

# **Counterattack: The Corps Study Guide**

**Counterattack: The Corps by W. E. B. Griffin**

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# Plot Summary

The attack on Pearl Harbor began from the Japanese Carrier Task Force 300 miles to the north. The attack began at 0755 hours with the other groups attacking afterward. The attack was successful. Most of the United States Pacific fleet was destroyed and the United States entered World War II.

Counterattack: The Corps, by W.E.B. Griffin, is the story of the war in the Pacific from the attack on Pearl Harbor until the invasion of Guadalcanal. The book focuses on the Marine Corps and the various men and women who were involved in the war in the Pacific. The novel opens with the attack on Pearl Harbor and describes where some of the characters were and what they did. Many of the characters in the book have known one another for years, having served together in different parts of the world. The book follows them from assignment to assignment as America prepared for the invasion of Guadalcanal. Many of the book's major characters came together as different parts of the invasion force.

Griffin does a good job of showing the characters as human, from the wealthy Fleming Pickering who went to work for the Secretary of the Navy, to Joe Howard, who was afraid during the Pearl Harbor attack and then volunteers for a dangerous mission behind enemy lines. Each of the characters dealt with the war in his own way, and contributed to the war effort. Pickering, a wealthy shipping magnate, sold his ocean liners to the Navy and made the rest of his Pacific fleet available to the government. He had been a Marine in the First World War and wanted to serve again but accepts a position as an adviser to the Secretary of the Navy, obtaining intelligence. He was one of the first to learn of the Australian Coastwatchers and helped to form an American team to work with them. Pickering held this advisory position until the end of the book.

Most of the characters were not wealthy and powerful. Steve Koffler was from East Orange, New Jersey and the Marines never knew he was an amateur radio operator until he became a member of Special Detachment 14, right before the invasion. He volunteered for parachute school because he didn't like his assignment as a draftsman. He wasn't happy as a parachutist and had problems with his superiors, so he volunteered for Banning's Special Detachment 14, and was dropped behind enemy lines with Joe Howard right before the invasions.

Counterattack The Corps is basically a story of the people. The reader watches how operation PESTILENCE was put together in terms of the characters and the assignment they had. The reader sees how the different special units came into being, from the idea stage through the procurement and training stages. The men, like Koffler, would volunteer for various assignments not knowing what was involved, because of secrecy.

The novel, which is historically based, is easy reading and well worth the reader's time. Although it is a little slow in the beginning as the characters are being introduced, it quickly gains momentum and holds the reader's interest. As the momentum builds, it becomes hard and harder to put the novel down.



## Summary, pg. 1-34

### Summary, pg. 1-34 Summary

The attack on Pearl Harbor began from the Japanese Carrier Task Force three hundred miles to the north. The attack began at 0755 hours with the other groups attacking afterward. The attack was successful. Most of the United States Pacific fleet was destroyed and the United States entered World War II.

Joe Howard is a Marine who was asleep when the attack began. He won a civilian shooting contest and was given the award by Major General Commandant Holcomb, the son of the commandant of the Marine Corps. His name was noted and he received assignment to Parris Island as a rifle instructor. After that, he was assigned to Quantico. He was promoted to sergeant in 1940.

During the attack on Pearl Harbor, Howard remained in the arms locker until the attack ended.

Sergeant Charley Galloway, Ensign Mary Agnes O'Malley, Lieutenant Florence Kocharski, and Steve Oblensky were at a hunting cabin in the hills of Oahu. During his first few years in the service, Charley was determined to maintain a clean record so he would be sent to flight school. They are all at the hunting lodge when they hear of the attack on Pearl Harbor from the radio. They quickly returned to the harbor area.

Oblensky and Galloway receive permission to search through the wreckage looking for aircraft that were salvageable. They figure they found enough in parts to put together one plane, an F4F-4 Wildcat. They restore the planes and the next day Charley flies it out to the Saratoga that was with the part of the fleet that had left the harbor the day before the attack. Since he flew the plane out to the carrier without permission, he is surprised to learn that they had been notified by Pearl Harbor and were waiting for him. Charley is arrested, as he figured he would be.

In Washington, D.C., Fleming Pickering arrives at the Foster Lafayette Hotel. He will be meeting with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to offer his services in the war effort. Since the hotel was full, he stayed in the suite of Senator Richardson S. Fowler. The two men have been friends for years and catch up on family news. Pickering tells the Senator that he has sold some of his ships. He is becoming interested in aviation and sees airplanes as the future. Pickering sold his liners to the Navy and kept his cargo ships.

### Summary, pg. 1-34 Analysis

The opening chapter sets the stage for the rest of the novel. It begins with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and introduces the various characters describing where they were and what they were doing when the attack occurred. Joe Howard was off duty in



his barracks and hid in the arms locker. Then he opened up the ammo locker and handed out ammo. Charley Galloway and his buddy Steve Oblensky were at a hunting lodge with two nurses, Mary Agnes O'Malley and Florence Kocharski. They immediately returned to the harbor area. They all felt guilty for not being there while the Japanese attack was taking place. Galloway, a pilot and former aviation mechanic, repairs a F4F-4 Wildcat and flies it to the carrier Saratoga without permission. He is placed under arrest but wants to go on to Wake Island to help defend against the Japanese.

Fleming Pickering is also introduced. He is the Chairman of the Board of the Pacific and Far Eastern Shipping Corporation. Pickering is in Washington two weeks after the outbreak of the war and has already profited by selling his ocean liners to the Navy. He sees the future of passenger travel to be in aviation.



## Pgs. 35-68

### Pgs. 35-68 Summary

Pickering tells the Senator of his plans for his company and how his grandson, Pick, can run it after the war. Fleming tells Foster that he is meeting a lawyer named Bill Donovan. Fowler tells him that Donovan is heading an intelligence gathering group that is independent of the others. He feels there will be too much rivalry for it to be successful. Pickering knew Donovan from working with him in the past and did not really like him or the fact that Donovan wanted him to work as an adviser to one of the bankers on the staff.

After meeting with Donovan, Pickering goes to see Brigadier General D.G. McInerney, an old friend. He tells him that he decided not to work for Donovan and is looking for a job in the war effort. Since he sold his liners, he will probably charter the other ships to the military so he will have time on his hands. He is thinking of going back into the Marine Corps. McInerney tells him that isn't a good idea but the Navy could use his services, but Pickering won't hear of it.

Back at the hotel, Pickering learns that he can't get a return flight to San Francisco because he doesn't have a priority. Fowler arrives with Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox and Pickering tells them of his meeting with Donovan. Knox wants Pickering to see his fleet to the Navy. Flem says he doesn't intend to sell his fleet but that his ship will haul; anything the Navy wants them to. He says he will fight the Navy in the Supreme Court if they try to seize his ships. Knox says he was thinking of offering him a position in the Marine Corps with the rank of colonel and Pickering says that is silly and goes on to tell Knox he should have resigned after Pearl Harbor. Knox says he did, but his resignation was refused.

Joe Howard is aboard the USS Tangier, a part of Task Force 14 that is heading toward Wake Island where they are prepared to engage the Japanese. While Joe is walking on deck, he notices that the ship has reversed course. He learns from one of the officers that Task Force 14 was ordered to return to Pearl Harbor.

PFC Stephen M. Koffler is on guard duty at Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey. This is where the Navy keeps its dirigibles. He has applied for parachute school while at Parris Island, which upset his superior, but he was sent to Lakehurst for parachute training. As soon as he arrived, he was assigned to guard duty. When they discover he was never given leave after boot camp, they given him an extended seventy two hour leave so he goes to New York City and on to East Orange to visit his family.

### Pgs. 35-68 Analysis

Pickering came to Washington to meet with Donovan about a job in his information gathering department, but he and Donovan don't get along. After the meeting, he meets



with a friend, McInerney and says he is thinking of going back into the Marine Corps. McInerney tells him not to even think about it, but that the Navy might be able to use him. He isn't interested. Later that evening, back at the hotel, Fowler introduces him to the Secretary of Navy, Frank Knox. They have words about Pickering's remaining ships. The Navy wants to buy them but Pickering won't sell them. The Navy can use them but not own them. Knox says he was thinking of offering Pickering a job with the Marines with a rank of colonel and Pickering tells him he is being silly. Earlier that day, he was looking for a way back into the Marines but he won't consider the offer from Knox. Pickering is looking for his place in the war effort and is having a hard time finding it. He refuses the job offer from Donovan because it is only an adviser position which he feels is too low, but tells McInerney that he is willing to do anything even at a low rank in the Marines. Pickering doesn't know what it is that he wants to do which is why he is having such a hard time. The one thing he knows he doesn't want to do is to sell his remaining ships to the Navy, even though they want them.



