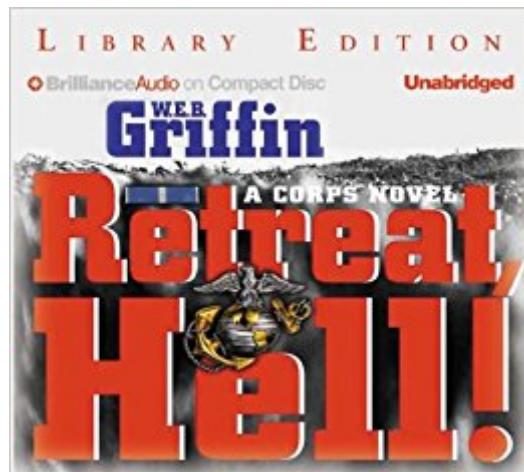


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Retreat, Hell! (The Corps Series)



Synopsis

It is the fall of 1950. The Marines have made a pivotal breakthrough at Inchon, but a roller coaster awaits them. The bit in his teeth, Douglas MacArthur is intent on surging across the 38th parallel toward the Yalu River, where he is certain no Chinese are waiting for him, while Major Ken McCoy, operating undercover, hears a different story entirely, and is just as intent on nailing down the truth before it is too late. Meanwhile, Brigadier General Fleming Pickering, shuttling between two continents, works desperately to mediate the escalating battle between MacArthur and President Harry Truman, while trying to keep his mind from the cold fact that somewhere out there, his own daredevil pilot son, Pick, is lost behind enemy lines - and may be lost forever. Before Retreat, Hell! is finished, all their fates will be determined - and for some of them, it will be a bitter pill indeed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Megaseller Griffin (Honor Bound; Brotherhood of War; Men at War) musters another solid entry in his series chronicling the history of the U.S. Marines, now engaged in the Korean War. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, nicknamed El Supremo by his subordinates, is taken by surprise when the North Korean Army surges south across the 38th parallel. After early losses, he rallies his troops and stems the tide, but not for long. Intertwining stories of literally an army of characters reveal how MacArthur and his sycophantic staff overlook the entire Red Chinese Army, which is massed behind the Yalu River and about to enter the war. Brig. Gen. Fleming Pickering attempts to mediate the ongoing battles between feisty, give-'em-hell Harry Truman and the haughty MacArthur, while

worrying about his pilot son, Malcolm "Pick" Pickering, who has been shot down behind enemy lines. The introduction of the Sikorsky H-19A helicopter into the war by Maj. Kenneth "Killer" McCoy and sidekick Master Gunner Ernie Zimmerman details the invention of tactics that will become commonplace in Vietnam. Readers looking for guts and glory military action will be disappointed, as barely a shot is fired in anger, but fans of Griffin's work understand that the pleasures are in the construction of a complex, big-picture history of war down to its smallest details: "There were two men in the rear seat, both of them wearing fur-collared zippered leather jackets officially known as Jacket, Flyers, Intermediate Type G-1." Veterans of the series will enjoy finding old comrades caught up in fresh adventures, while new-guy readers can easily enter here and pick up the ongoing story. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Griffin is the author of five series, including Honor Bound, Brotherhood of War, The Corps, Badge of Honor, and Men at War--33 books for those readers who are still counting. In this latest book in The Corps, Griffin sets the action in Korea in 1950 during the war. The plot involves a disagreement between General Douglas MacArthur and Major Kenneth McCoy on just where the Chinese are waiting to engage U.S. troops. Another protagonist, General Fleming Pickering, is kept busy mediating the growing quarrel between MacArthur and President Truman. Pickering's son, a marine pilot, is missing after being shot down behind enemy lines. There are lots of other characters, all keen on destroying the bad guys. Like his other novels, this one is filled with military jargon and tough talk. The setting is worldwide: locales include South Korea, a neuropsychiatric ward in a San Diego naval hospital, Tokyo, Wake Island, the Sea of Japan, and the White House. There also are lots of top-secret memos and military abbreviations but not much suspense. In Griffin's novels, the good guys always win. However, the author has a knack for smoothly combining fact with fiction, giving his work a realistic veneer. George Cohen Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Don't know if Griffin intended to go on with the another in the series or what the idea was, but the book seems about half finished. After reading all the other 9, you get left in the middle of an incomplete story. Its ridiculous, really, to end it without really knowing what the entire purpose of the story was. I looked to see if there was a number eleven in the series, hoping that I would have some idea of the purpose of book 10, but there is nothing. So while I enjoyed the series, I would suggest anyone reading it either stop at eight, when there is some conclusion to story, or at nine, but don't

bother with 10 because its pointless to read a book that spends a great deal of time reviewing the previous books and then drops the storyline in the middle, leaving no resolution to the story.

I am prejudiced in that I am a Marine. But even a bit of pro Marine Corps prejudice is not what convinces me that WEB Griffin is a great writer. As far as I know he never served in the Corps, but he captures our ethos and our esprit de corps far better than any other author I know. Griffin writes with feeling and he captures the essence of military life. He manages to intertwine a great story line with an accurate telling of the history of the period. Strongly recommended for anyone who has even a casual interest in military life of the period.

