



# Fallout

*Harry Turtledove*

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## **Fallout** Harry Turtledove

One act of folly. One poor decision. One moment of rage. The novels of Harry Turtledove show history balancing on single moments. In his astounding new novel, the unthinkable has come to pass. The Cold War turns hot—and the United States and the Soviet Union unleash their nuclear arsenals upon each other. Millions die. Millions more are displaced. Germans battle side by side with Americans, Polish freedom fighters next to Russian fascists. The genie is out of the bottle. And there's no telling what fresh hell will come next.

At the heart of *Fallout* are Harry Truman and Josef Stalin. Even as Joe McCarthy rises in power, the president is focused elsewhere, planning to cut off the head of the Soviet threat by taking out Stalin. It's a daring gambit, but the Soviets have one of their own. Meanwhile, Europe's weak sisters, France and Italy, seem poised to choose the winning side, while China threatens to overrun Korea. With Great Britain ravaged and swaths of America in ruins, leaders are running out of options. When the United States drops another series of bombs to slow the Russian advance in Europe, Stalin strikes back—with horrifying results.

These staggering events unfold through the eyes of a sprawling cast of characters: a Holocaust survivor in a displaced persons' camp in Washington; the wife of a bomber pilot and her five-year-old daughter starting a new existence on their own; a savage Soviet fighter waging war by his rules; a British pub owner falling in love with an American pilot. In the masterly hands of Harry Turtledove, this epic chronicle of war becomes a story of human struggle. As the armies of the world implode, the next chapter will be written by the survivors—those willing to rise up for an uncertain future.

## **PRAISE FOR HARRY TURTLEDOVE**

"Turtledove is the standard-bearer for alternate history."—*USA Today*

### **Bombs Away**

"Turtledove's thorough research and grounded imagination work to create a frighteningly realistic past where world leaders act out of desperation and fatalism, and a large cast of common folk suffer the consequences. . . . The vicarious sense of eschatological dread is always powerful."—*Booklist*

### **Last Orders**

"All quite plausible . . . Turtledove's focus on the characters serves to fill out the big picture with patient, nitty-gritty detail. . . . Armchair warriors will have much to ponder." —*Kirkus Reviews*

### **Two Fronts**

"A you-are-there chronicle of battle on land and sea and in the air."—*Tor.com*

### **Coup d'Etat**

"This is what alternative history is all about."—*Historical Novel Society*

## Fallout Details

Date : Published July 19th 2016 by Del Rey

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Author : Harry Turtledove

Format : Kindle Edition 432 pages

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# From Reader Review Fallout for online ebook

## Patrick DiJusto says

Harry Turtledove is a brilliant alternate history writer. Which should come as no surprise, as he's a professional historian. His new Hot War series is probably the most brilliant idea for an alternate history I've ever seen. Most nuclear war novels and movies treat nuclear war as an hour-long event, in which civilization exists in the morning, and doesn't exist in the afternoon.

Turtledove found the right niche in time, specifically early 1951, when an atomic war would not necessarily be over in a day. In this alternate history, General MacArthur, losing the Korean War, convinces President Truman to use nuclear weapons on Chinese cities north of the Yalu River. This does not result in an all-out launch of Soviet nuclear missiles, because in 1951 nuclear missiles didn't exist. The delivery system of choice for the United States was the B-29 bomber, and the Soviet Union's copycat Tu-4.

This meant that the war would happen slowly over the course of days, weeks, and months. Rather than an all-out spasm attack, the attacks are spread out, giving both civilizations time to adjust, and possibly recover. Also, the atomic bombs of that time were rather small, "only" about twenty kilotons in yield. This meant that a bomb dropped on a city only destroyed part of that City. This lack of total destruction allows both sides to keep the atomic war going.

The story is told in standard Turtledove style. That is, multiple point-of-view characters, mostly soldiers, mostly cursing up a storm. As in all Turtledove's books, there's the non-com with the cynical Heart of Gold, the army officer who is too smart for his superiors, a young attractive female shopkeeper who is just trying to get by, liberal Jewish characters for the others to pick on, and assorted real life historical personages, usually in positions of power. They all tell their stories of the slow motion atomic war in round-robin style, going from one character to the next, with the cast of characters getting smaller and smaller, as, with all Turtledove's books, anyone can die.

