W.E.B.

Griffin

The Soldier Spies

A Men at War Novel

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W.E.B. GRIFFIN

THE SOLDIER SPIES

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THE SOLDIER SPIES

For Lieutenant Aaron Bank, Infantry, AUS, detailed OSS
(later, Colonel, Special Forces)
and
Lieutenant William E. Colby, Infantry, AUS, detailed OSS
(later, Ambassador and Director, CIA)

They set the standards, as Jedburgh Team Leaders
operating in German-occupied France and Norway, for
valor, wisdom, patriotism, and personal integrity
that thousands who followed in their steps
in the OSS and CIA tried to emulate.

ALSO BY W.E.B. GRIFFIN

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HONOR BOUND

BLOOD AND HONOR

BROTHERHOOD OF WAR

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BOOK II: THE CAPTAINS

BOOK III: THE MAJORS

BOOK IV: THE COLONELS

BOOK V: THE BERETS

BOOK VI: THE GENERALS

BOOK VII: THE NEW BREED

BOOK VIII: THE AVIATORS

THE CORPS

BOOK I: SEMPER FI

BOOK II: CALL TO ARMS

BOOK III: COUNTERATTACK

BOOK IV: BATTLEGROUND

BOOK V: LINE OF FIRE

BOOK VI: CLOSE COMBAT

BOOK VII: BEHIND THE LINES

BOOK VIII: IN DANGER'S PATH

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BOOK I: MEN IN BLUE

BOOK II: SPECIAL OPERATIONS

BOOK III: THE VICTIM

BOOK IV: THE WITNESS

BOOK V: THE ASSASSIN

BOOK VI: THE MURDERERS

BOOK VII: THE INVESTIGATORS

MEN AT WAR

BOOK I: THE LAST HEROES

BOOK II: THE SECRET WARRIORS

I

[ONE]
Marburg an der Lahn, Germany
8 November 1942

On the night of November 7, Obersturmführer-SS-SD Wilhelm Peis, a tall, pale, blond man of twenty-eight, who was the senior Sicherheitsdienst (SS Security Service) officer in Marburg an der Lahn, received the following message by Teletype from Berlin:

> YOU WILL PLEASE TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF REICHSMINISTER ALBERT SPEER AND A PERSONAL STAFF OF FOUR WHO WILL MAKE AN UNPUBLICIZED VISIT TO THE FULMAR ELEKTRISCHES WERK AT MARBURG 8 NOVEMBER. THE REICHSMINISTER WILL ARRIVE BY PRIVATE TRAIN AT 10:15 AND DEPART IN THE SAME MANNER AT APPROXIMATELY 15:45.

The message from Berlin seemed more or less routine to Peis, and he at first treated it as such until early in the morning of the eighth when Gauleiter Karl-Heinz Schroeder—in a state somewhere between chagrin and panic—burst into Peis's sleeping quarters (Peis was not in fact asleep) and pointedly reminded him that not only had Speer taken the place of Dr. Fritz Todt as head of the Todt Organization—in charge of all industrial production, military and civilian—which made him one of the most powerful men in Germany, but that he was a *personal* friend, perhaps the *closest* personal friend—of the Führer himself.

The intensity of Schroeder's concern impelled Peis to double his efforts on behalf of welcoming the Reichsminister, and he rounded up half a dozen Mercedes, Horch, and Opel Admiral automobiles to carry Speer from the railroad station to the Fulmar Electric Plant—or wherever else he might wish to go. He canceled all leave for the police and the SD. And he dressed in a new uniform.

By this time Peis was less motivated by the concerns of the Gauleiter than by more pressing and personal concerns of his own:

The Reichsminister would certainly be accompanied by a senior SS officer—at least an Obersturmbannführer (Lieutenant Colonel) and possibly even an Oberführer (Senior Colonel). If this officer found fault with his security arrangements for Reichsminister Speer, Peis could start packing his bags with his warmest clothes. There was always a shortage of Obersturmführers on the Eastern Front, and a long list of SS officers already there who had earned a sweet sinecure like the SS-SD detachment in Marburg an der Lahn. Peis had long before decided that it was far better to be a big fish in a little pond than the other way around.

Peis set up his security arrangements at about seven in the morning, soon after Schroeder had left him; he personally checked his arrangements twice; and he was at the Hauptbahnhof forty-five minutes before the scheduled arrival of the private train.

