

[PDF] The End: A Post Apocalyptic Novel

G Michael Hopf - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: The End: A Post Apocalyptic N
Author: G Michael Hopf
Released: 2013-04-05
Language:
Pages: 442
ISBN: 1478195487
ISBN13: 978-1478195481
ASIN: 1478195487



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pdf, mobi, epub, azw, kindle

Description:

About the Author G. Michael Hopf is a former U.S. Marine and bodyguard. For years he has studied and researched the effects of an EMP (Electromagnetic Pulse) attack on the United States. From his research he was shocked by the level of devastation that would befall the country. He wanted to bring awareness to this real threat by creating the world of Gordon Van Zandt in "The End" where this type of weapon is unleashed and a fight for survival ensues. He lives with his family in San Diego, CA Feel free to contact the author with any questions or comments at geoff@gmichaelhopf.com

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October 15, 2066

Olympia, Washington, Republic of Cascadia

Haley stood, staring through the thin pane of glass that separated the chilly sea air of the Puget Sound and the warmth of her living room. She looked at the capitol building in the distance. Its sandstone dome towered over the other buildings in the city, as it had for the past 138 years. At one time, it was the capitol of a single state; now it was the capitol of her country, a country born out of chaos and destruction.

She tore her gaze away from the distance and looked down at the photo she held in her hand. She touched the faces of the family depicted. Tears began to well up in her eyes as she passed her fingers across the photo. It contained four smiling faces; a portrait of a once-happy family, her family. More tears came as she thought back to the day the picture was taken. She remembered it vividly, as though it was that very morning. Haley closed her eyes and pressed the photo against her chest; the tears ran down her cheeks and hung from her chin. She remembered her father holding her tight as she sat on his knee; he kissed her many times on her head and told her how proud he was that she had tied her own shoes that day. She longed for that innocent time when she had no concerns or cares. She longed for the days when her family was together and happy. Not long after that photo was taken, her innocent world collided with the harsh realities of mass murder and apocalypse. Her family was to be ripped apart by this new reality, and what remained would never be the same.

A knock at her front door jolted her back to present. She quickly wiped the tears from her face and placed the photo in the pocket of her sweater. She walked toward the front door, but before she opened it, she turned to the mirror that hung on the wall in the foyer and looked at herself. She made sure she had wiped all the tears away and fixed her graying hair.

"You can do this, Haley," she said, attempting to reassure herself of the difficult task she had before her.

She turned and opened the door. On the porch before her were three people. The first was a man in his thirties, John, the lead reporter for the Cascadian Times. He was accompanied by two photographers, neither of whom could be more than twenty-five years old. They were all postwar babies; none of them knew the horror and brutality of the Great Civil War.

"Mrs. Rutledge?" John asked as he reached his hand out.

"Yes, please call me Haley." She grasped his hand firmly and shook.

She greeted the other two and invited everyone into her house. They shared small talk as the photographers set up equipment for the photo shoot that would follow the interview.

"Mrs. Rutledge, when you're ready to begin, let me know," John said.

"John, please, call me Haley."

"Yes ma'am," he answered with a sheepish grin.

Haley sat nervously, her hands rigidly clasped on her lap. She rubbed her fingers in anticipation of the first question.

"Haley, first let me thank you for letting us into your home. It is an honor to be able to speak with you and to get your personal story and perspective."

"You're very welcome, John. I have to admit, I'm a bit nervous. As you know, I don't like the limelight nor have I ever been one for doing interviews. If it weren't for your family connection you wouldn't be here. I knew your father; he was a friend and colleague to my own father. It was only when I heard you would be the one conducting this interview that I agreed," Haley said. She sat very straight and looked at John directly.

"I do know that our families have had some connection in the past and, again, thank you. Let me then get right into this."

Haley just nodded her approval.

"Next week marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Salt Lake. It was that treaty that gave our young republic the formal victory over our opponents and gave birth to our country. Your father was in Salt Lake for that signing. What can you tell me about him?"

Haley chuckled a bit before she answered. "Wow, that is quite the question. What can I tell you about my father? Where do I begin?" She paused for a moment before she continued, "Are you asking me about how he was then?"