I was fortunate enough to discover volume 1 of this series earlier this year. I read Volume 2 within the month of its release. And now I've got to wait an entire year for volume 3. This series plot is so compelling, it will be worth the wait.

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## Mark Gardner says

I've been a Turtledove fan for three decades now. For diehard fans, Fallout is another grand outing into speculative history with the master of the genre. Unfortunately, that's the problem. The Turtledove Formulaic Doctrine is alive and well in this story. Same old Turtledove with the same old cast of characters. The same things seem to happen in every Turtledove book.

There is even a subplot in Fallout that is recycled almost point by point from Joe Steel. I've found that Turtledove's non world war stories to be more engaging and better written.

It took me two weeks to slog through Fallout and that's something since I usually can read a 300 – 400 page book in less than a week. I'm glad I picked up a digital ARC on Netgalley. I would've been disappointed had I purchased Fallout.

Fallout is still a decent read, and newer converts to Turtledove won't recognize the TFD and the recycled plots. I suspect that since I've read everything Turtledove has ever published, I'm a bit jaded. Three stars for Fallout.

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## **John Purvis says**

"Fallout" eBook was published in 2016 and was written by Harry Turtledove ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry\\_T...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_T...)). Mr. Turtledove has published over 100 books. This is the second of his 'Hot War' alternative history series where the Korean War spins out of control.

I received a galley of this novel for review through <https://www.netgalley.com>. I categorize this novel as 'R' because it contains scenes of Violence and Mature Language. The story is set at various locations around the world. As in the first volume of the series, there is not a principal character, but several characters are followed.

This Alternate History is based upon US President Truman authorizing General MacArthur to use nuclear weapons to stem the flow of Chinese troops into Korea. The US bombs a few strategic Chinese cities to cut the supply lines. Russia responds by bombing US allies in Europe. Every time one drops bombs, the other responds in kind. Soon a second ground war is raging across Europe. After dropping "nukes" on Russian forces in Germany, the US is pushing the Russians back. This volume picks up at the end of the prior volume. The US and Russia continue to retaliate 'in-kind' every time the other drops a nuclear bomb.

Individuals are followed in various locations: a US Army officer in Korea; US President Truman; a female pub owner in the UK; a US AF bomber co-pilot in Korea and his wife left back in Seattle; a Russian bomber pilot; a Russian tank commander, a German militia volunteer, and a Hungarian infantry man among others.

The story not only deals with the military conflict, but it also touches on the emotional extremes that they are going through. Mr. Turtledove does not pick a 'right' and 'wrong' side in the war, but attempt to show what this war would have cost the world. I have read several of Mr. Turtledove's books and this ranks up with the best of them. The story is fairly fast paced, though it is far from continuous military action. The cover looks kind of old fashioned, but it certainly gets the point across with areas of radiation spreading across Europe, China and the US. I give this novel a 5 out of 5.

Further book reviews I have written can be accessed at <https://johnpurvis.wordpress.com/blog/>.

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## **John says**

I won this book in a giveaway on Good Reads.

I've only been a fan of Harry Turtledove's books for a few years. Because of that I've been able to go from book to book in some of his series.

With this series I have to wait for the next one to come out.

As the second book in the series and with a year between books, it took me a bit to remember all the characters from book 1. Believe me, there are a lot of characters to remember.

The story starts up just after book 1 ends. The characters are from both sides of the war. Soldiers & civilians. We get to see how the war affects everyone.

I read a review that says this book fits well into Turtledove's style. I agree & I like that. The story isn't told strictly through the eyes of big shots...the president, generals, dictators. The story is told through the eyes of the little people. Fictitious people, but it is a work of fiction.

Once I got a handle on everybody, I got back into the plot. Towards the end I started to recognize the plot lines that would be carried over to the next book. I was really sorry that I'll have to wait till next year to see how they turn out.

If you are a fan of Turtledove's other books, you will enjoy this one.