## **pgs. 69-104**

### **pgs. 69-104 Summary**

Koffler's family isn't home so he enters the apartment through a window. He tries calling friends but they aren't home so he goes downstairs to the neighbors apartment. Steve has a drink with them and then leaves and goes to a bar where he meets the neighbor's daughter and her date. After a few drinks, he feels the intoxication and goes home. The neighbors daughter, Dianne calls and Steve invites her up to the apartment. She arrives wearing a bathrobe and carrying a bottle of scotch. After this, she avoids him for the rest of his visit.

Pickering's headquarters are located in San Francisco. His father and Andrew Foster, who owned the Forrest Hotels, had pulled out of the stock market before the crash and bought various properties during the Depression.

Pickering is in his office when he receives a phone call from Knox's aide who says Knox wants to meet in him at Treasure Island or at the Alameda Naval Air Station. Pickering refuses, saying he doesn't have the time. Knox arrives at his office an hour later. Pickering apologizes for what he said at Fowler's room about Knox resigning and Knox presses him for the truth on whether or not he really meant it. He says he would have misjudged Pickering if he hadn't meant it and that he wants Pickering to come and work for him. They talk about the changes taking place in Washington. Knox is looking for someone to give him good honest information. Pickering agrees to work for Knox. He will have the rank of Captain. After Knox leaves, Flem calls his wife, Patricia, to tell her of his decision.

It is January 30, 1942 and Charley Galloway reports to McNerney at the Anacostia Naval Station. Galloway is in trouble for flying the Wildcat to the Saratoga without permission. McNerney is secretly proud of Galloway, feeling he would have done the same thing if he were Galloway. McNerney knew that Charley would have become a Marine legend if he had reached Wake Island with the Wildcat but the Task Force had been recalled to Pearl Harbor.

Charley had been slated for a court martial and was shipped back to the United States. It wasn't practical to court martial him in Washington, D.C., when all of the witnesses were in the Pacific. McNerney assigns Galloway to work in maintenance at Quantico without any flying until they decided what to do about the situation.

### **pgs. 69-104 Analysis**

Secretary of the Navy Knox is still intent on having Pickering work for him. While in California visiting his son, Knox has an aide phone Pickering to meet him at one of the naval stations. Thinking that Knox still wants his ships, Pickering refuses. An hour later, Knox arrives at Picker's office. The two men talk and discover they share a lot of beliefs





and views. Knox appreciates Pickering's honesty and evaluated him on the basis of his telling Knox that he should have resigned after Pearl Harbor. Knox says he needs someone who will be honest and frank. After discussing the situation, Pickering agrees to work for Knox providing and gathering information about the Pacific. He will have the rank of captain and will begin as soon as he can be brought on board. Knox offered Pickering a position that Pickering felt he would be good at and was at a level that Pickering felt was suitable to his experience.

Charley Galloway is back in the United States, still in a lot of trouble for his unauthorized flight to the Saratoga. They had plans to court-martial him but his case ended up on the desk of McInerney at Anacostia. McInerney couldn't let Charley know it, but he felt he would have done the same thing if he were Charley and he wouldn't let Charley face a court-martial. McInerney didn't agree with the decision to recall Task Force 14 and felt they should have been sent to Wake Island. He assigns Charley to temporary maintenance duty at Quantico. Charley is too good of a pilot to waste.



## **pgs. 105-141**

### **pgs. 105-141 Summary**

Pickering appears at the White House for a meeting with Knox and the President. They are preparing to bomb Japanese aircraft carriers. Pickering is assigned to work on the project.

Ellen Feller works at the Security Intelligence Sections of the Navy. She is a linguist for the Navy and is on her way to a meeting with Commander Kramer and Captain Haughton who works for Secretary Knox. After the meeting, Feller and Kramer went to see Pickering, since Ellen is a candidate to be Pickering's secretary. A man called Mr. Satterly is also with them and they are helping outfit Pickering for his trip.

On February 2, 1942, Joe Howard flew from Pearl Harbor to Camp Elliott, near San Diego. He reports to Captain Jack Stecker who he worked with at Quantico. Stecker takes Howard to his quarters. After Howard showers Stecker tells him he is going before Colonel Lewis T. Harris. Stecker recommended him to be commissioned as a first lieutenant. He explains how the service is short of knowledgeable officers with his skills and that there is a rumor that there will be promotions every six months. If Howard passes muster, he will work for Stecker as an ordinance officer.

Later, Stecker finds out that Captain Pickering has arrived, unannounced, and wants to meet with him. He doesn't remember Pickering who reminds him that they served together at Belleau Wood. Their kids are now roommates at Pensacola. Pickering is appointing Stecker to see that the Raiders who are commandos have everything they need—a job he was already performing.

Howard reports to the Naval Hospital for his physical. When asked if he ever had any venereal diseases, he says no and is sent for a Wasserman blood test. At the venereal ward, he is in the middle of a battle between two nurses, but doesn't know it.

### **pgs. 105-141 Analysis**

Pickering is assigned to gather information in the Pacific so the military can begin to bomb Japanese carriers. When he watches how the assignment comes about at his meeting with Knox and the President, he feels he is already a part of the politics of the Washington scene. He is still learning his way around in terms of things like protocol and the medal ribbons he has received. Ellen Feller has been assigned as his secretary and she has an interesting situation with a missionary husband who she discovered was smuggling archaeological artifacts out of China. She can't divorce him or her aging religious zealot father will cut her out of his will.

Joe Howard is brought to Camp Elliott because Stecker recommended that he be commissioned a first lieutenant. Howard expresses his fears about not being able to do



the job. He is coming up in the ranks very quickly and doesn't know if he can handle the situation but the service is short of officers with his skills.

The venereal ward has two nurses who don't get along due to the fact that one of them has a college degree. Howard is sent there for a blood test. Each nurse makes a decision about him before he takes the test.



## **pgs. 142-177**

### **pgs. 142-177 Summary**

Howard goes to the Officers' Sales Store to buy his new uniforms. The Storekeeper First is very helpful to him and buys his old uniforms. As he leaves, he meets Barbara Cotter the nurse, from the day before. They decide to have lunch at the hospital before Howard is sworn in as a first lieutenant.

Stecker and Lewis are not sending Howard to Quantico for basic school. This means he cannot be assigned to a troop. Howard is having dinner with Barbara Cotter that night and Stecker gives him a key to Pickering's suite at the Coronado Beach Hotel. The key got Howard and Cotter a table immediately when Joe showed it to the maitre d'. Barbara is upset about the key until she hears the story. They find that they receive special treatment because of their association with the Pacific and Far East Company of Pickering.

When Barbara and Joe are dancing, she spots Hazel Grower, the nurse she doesn't get along with. They both drink more than they want. When Joe asks for the check, he is told that the bill is paid by Pickering's company. On the way out, Barbara wants to use the bathroom in the suite they have the key for.

There is to be a public relations film made at Lakehurst and McNerney recommend Charley Galloway for the job. This restores Charley's flight status.

Franklin G. Neville was a career Marine and very wealthy. He was an expert on parachuting and assigned to Quantico. Neville had written an article on parachuting which was circulated through the Marine Corps. Since the Army had plans for an airborne division, the Marines decided to look into a program of their own with Neville in charge. After completion of the test program, Neville recommended that the Marines form their own parachutist program. The program was approved and established at Lakehurst. He recruited volunteers for the project.

PFC Koffler did not know that there was no such thing as extended leave and he was technically AWOL. He is at Lakehurst to begin parachute school along with R.B. Macklin who is his superior.

### **pgs. 142-177 Analysis**

The newly formed Raiders are to be given anything they want, and this is part of Stecker and Howard's job. The priority and orders came from Pickering and Knox, and because of this, they don't send Howard to Basic School at Quantico, which means he can't be assigned to troops and they won't lose him.

