In the book, *Where Men Win Glory*, Jon Krakauer criticizes the U.S. government and the military for their actions in the Middle East, using Pat Tillman’s death as an example of what can go wrong due to the nature of war.

Pat Tillman was as much introspective as he was calculated. Everything he had ever done had a valid and premeditated reason behind it. So when he joined the Army, leaving a successful NFL career, it was his strong yet deliberate values that propelled him to lead what he thought was a more meaningful life in the armed services. Krakauer brings the reader into Tillman’s mind through interviews with those who were close to him as well as using excerpts from his journals. When the United States government and the media took hold of his story, he became the reluctant poster boy of national pride, an athlete who would give up his financially stable life for one threatened by roadside bombs and oppositional gunfire.

However, three years after joining the Army he was killed by friendly fire. His funeral was nationally televised yet the public and his family remained unaware of the nature of his demise until after the service. Jon Krakauer illustrates a story of how the U.S. government and military betrayed Pat Tillman and the American people, by making them believe in the virtuosity of the actions in the Middle East.

In the very beginning of the book, Krakauer separates his detailed passages of the United States’ modern involvement in the Middle East from the biography of Tillman’s early life as a high school football star. As the date of September 11th looms closer, the author begins to seamlessly transition between the two storylines. When 9/11 shakes the whole landscape of American society, Tillman sees it as his opportunity to seek a more meaningful life than the one he had in the NFL. Krakauer humanizes an Army enlistee for those who are unfamiliar with the different type of people who put their lives on the line for the United States. Although Tillman has a better background than many who seek to join the
Army, there are many who deeply contemplate this decision, as it is probably the most important they will make in their lives.

More evidently, through intense research, Krakauer vividly highlights the cover-up that was orchestrated by the military superiors. Through increasing speculation by the associated press, Krakauer decided to uncover the full extent of the conspiracy. They ordered for all evidence of the friendly fire to be destroyed, including Tillman’s clothes. Soldiers were ordered to keep silent about his death, even to his brother who was in the military with him. If Tillman were not in the national spotlight, it is possible that the cover-up would not have been carried out. Although the government and the media’s use of Tillman’s name somewhat boosted morale in the war, his fame changed the way he was treated in the military. Krakauer raises a point of how the public’s opinion of war has an effect on the actions that are carried out overseas. In a democracy, where the government has to convince the people that the war is valid, it is important in how it is portrayed. To have a national hero die by the gun of his own comrade was a factor contributing to the increasing public disapproval of the wars in the Middle East.

This book is important to incorporate into the American Studies department curriculum at Connecticut College because it not only provides an interesting narrative in the life of Pat Tillman, it also offers a truthful understanding of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although at times, the book can drag on about details of the military, it can be seen as an introduction to the inner workings of the United States Army. Although he introduces civilian readers to the foreign life of an Army ranger, Krakauer makes it easy for the audience to understand what exactly is going on without breaking the stride of his narrative, by humanizing and complicating our concepts of war. Where Men Win Glory gives Krakauer a platform to criticize how the U.S. government publicized two wars, using Tillman as a device to garner enlistees as well as to shine a positive light on their military action. Because the book illustrates the difference between how war is covered by the media and how it is actually fought, Jon Krakauer bridges the gap between public perceptions and the realities of war.