"I can see how that can be a vague question, I'm sorry. Let me start again. Your father was very instrumental in the founding of this country; he is one of our founding fathers, as some would say. While many praise him for his sacrifice, there are some now that question some of his actions during the Great Civil War. How would you describe him?"

"I have heard some of those revisionists who now, in the protection of our hard-fought freedom, question the means by which it was gained. To them I say, 'you didn't live it, you were not there.' It is easy to sit in the comfort of liberty handed to you, swaddled in the bloodied cloth of our revolution," Haley said firmly. "If you are here to question my father's actions, then I feel we should start with who my father was and where he came from. The man I knew was a loving and protective man. He cared for me and the rest of his family and was willing to do whatever it took to ensure our survival. Many look back on history without looking at context. You have to have lived it to truly understand why anyone did what they did. My father was a pragmatic man who took direct action when it benefitted those whom he pledged to protect. He was not always a pragmatist, though." Haley paused; she shifted in her seat and then continued with a softer tone in her voice. "Daddy was very open about his life. He told me stories from his past. Many times, he told me that life will show up and change the way you look at the world; that there would be incidents that would shake you to the core and shift your way of thinking. My daddy had a few of those moments, the first one I can remember him telling me happened back when he was a Marine in Iraq. What happened there changed him as a person and set him on the course that would lead us to this living room today. I hope you planned on being here a while, because I am going to set the record straight."

November 16, 2004

"Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet."

Marine General James Mattis to his Marines in Iraq

Fallujah, Iraq

"Target acquired!" yelled Sergeant Gordon Van Zandt, his face planted firmly on the day sight of the TOW antitank missile system.

Gordon could hear gunfire cracking around him. He focused on the target he had acquired, a small window. Inside, an Iraqi sniper was pinning down a squad of Marines further up the road. The glint of the sniper's scope and an occasional flash from the muzzle gave away the sniper's position.

After the pinned-down squad was notified that no air support was available, Gordon's TOW squad was called up to take out the sniper's nest. TOWs had been initially designed to destroy armored vehicles; the previous Gulf War had proven their farther-ranging battlefield application, bunker busting.

Gordon steadied his breathing and kept the crosshairs on the target while his driver, Lance Corporal Bivens, crouched outside the vehicle, alongside the rear driver's side with his SAW machine gun against his shoulder.

Bivens yelled, "Back blast area all secure!" Bivens was not your poster model of a Marine physique. He was small in stature, lean, and only stood around five feet six inches. But his nickname, "Pit Bull," said more about him than anything else could; he was a staunch fighter and had proven himself a worthy opponent in hand-to-hand combat.

Immediately, Gordon reached up with his right hand, lifted the arming lever, and shouted back, "Gun up!"

He placed his hands gently back on the traversing unit's control knobs and with his right thumb flipped up the trigger guard.

Just then, he saw the sniper's rifle barrel emerge from the shadows of the small room he occupied. Not willing to waste another second, Gordon yelled out, "Fire in the hole!"

He pressed down on the trigger.

A loud pop and whiz came from the TOW. Within a couple of seconds the loud blast of the missile leaving the tube on its way to the target rattled Gordon's ears. He tracked the missile through his sight as it flew to its target. After only a few moments, he saw a flash of light. The missile had struck its target. All Gordon could see now was dark smoke billowing out of the room.

"Impact, target destroyed!" he yelled out. He reached up, released the bridge clamp unlocking the missile, and tossed the empty tube onto the ground.

Bivens slung his SAW and quickly opened the Hummer's rear hatch. He grabbed a new missile and handed it to Gordon, who loaded it into the launch tube with precision speed and closed the bridge clamp down. He jumped behind the scope, assessed the damage, and looked for more targets.

After feeling secure, he looked up from the gun and shouted out to Bivens, "We got that fucking Muj, jump back in, and let's drive up to assist the grunts."

Bivens jumped back into the driver's seat and proceeded toward the Marine squad.

"Bivens, radio the Battalion Forward HQ and order a medevac."

"Roger that," Bivens replied, grabbing the radio.

Bivens and Gordon pulled up to the Marines.

Grabbing his M-4 rifle, Gordon jumped off the top of the Hummer. He looked back to Bivens. "Stand

watch while I attend to these guys.”

“Roger that,” Bivens replied as he crawled up into the hatch.

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