

Books Reviewed

THE REMAINS OF THE CORPS: Volume I: Ivy & The Crossing: The Illustrated Novel. By Will Remain. Illustrated by Tara Kaz. Published by EG&A Publishing. 368 pages. The book is available through www.remainsofthecorps.com.

All devoted authors of consequence covet the imprimatur stamp of approval for his or her achievement more than reaching the peak of the best-seller list or realizing large movie contract rewards. Imagine when the paragon of military matters, General David H. Berger, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, sent an unexpected letter of approval to first-time novelist Thomas W. Hebert (Will Remain is a pen name), a second generation Marine, for his minor masterpiece, "The Remains of the Corps: Volume I: Ivy & the Crossing: The Illustrated Novel." REMAIN is an anagram for Marine.

Fiction, spanning most of the 20th century, 1913 to 1978, Volume I depicts the history of three generations of a United States Marine Corps family that had its birth roots in Worcester, Mass., and its college roots at Harvard in Cambridge.

While his forefathers fought bravely, often heroically, in the Great War, World War II, Korea, and in other war-stressed areas in the world, "... The skill, strength, endurance, and spirit my progenitors exhibited are anything but make believe," the fictional author says. Their stories, five additional volumes of "The Remains of the Corps" (1913-1917) are on their way. Volume II, "France: Belleau Wood and Beyond" (1917-1919); Volume III, "Between the Wars" (1919-1941); Volume IV, "World War II (1941-1945); Volume V, "Post-WW II-Korea (1946-1953); and Volume VI, "Post-Korea (1954-1975). Hebert adds, "My collateral view of many of the Remain family members takes the reader inside the Corps, both in peacetime and in war, including adventures in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic."

Appreciative of having received Volume I, "Ivy & the Crossing," General Berger wrote, "The Remains of the Corps' is a unique and compelling look at the Marines in World War I. It is clear that you

put a significant amount of effort into creating believable characters and scenarios and truly bringing each one to life Your book is a great addition to our library at the Home of the Commandants. Many thanks for your service to the Corps and our country ... Semper Fidelis."

Any reviewer of books assigned to Volume I, "Ivy," any military historian, buff, or general reader, would agree. The general's tribute is justified. Page after page, Hebert's eloquence is riveting, so much so that the Remain family ingratiates itself in the subconscious, akin to a good television miniseries, that all the members become integral to our own family. In short, we're all imprimaturs stamping approval of the Remains and grandson Will's veracity of them.



Enhancing the author's embracing narrative style is the use of illustrations, 134 of them in Volume I alone, every one intrinsic, nay, crucial, to the well conceived storyline. Artist Tara Kaz, a graduate of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, was chosen after careful consideration of numerous graphic designers, painters, and illustrators.

"After putting my heart and soul into every page," Tom admits, "I was searching for an artist who quietly and realistically could capture the heart and soul of each member of my family, the encompassing Marines, and main characters such as born-to-the-purple Lawrence Blakeslee and the beautiful KatyKay Mulcahy."

Indeed, without a single photograph in the entire 368 page text, Tara Kaz captures them all, fictional enlisted men, non-commissioned officers, officers, cadets, places, etc., in a creative style of drawing commensurate with the best art in photography. "Tara breathes life into each of their stories with 53 drawings and 81 portraits. And by the time my six volumes are completed, she will have completed for 'The Remains of the Corps,' close to a thousand superb illustrations, each one deserving its own frame."

Such respect for his artist, love of family, and enormous respect and admiration of the Corps deserves a further glimpse into the author, a man beyond the ordinary whose intuitive imagination adds to

the dignity of our own humble lives. He has been referred to as a "literary blacksmith whose hammers, tongs, and chisels, including a lengthy self-education in the literary arts, an intense passion, and a fierce persistence, are shaping the iron wrought by many years of extensive research." So fittingly apropos.

The son of a Marine sergeant who served on Iwo Jima, Hebert was born in Springfield, Mass. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1968, and served in Vietnam from 1970 to 1971 as a first lieutenant. Upon leaving the Marine Corps, he obtained a master's degree in professional accounting from the University of Hartford. He is a certified public accountant, with an avocation of researching and writing about military matters.

Don DeNevi

Author's bio: For more than 35 years, Don DeNevi has reviewed books for Leatherneck, in addition to writing more than 50 himself. Only recently has he begun writing military fiction, his first two efforts entitled, "Pacific Nocturne—Pavuvu Island, 1944, When a Multiple Murdering Marine Murdered His Own," and its sequel, "The Guard House Murders—Camp Elliott, San Diego, 1944—Who's Killing Young Marine Inmates?"



For more information on:

The Remains of the Corps

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