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### **William Bentrim says**

Atomic bombs have been exchanged. The world after WWII is much different in this alternate reality. The world is at war again and it is the war that Douglas McArthur feared, where the USSR and China are fighting the US and it's allies. This book appears to be a compilation of stories from those who are fighting the war and those who have survived the atomic bombs.

Turtledove provides insight to how those who dropped the bombs feel and how those who have survived the bomb are struggling to exist.

Tankers, survivors on both sides, pilots and bar keeps all have stories in this book. That is it's strength and it's weakness. It reads very disjointed and there are way too many characters to keep a train of thought as to who is doing what.

I love Turtledove's characterizations, the life that he brings to them but this book was a struggle to read.

Web Site: <https://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/turt...>

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### **Aaron says**

This picks up right where The Hot War ended. The world is being ravaged as the Korean War has spread and, unlike in our time, an uneasy peace/Cold War that forms out of the split between the Western and Communist powers is not what forms. Things went wrong in the fist book when President Truman approved the dropping of an atomic bomb on communist forces because of the Korean War. Since then, Europe, Russia, and the United States have been confronted with the dropping of multiple atomic bombs and traditional war has accompanied them.

Like most of Turtledove's books, the story is told from the perspective of a number of everyday characters such as Russian, Ukrainian, German, and American troops as well as British widowed barkeep (woman), a Jewish delivery man living in California, an American refugee on the move with her daughter after her cities was bombed, a female prisoner of war in a Russian gulag and a number of others. I really enjoy how well-developed each of the characters and their backstories are. You cannot help but feel for them.

The book doesn't really finalize things ... in fact, things actually become quite intense as it comes to a close. As a result, I have no doubt that there will be another book in this series. I will definitely be ready to read it when it comes out!

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## MD says

I fully expected to like this book - I like military SF and I like alternate history. But I didn't just like it, I *loved* it. Much to my surprise, it reminded me of John Dos Passos' *U.S.A.* trilogy.

It doesn't have the "Newsreel" inserts Dos Passos used so effectively (and later John Brunner in *Stand on Zanzibar*), but it is similar in that it is written in short chunks from the viewpoint of multiple characters who are very different from each other, and in the feel of the characters and the prose. At first I thought I would have trouble keeping all of the characters straight, but they are so different from each other and so well written that I found it less of a problem keeping the characters straight than I do in many books with a single narrative. This even though it is the second book in a trilogy and I had not read the first. (Coincidentally, I started the *U.S.A.* trilogy with the second book - *1919* - as well.) One thing worthy of note regarding this middle book - although I was fine starting here and plan to read book 1 as a "prequel," this book doesn't have a real ending. Presumably that will come in book 3.

So, WWII has barely ended, the Korean conflict began, but in this alternate history it goes nuclear and instead of a Cold War between capitalist and socialist standard-bearers WWII begins. The Korean front becomes secondary to a new war over Europe. The largest number of point of view characters are combatants in the war in Europe, but characters also include one combatant in Korea, a gulag prisoner, and a civilian each in England, the USSR and the US. Plus Harry Truman. Major cities are nuked, including American cities. Even though many thousands of people die in each city, many effects are surprisingly local as, I suppose, must have been the case in Japan as well. Of course, the timeframe is too short to show longer-term effects. When the US again uses nuclear strikes for military advantage, retaliation strikes follow which then escalate on both sides. We see a small slice of the thinking at the top through the eyes of Harry Truman, but most of the story is seen through the eyes of characters who are actively engaged in and/or affected by the war - both nuclear and conventional, including foot soldiers.

One thing that struck me as odd was the prevalence of Jewish characters but the lack of diversity overall. I recall one interaction with a Hispanic character (a 14-year-old thief), a couple of minor Asian (Korean) characters, and no black characters at all (just a couple of general references to them). A North Korean or Chinese point of view character would have been welcome, or one who is black or Asian. I understand that segregation policies of the era complicate that, but more recent events have shown us that black experiences in disaster situations can be quite different from white experiences. And what about the Japanese who had been interred on the west coast? Would more diversity cause too much scope creep?

But yes! Read this! Read it for the points of view surrounding war, economics, and morality. Read it for the insights into European history and politics at the everyman level. Read it for the excellent writing and characterization. Read it just because it's a really good read.

