



American Front

Harry Turtledove

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When the Great War engulfed Europe in 1914, the United States and the Confederate States of America, bitter enemies for five decades, entered the fray on opposite sides: the United States aligned with the newly strong Germany, while the Confederacy joined forces with their longtime allies, Britain and France. But it soon became clear to both sides that this fight would be different--that war itself would never be the same again. For this was to be a protracted, global conflict waged with new and chillingly efficient innovations--the machine gun, the airplane, poison gas, and trench warfare.

Across the Americas, the fighting raged like wildfire on multiple and far-flung fronts. As President Theodore Roosevelt rallied the diverse ethnic groups of the northern states--Irish and Italians, Mormons and Jews--Confederate President Woodrow Wilson struggled to hold together a Confederacy still beset by ignorance, prejudice, and class divisions. And as the war thundered on, southern blacks, oppressed for generations, found themselves fatefully drawn into a climactic confrontation . . .

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American Front Details

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From Reader Review American Front for online ebook

Emile Frijns says

I read this book when I was 17 and I remember absolutely loving it. While sorting some shelves at my parents' place, I stumbled upon this book again and am planning on reading it again.

Zak Kizer says

Though burdened with too many characters and a surprisingly narrow scope, American Front nonetheless offers more of Turtledove's fascinating premise and richly detailed world building.

Betty says

We never hear whether Turtledove ever served in the military, but books like this make me feel as if he did. I keep seeing other conflicts as I read. The experiences on both sides of the war, both on the battlefield and trying to maintain family and peacetime work, gives a moving picture of what war does to everyone. This is what might have happened in America in the early 1900s if the Confederacy had won the Civil War.

Kathy says

I had some issues with this Turtledove, even though I've enjoyed some in the past. Almost too many characters and he jumps back and forth between them in little short vignettes. For most of the book I struggle to remember who and what was going on.

Besides that, it is interesting to imagine a world with a separate CSA and how things might have been. Based on the characters in the book and their stories, I think I'd want to live in Canada then!

Not for those offended by a look at racial discrimination, especially in the 1910s, but in a world where there still is a CSA.

Jonathan Lee says

I was hooked after reading the previous novel, "How Few Remain", and knew I had to continue with this series. It didn't serve as a prequel, but added some context and familiarity that I appreciated. This book had me flipping page after page, and I burned through it in just about a week or so. The third-person multiple POV is a bit confusing, but once I got each character straight, I loved seeing so many different experiences and lives during the war. A really thought-provoking and interesting read, looking forward to what else this series holds!

Nicholas Bobbitt says

I wanted to like this more. Ugh. Turtledove's writing can't support his idea, despite me liking the idea behind Timeline-191.

Ifan says

This book unfortunately did not live up to the quality of the previous one. The pacing felt a bit off - Turtledove could have spent more time setting the scene up for the war, in my opinion.

George Flannary says**Great book but needs more about the rest of the world**

The work just needed more on the rest of the war and not just the parts where the USA is involved. Very little is mentioned about the European western and eastern fronts. No mention of the Ottoman Empire being involved at all. It's a great group of stories, some coming together in the end.

Victor Vilchiz says

i was expecting more based on what others say about HT. My first issue with this book is that it is labeled to be the the first book in the series... turns out that it is actually the 2nd one and I am sure a lot of my confusion comes from the fact that he lays out his "alternative" reality in book 1. Anyhow... if I do pick up the 1st or 3rd book in the series it will be due to the fact that he has Pancho Villa running for president of the Confederacy.... so far fetched as Villa never had presidential ambitions (in reality he was president no more than a week resigning to go back to battle; the real power holder was that who commanded the army).

Samantha Artuso says

Written well enough to make World War 1 interesting. Harry Turtledove has a very interesting take on alternate history and the ending has me itching to get the second book so I can find out what happens with "De Revolution!"

