"The Firing Squad" by Colin McDougall

Group Questions: *discuss with partners during class and record responses*

1. Look up the following words: *ethics, moral, immoral, redemption*. Discuss definitions with your table group. Can you think of any situations where these words might apply to you?

2. Are there ethics in war? Explain.

3. Brigadier Hatfield poses two equally undesirable alternatives to Captain Adam. What are they and why are they undesirable? Why does Adam?

4. How does the term *moral dilemma* apply to this story?

Individual Questions: *Due:*

5. Determine the conflicts in the story and explain (remember to discuss both internal and external conflicts).

6. How are the ethical boundaries blurred when it comes to the execution of Private Sydney Jones?

7. Adam is not just the Commander of a firing squad: he realizes he is an executioner. What are the connotations of the word "executioner?" How is executing Jones any worse than the war itself?

8. How is the situation more difficult “Now the enemy is not a distant face-less target”?

9. How is the execution of Jones a political matter? Why must it be carried out?

10. Based on your responses above, determine the theme of the story. Write down a strong statement including the theme, the title of the story, and the author. Now, in the next sentence, include a quotation from the story. (This should be similar to the example on the “Evidence handout” for direct quotations for “Gentlemen, Your Verdict”).

Paragraph Assignment:  

In a paragraph of 150-200 words, with direct reference to Colin McDougall’s “The Firing Squad”, discuss the theme of the story.

- Put the theme statement in the topic sentence (review question #10).
- Use direct evidence from the story (quotations) and explain how they prove your theme statement. Integrate these quotations within your sentences.
- Remember, you must have an argument proving your theme. If you are struggling with this, you can modify the topic and refer to how the conflict reveals the theme (depending, of course, on your theme statement).
- You must: Complete a paragraph plan and a rough copy; then, have an editing session and complete a good copy. Hand all work in.