

Robert D. Hubble

I decided to write not one, but three books, thinking anyone can write one - and discovered anyone can also write three. Then I rekindled my interest in the American West, where for many years I was fortunate to have worked, and began writing about those hardy characters and the tough land on which they lived, struggled, thrived and died. Writing such as:

“May be told by a soldier who is no writer to a reader who is no soldier.”

— Ambrose Bierce



Robert D. Hubble grew up to be a farmer, leaving his London school at the first opportunity to do so. Immediately after college life forced a change, however, as it so often does, and Robert became a Sapper instead, serving as a combat engineer in Britain's Corps of Royal Engineers. Then, still with a desire to farm, he left England to first travel to Europe and then to America, where he helped run a Midwest dairy farm among the frozen lakes of northern Minnesota. Another life changing experience led Robert to the ruggedly beautiful wilds of central Idaho, where he immediately fell in love with the magnificent mountains and the gritty physical work of fighting wildfires. A job that enabled Robert to experience many years as a U.S. Smokejumper in the Rocky Mountains of Montana. Where he now lives with his wife Christina, who has twice nursed Robert back from the edge and afforded him time to write these six books:



A Western: 1864-65
(2016 - ISBN-13: 978-1522742630)

A Western: 1863-64
(2014 - ISBN-13: 978-1500756642)

A Western: 1862-63
(2013 - ISBN-13: 978-1490439860)

Limey Smokejumper: Fighting Wildfire in the Rockies
(2013 - ISBN-13: 978-1480129252)

Churchill's Gold: the Ripples of War
(2012 - ISBN-13: 978-1479388998)

Inside the Great Game: the Fight for Oil and Pipelines in Central Asia
(2012 - ISBN-13: 978-1466313521)

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A WESTERN: 1864-65

IN THE MIDDLE OF A FROSTY FIELD, pleasantly tinted by wood smoke, and rising high above Black Kettle's lodge on a tall angular tepee pole, an impotent American flag hung limp at dawn. Its presence meant to afford protection to those camped near it; a suggestion holding a promise from Fort Lyon's commandant. But instead, it advertised a tragedy so barbaric that two Union officers refused to have any part, while watching others unleash industrial thunder onto an unsuspecting people. Artillery wagons spat fire and terror as Indians tried to escape into a draw, while close rifle fire cut them down by the score, regardless of sex, age or children raw, women and babes and tired old men alike. Some of Fort Lyon's soldiers had spent the night inside the camp, having been peaceably trading with the Indians, as was often permitted, and were almost killed by the indifferent spit of their own guns. When the cannons fell silent the cavalry charged; sabers high, flashing, slashing, sabering every piece of flesh bare, flaying to the bone, pistols belching smoke and lead

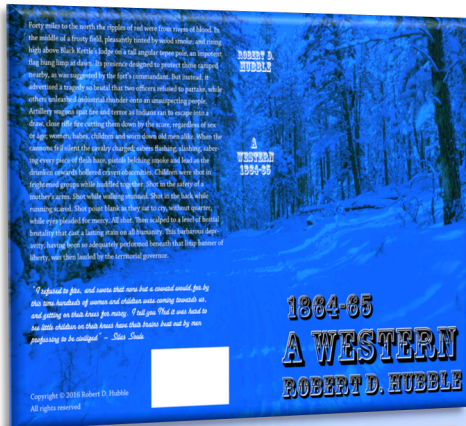
as the frenzy of drunken cowards hollered craven obscenities to offset the horror of their actions. Children were shot in frightened groups huddling together. Shot in the comfort of their mothers' arms. Shot as they stumbled along, numb, stunned and frantic. Shot in the back while running scared. Even shot point blank sitting in bewilderment to cry and stare. Shot without quarter while eyes pleaded not to be. All shot. Black Kettle's wife was holed nine times, yet survived to tell the ghastly tale of humanity's hypocrisy. Then both the dead and injured endured scalping and butchery to a degree of bestial brutality that cast a stain on all mankind. This barbarous depravity, so well performed beneath a limp banner of liberty, was then lauded by the territorial governor.