I received an advance uncorrected proof of this book for free by requesting it from the FirstReads program on Goodreads. I have limited time to read so I do not request books unless I really want to read them - i.e. unless I think they will be worth 4-5 stars. *Fallout* delivered.

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## Christian D. Orr says

Another harrowing, action-packed alternate history novel by Harry Turtledove that keeps the pages turning. Like so many of Tutledove's books, there's no one protagonist or main character (though Harry Truman would figure as the most significant in terms of real-world historical prominence), but a variety of characters, military and civilian alike, from countries on both sides of the conflict, all of whom go to remind the reader that war is an all-too-human endeavour that affects all sides, regardless of nationality or ideology.

RANDOM STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS NOTES, OBSERVATIONS, AND FAVORITE PASSAGES:  
SOUTH GATE STATUS:

--p. 26: "Artillery was the big killer. Everybody knew it." Yep, King of Battle

--p. 31: "'A wounded man makes more trouble than a dead one.'" Very true.

--p. 40: San Pedro and Long Beach (sigh)!

--p. 42: Rams and Trojans (FIGHT ON!!) and bRuins (ugh)!!

--p. 44 Sark (haha)!

--"Latvian or Lithuanian" = "trouble with a capital T." But does the Russian wore for "Trouble" also start with "T?" Nope, it's "beda" and several other "B" words.

--p. 132: "Grigory Papanin squealed like a bull calf when it was suddenly made into a steer. His hands flew to the wounded part. Vasili did his best to turn Papinin into a steer, all right. His booted foot caught the other man square in the crotch. Papanin squealed again, on a higher note this time, and folded like a concertina." Steers & queers? Heh heh.

"He didn't believe in anything so stupid as a fair fight. He fought to win, and to teach a lesson the other guy would never forget." AMEN!!!

--p. 143: "Cade whooped again, and pumped his fist in the air. He knew that was an un-Christian thing to do. The Red Chinese were men, just like him. But they were also men trying their goddamnedest to kill him. Maybe he should have regretted their untimely demise, but he didn't." Amen!!

--p. 145: "....the Korean Christians. They live up to the name better than a bunch of folks back home, and you can sing that in church."

--p. 155: Did the USAF already have dark blue uniforms by 1950?

--p. 176: "A bully who didn't scare you wasn't a bully any more."

--p. 191: "The South Korean leaders had mostly collaborated with the J\*ps." Really? Does Turtledove have real-life historical evidence of this?

Turledove's depiction of the ROK troops' fighting prowess is quite a contrast of the rep they've received from other sources from the Vietnam War onward.



--p. 202: KFI!

--p. 222: "Washington's incestuous world," LOL!

--p. 224: "I'm not Stalin, thank God, and this isn't Russia. We have a government here, not a dictator." Um, Harry, I hate to break it to ya, but the two concepts aren't mutually exclusive.

--p. 229: "All the Russians swear so much, like sailors or whores. They swear so much, they don't even notice they're doing it. It's nothing but the foulest language every minute of every day." LOL, ochin karasho, na zdaruvya!

--p. 234: Aaahhh, SFV references (Reseda, Sherman Way, Van Nuys).

--p. 245: "smegma-lips," LOL!

--p. 259: "metyeryebyets!" Has Turtledove been reading Clavell? Heh heh.

--p. 267: "Officers and sergeants who led from the front got better results than the ones who just ordered their men forward while they stayed safe in the rear, the way so many World War I commanders had." Demo Dick Marcinko would approve!

--p. 269: George Kennan!

--p. 284: Carl Cummings!?!?

--p. 318: "We serve the Soviet Union!" the sergeants chorused. [i]And the Soviet Union serves us too--medium rare[i], Konstantin thought."

--p. 324: "Most of the time, though, the Yankees are plenty good at tactics and not so hot with strategy." Um, I daresay just the opposite, at least at that point in history.

--p. 359: 11 September 1951; mere coincidence on the author's part?

--p. 394: "bilgewater like Pabst and Schlitz," haha!

