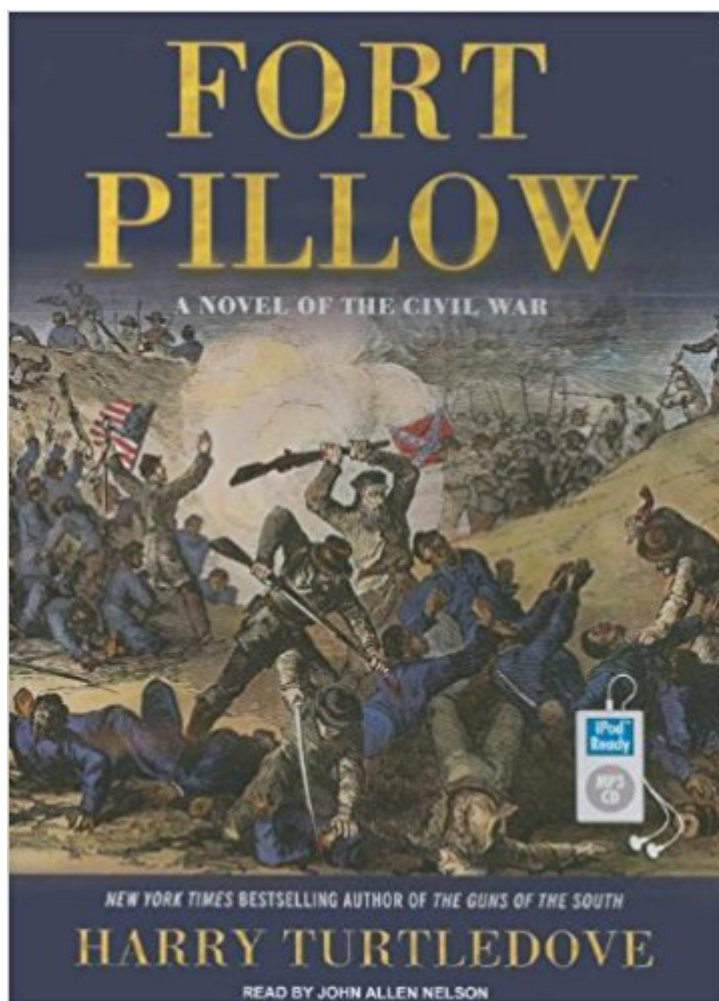


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Fort Pillow: A Novel Of The Civil War



Synopsis

In April 1864, the Union garrison at Fort Pillow was composed of almost 600 troops, about half of them black. The Confederacy, incensed by what it saw as a crime against nature, sent its fiercest cavalry commander, Nathan Bedford Forrest, to attack the fort with about 1,500 men. The Confederates overran the fort and drove the Federals into a deadly crossfire. Only sixty-two of the colored Union troops survived the fight unwounded. Many accused the Confederates of massacring the black troops after the fort fell, when fighting should have ceased. The "Fort Pillow Massacre" became a Union rallying cry and cemented resolve to see the war through to its conclusion. Harry Turtledove has written a dramatic re-creation of an astounding battle, telling a bloody story of courage and hope, freedom and hatred. With brilliant characterizations of all the main figures, this is a novel that reminds us that Fort Pillow was more than a battle-it was a clash of ideas between men fighting to define what being an American ought to mean.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Turtledove revisits the controversial 1864 Battle at Fort Pillow, also known as the Fort Pillow Massacre, in this even-handed, readable historical novel (after Days of Infamy) about the bloodbath in western Tennessee, where the Civil War pitted "neighbor against neighbor." The defenders at the Union-held Fort Pillow were made up of a unit of nearly 300 Tennessee Unionists ("homemade Yankees," according to their neighbors in gray) and an equal number of African American artillery men. Turtledove sifts through the disputed historical record and scrupulously reconstructs the

