Aileen Kilgore Henderson's Stateside Soldier is an edited collection of letters and diary entries written during her two years as a WAC (Women's Army Corps) at the conclusion of the Second World War. It is the first twentieth-century contribution to the book series formerly entitled "Women's Diaries and Letters of the Nineteenth-Century South" edited by Carol Bleser. Though there are probably other books more suited to classroom use than this one, it does succeed in providing historians conducting research in related subjects a glimpse into the day-to-day life of a good soldier and a likeable young Southern woman.

In a sense there are really two authors of this book, each of which is relevant in her own way: Aileen Kilgore Henderson circa 2001, and Aileen Kilgore circa 1944. As the author herself notes in the prologue, "the young woman writing those diary entries and those letters seemed to be someone I had never known" (p.1). The person who wrote the introductory material, and who presumably chose which excerpts to include, has a lifetime of work behind her as an educator, having served as both a schoolteacher and a museum docent. She is also an accomplished author, having written three award-winning children's books and edited a second collection of letters from her youth. (1) Most of the text (237 of the 241 pages) was written, however, by a 23-year-old woman from rural Alabama for whom "a fascinating world [was] opened" from 1938 to 1943 by all the people she met working at the local "five-and- dime store" (p.2). It is this young woman that is the most important author of Stateside Soldier. and from her stem both the book's strongest and weakest points. Henderson nicely summarized the dangers of all this in the prologue: "It is an act of courage and/or foolhardiness to open one's diary to the gaze of others" (p. 1).

First a brief summary of the events covered...
Letter From a Soldier To His Wife. The writing of this letter took place many years ago in 1944. The fact of this short letter being family related gives me the opportunity to fill in a few more details. Similar communications happen today when families are separated due to deployments during times of war or even during peace time separations. Jack returned home in early December of 1945. His son was a toddler of 16 months and was walking and talking. Seen here with his wife and child their entire lives lay before them and the future looked rosy. Stateside Soldier Life in the Women's Army Corps, 1944–1945. Aileen Kilgore Henderson. Additionally, Henderson reveals the public scrutiny and criticism WAC members faced as they assumed nontraditional roles. A fascinating record of history in the making, Henderson's diary and letters offer a window into the lives of groundbreaking women and their lasting impact on the United States Armed Forces. After her discharge from the Women's Army Corps, Aileen Kilgore Henderson returned home to Alabama and earned a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. She has taught school in Alabama, Texas, and Minnesota and has worked as museum docent, freelance writer, Sadly, those last letters home would continue to document the tragic legacy of war, through Iraq and Afghanistan. From Bunker Hill to Fallujah, Americans have written hundreds of millions of war letters. Their words form the pages of our national autobiography, offering eyewitness accounts of major battles from Lexington and Antietam to Normandy, the Chosin Reservoir, Khe Sanh and Kandahar. Kennedy’s letter was smuggled from one POW to another, and it was finally mailed to his parents in late 1945 — more than four years after their son had left for the Pacific. During the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, service members have been more likely to transmit their messages home as emails. But there are exceptions. So do I” The next letter he sent home from the Moscow region, “Hello, Verusinka and my dear son Edinka! Verushechka, please, don’t sing the blues. Get ready for winter. At war. Alive and well” Leonid has been missing since 1944. Nikolay Feskin’s letters are full of father’s love. In the rear, he left wife Evdokia and three children. Here are a few phrases from the soldier’s letter, “I kiss you many times. I want to see very much. And this is from a letter of Mikhail Martov on May 9, 1945, addressed to his wife, “Dear Tamara! I did not sleep all night. All the weapons were reverberating.