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## **Peter Hansen says**

Really liked the "Hot War" and was glad to hear more of the stories and this book dragged on a bit in the middle after finishing it and realizing that it is probably book two of a series the slow parts made more sense and looking back I can enjoy the "filling in" they have the story.

I look forward to the next in the series to continue the tales of the characters.

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## **Tomislav says**

Fallout is the second book in Harry Turtledove's new alternate history series "The Hot War", in which the Korean War goes nuclear. In general, this review is free to reveal plot events of the first book, so I would suggest you read no further, if you want to avoid spoilers of Bombs Away. It will not reveal plot developments of Fallout itself. Consider yourself warned.

The point of departure (POD) of this alternate history is in 1950, after China intervenes to prevent the loss of Korea to US/UN forces. In the first book, President Truman authorized the use of atomic bombs against Chinese troops in China, near the Korean border. In response, the Soviet Union took nuclear retaliation against western Europe, and started a land invasion across Germany. There have also been one-time strikes against the major cities of west coast USA and European USSR. These strikes have been delivered by aircraft, and were limited by the range of the bombers in use at that time.

The way to tell a big story is with lots of personal points of view, and what could be bigger than World War III? The narrative switches frequently between a dozen lead characters, located at various points around the globe. This conflict is only a few years after the end of World War II, but the central European nationalities are now arranged in different combinations. Former allies like the Germans and the Hungarians are now on opposite sides. Former enemies like the Germans and the Americans are now allied. And there is a heavy representation of Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, etc. Conspicuous by their absence is any mention of Tito and the Yugoslav nationalities. However, all are impacted by the conflict – civilians who live near cities that have been nuked, or pilots that fly the bombers – tank crews, and infantry – and President Harry Truman. Unfortunately, the time span of this novel covers a period where those individual experiences are all kind of the same.

In this second book of what is looking like it will grow into an extended series, the war expands. There is more mass death and destruction of famous landmarks, and a general de-sensitizing of the population and the characters to all of the violence. There are also hints towards long-term historical divergences which could occur in the subsequent books, but that is not yet developed. Still, we have familiar 1950s people getting thrown out of their comfortable existences. Hopefully the next novels of the series will reveal Turtledove's deeper plan for this universe he has created – but this one has not yet explored any kind of science fictional possibilities. I'm still waiting.

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## **Matt Mitrovich says**

Originally posted at: <http://amazingstoriesmag.com/2016/07/...>

Bombs Away by Harry Turtledove was a good, if flawed, book. That being said, how does its sequel, Fallout, hold up to the original?

Our story continues (and maybe skip the next two paragraphs if you haven't read Bombs Away) immediately after the atomic bombing of Paris. Soviet forces are pushing hard across western Europe and are on the verge of overrunning West Germany, forcing President Truman to resort to tactical nuclear strikes to stem the tide. The Soviet Union is rocked back on its heels, but its not out of the fight just yet. Massive stores of weaponry from the last war may be obsolete, but still useful when you care little about the lives of your soldiers. Still

the Soviet Union is showing signs of cracking as rebellions break out in their satellite states and unless Stalin can strike back at the United States, there may not be a Soviet Union for much longer.

Granted the United States has seen better days as well. Joe McCarthy is riding a tide of popularity that might take him to the White House since Americans are angry after the nuclear strikes on the West Coast and continuing defeats in Europe and Korea. The United States is also having trouble supplying its forces fighting overseas after the destruction of the Panama and Suez Canals. Truman, who decided not to run for reelection to give the Democrats a chance at beating McCarthy, is desperate to scratch out a victory before his country elects a potential fascist or America's allies in Western Europe make a separate peace with Stalin. Meanwhile, the war in Korea rages on, forgotten by most of the world, but still deadly to those few who still fight there.

At a book signing I attended years ago, Turtledove joked about how he was getting political in his old age and you can certainly tell he is with *Fallout*. I am not exactly sure when *Fallout* was completed, but McCarthy's road to the White House does parallel a certain political candidate's campaign in the 2016 election. And, why not? I have seen some describe the War on Terror as "World War III" and Soviet deceitful tactics (like painting their bombers in American colors to confuse defenders) do resemble contemporary terrorist tactics. Also if you are the type of person who doesn't feel we are winning that world war and you are afraid you may be the next casualty, perhaps voting for someone who promises to be tough on your enemies doesn't sound like a crazy idea.