Joe Howard takes Barbara Cotter to the Coronado Beach Hotel for dinner. He is given the key to Pickering's suite and doesn't understand that Pickering's company is paying the bill. Joe learns from Barbara about Scotch and steaks.

The section on Neville and parachuting illustrates the rivalry and politics within the military. Neville's articles and evaluations about the role of parachutists were not taken seriously by the Marines until they learned that the Army had plans for an airborne division. The politics is also indicative in the views towards the graduates of the service academy's and this usually takes the form of jealousy.

It is also obvious that some people, like Macklin, create problems for people like Koffler because of their own troubles and trying to make themselves look good.



## **pgs. 177-211**

### **pgs. 177-211 Summary**

The men slated for the parachute public relations film report to Colonel Hershberger. The assignment is explained to Galloway. Ward and Schneider are in charge of making the public relations film. The three are airborne within an hour, practicing in the airplane. They then set out for Lakehurst but diverted to Willow Grove, near Philadelphia to check the plane for possible mechanical problems. Since Ward lives near the base, they decide to spend the evening at his hours and leave in the morning. Ward's Aunt Carolina picks them up.

Ward's parents went out of their way to entertain the group. Ward's girlfriend arrives with some of her friends but Charley is infatuated with Aunt Carolina, who drives Charley back to the base without Ward and Schneider. When Ward and Schneider return to the base, they cannot find Charley, and when he did not appear, began to make plans to continue on to Lakehurst without him. Charley finally arrives, having spent the time with Aunt Caroline at her house. Schneider is angry about the situation.

On the flight to Lakehurst, Galloway tells him that they can expect some interference from Colonel Neville and they are to let Galloway handle it.

Neville drives himself to Lakehurst for the meeting with the press. A lot of planning went into the event since the Marines wanted their parachutists to be favorably presented. Life magazine had an exclusive on the photographs and what they didn't want would be made available to the general press. Neville had developed a schedule that he wanted followed. It began badly from Neville's point of view when he was sprayed with dirty snow from an airplane propeller. He asks to see the pilot and complains that the plane's wing and nacelle are dirty,

Neville has a confrontation with Galloway, Ward and Schneider. He is angry that Galloway is the pilot in charge. When the Texas plans arrive, Neville calls them all to a meeting and explains his plans for the photo shoot. Charley protests saying that it is too dangerous to fly the three planes so close together. Neville calls Hershberger, who supports Galloway.

Steve Koffler took part in the parachute humps. The ceremony for his rating is to be held in the presence of the Life journalists. Koffler did not want to be a parachutist now but was afraid of being sent to the Naval Prison at Portsmouth if he quit.

### **pgs. 177-211 Analysis**

Once Galloway, Ward and Schneider are airborne, it is obvious that Charley is in no hurry to reach Lakehurst. He says there might be possible engine trouble and stops at Willow Grove near Philadelphia. There is nothing to do at Lakehurst. Since Ward lives



near Philadelphia, he is in favor of the stopover. Schneider is not and accused Galloway of wanting a night out on the town. They spend the night in the Philadelphia area. The plan is obviously Hershberger's who wants to minimize any interference from Colonel Neville. Neville wants everything to go right so the parachutists are presented in a favorable light. When he questions Galloway's refusal to fly close to the Texans, he calls Hershberger to report Galloway's behavior as is berate by Hershberger, who speaks loudly on the phone for everyone in the room to hear. It is obviously that they don't want any interference from Neville.

Steve Koffler has completed in Jump School training and is due to receive his rating in front of the journalists. The problem is that Koffler no longer wants to be a parachutist, finding it to be too dangerous. He is afraid to quit because he thinks he will be court-martialed for the extended leave that had him designated as AWOL.



## pgs. 212-246

### pgs. 212-246 Summary

Koffler is in love with Dianne and figures if he goes through with the parachuting ceremony, he will receive leave and be able to see her. He did his sixth jump on February 14 with the journalists present. On the eighth jump, Neville boarded the plane with his parachute. As Neville is standing in the door preparing to jump, Koffler can see a smaller plane in which there is a man with a camera. Neville is posing for them. They began their jumps. Neville and his chute are caught on the small plane and Neville falls to the ground. Koffler's picture is taken as he looks at Neville's body.

Jack Dillon has written a novel to which a Hollywood studio purchased the movie rights. When he is discharged from the Marines, he goes to Hollywood. He saves the life of the producer, as well as shielding him from a bad public relations situation and is offered a job in public relations for the studio. He accepted the position. Within two years, he was friends with the big stars.

When the war began, Jake Dillon was offered a position in public relations with the Marines with a rank of Major. He goes to Washington. He is assigned to handle the Life magazine journalist shoot at Lakehurst. Having met Neville, he is uneasy about the situation. After the fatal jump, Macklin tells him that he preparing court-martial charges against Koffler for his behavior over Neville's body. He told off the Life photographer. Dillon orders Macklin to release Koffler and promote him to corporal. The press wants to interview both Koffler and Galloway and the Marine Corps isn't tarnished by the incident.

Dillon tells Galloway and Koffler the plans for the funeral and tells them to avoid the press. They depart, with Aunt Caroline driving. They drive Koffler to his home in East Orange and they will stay at a hotel, the Essex House. Koffler decides he will take Dianne to the same hotel. He plays and the scenario in his mind. His mother greets him at the apartment house where Dianne and Leonard are on their way out. His family and his friends family go out for dinner at the same restaurant where Dianne and Leonard are. When he finally talks to Dianne, she tells him she doesn't want anything to do with him.

In Washington, Pickering arrives at his hotel and finds Senator Fowler waiting for him. Even though he had office space at the Navy Department, he did most of his work in his hotel suite office. Pickering had attended Neville's funeral and tells Fowler the story he was told by Dillon. He also tells him how they broke the Japanese codes and know they executed two hundred Americans. Fleming pulls out some maps and they review the events of the war.





## pgs. 212-246 Analysis

Neville had argued with Charley over the safety of planes flying too close together but he wanted to put on a good show for the press. It cost him his life. He motioned a small plane to come closer so they could photograph him preparing for his jump, again ignoring the warnings of Charley.

When Jake Dillon is offered a job as a public relations officer with the Marines, he says he doesn't feel qualified to hold the rank of major. However, he accepts the position, even though it means a big cut in pay. He is handling the public relations during the Lakehurst jump when Neville is killed. Macklin, who has it in for Koffler, had Koffler being held for a court-martial for his verbal response to a Life photographer. Dillon order Koffler released, k promoted to corporal, and made available, along with Galloway, for the press to interview. He basically portrays the death of Neville as tragic, portraying Neville as a good officer who died while training with his men. He didn't let the press portray Neville as the publicity seeker that he was.

Koffler had fantasized about Dianne, thinking that he was in love with her. The only time he talked to her was while he was in Jump School. She had put him off, but he hadn't taken the hint. He built up the relationship in his mind, which is why he was hit so hard when she told him that she didn't want anything to do with him.

Pickering and Fowler discuss the war, what has happened and what they think will happen, even though they aren't supposed to for security reasons.



## **pgs. 247-272**

### **pgs. 247-272 Summary**

In San Diego, Sticker visit Colonel Lewis office. Lew is about to be made a Brigadier General. Stecker learns that he is also be be promoted to major and will go to North Carolina. He is to be the Battalion Exec.

At the Naval Hospital, Barbara Cotter is called to the office of Lieutenant Commander Jane Marwood. She finds Hazel Grower in the office when she arrives. Barbara finds out that she has orders to go oversees as a psychiatric nurse. Marwood doesn't know where she is being sent just that the orders said she is to report to the Personnel Office.

Joe picks her up and tells her they are having dinner with another couple, Ken McCoy and his girl, Ernie Safe. They are having dinner at the San Diego Yacht Club. They arrive at Ken's boat and Barbara tells them that she received her orders and begins processing on Monday.

On February 28, Pickering's plane receives permission to land at Pensacola Naval Air Station. Pickering goes directly to Admiral Sayre's office and says the matter is personal. The Admiral is the first to mention Dick's relationship with his daughter.

Pickering goes to the San Carlos Hotel suite and is there when Lieutenant Dick Stecker walks in. Pick walks in behind him and greets his father. Pick wants to know what is happening at Eglin and guesses correctly about the aircraft carrier but Flem won't tell him anything. Pick takes a shower and Dick and Flem talk about Sayre's daughter, Martha Culhane. Flem is on his way to Hawaii and tells them that. They have dinner in the hotel dining room. Admiral Sayre's and his family are seated at table on the other side of the room.