scene. Although greatly outnumbered, the fort's defenders at first rejected a Confederate surrender offer, and the rebels-enraged by traitorous whites and armed Blacks-stormed the fort, slaughtering twice as many blacks as whites, even while the Unionists tried to escape or surrender. For a comprehensive view of the battle, Turtledove shifts the narrative among a mix of fictional characters and historical figures: Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest; Major Bill Bradford, who replaced Major Lionel Booth as the garrison's Union commander; and Sgt. Ben Robinson, one of the Negro troops. Fans of Civil War history will especially enjoy this balanced account. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Starred Review In April 1864, the Union garrison at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, consisted of 600 men, more than half of them black and many of the rest Tennessee unionists. They were commanded by Major William Bradford, who had gotten his command by raising regiments. Their position was attacked by General Nathan Bedford Forrest and 1,500 men, many of whom were also Tennesseans. The Confederates overran the fort, and when the fighting was done, there were 226 Union survivors. Only 62 of the black troops survived unwounded. Major Bradford was killed shortly after being taken prisoner. Exactly what happened has been a subject of controversy from that day to this. An immediate congressional investigation found that Forrest's forces had deliberately murdered the black troops and their officers, and "the Fort Pillow Massacre" became a rallying cry for Union victory. The investigation's report, however, contains several errors of fact. Accounts of Forrest's campaigns written by Confederate sympathizers after the war maintain that Forrest's troops only fought--they didn't massacre--the Union troops. Turtledove's most impressive novel uses known facts and persons and extremely plausible extrapolations to paint a picture of one of America's least glorious affrays. After reading it, one is convinced that it happened that way. Turtledove also depicts the people of the time and place very vividly, making the novel a true window into history. Frieda Murray Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Harry Turtledove is known mostly as a master of the alternate history genre, and rightly so. His books "Guns of the South", "Ruled Britannia", the Worldwar and Timeline 191 series are exceptional examples of what alternate history can be. As those who have read the works of one H N Turteltaub already know, Turtledove can also write excellent historical fiction. "Justianian" is currently out of print, but well worth reading, if you can find it. "Fort Pillow" is not an alternate history story. It's the

first (to my knowledge, anyhow), straight historical novel that Turtledove has published under his own name. Does it stand up to his other works? Emphatically yes. The Civil War is territory he's gone over before, but always in an alternate history. Seeing what he does with a regular historical fiction novel is impressive. As is usual with a Turtledove book we get viewpoint characters on both sides and at all levels. From the black artillery sargent, to a couple of US officers, all the way up to Nathan Bedford Forrest himself, we really get to see what the war in general, and this battle in particular, was like. That the massacre was a great infamy goes without saying. Regardless of which sources are right or wrong (USA vs CSA), a disproportionate number of black soldiers were killed during and after the fighting, as were the officers who commanded them. That we as a nation no longer remember this (even I hadn't known about it until the book came out, and I like my history!), is an infamy almost as great, one that hopefully this book will go a long way to correcting.

This is not a typical Turtledove novel, but it was an enjoyable read. This novel is historical fiction, NOT alternative history. However, this book should interest both his Alternative History fans and mainstream historical fiction aficionados as well. I always look forward to reading Turtledove when he departs from his normal Alternative Fiction genre (including his Turtletaub personae). Novels like this one help us to appreciate the breadth of Turtldove's talent and remind us that he is a serious student of history. The characters are well-written and he demonstrates his expertise on Civil War history. It's every bit the page-turner we've come to expect from Turtledove, so you won't be disappointed. The book's message is very dark, so you won't find much levity. But, it brought history to life and I'm glad I read it. I look forward to more novels like this one from Turtledove in the future.

I hope Mr. Turtledove is as skillful at conveying the actual events as he is at weaving a story around them. I have long been intrigued with this particular battle and the character of Nathan Bedford Forrest. Turtledove leaves just enough on the table to keep one guessing, which I think is a good approach since we never see entirely into a person's soul. I will be reading more of his books in the future.

Was disappointed somewhat in the book, I guess because it was so descriptive of the time.

A great account of a little-known event near the end of the Civil War in the Deep South. Highly recommended.

This book should be on the shelves of every High School and College Library! It is an insightful telling of an important and TOO overlooked battle of the Civil War! Heck! It's a Good Read, too.

Written about a battle that is little known. Book gave both sides feelings during this battle, from the confederates anger over armed blacks to the former slaves not wanting to return to slavery.

Interesting book.

Big Harry T fan. Cleared up a lot of ms-conceptions I had of what happened.

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