The train itself, though it rolled into the station on schedule to the minute, was otherwise a disappointment. To start with, it wasn't actually a train. It was one car, self-propelled—not much more than a streetcar. And there were no senior SS officers to be impressed with the way Peis had handled his responsibilities. Only Reichsminister Speer and three others—all civilians, one a woman—stepped out of the car.

And even Speer himself wasn't in uniform. He was wearing a business suit and looked like any other civilian.

After the Reichsminister and his party reached the platform, Karl-Heinz Schroeder, wearing his best party uniform, marched up and gave a stiff-armed Nazi salute, then launched into his welcoming speech. Speer made a vague gesture with his hand in reply to the salute and cut Schroeder off at about word five.

"Very good of you to say so, Herr Gauleiter," Speer said, and then went quickly on. "I had hoped that Professor Dyer would be able to meet us."

From the look on Schroeder's face, it was obvious to Peis that Schroeder had never heard of Professor Dyer.

Peis had.

Unless there were two Professor Dyers, which was highly unlikely, Reichsminister Speer desired the company of a man who had one foot in a *Konzentrationslager* (concentration camp) and the other on a banana peel.

"Forgive me, Herr Reichsminister," Schroeder said. "Professor Dyer?"

And then, Peis thought, Schroeder finally put his brain in gear. "Perhaps Obersturmführer Peis can help you. Peis!"

Peis marched over and saluted.

Speer smiled at Peis. "There was supposed to have been a message sent—" he began.

"I sent it, Herr Speer," the woman said.

Speer nodded.

"—requesting Professor Friedrich Dyer to meet with me."

"I have received no such message, Herr Reichsminister," Peis said. "But I think I know where he can be found."

"And could you bring him?" Speer asked.

"If I may be so bold as to suggest, Herr Reichsminister?" Peis said.

"Of course," Speer replied.

"While you and your party accompany the Gauleiter, I'll see if I can find Professor Dyer for you and take him to the Fulmar plant."

"Good man!" Speer smiled and clutched Peis's arm. "It's quite important. I can't imagine what happened to the telegram."

"I'll do my best, Herr Reichsminister," Peis said.

Peis hurried to the stationmaster's office and grabbed the telephone. He dialed the number from memory.

Gisella Dyer, the daughter (and the only reason Professor Dyer was not making gravel from boulders in a KZ somewhere), answered the phone on the third ring.

"How are you, Gisella?" Peis asked.

"Very well, thank you, Herr Sturmbannführer," she said, warily. Peis understood her lack of enthusiasm. But she wasn't the reason for his call today.

"Do you know where I can find your father?" he asked.

He heard her suck in her breath, and it was a moment before she spoke again. She was carefully considering her reply. Peis knew that she would have preferred that Peis direct his attentions toward her not because she liked him (she despised him), but because as long as Peis liked her, her father stayed out of the KZ.

"He's at the university," she said finally, with a slight tremor in her voice. "Is there something wrong, Herr Sturmbannführer?"

"Where exactly at the university?"

Gisella Dyer considered that, too, before she replied.

"In his office, I imagine," she said. "He doesn't have another class until four this afternoon." She paused, then asked again, "Is there something wrong?"

"Official business, Gisella," Peis said, and hung up.

It would be useful for Gisella to worry a little, Peis thought. She tended to be arrogant, to forget her position. Periodically, it was necessary to cut her down to size.

Peis found Professor Friedrich Dyer where his daughter had said he would be, in his book-and-paper-cluttered room in one of the ancient buildings in the center of the university campus. He was a tall, thin, sharp-featured man; and he looked cold, even though he was well covered. He wore a thick, tightly buttoned cardigan under his many-times-patched tweed jacket and a woolen shawl over his shoulders. The ancient buildings were impossible to heat, even when there was fuel.

Professor Dyer looked at Peis with chilling contempt, but he said nothing and offered no greeting.

"Heil Hitler!" Peis said, more because he knew Dyer hated the salute than out of any Nazi zeal of his own.

"Heil Hitler, Herr Peis," the professor said.

"I wasn't aware you are acquainted with Reichsminister Albert Speer, Professor," Peis said.

"I gather he's here," Dyer said.

The professor was not surprised, and this surprised Peis.

"You were supposed to meet him at the station," Peis said.

"No," the dignified academic said simply. "The telegram said only that the Reichsminister would be here and wanted to see me."

"What about?"

"I really have no idea," Professor Dyer said.