Leo B says

Harry Turtledove's The Great War: The American Front, is a fast paced alternate history novel focusing on

World War One after a confederate victory in the United States Civil War. After the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Archduke, The US sides with The German Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire, and The Ottoman Empire. The CSA does the opposite, they join the Entente with The British Empire, French Empire, Russian Empire, and Serbia. Fierce fighting on the border of the CSA and USA ensues.

Turtledove uses a unique style of writing which throws you from character to character while never visiting one character twice. This strategy is hard to adapt to at first but eventually moves the story along quite nicely. This book touches on some sensitive topics such as genocide and war and the bad things that come with war. Such as how often soldier characters can die randomly. It also has a very heavy use of racial slurs so I would suggest no one under the age of 14 read this book due to its mature content. Overall I would give this book a 4 due to its interesting plot and realistic view on war and its effects on countries and people.

Hillary says

Not as thoroughly awesome as How Few Remain, the first in this series, but quite engaging. The First World War affects the USA and CSA as something of a continuation of the Civil War, here - it seemed they were just waiting for an excuse to start fighting again, and they fell into war again with vigor. The author's refusal to take sides is interesting as well. I was also fascinated by the way alliances fell out in this version of history - very plausible given the events of How Few Remain, but it seriously messes with my good guy-bad guy ideas of World War I. Looking forward to finding the next one in the series.

Jon says

I may include spoilers, so if you're planning to read the book (let's face it; you're not), consider yourself forewarned.

First recall that we're talking about an alternate history where the South won the Civil War with the help of England and France. This book takes us to 1914, where World War I is starting. It's England, France, Russia and the Confederates (the "Quadruple Entente") versus the US, Germany, and presumably Austria and the Ottoman Empire. (If the latter two get a mention, it's very brief.) In North America, the war is primarily a struggle of the US versus the Confederates and Canada.

The book is, like How Few Remain, told from a variety of perspectives. Unlike HFR, however, TGWAF (are those acronyms annoying enough?) tells the story from the perspective of common people. There are some historical figures present -- I counted Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, George Custer, Eugene Debs and Marcel Duchamp, but I'm sure there were more. These characters, however, are secondary to the everyday folk -- the New England fisherman, the Confederate Army major with the unfortunate surname "Lincoln", the black butler in a South Carolina mansion...

There's less excitement in "I wonder what a New England fisherman would do in this timeline" than "I wonder what Abe Lincoln would do if he lost the war (and survived)." The book at times sounded like one of those histories where they try to convince you that the life of ordinary people is more worth studying than the life of kings and statesmen. Sounds fun, huh? Nevertheless, the book succeeded in making me think about World War I in different terms -- by hearing Virginia ripped apart by trench warfare, I could more readily

imagine the psychological shock to Europeans. And I could more readily appreciate the benefit to America of not having a war on our home soil during the twentieth century.

One of the book's drawbacks is its large cast of characters that makes it hard to remember who's who. Sometimes I had to wait until a soldier cursed the other side to remember which side he was on. Another is that everything is very slow developing and telegraphed. In an early scene, Confederate President Woodrow Wilson is giving a speech in Richmond, and soldiers fire bullets into the air to scare away the crowd. Is it really necessary to have a character wonder to himself what will happen when the bullets come back down? It doesn't move the plot along, and it doesn't really provide any "flavor" to the story.

Nevertheless, the alternate history is fairly compelling. By the end of the book, the USA has advanced across most fronts, though the war is stalling. The USA has also pushed the CSA out of Pennsylvania and is trying to retake the parts of Maryland and DC that have fallen. The South is starting to be disrupted by a Marxist revolution led by blacks. That's one of Turtledove's cleverer ideas, and I'm waiting to see how this will play out.

Bryce says

Turtledove is great at describing the endless tedium and frustration of war; he attacks it from all sides and perspectives, building a complete picture. If you're interested in the big and little picture of war and political events, this is great. If not, the reader bores quickly.

eric quinn says

A part of the How few remain Alternate History world....really really good.
