do you think of their motives for chasing these relationships in the first place? Do you agree with their reasons for cutting off contact?
11. Gustav and Clarence’s lives converged over a single moment of regret that haunted their meeting in Cologne decades later. How did this reunion offer clarity for the men?
12. After the battle in Cologne, Clarence is approached by German children begging for gum. Although the interaction is brief and innocent, Clarence is reprimanded and denied the Bronze Star. Since the publication of *Spearhead* this decision has been reversed, and on September 18, 2019, Clarence was awarded the Bronze Star. What do you think of Clarence’s initial punishment, and how do you feel about the turn of events all these years later?