Griffin concludes his series with the fateful events of fall 1950. MacArthur's bold counterattack at Inchon has reversed the Korean War's tide and has the North Koreans retreating in disarray. MacArthur wants to press his advantage into North Korea and finish the war by Christmas, but Truman and his Pentagon advisors fear MacArthur will draw the Chinese into the war. MacArthur's staff is telling him there's no risk of that. Major Ken McCoy disagrees. Nearly cashiered from the Marines for predicting a North Korean invasion a month or two before it actually happened, now called back to the CIA, he has intelligence that suggests the Chinese have secretly sent tens of thousands of men into North Korea, with many more poised to join them. But he doesn't have hard evidence and once more the brass won't listen to him, setting the stage for the Allies being taken by surprise yet again. His boss Brigadier General Fleming Pickering and Truman's own trusted buddy and adviser Major General Louis Howe trust McCoy's judgment and have to work delicately between the MacArthur and Truman camps. Truman worries that if he fires MacArthur, a potential rival in the 1952 presidential election, he'll appear to have acted for personal reasons. Pickering's pilot son Pick is still MIA, shot down behind enemy lines and, as we learn at the outset, alive, hungry and desperate as he tries to avoid capture. His war-correspondent girlfriend is desperate for news of him, as is Pick's childhood friend, the now-pregnant Ernestine McCoy, who has moved to Tokyo to be closer to her husband. Pickering has to come to terms in the story with his devil-may-care approach to life and who has been harmed by it. This is another book with little action, a lot of background and a boatload of Famous Grouse scotch whiskey about a war too many of us know too little about. It's the dawn of age of the military helicopter and jet, the first hot war of the Cold War, the first time the U.S. must fight wars in a limited fashion, fretting about going too far or setting off a wider and potentially nuclear war. I wouldn't have minded one more book in this series,

telling us what happens after the Chinese surge across the border and the American and South Korean troops must retreat yet again. I like the characters of reservists called out of their comfortable lives to fight this sudden war, and of the women who bitterly resent their being sent off to war yet again. Griffin likes to get beyond pilots and spies and tip-of-the-spear warriors to give us those who make up the masses of the military. There is an efficient regular who runs a transportation company and hopes to parlay good work into a career-move promotion. There's a slick car salesman now a captain over an infantry unit, thrown into the breach at Pusan, held in reserve at Inchon, and now ashore in the administrative fog of war without anyone having a good idea of what to do with them. There's a cryptographer snagged by Pickering and his people because, formerly in Europe, he has no ties to MacArthur's cryptographers and can keep things mum. And I like his handling of the month-to-month mood -- the desperation and pessimism of the first couple of months, and the manic surge of confidence after Inchon with most people agreeing the war can be over by Christmas. Griffin, to his credit, doesn't give any of his characters the prescience to know it will drag on until June 1953, but allows the ones we like best to remain silent on the matter. And Griffin is as ever excellent on the cross-currents and politics at the top, between White House and Pentagon, between Pentagon and MacArthur, between MacArthur and the fledgling CIA and so on. I was a little disappointed that not all of the series regulars had their lives brought forward. I would have enjoyed a line or two describing what happened to them after World War II. Having spent ten novels with them, I will miss these characters.

This series about the Marine Corps, of which this is the last volume, is probably the best thing WEB Griffin did before he aged out and started working with his son, who writes as if he were creating video games -- with flat characterization, improbable plots.. In the Marine series, the characters are fully developed, the action is believable, the history is good, and the Corps is honored. Griffin's later works with his collaborator are super disappointing and I would never purchase (and probably would not waste time reading them -- ever! My late husband was a proud Marine who served in Korea in a variety of capacities. He honored this series as true to -- and typical of -- the Corps during the World War II era.

W. E. G. Griffin is an excellent writer about military history. He thoroughly researches his novels and has high ranking military personnel who he interviews to get his facts exactly right. He includes detailed specifications on weapons used by the military including guns, airplanes, ships, and armaments. Each character in his book is well developed and he uses actual historical figures to

bring his stories to light. Included in his books are little known facts of actual wartime events which he keeps true to fact and does not embellish, detract from, or change to make his stories a "better read". I have read the entire 7 book series and couldn't put a book down until I finished them all.

This series was beyond words phenomenal. As a former Marine grunt, full of esprit de corps, this series has been a true pleasure. Now that I've read the final book I feel like I'm breaking up with a group of people I've come to love and admire. Mr Griffen has perfectly put in to words relationships, conversations, and experiences that translate from the origin of the corps at Tunn Tavern to those of us that have fought the war on terror and every jarhead in between. My only wish is that there was more books or that this series was picked up as a motion picture or tv series. The writing is so rich, the characters so relatable and the story is too good not be seen by the masses.

Readers: this book is a bit frustrating because it stops in 1951 and the Korean war would go on for several more years. It also leaves Pick in NP limbo and I hate books with no happy ending. It made me feel like there should be one more book in the series but of course that didn't happen. AND, although the reader knows that ultimately MacArthur was relieved, that information is not part of the story but in the author's end remarks. I would have liked to read about that discussion within the CIA- Far East compound.

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