Barbara and Ernie spend the day talking and getting to know one another while Joe and Kn are at work. Barbara planned to spend her two week leave there but receives a phone call saying her orders were changed and she was shipping out the next morning, March 8, 1942.

On the way to Hawaii, Pickering spends a few days with his wife in Hawaii. Ellen Feller was being reassigned to Captain Haughton and would handle correspondence with Pickering.

### **pgs. 247-272 Analysis**

When Jack Stecker learns that he is being promoted to major, he wonders, like others who receive promotions, if he will be able to handle the job.



Barbara Cotter and Joe Howard have become seriously involved. Just as Barbara realizes this, she receives her orders to go overseas. She doesn't know where and can't find out. She plans to spend the two weeks overseas leave with Joe on Ken's yacht, along with Ernie, but receives a call that her departure date has been moved up. There is nothing that she can do about it. She wants to spend as much time as possible with Joe.

Flem Pickering is on his way to Hawaii for his intelligence gathering mission. On the way he stops off to see his son, Pick, at Pensacola Naval Air Station and the characters of Pick and Dick Stecker are finally introduced. Both have been referred to on and off during the novel. Pick tries to learn what is happening at Eglin and tells his father what he has seen and what he thinks, but Flem won't discuss the subject. Flem stops in California to spend a few days with his wife before leaving for Hawaii.



## pgs. 273-304

### pgs. 273-304 Summary

Ellen Feller receives a promotion with her new assignment. She is now an Intelligence Analyst and on her way to her new assignment in Hawaii when she leaves the hotel. She answers Fleming's knock at her hotel room door wearing a translucent dressing gown. He tells her to get dressed since his wife is on her way up. They all have lunch together and then take Ellen to the boat, the President Milliard G. Fillmore, which had once been Pickering's Pacific Princess.

Barbara Cotter is also aboard the boat. Ernie, Ken and Joe are there to see her off when Ernie recognizes the Pickering's. Joe stood there and watched until the ship was out of sight.

Pickering travels to Melbourne and send his Top Secret correspondence to Knox. He did not go to the Philippines because he would have arrived after MacArthur's departure. Much of his letter is concerned with MacArthur's safe transport to Melbourne. He had problems trying to see MacArthur until Mrs. MacArthur recognized him. They traveled to Melbourne by train and Pickering had the opportunity to talk to MacArthur.

The principle of the chain of command is discussed. It exists for a reason. Authority flows from the top. Things operate more smoothly when the chain of command is followed.

Captain Haughton traveled to a Baltimore restaurant carrying a black briefcase. He is soon joined by Brigadier General Horace Forrest of intelligence and Lieutenant Colonel F.L. Rickabee. After ordering, they discuss the information from Pickering about the Coastwatchers, Australian who live on their islands who can supply intelligence. They want Rickabee to set up an organization to work with the Coastwatchers Haughton explains Pickering's role in the Pacific and says that he doesn't consider it to be spying.

### pgs. 273-304 Analysis

Ellen Feller admits to herself that she finds Fleming Pickering to be an attractive man. She wonders what he would be like in bed but figures she better drop that line of thinking since she wants to keep her job. Ellen is also worried that the boxes of stolen artifacts from China might surface since she doesn't know what her husband did with them. She feels that Pickering is powerful enough to protect her if they do.

Pickering's functions in the Pacific are viewed as a form of spying by many. He is there to gather information for Secretary of the Navy Knox. The information he obtained about the Coastwatchers resulted in Haughton's Baltimore meeting with Rickabee and Forrest. Knox trusts Pickering to provide honest information and assessments of the situation and that is what Pickering is doing.



## **pgs. 305-342**

### **pgs. 305-342 Summary**

Macklin receives a request to recruit volunteers for a special mission that is described as dangerous. He had nineteen volunteers and felt that this reflected badly on him. Ninety percent of his men were willing to go on a risky assignment to get away from the parachute training program. The only two men who hadn't volunteered were Koffler and the mess sergeant James P. Cumings. He send First Sergeant George Hammersmith to talk to Koffler. Hammersmith tells Koffler that he is yellow for not volunteering.

Jack Stecker meets Ed Banning when he arrives in San Diego. Stecker tells him that eight of his people have arrived. Banning had wanted McCoy but he refused. Stecker suggests Joe Howard and Banning says he will talk to him. Stecker drives Banning to the Coronado Beach Hotel where he will spend the night.

On April 18, Joe Howard receives a letter from Barbara. On that same day, Stecker takes Banning to a Quonset hut to meet the eight Marines who had volunteered for the mission involving the Coastwatchers. Banning couldn't tell them the nature of their mission until they reached Australia because he couldn't risk anyone talking.

Howard brings a car to the Quonset hut for use by Banning's group. Stecker introduces him to Banning who immediately likes Howard. After Stecker leaves Banning begins to interview the men on an individual basis and looks over their records. The last man he interviews is Steve Koffler, who told him of his problems with Macklin. Banning finds that Koffler can type, is a radio operator and a draftsman. He appoints him the unit's detachment clerk.

Banning also talks to Howard about volunteering and finds that he is also wanted by the Raiders. If he doesn't take either, he will be assigned to a company in North Carolina. Howard says he would like to go with Banning's group but he already told the Raiders he would go with them. Banning says he will take care of the situation. Howard is now a member of Banning's group.

Pickering sends another report on April 21, 1942. He discusses the limitations of the 925 mile range of the B-17. Pickering is having problems with MacArthur's. He tried to analyze his relationship with MacArthur and why MacArthur wants him around. Pickering did manage to supply them with maps that were better than what the government had and made arrangements to keep them updated.

### **pgs. 305-342 Analysis**

Koffler has a problem with Macklin and Hammersmith, and it is because of nothing that he did. He is one of the two men who didn't volunteer for the dangerous mission and Macklin send Hammersmith to talk to him. Hamersmith tries to goad him by saying he is



yellow for not volunteering. The tactics of Macklin and Hammersmith are deplorable. Macklin has his own problems with a bad report in his records and Neville dead before it could be wiped out. He is concerned with what it looks like for him that so many of his men are willing to leave his unit for a dangerous mission. Koffler is the one he wants to get rid of.

Banning meets the men chosen for the Coastwatchers mission. He understands what is being asked of them and that he can't reveal the nature of the mission to them for fear of jeopardizing their operation. He knows the conditions under which the men trust their officers and realizes the importance of first impressions.

Banning interviews his volunteers one of whom is Steve Koffler. He learns of Koffler's problems with Macklin. Banning, who doesn't like Macklin, figures that Koffler has to have a lot of good traits if he didn't get along with Macklin. He finds out that Koffler can type, is a radio operator and a draftsman. He makes it clear that there is no more volunteering for assignments to avoid doing things he doesn't want to do. Koffler will now do what the Marines want him to do whether he likes it or not. Banning is willing to allow Koffler to prove himself, which is more than Macklin was willing to do.



## **pgs. 340-371**

### **pgs. 340-371 Summary**

McInerney is meeting with Congressman D. Franco at the Willard Hotel and notices Charley Galloway at another table with two attractive blonds, one of whom is a movie star. The other is Aunt Caroline. When McInerney finishes with the Congressman, he stops by Galloway's table and is introduced to the women. McInerney learns from the desk clerk that they are all part of the group with Jake Dillon. McInerney calls Jake Dillon down to the bar for a drink. He has Galloway assigned to Jake Dillon for his public relations work.

The Marine Commandant, General Thomas Holcomb's returns to his Washington, D.C., home and finds he has a briefing on the Coral Sea situation. McInerney is also there. The intercepts reveal that the Japanese have plans to take several of the Pacific islands and Hawaii. They are also threatening supply lines to Australia and New Zealand. Their discussion includes reports from the Coastwatchers and the fact that they want Banning's group to work closely with them to improve intelligence. They have successfully stalled the Japanese but they know it won't last.

After the briefing, McInerney and Holcomb talk. McInerney wants Galloway to command a fighter squadron. Holcomb isn't in favor of the idea but allows it.

Macklin is working when Hammersmith interrupts him with a TWX message. Macklin has been assigned to ship overseas to the Pacific.

