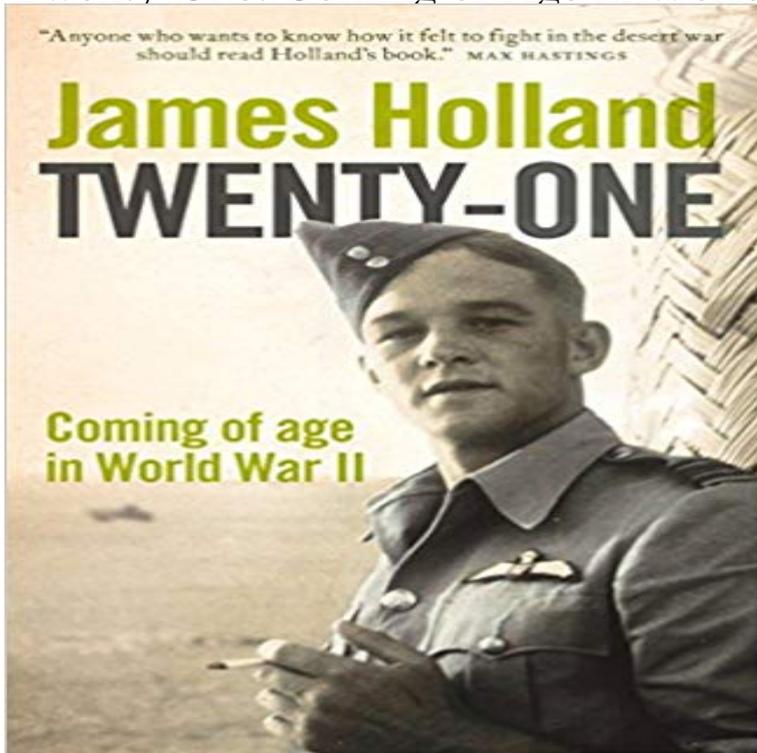


Twenty-One: Coming of Age in World War II



World War II affected the lives of ordinary men and women more directly than any other conflict before or since. This is an unprecedented look at the lives of twenty-one young men who answered their country's call to arms and left their homes to fight in unfamiliar and far-reaching corners of the globe. Many never returned, and those who did found their homes and countries much changed by long years of war. Most discovered they had become different people: having seen death and destruction on a scale they had never imagined they would witness, the return to civilian life was often far from easy. Now, more than sixty years on, this remarkable generation is fading. Most are now over eighty and around the world more than two thousand veterans of the war are passing away every day. In this new book Sunday Times bestselling author James Holland recounts the real-life stories of twenty-one young men from around the world who served in different services and theatres of the war. Whether it be the Byers brothers from Canada or Bill Laity from Cornwall, Wlad Rubnikowicz from Poland or Tom Finney from Preston, each began the war with little idea of what lay in store; and yet, each displayed astonishing courage, fortitude and resilience, united by a sense of honour and duty, and bound by the fellowship of their comrades. Often reacting in very different ways to the strange and frequently terrifying situations in which they found themselves, they each suffered hardships and loss, making sacrifices that have ensured a lasting peace amongst the warring nations; and if some of these survivors are perplexed by how the world has developed, none doubts the value of what they did all those years ago. Moving, poignant, and conveying all the drama, tension and fear experienced in war, *Twenty-One* is an uplifting tribute to a passing generation, describing the wide range of experiences and extremes these

remarkable men and women witnessed during World War II. Note that it has not been possible to include the same picture content that appeared in the original print version.

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