Still I thought Turtledove did a better job of highlighting the flaws of both the communist and capitalist systems that are at war with each other. For example, characters in the East lament how there is no incentive to work hard since anything extra goes immediately to the state and you will see zero benefit, but you can't complain about that unless you want to be taken away by the secret police. Meanwhile, in the West, other characters get angry how corporations see caring about the health of their workers or paying insurance money owed to victims of atomic attacks, as unnecessary expenses that they can do without and anyone who thinks otherwise is just a dirty commie. Thus you see characters in the communist world moving to the right with their politics, while characters in the capitalist world move to the left.

Politics aside, *Fallout* as a book was...okay. If you liked *Bombs Away*, then you will like *Fallout*. It is a continuation of the story that begins right where the last book left off with all of the same POV characters who were still alive at the end of the first book. If you didn't like *Bombs Away*, then you won't like *Fallout*. Admittedly I do like how the stakes have gotten higher, while weaponry has actually devolved rather than advanced in the face of nuclear warfare, but it's hard to sell something that is part two of the same story, rather than a new story in the same universe.

So in conclusion, if you are a Turtledove fan and enjoyed *Bombs Away*, I would check out *Fallout*. I found it to be an enjoyable read that managed to have some interesting commentary on modern politics. If you are not a fan of the first book, however, then you aren't going to find much in this book to change your mind.

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## **Ron says**

*Fallout* picks up where *Bombs Away* left off following most of the same characters. The reader gets to follow the lives of a bomber pilot widow, a British pub owner, several Germans, and a White Russian displaced back to the Soviet Union from China. The war continues to heat up with strikes on cities in Eastern Europe, Britain, and the United States. The last occurs when the Soviets come up with the concept of mid-air

refueling. Turtledove provides glimpses of who life still continues in the midst of world-shattering events. He also continues his habit of killing of characters who the readers have followed for a long time. Based on how the ending developed, there will be at least one more book in The Hot War series. Wonder who will buy it first - Stalin or Truman?

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### **David says**

for those of us who grew up or came of age in the atomic era this series is a frightening vision of what might have been. Harry is careful enough to set this a few years before the birth of hydrogen bombs but I suspect that they may show up in the third book of this series. He'll need some more characters as he has done away with a few of the main characters in this book. Not unusual for him but it seemed as if a few more than normal went off to meet their maker. I almost wish I could wait a while to read these so it wouldn't be nearly a year until the next volume appeared.

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### **David Nichols says**

Harry Turtledove has devoted most of his alt-history novels to re-fighting the Second World War, so his new series, exploring the escalation of the Korean War into a nuclear conflict, represents a welcome departure. FALLOUT follows the same structure as his other AH books: a series of vignettes exploring sequential episodes in the lives of his main characters, most of whom are soldiers and airmen and most of whom, alas, I found forgettable. Exception may be made for Daisy Baxter, an RAF widow recovering from the atom-bombing of her town; Luisa Hozzel, a West German soldier's wife arrested by the Soviet secret police and deported to the gulag, where starvation and abuse await; and Vasili Yasevich, a Russian struggling to make a living in Soviet-occupied Harbin. Harry Truman, the only non-fictional character in the story, serves mainly to advance the strategic narrative, keeping us apprised of cities bombed and lives lost. This larger narrative isn't terribly exciting – Turtledove's Korean War develops much like the historical one, into a stalemate (enlivened with occasional nuclear air raids) – but HT does save a few good surprises for the end.

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### **Peter Mcloughlin says**

Fairly good tale of alternate history about the Korean War tuning into WWII. It is set in 1950-52 when in this timeline Truman defers to MacArthur and uses atomic weapons against China during the Korean War and starts a nuclear WWII. The west coast and much of Europe have been hit with Atomic bombs and the Red Army is fighting Nato in Europe and fighting continues in Asia. The story follows ordinary Americans, Germans, Russians in this conflagration. Very plausible scenario.

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