On May 17, 1942, Schneider, Ward and Caroline are waiting for Charley Galloway to arrive at the Officer's Club at Quantico. Charley arrives at the base in an F4F Wildcat and tells them that he has been promoted to captain and will have his own squadron in the Pacific. Ward volunteers for the squadron. Charley also invites Schneider to volunteer.

On May 19, 1942, Banning's group flies to Australia. Because of priorities, Banning and Koffler are on a flight ahead of the others. Banning is carrying a letter from Knox to Pickering. Pickering meets the plane when it land.

### **pgs. 340-371 Analysis**

McInerney assigns Charley Galloway to fly for Jake Dillon's public relations group. McInerney says he wants Dillon's work to be successful for the good of the Marine Corps. McInerney went out of his way to find out what Charley uses doing at the Willard Hotel.

After a briefing with the Marine Commandant, McInerney talks to him about the shortage of fighter pilots and suggest that Charley Galloway be given a squadron. He



tells the Commandant that Charley was given a raw deal over the incident at Pearl Harbor. As a result of McInerney's interference, Charley obtains what he always wanted. He is made a captain and will have his own squadron of five pilots in the Pacific. McInerney's action makes sense because the Marines need qualified pilots and that's what Charley is. When Ward and Schneider find out, Ward volunteers and Charley invites Schneider to volunteer.

Pickering is still in Australia with MacArthur's staff and meets Banning and Koffler's plane. He knows about the Coastwatchers group because it was his information that led to the formation of Banning's group.





## pgs. 371-407

### pgs. 371-407 Summary

Banning is staying in Pickering's suite at the Menzies Hotel. Pickering gives him a check for \$250,000 for the expenses of his operation and will begin to introduce him to people involved with the Coastwatchers. They decide to lodge the rest of the group at Pickering's rented house in Melbourne when they arrive and then to rent a house in Townesville where the Coastwatchers are headquartered.

Pickering writes Knox asking him to get the higher priorities for the balance of Banning's group, who are still in Hawaii awaiting transport. He has forbidden Banning to go behind enemy lines himself because he knows about Albatross.

By May 22, 1942, Steve Koffler is living at the elms, Pickering is rented house, awaiting the arrival of the other members. Banning was in Townesville. While eating breakfast, he receives a phone call saying that some crates and some of the men will be arriving that day. The crates are delivered within the hour, by a female crew. They contain a good short-wave radio.

After unloading the crates, Petty Officer Farnsworth will arrive into Melbourne with Koffler, but they have two hours before they have to leave. They sit in the breakfast room and talk.

Banning meets with Lieutenant Commander Eric Feldt of the Australian Navy in Townesville on May 24, 1942. He is in charge of the Coastwatchers and not happy to see Banning. Banning says he is there to help in whatever way he can. Once the ice is broken, the two men get along and Feldt explains the operation to Banning. Feldt allows Banning to stay and work with them.

Koffler and the group of Special Detachment 14 arrives in Townesville on May 31. Banning meets their train. In addition to radios and other supplies, they have also brought two trucks and two cars. The other car was left in Melbourne with Koffler. The troops tell Banning about Koffler's ability to fix radios and make radios from parts. Feldt has made arrangements for the men to be quartered in the Y.M.C.A. building and later tells Banning that he is impressed with the group.

While Howard, Banning and Feldt are talking and drinking, they are interrupted by an aide delivering aerial photographs from Buka. A man, Sub-Lieutenant Jacob Reeves is standing with his arms over his head. In the background, the grass has been cut to form the letters, RH, indicating that his radio is broke. They decide to send him one of the new radios by parachute with Kofler who will have to show Reeves how to operate it. Howard volunteers to growth Koffler.



## **pgs. 371-407 Analysis**

Banning's mission is a priority with Pickering. He has set up a house for the group to use in Melbourne and contacts with the Coastwatchers organization in Townesville. He also asked Knox to intervene to obtain faster transport for the members of the group who were still waiting in Hawaii.

Banning travels to Townesville to meet Eric Feldt who is in charge of the Coastwatchers. Feldt has never been receptive to any American interference with his operation but after they talk, accepts Banning. When Banning's men arrive with their supplies, Feldt later tells Banning and Howard that he is impressed with them. Banning is also impressed with Koffler, who is still at the Elms, when he learns of his ability to build radios from parts.

That night, the group is confronted with their first problem when they receive aerial photographs from Baku. The Coastwatchers man there has a broken radio. They decide to have Koffler parachute in with one of the new radios. Since Koffler knows nothing about Japanese planes, Joe Howard volunteers to go with, since he has training and experience in this area. Joe doesn't really want to go but feels he is the best qualified of the group to recognize Japanese equipment and planes.



## pgs. 407-440

### pgs. 407-440 Summary

The funeral for Petty Officer Daphne Farnsworth's husband is held on June 6, 1942, Koffler appears to offer his condolences. She drives back to Melbourne with Koffler.

Barbara Cotter is stationed at the Army Hospital in Melbourne and does not know that Joe is also in Australia. She is sent to Pickering's house to administer immunization to Koffler. The hospital had administered injections earlier that day to another man. Barbara finds they are going on a mission behind enemy lines, when she calls the hospital to tell them she has to wait for Koffler to arrive.

When Barbara goes into the sitting room, she sees Joe and runs into his arms. Pickering suggests Joe show her the ground so they can talk. He is leaving the next day and they go up to his room.

Koffler stops at the Elms to check for messages before driving Daphne home, and finds all of them waiting for him. They talk about the mission in front of Barbara. Koffler explains how it should be packaged. Daphne is standing outside listening and determines the seriousness of the mission. She knows they will drop them behind enemy lines. Koffler is promoted to sergeant. They will leave at 0630 hours and can spend the night with their girlfriends.

When Steve went looking for Daphne, he couldn't find her. Her suitcase is missing from the car and he drives around looking for her but can't find her so he returns to the Elms. He finds Daphne in his bed.

On June 8, Koffler and Howard are preparing for their mission. While they eat, the RAAF pilots brief them on Baku. They plan to fly at a high altitude to avoid being detected and to descend rapidly to allow the jump.

During the flight, Koffler fantasizes about being married to Daphne after the war. He is shaken out of his fantasy when the engines change pitch and the Flight Sergeants come to tell him they are beginning their descent. Koffler checks his and Howard's parachutes and harnesses. When the plane was in the proper position, they made their jump. Koffler can see that they will land in the trees and knows there is nothing they can do about it.

Reeves finds Koffler, who was hurt in the landing. They have already found the cargo and are looking for Howard, who they find hanging in the trees with a broken arm. Reeves tells the woman to take Howard to the village. He, Koffler and the others have to stop the Japanese from reporting what they say.



## pgs. 407-440 Analysis

Koffler, who doesn't know that he is going to Baku, hears about the death of Daphne Farnsworth's husband, travels almost three hundred miles to her home to offer his condolences. No reason is given for his appearance except that he wanted to tell her that he was sorry about her husband's death. He doesn't know her that well and he may have just been lonely. Pickering and the others are waiting for him to return to the Elms so he can receive the immunizations that he needs for the mission to Baku that he is being sent on.

Joe and Barbara finally meet. Neither of them knew that the other was in Australia. She is upset that he is going on the secret mission. Banning is upset about the mission also because he doesn't think that Koffler and Howard will survive, but he doesn't tell them that.

That RAAF drop Koffler and Howard over Baku. There is no place to land but in the trees. Howard relies on Koffler's experience and shows no fear before the jump. Reeves finds Koffler where he lands and says they have to stop the Japanese from reporting what they saw. They will only look for Howard for five minutes. Koffler says he won't go without Howard. Luckily, they find Howard with a broken arm, before the end of the five minutes. Both men have survived the jump.

Koffler has admiration for Howard, for being willing to make the jump with no training and for not showing any fear. He knows that Howard relied on his experience.



## **pgs. 441-474**

### **pgs. 441-474 Summary**

Koffler is with Reeves and his men. They have to kill all of the Japanese so none of them can get through to make a report. They kill the entire patrol of eight and then return to the village. While Steve bothers, Reeves attends to Joe's broken arm.