“ I tell you Ned it was hard to see little children on their knees have their brains beat out by men professing to be civilized. ” — Captain Silas S. Soule

A Western: 1864-65 sees Bill Durban finish the war and travel across the High Plains to Colorado with Silas Soule, just prior to the Sand Creek Massacre. Winter comes hard and early this year and Bill finds travelling companions in a family of escaping Cheyenne, fighting off renegades and agrieved Indians until being caught up in the siege at Julesburg. With the Cheyenne, Sioux and Arapaho heading to their winter camps, Bill rides

through Colter's Hell and across the Yellowstone Caldera with an Indian companion, heading back home to his son in the Deer Lodge, where one final act of violence awaits a man long grown tired of war. With the advent of Montana Territory, and the arrival of lawyers and the taxman, Johnny Grant thinks of leaving his ranch.

“ It is better to have less thunder in the mouth and more lightning in the hand. ” — Apache proverb



A WESTERN: 1863-64

BITTERNESS HAD SEEPED INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE NATION, both North and South, cleaving apart those who had participated in the great struggle from those who had not. The early vigor that had captivated much of the people, on either side, had since worn thin. The continent's youth, the Union's future, initially clamoring to the clever speeches of politicians, eager for duty, and in search of glory, found nothing to substantiate that beguiling political rhetoric once on the battlefield. There, many knew they had been duped as they watched row upon row of their friends and comrades scythed down like summer corn. Such brutal lessons were severe; and one never adequately appreciated from one generation to the next as youthful vigor the world over seeks to emulate the glory of ancestors. Urged on by a host of spineless politicians talking a glittering tale but never witness to the savage task or terrible result. Nor understanding that war is a mystery, stiffened with speculations, misplaced boasts, and endured at length with ardent young fear all along the line. A young encouraged individually and collectively by jokes and rousing songs designed to rally them to action before the spits of frowning cannon blasts every last semblance of youth from their souls. Leaving them afterwards staring in wooden bewilderment at the last atrocity just occurred. The dead having no chance for the heroic deeds they had dreamed, no chance other than tedious marching to the gory field, whence to be fodder to a screaming bullet and to be dead among a throng of bloody dead. Thenceforth and forever to be named Our Honored Dead.

“ Those many men in the long lines of butternut soldiers did do something spectacular that day; they walked and then ran headlong into a storm of steel. To some in the South that was glorious. ” — Sergeant Bill Durban

In *A Western: 1863-64*, we follow Bill Durban as he travels from the Deer Lodge across Dakota Territory to find his son in the eastern states, which are engaged in two wars. One pitting white men against white men in the internecine bloody strife of the Civil War, the other pitting tribes of American Indians against hordes of encroaching white men, all seeking what had been promised them: A nation undivided, forged from the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from east of the Mississippi across the Great Plains to the Rocky Mountains and beyond. All the way to the Pacific Slope; indeed, west of the American West. Enabled to do so thanks to the many stalwart mountaineers who preceded them, explorers and trappers, who found the old Indian trading trails where no white man had set foot. But where, soon, thousands upon thousands of Europeans would trudge by foot and roll by ox-cart, to live better or die in the attempt. It was the making of a new nation by the crushing of many old nations. Humanity at its best and worst. But those many men now damned and embroiled in the Civil War would first have to finish that fight, or die trying.

“ War is cruelty. There is no use trying to reform it. The crueller it is, the sooner it will be over. ” — William Tecumseh Sherman



A WESTERN: 1862-63

DISPLACED PERSONS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE CIVIL WAR were arriving to the West in droves, as were deserters, the walking wounded and the downcast limbless. With them, mostly came hope, but also, with some, came the cheapness of life. Two years of bloody strife had whittled away the inherent kindness of many ordinary folk, who remained generally good in heart but had developed an untrusting character as a safeguard. But to others the unbridled, unashamed butchery of this caustic war between cousins just compounded their already miserable existence. So while some rode west in rickety covered wagons in search of hope to escape the horrors of war, others arrived to reap more horror from those desperate masses of hope. In 1862, many of these hopefuls came also for gold. And as these wretched white hordes emerged onto the Great Plains, inevitably shoving away the longstanding native tribes further and further in front of them, so too came the trials of the Indian Wars. The West was destined to change forever. Geography often



