**Introduction**: Author Tim O’Brien says it is sometimes the seemingly most unbelievable things in a war story that make the story seem true, while some very believable elements sometimes come off as sounding false. “Sometimes”, he says, “a true war story is impossible to tell.”

**Important Terms and Concepts for Consideration:**
- **Magic Realism**: a literary genre or style, strongly associated with Latin America (but not exclusively, hence the term’s importance for our study of *Going After Cacciato*...), that incorporates fantastic or mythical elements into otherwise realistic fiction — called also *magical realism*.
- **Verisimilitude**: the extent to which the literary text is believable, or the extent to which it imitates life. Even when stories are far-fetched, such as with science fiction, readers must be willing to "suspend disbelief" and think that the story could actually occur.
- **Stereotype (literary device)**: A stereotype is a character, with generalized traits (characteristics that make the character a group representative rather than an individual). Writers sometimes use stereotypes as minor characters.
- **Trope**: *Technically speaking*, literary trope is the use of figurative language – via word, phrase, or even an image – for artistic effect such as using a figure of speech. *For our purposes here*, the word trope has also come to be used for describing commonly recurring literary and rhetorical devices, motifs, or clichés in creative works.

**Directions**: *Individually*, close-read and annotate the opening passage from Tim O’Brien’s *Going After Cacciato*, page 1 – the first paragraph on page 7. Then, *in small groups* at your table, discuss the following prompts regarding the extent to which O’Brien is able to (or fails to) achieve verisimilitude in the opening to his war story with the use of stereotyping, incorporation of war story tropes, and incorporation of Magic Realist elements. **Complete this annotation note organizer INDIVIDUALLY. Due____________________.**

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<th>List of characters who you feel are stereotypes of characters in a typical war story:</th>
<th>The character’s traits that you deem stereotypical</th>
<th>To what extent does O’Brien’s use of character stereotype help to develop the text’s <em>verisimilitude</em>, or to what extent does it undermine the text’s <em>verisimilitude</em>? Discuss.</th>
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Think of all of the war stories you have ever seen or read. Identify all of the devices, motifs, or clichés you expect from the typical war story that you come across in the opening of *Going After Cacciato*:

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<th>List all of the elements from the opening passage of <em>Going After Cacciato</em> you suspect embody the tenants of Magic Realism:</th>
<th>To what extent does O’Brien’s use of Magic Realist elements help to develop the text’s <em>verisimilitude</em>, or to what extent does it undermine the text’s <em>verisimilitude</em>? Discuss.</th>
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To what extent does O’Brien’s use of war story tropes help to develop the text’s *verisimilitude*, or to what extent does it undermine the text’s *verisimilitude*? Discuss.