In Melbourne, Pickering sends a letter to Knox, most of which is about the Battle of Midway. He requests that Banning be added to the Magic messages list since he might be able to provide some insightful analysis. Pickering says that MacArthur should be kept informed of naval actions while they are taking place. The way it is, he learns about them from intercepts of Japanese messages. MacArthur wants to attack New Britain and New Ireland but requires Naval support that he doesn't think he will receive. Pickering also tells Knox that Koffler and Howard successfully parachuted into Baku Island and that their radio was on the air. The plane that they parachuted from was shot down while returning to base.

Lieutenant Hon Song Do, known as Pluto, brings Pickering a message from Haughton. Pluto fixes drinks while Pickering reads the message.

Pickering drives to the Elms on July 1. Banning wants him to meet some people. Pickering is honestly happy to find Jake Dillon inside. He is introduced to Colonel Goettge, who is in Marine intelligence. They discussed the plans for attacks on the various islands that are being considered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Goettge says his job is to gather as much intelligence as possible about Guadalcanal and Tulagi. Feldt will be arriving soon for dinner and to meet Goettge. They have also invited Barbara and Daphne.

When MacArthur moves his headquarters to Brisbane, Pickering goes with. He writes to Knox about the move on July 21. He tells Knox of his meeting with Goettge. He gives Knox his opinion of the situation in the Pacific and the plans for the invasion of Guadalcanal and Tulagi. Pickering is going to watch the rehearsals in the Fiji Islands.

Just after Pickering has Pluto send an encrypted message to Ellen Feller, he meets Ellen and Haughton in the hall. He invites Ellen to spend the night at his cottage.

### **pgs. 441-474 Analysis**

Koffler has never killed anyone before, but he didn't hesitate to when he head to. They get the radio up and running and send their love to Barbara and Daphne. This is how Banning knows that their jump was successful. Pickering reports this to Know in one of his letters.



The military is preparing to invade some of the Pacific Islands and Pickering is planning to go to Fiji to watch the rehearsals. His job is to provide information to Knox and he feels that he should be there. His group is assisting Goettge gathering intelligence on Guadalcanal and Tulagi in preparation for the engagement.

Just before his departure, Ellen Feller arrives in Brisbane with Haughton. He has her stay at his cabin and she is promptly in his bed. She says she knows this wouldn't happen if his wife was there.



## **pgs. 475-502**

### **pgs. 475-502 Summary**

The USS Lowell Hutchins was formerly the Pacific Enchantress. There was a total of eighty-two ships in the Amphibious Force but General Harris did not think it would be enough to accomplish their mission. Jack Stecker's opinion of the situation and Stecker says he doesn't think that taking Guadalcanal will be as easy as they all think. The drill in Fiji had not gone well and the Japanese will fight to keep the airbase they are building in Guadalcanal.

By August 7, the Amphibious Force of Operation PESTILENCE was moving into place. The invasion of Guadalcanal began. The landings on the other islands followed and slowly made progress. Most of their problems had to do with off loading-supplies.

Macklin was also involved with operation PESTILENCE, since he was serving in a parachute battalion. He also was not happy about the situation. His parachute battalion was being used as regular infantry since there were no planes for drops. He is injured in the landing and the medic helps him to share. As the morphine takes effect, he is thinking of Purple Hearts and a promotion to captain.

Tulagi is declared secure on August 8, 1942. Second Battalion Commander Jack Stecker shot a sniper who was firing into his bunker. He was being viewed in awe by the others as he arrived for a meeting with Harris.

Pickering send a letter to Knox. He is aboard the USS McCawley near Guadalcanal. He tells Knox about the invasion. He still feels that the Wildcats are useless without wing tanks. Pickering discusses their losses. The invasion fleet will be pulling out in thirty minutes and he wonders what the Marines on Guadalcanal will use for supplies. He doesn't agree with leaving the Marines on the beach.

Pickering goes to Major General A.M. Vandergrift. He won't leave with the departing invasions fleet. He volunteers his services as a Marine. Vandergrift tells Stecker to get Pickering a weapon and to assign him to Colonel Goettge.

### **pgs. 475-502 Analysis**

The night before the invasion for operation PESTILENCE, all of the involved parties are on one of the eighty two ships involved in the Amphibious Force. Jack Steker tells General Harris that he doesn't think it will be as easy as they all think. Macklin is upset with having his parachute battalion serve as an infantry unit. Macklin is injured arson as he reaches the beach.

Pickering is on board the USS Crawley where he receives information that he sends in his communications to Knox. The invasion fleet is due to pull out in thirty minutes,



leaving the Marines on Guadalcanal without any supplies. Pickering does not agree with this decision, feeling they should not be deserted by the invasion fleet. He tells the Commanding Major General that he does not want to leave with the fleet. He was once a Marine and he still considers himself a marine. They find him a gun and assign him to Colonel Goettge. Pickering could not in good conscience leave those Marines on the beach without supplies. He stayed to help them.





# Characters

## Fleming Pickering

Fleming Pickering is the Chairman of the Board of the Pacific and Far Eastern Shipping Corporation. He sold his ocean liners to the Navy since he sees aviation as the travel of the future. The company had been owned by Pickering's family and he had worked his way up, becoming the Chairman after his father's death. He goes to Washington to try to help out with the war effort but refuses to sell his remaining ships to the Navy. He finally accepts a job with Know and the rank of Captain. His first assignment is to prepare the way for the Raiders, American commandos, who plan to hit Japanese carriers. He will be spending a lot of time in Hawaii. He then goes on to Melbourne, Australia where he works closely with MacArthur. Pickering is also involved with Banning's group when they come to Australia. Pickering also makes the move to Brisbane when MacArthur moves his headquarters. During the invasion of operation PESTILENCE, he disagrees with the brass pulling out the invasion fleet leaving the Marines on Guadalcanal without supplies. He remains in the island as a Marine corporal.

## Joseph L. Howard

Joe Howard is a Marine who served aboard the battleship Arizona. After leaving the Arizona, he was assigned to the Philadelphia Navy Yard. He had attained Expert Rifleman status and was assigned to teach shooting to recruits at Parris Island. From Parris Island, he was sent to Quantico. In 1940, he was promoted to sergeant and sent to Pearl Harbor as a staff sergeant.

On December 22, 1941, he is on board the USS Tangier heading for Wake Island when Task Force 14 is ordered back to Pearl Harbor. The following February he is at Camp Elliott in California where Jack Steckler has recommended that he be commissioned as a first lieutenant to work with the Raiders. While taking a physical for the position, he meets nurse Barbara Cotter. They become romantically involved and spend a lot of time together until Barbara receives orders to go overseas. Howard is wanted by both Carlson for the Raiders and Banning for his group. He accepts the offer from Banning and parachutes into Baku with Koffler.

## Charloes M. Galloway

Charley Galloway is Marine pilot. He, a friend and two nurses were at a cabin when the attack on Pearl Harbor took place. He began his military career as an aviation mechanic at Parris Island and then went on to pilot's training at Pensacola. He is a vary experienced pilot at the time of the attack. After the attack, he salvages and repairs an F4F-4 Wildcat and flies it out to the carrier Saratoga, where is is placed under arrest since he didn't have permission for the flight. He is assigned to temporary maintenance



duty at Quantico by McInerney and escapes court martial. He doesn't fly again until the Life magazine photo shoot in which Neville is killed. Galloway is involved with Ward's Aunt Caroline and becomes friends with Hake Dillon. McInerney assigns Charley to work with Jake Dillon's public relations group and then asks the Marine commander to allow Charley to be a fighter pilot. He is promoted to captain and given his own squadron.

## **Steve Koffler**

Koffler is a PFC in the Marines who volunteers for parachute duty. He is from East Orange, New Jersey and is assigned to Lakehurst for parachute training. By the time he was due to receive his rating, on the day of the press shoot, he had decided he didn't want to be a parachutist because it was too dangerous. He is on the jump in which Neville is killed. Macklin wants to court martial him for mouthing off to the press but Dillon orders the charges dropped and that Koffler be promoted to corporal. Koffler applied for Banning's group to work with the Coastwatchers to get away from Macklin and Hammersmith. He is immediately made the detachment clerk by Banning and when they arrive in Townesville, is chosen to parachute into Baku with Howard.