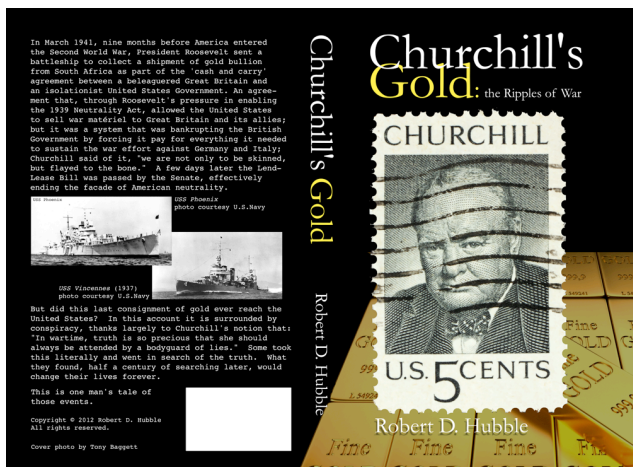
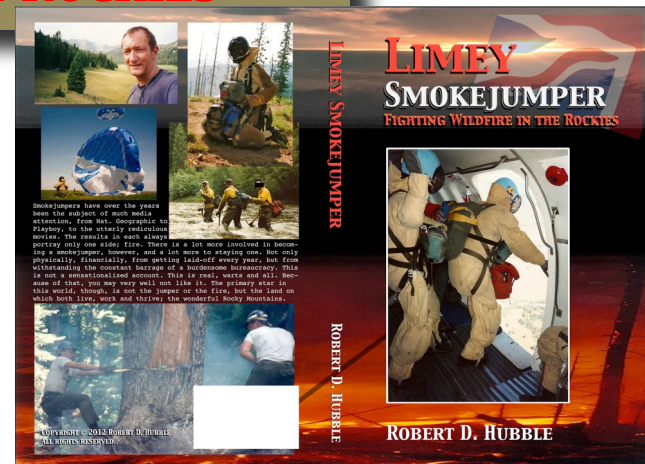
confused people as to where exactly the Civil War was being fought. While place names such as Vicksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg gave pitiable prominence to the east, less known and more clandestine battles were fought elsewhere, with less bloodshed but with more guile, and not always south of the Mason-Dixon line. Without access to gold, not only was the South unable to finance its war, but its Confederate paper currency would be rendered worthless. Despite early victories at Manassas some in the South had lost morale. Confidence in the army and politicians was fading as the appalling casualty lists were made public and their wounded walked home and the dead lay rotting in the fields. Farms had been left untilled and cattle barren as men were drafted into the fight. There was no foreign aid since the South had little worth to call upon apart from its people. The only thing that could save the South, except for a catastrophic military failure in the North, was gold. So along the overland trails went men seeking ways to fetch that gold South, hidden in open sight amongst the throngs crossing the Great Plains, or clandestinely riding along with Minnesotans crossing the Dakotas. A few even went north from Texas.

“ I wish I could find words to express the trueness, the bravery, the hardihood, the sense of honor, the loyalty to their trust and to each other of the old trail hands. ” – Charles Goodnight

Here, in *A Western: 1862-63*, we meet Bill Durban as he struggles wounded across the snowy Rocky Mountains, to seek refuge in the little town of Deer Lodge in Idaho Territory. Where he becomes embroiled in a vendetta and finds a friend in Johnny Grant, a Métis, who owns a large ranch in the valley and invites Bill to go with him to New Mexico to buy cattle and drive them back to Montana. Meanwhile, Southern sympathisers and renegades are eager to get their hands on the gold being mined in the burgeoning fields of Bannack and Virginia City to help the war effort, hiding amongst the thieves and murderers who would neccitate forming of the Montana Vigilantes.

