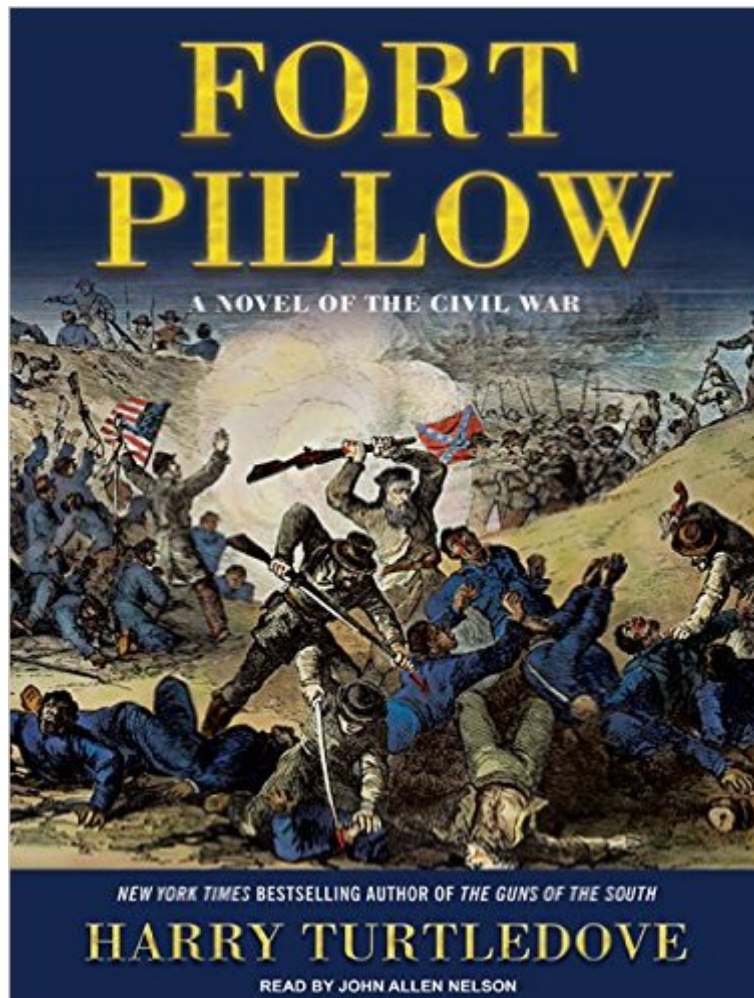


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Fort Pillow: A Novel Of The Civil War



Synopsis

In April 1864, the Union garrison at Fort Pillow was composed of almost 600 troops, about half of them black. The Confederacy, incensed by what it saw as a crime against nature, sent its fiercest cavalry commander, Nathan Bedford Forrest, to attack the fort with about 1,500 men. The Confederates overran the fort and drove the Federals into a deadly crossfire. Only sixty-two of the colored Union troops survived the fight unwounded. Many accused the Confederates of massacring the black troops after the fort fell, when fighting should have ceased. The "Fort Pillow Massacre" became a Union rallying cry and cemented resolve to see the war through to its conclusion. Harry Turtledove has written a dramatic re-creation of an astounding battle, telling a bloody story of courage and hope, freedom and hatred. With brilliant characterizations of all the main figures, this is a novel that reminds us that Fort Pillow was more than a battle-it was a clash of ideas between men fighting to define what being an American ought to mean.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fort Pillow (2006) is a novel of the Civil War. The fort was first constructed at the orders of Confederate General Gideon Pillow on the First Chickasaw Bluff of the Mississippi River. Not quite forty miles north of Memphis, the first line of fortifications ran a couple of miles from Coal Creek to the Mississippi. Later, a shorter second line was constructed inside the line laid out by Pillow. When Union troops took the fort, a third line about four hundred feet long was built across the tip of the triangle. Fort Pillow was defended by the Thirteen Tennessee Cavalry (US) under Major William F. Bradford. Shortly before the assault, a battery from the Sixth U.S. Heavy Artillery and another from

the Second U.S. Light Artillery was ordered to the post. Most of these artillerymen were black, with white officers and mostly white sergeants. The artillery commander, Major Lionel Booth, was senior officer at the fort. In this novel, Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest orders the brigade at Sharon's Ferry and another at Eaton to attack Fort Pillow. While initially designating General Chalmers as the commander, Forrest quickly changes his mind and leads most of the Nineteenth Tennessee Cavalry (CS) to Fort Pillow. They engage the services of W.J. Shaw as a guide to the fort and follow him into the rainy night through bogs and woods. Amazingly enough, they find Fort Pillow just before dawn and, on April 12, 1864, immediately attack the Federal skirmish line. The defenders are awakened by the gunfire and, despite initial confusion, deploy two more companies to the skirmish line. The black artillerymen operate the guns like professionals. Those who are not required on the guns fight with muskets alongside the white cavalrymen.

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