## **Franklin G. Neville**

Franklin Neville is a career Marine who is put in charge of the Marine parachutist program. Both he and his wife are independently wealthy. As a military attache in Finland, he learned about parachuting and wrote a paper on it that circulated around the Marine Corps. There wasn't much serious interest in the subject until the Marines learned that the Army was beginning its own airborne division. Neville was asked to run a test program and based on his recommendation, the Marine's program was established at Lakehurst. When the public relations film is being made, Hirshberger prepares Galloway for possible interference from Neville and how to handle it. He is killed during a jump for the journalists.

## **Ellen Feller**

Ellen Feller is an Oriental Languages Linguist for the Navy. She is married to a missionary named Glen. She has no interest in religion or missionary work and only remained married because her old and wealthy father is a religious zealot and she doesn't want to be cut out of the will. She is assigned to be Captain Pickering's secretary. When Pickering leaves for Hawaii, she is reassigned to Captain Haughton to handle correspondence with Pickering. She is promoted to Intelligence Analyst. Ellen appears in Brisbane right before Pickering leaves for Fiji and spends the night at his cottage.



## **Barbara Cotter**

Barbara Cotter is a nurse assigned to the Naval Hospital at San Diego. She has a college degree and is a psychiatric nurse, which causes some jealousy problems with her colleague, Hazel Grower. Barbara meets and becomes romantically involved with Joe Hoard when she learns she is being sent overseas. She is not told of her destination but is on the ship to Hawaii with Ellen Feller. She is stationed at the Army Hospital in Melbourne and meets Joe the night before he leaves on a dangerous mission.

## **Jack Stecker**

Jack Stecker is a career military man. He was a master gunnery sergeant when he first met Joe Howard at Fort Benning in Georgia and helped get assigned to Quantico. By February, 1942, he was a captain at Camp Elliott. Stecker has a wife named Elly and a son who was killed during the attack on Pearl Harbor. His other son, Richard, is in the Marines. Stecker receives a promotion to major. He is with Operation PESTILENCE when they invade the Pacific islands.

## **Edward J. Banning**

Banning is a Marine who had been stationed in Shanghai. He was married to a White Russian refugee who remained in Shanghai when he shipped out. He wonders what happened to his wife, Ludmilla. He is romantically involved with New York City librarian. Banning forms the unit that will work with the Coastwatchers and takes them to Australia. Since he and Eric Feldt, the head of the Coastwatchers, find they can work together, Special Detachment 14 takes up residence in Townesville.

## **R. B. Macklin**

Macklin was a graduate of the Naval Academy at Annapolis. He had some problems that resulted in a report in his file questioning his abilities. He couldn't resign because of the war so he went to work for Neville in the parachute program. Neville promised him a good efficiency report to wipe his record clean if he did a good job with the parachute school. He received orders for duty in the Pacific and is injured in the invasion of Guadalcanal.

## **D.G. McInerney**

McInerney is a Brigadier General in the USMC and stationed at the Anacostia Naval Station. He is a friend of Pickering who dissuaded him from his idea of going back into the Marines as a corporal. He is also the one who makes the decision regarding



Charley Galloway not being court martialed. He is eventually responsible for Charley's promotion to captain and leading a squadron of fighters in the Pacific.

## **Ken McCoy**

Ken McCoy, known as Killer McCoy, is a Marine. He is a friend of Joe Howard and lives on a boat in the San Diego Yacht Club and is dating Ernie Sage. Earlie, he had worked in intelligence in China. He was collecting intelligence on the movement of Japanese troops and on artifacts being smuggled out of China. One of the smugglers was Ellen Feller and her husband.

## **Frank Knox**

Frank Knox is the Secretary of the Navy and is introduced to Fleming Pickering by Senator Fowler. His first meeting with Pickering doesn't go smoothly and ends with Pickering telling Knox he should have resigned after Pearl Harbor. Knox appreciates Pickering's candidness and eventually persuades Pickering to work for him gathering information and intelligence on the situation in the Pacific.

## **Richardson Fowler**

Richardson Fowler is a United States Senator from California and a friend of Fleming Pickering. He was the heir to a string of newspapers and radio stations. Fowler advises Pickering about Donovan and introduces him to Secretary of the Navy Knox who Pickering eventually goes to work for.



## **Objects/Places**

### **Pearl Harbor**

Pearl Harbor is where the United States Pacific fleet is attacked at Oahu island in the territory of Hawaii.

### **Parris Island**

Parris Island is the site of the Marine boot camp where Joe Howard taught recruits to shoot.

### **Quzntico, Virginia**

Quantico, Virginia is the site of the United States Marine Corps school where Joe Howard was assigned to.

### **Washington, D.C.**

Washington, D.C. is the capitol of the United States.

### **USS Saratoga**

The USS Saratoga was part of the Pacific fleet that was at sea during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

### **USS Tangier**

The USS Tangier is part of Task Force 14 of the Pacific fleet.

### **Lakehurst Naval Air Station**

Lakehurst Naval Air Station is a Navy base in Lakehurst, New Jersey.

### **East Orange, New Jersey**

East Orange is the New Jersey city that is home to Steve Koffler.



## **San Francisco**

San Francisco is the California city that is home to Fleming Pickering.

## **Camp Elliott**

Camp Elliott is a Marine base in California near San Diego.

## **Pensacola Naval Air Station**

The Pensacola Naval Air Station is located in Pensacola, Florida.

## **Melbourne**

Melbourne, Australia is where MacArthur established his headquarters.

## **Townesville**

Townesville is in Queensland, Australia and the location of the headquarters of the Coastwatchers.

## **Brisbane**

Brisbane, Australia is where MacArthur moves his headquarters to in July, 1942.



# Themes

## Relationships

Relationship are one of the underlying themes of the novel and there are different kinds of relationships. There are the usual male-female relationships. These involve Pickering and his wife and Pickering and his secretary. Pickering and his wife have been married for many years and have a good solid relationship, but he does have a brief one night fling with his former secretary, Ellen Feller. She and her missionary husband remain married so they can inherit from her aged father. If they divorce, they will both be cut out of his will. She is attracted to Pickering, and he is to her, but they maintain a business relationship. She makes it known that she is available when he picks her up to take her to the ship leaving for Hawaii, but he tells her to get dressed and that his wife is waiting. When she arrives in Brisbane, he has been alone for quite a while and is about to leave with the invasion fleet. He has her stay at his cottage.

Another relationship that the reader watches develop is that between Joe Howard and Barbara Cotter. They meet when he appears at the hospital for a physical. Their relationship develop and deepens over time until they both ship overseas. In Australia, he refers to her as his fiance.

Other relationships in the book are those between superior and subordinate, like Macklin and Koffler. Macklin was trying to make himself look good by making Koffler look bad. He used Koffler to vent her own frustrations, such as when Neville died. Koffler never did anything wrong but Macklin and Hammersmith made it clear that they didn't like him and wanted him out of the unit. Because of this, Koffler applied for Special Detachment 14 where he was able to prove himself and his skills.

## Dedication

Dedication and loyalty are also themes of the book. The men and women are married and are dedicated to their country and the Marine Corps. This is illustrated in a variety of ways throughout the novel. During the attack at Pearl Harbor, Joe Howard took shelter in the arms locker and passed out ammunition to those who came by. He hid there because he was scared and this bothered him in the months after the attack. He felt that he had let the Marines down even though no one else viewed his actions in that way. Later, he was wanted by both the Raiders and Special Detachment 14. He parachuted into Baku without any jump training to set up a radio and provide intelligence behind enemy lines.

The role of dedication is probably best exemplified by Fleming Pickering. Even though he was a wealthy and knowledgeable shipping magnate, he first wanted to go back into the marines when the war began. He was told that it was a silly idea and that his services could best be utilized in other capacities. He eventually accepts a position with



the Secretary of the Navy with a rank of captain. He provided intelligence information and analysis for the Secretary. Pickering was with the Amphibious Force that invaded Guadalcanal. He remained on board during the actual fighting since he was still working as an advisor to the Secretary of the Navy. However, the invasion fleet was pulling out and leaving the Marines on Guadalcanal without any support or supplies, an action that Fleming did not agree with. He had been a Marine in the First World War and Marines did not leave one another in that kind of situation. Pickering found the commanding Major General and refused to leave with the fleet. He offered his services as a Marine corporal.