LIMEY SMOKEJUMPER: FIGHTING WILDFIRE IN THE ROCKIES

Smokejumpers have over the years been the subject of much media attention, from National Geographic to Playboy, to some utterly ridiculous movies. The results in each only portray one side; fire. But there is a lot more to becoming a smokejumper, and a lot more to staying one. Not only physically and financially, from getting laid-off every year, but also from withstanding the constant barrage of a burdensome bureaucracy. This is not a sensationalized account, this is real, warts and all. Because of that, you may very well not like it. The primary star in this world, though, is not the jumper or the fire, but the land on which both live, work and thrive; the wonderful Rocky Mountains. It is inherently human that those stalwarts of yesteryear brag about their work being harder and they being tougher than anything comparable today. In the case of smokejumping, at least, this statement appears to be more true than most. Early smokejumper equipment demanded uncommon rigors in the face of an uncertainty that today's jumpers are thankfully not accustomed. However, all jumpers still maintain an athletic level of fitness to do any job assigned, at anytime — and do so with unselfish vigor not because of the government, but in spite of it.



Churchill's Gold: the Ripples of War

In March 1941, nine months before America entered the Second World War, President Roosevelt sent a battleship to collect a shipment of gold bullion from South Africa as part of the 'cash & carry' agreement between a beleaguered Great Britain and an isolationist United States Government. An agreement that, through Roosevelt's pressure in enabling the 1939 Neutrality Act, allowed the United States to sell war matériel to Great Britain and its allies. But the system was bankrupting the British Government by it having to pay for everything it was using to sustain the war. Churchill said of it, "We are not only to be skinned, but flayed to the bone." A few days later the Lend-Lease Bill was passed by the Senate, which effectively ended America's neutrality. Did this gold ever reach the United States? It is surrounded by conspiracy, largely thanks to Churchill's notion that, "In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies." Some took this literally and went in search of the truth. What they found, after half a century of searching, would change their lives forever. This is one man's recollection of those events around *Churchill's Gold*.

Inside the Great Game

The Great Game continues. In its long and bloody history there have been periods of relative peace and tremendous violence. Through all, the subtle intrigue remained, only coming to the fore when national interests are at stake, as is the case now; with one major superpower vying for influence against many smaller nations, rich and poor, for the only truly valuable commodity currently left in the world: Oil. For this, countries still send their soldiers, but now under the guise of consultants and advisors, instead of travelers and tradesmen. The present struggle is no longer strictly limited to the mountains of Central Asia, but is fought worldwide. Neither is it fought solely by nations, but by powerful transnational conglomerates. Religious ideologies also play a greater and more dangerous role than ever before; with Islamic fundamentalism clashing violently against western religions, values and naive interventionism. Yet no matter how often the 'whom' and the 'where' may change, the 'what for' rarely does. It remains forever: Influence, supremacy and, ultimately, domination. Individuals drawn into this fight are still abandoned by fickle national and corporate policies and few are ever remembered for their efforts. When the instigators give up and wash their hands soldiers die. All so their masters can have a continued role *Inside the Great Game*.

Previews available:

A Western: 1862-63 – <http://awestern1862-63.com>

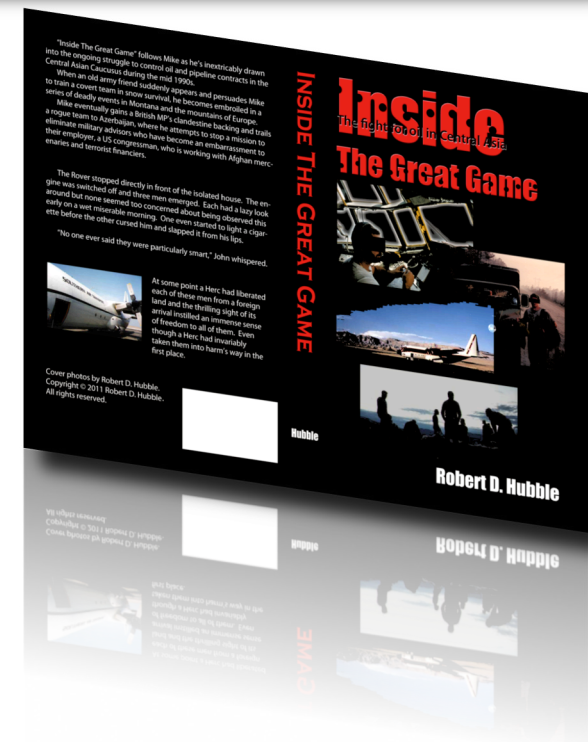
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