Koffler exhibited this same trait when he and Howard parachuted into Baku. They couldn't find Howard at first and Reeves said that if they didn't in the next five minutes, they would leave to stop the Japanese patrol from making its report. Koffler made it clear that he wouldn't leave another Marine, Joe Howard, in that situation. Luckily, Howard appeared before the five minutes was up.

## Respect for Authority

Another theme can be called the respect for authority, for lack of a better term. The men would volunteer for dangerous missions, not knowing what or where they were, knowing that they could be killed. Thus is true of the Raiders and Special Detachment 15. They relied on the knowledge and experience of their superiors in such a situation. This is what Ed Banning knew when he first met his men of Special Detachment 14. He knew the circumstances under which men trusted their superior, especially regarding secret and dangerous missions. This is why he was so careful to make the right impression in his first meeting with them. They came through in his first meeting with them. They came through for him. When they had to drop Koffler and a radio into Baku, Joe Howard volunteered to go with because he had training in identifying Japanese planes and ships. He felt he was the best qualified, even though he had never used a parachute.

At the end, even Pickering had respect for authority. He asked permission to stay and fight as a corporal. He wanted to help the Marines on Guadalcanal but wouldn't have stayed without the permission of the Major General.



# Style

## Point of View

The novel is written from the third person point of view with the narrator being the author, W.E.B. Griffin. The use of the third person allows the author to provide many background and other details for the reader, and this is especially important in a historical novel of this kind. While the emphasis of the novel is on the people, the action is still set in a historical framework and it is important for the reader to be aware of the historical details. There are numerous characters and plenty of dialogue as the characters interact.

The use of the third person is the best approach for this type of novel since it provides the reader with the broadest view of the situation. If the first person approach had been used, the knowledge of the reader would be limited to scenes involving the storyteller, who can only be in one place at a time. This wouldn't work for this kind of novel where the action is occurring in different parts of the world. There is a lot of secrecy involving different units and assignments and one person could not be privy to all of this knowledge. The use of the third person avoids this limitation and, in this kind of novel, provides the best reading experience for the reader.

## Setting

The action of this novel occurs in numerous settings as the characters move around from place to place. Most but not all of the settings, are in the Pacific or on various United States military bases and the surrounding areas. The novel begins with the attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. There are numerous scenes in Washington, D.C. Parris Island is the site of the Marine boot camp. Quantico, Virginia is the location of the United States Marine Corps School. The Lakehurst Naval Air Station is the site of the parachute school and played a central role in the novel. Koffler was trained there, Macklin was assigned there, Neville dies in a jump there.

Fleming Pickering is from San Francisco and there are many scenes there as well as in the Los Angeles and San Diego areas, where Camp Elliott is located. There are also numerous scenes on various ships and planes.

Pickering spent much of his time in the Pacific. MacArthur first established his headquarters at Melbourne, Australia and then moved it to Brisbane. The Coastwatchers were headquartered in Townsville and Banning and his men were based there. There are also scenes on some of the islands, like Baku and Tulagi.



## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple and clear. The book is easy to read and the language is clear with no hidden meanings. This results in a book that is rather quick reading. There are no foreign language terms or complex terms to slow down the reader. The language and sentences are straight forward and easy to understand.

There are quite few military terms in the book and not all of them are defined but the reader can usually figure out what is being referred to. There is also a lot of equipment and parts of ships and planes that are referred to. Again, the terms are used in a way that doesn't slow the reader down or detract from the action of the novel. The use of these terms adds to the realism of the situation.

The language and the meaning of the language of the novel determine the readability of the book. Griffin's style results in an easy to read book that is enjoyable for the reader who does not have to struggle with the language in any way.

## Structure

The structure of the novel is quite simple. The action takes place in fourteen chapters. There are not titles to the chapters and the setting jumps from place to place. Each of the different settings is described with the name of the building or base, the location, and the time and date. Because of this, the reader always knows where the setting is and how the scene fits in chronologically.

There is no Table of Contents, Introduction or Forward. The book basically opens to page one of chapter one but this does not in anyway detract from the book. A Table of Contents might have been nice but since there are no chapter titles, isn't really necessary.

The simplicity of the chosen structure works well for the novel. The book is more of a story of the people than of the events with the setting moving around quite a bit. The reader can always look at the sections heading to learn the location, time and date. This simple structure allows the reader to focus on the people, which is what the novel is all about.



## Quotes

The Japanese Carrier Task Force charged with the destruction of the United States Pacific Fleet began launching aircraft approximately 305 nautical miles north of Pearl Harbor. (Chapter 1, pg. 1)

And, he was honest enough to admit, he would have been disappointed if he had. He didn't want to fight the war from behind a goddamned desk in Sodom on Potomac. (Chapter 2, pgs. 40-41)

General McInerney believed everything Galloway was telling him. He also believed that if he were a younger man, given the same circumstances, he would - he hoped - have done precisely what Galloway had done. That meant doing what you could to help your squadron mates, even if that meant putting your ass in a potentially lethal crack. It had taken a large set of balls to take off the way Galloway had. If he hadn't found Sara, he would have been shark food. (Chapter 4, pg. 98)

You fraudulent old sonofabitch, Pickering thought, that's what this whole thing with your boy here for a private lunch is all about. Know brought me here to let you know what he intended to do with me, and you'll let him, providing I take care of this Major Evan Carlson. Tit for tat. I haven't been here a week, and I'm already in politics. (Chapter 4, pg. 110)

"When all else fails, tell the truth," Stecker said. "We tell them that Howard, a small-arms expert, has been charged with getting the 2nd Raider Battalion the weaponry they want. And, that since this is a matter of the highest priority, according not only to the Commandant, but to the Secretary of the Navy as well, we thought this assignment was more in the best interests of the Corps than sending him to Quantico. (Chapter 5, pg. 147)

If both 'chutes failed, the sergeants told them, there was no problem. Just bring them to the supply sergeant, and he would exchange them for new 'chutes. (Chapter 7, pg. 210)

And the press seemed to have bought the story line that it was a tragic accident, something that just happened to a fine officer who was undergoing training with his men. (Chapter 7, pg. 225)

I don't care what she thinks I've done, what good ol' Hazel has told her I've done. I will plead guilty, swear I will never do it again, and beg forgiveness. Just so I can meet Joe! (Chapter 8, pg. 253)

Along with his immediate family, the general brought his staff out with him, none of whom, frankly, I care for - although MacArthur feels they are to a man superb officers. To me they're more like the dukes who used to surround a king. (Chapter 9, pg. 287)



The chain of command is so important that it is almost never violated. People at the top, civilian or military, very rarely issue orders to anyone not in the level of command immediately subordinate to them. (Chapter 9, 299)

Banning had long ago learned that enlisted Marines trust their officers on a few occasions only: first, when the officer knows more about what's expected of them than they do; second, when he will not ask them to do something he will not do himself; and, third, perhaps most important, when he is genuinely concerned with their welfare. (Chapter 10, pg. 321)

And now I am curious. What the bloody hell is going on around here? Marine parachutists? Villas in the country? "World's best wireless" shipped by priority air? (Chapter 12, pg. 389)

It was not a pleasant feeling, and his rationalizations, although inarguable true, sounded hollow and irrelevant: I am asking him to risk, and perhaps even give, his life so that other men may live. And: He's a volunteer, nobody pushed him into this at the point of a bayonet. And even: He's a Marine, and Marines do what they are ordered to do. (Chapter 13, pg. 421)

The village looked like something out of National Geographic magazine. It was much larger, too, than Steve had expected, although when he thought about that, he couldn't understand why he thought it would be any particular size at all. (Chapter 13, pg. 443)

"It's all right, Sergeant Major. Captain Pickering is a Marine; he knows what a rifle is for," Major Stecker said. (Chapter 14, pg. 503)



## Topics for Discussion

Pickering is a successful shipping magnate. How does he come to work for Secretary of the Navy Knox? What kind of work does he do?

Why is Charley Galloway relieved of his flight status? How is his flight status reinstated?

What is the role of Franklin Neville? What factors contributed to his death? Why did the Marines have to make the situation look good?

Why does Steve Koffler have such a hard time with Macklin who obviously does not treat him fairly?

What are the Coastwatchers? Why are they important? What is the purpose of Banning's mission?

How would you rate the intelligence effort as presented in the book? Was MacArthur kept adequately informed?

What is operation PESTILENCE? How did all of the various groups discussed in the novel fit into it?