Is that the truth? Peis wondered. *Or is the professor taking advantage of his association with the head of the Todt Organization and trying to impress me?*

"He is at the Fulmar Electric Plant," Peis said. "I am here to take you to him."

Professor Dyer nodded, then rose and with difficulty put his tweed-and-sweater-thick arms into the sleeves of an old, fur-collared overcoat. When he had finished struggling into it, the two top buttons would not fasten. He shrugged helplessly, set an old and shaggy fur cap on his head, and indicated that he was ready to go.

The university was in the center of Marburg atop the hill, and the Fulmar Elektrisches Werk was about ten minutes north of town. It was an almost new, sprawling, windowless, oblong building with camouflage netting strung across it. The netting was intended to blend the plant into the steep hills around Marburg to make it invisible from the air.

The plant had no guards now, but that was to change, Peis knew, as of the first of December. (The coming change sparked considerable curiosity in Peis: What were they going to make in there that required all that security?) The local SS-SD office (that is to say, Peis) had been ordered to dig up before December enough "cleared" civilians to handle the security job. If he could not provide enough "cleared" civilians, the police would have to provide the guard force, at the expense of whatever else they were supposed to be doing.

Meanwhile, a substantial guardhouse had been built. And a nearly completed eight-foot fence, topped with barbed wire, surrounded the plant property. At hundred-yard intervals there were guard towers, with floodlights to illuminate the fence.

Peis found Reichsminister Albert Speer and his party by driving around until he discovered the little convoy of "borrowed" automobiles.

Speer was inside a work bay. The bay was half full of milling machines and lathes, and there were provisions for more. As soon as he saw Peis and Professor Dyer, Speer walked over to them. He was smiling, and his hand was extended.

"Professor Doktor Dyer?" Speer asked.

"Herr Speer?" Dyer replied, making a bow of his head and offering his hand.

"I'm very pleased to meet you," Speer said. "I've been reading with great interest your paper on the malleability of tungsten carbide."

"Which paper?" Dyer asked, on the edge of rudeness. "There have been several."

"The one you delivered at Dresden," Speer answered, seemingly ignoring Dyer's tone.

"That was the last," Dyer said.

Speer looked at Peis the way he would look at a servant.

"We will be an hour," Speer said, dismissing him, "perhaps a little longer. Could I impose further on your kindness and ask you to arrange for Professor Dyer to be returned afterward to wherever he wishes?"

"It will be my pleasure, Herr Reichsminister," Peis said.

"You are very kind," Speer said.

"I am at your service, Herr Reichsminister," Peis said.

Since there was time before he had to retrieve his car, Peis walked the new fence surrounding the plant. The professional cop in him liked what he saw. In his judgment, whoever had set up the fence knew what he was doing. It would be difficult for any undesirable to get into the plant area. Or to get out of it.

He noticed too, on his journey of inspection, that the fence enclosed an open area large enough to build laborer barracks. He had heard that the Todt Organization was recruiting laborers from France, Belgium, the Netherlands—and even from the East—to work in German industry. They could not, of course, be permitted to roam freely around Germany.

After his tour, he settled into his Mercedes-Benz and started the engine. It was a waste of fuel, but he wanted the engine running anyway, partly because he intended to turn on the radios (unless the engine was running, the radios quickly drained the battery), but primarily because it was cold: Whatever the virtues of the Mercedes' diesel engine, it was a sonofabitch to start when it was cold. He did not want Reichsminister Speer to remember him as the SS officer whose car couldn't be made to run. Peis himself didn't mind some additional warmth either.

Over the shortwave radio, Peis checked in with both his headquarters and the detachment guarding the Reichminister's railcar at the Bahnhof. He then tuned in Radio Frankfurt on the civilian band radio.

The news was that the Wehrmacht in Russia continued to adjust its lines and inflict heavy casualties upon the enemy. But then there was a surprise:

In blatant violation of international law, at four that morning, United States naval, air, and ground forces had started shelling and bombing French North Africa. Later, an American invasion force was sent ashore on both Atlantic and Mediterranean beaches. Terrible casualties were inflicted upon innocent, neutral civilians, etc., etc., etc.

The invasion was obviously successful, Peis concluded. Otherwise, the announcer would have gleefully proclaimed that it had been thrown back into the sea.

Why didn't the Americans mind their own damned business? Peis wondered. Germany had no real quarrel with America. What the hell did they want with French North Africa, anyhow? There was nothing there but sand and Arabs riding around on camels.

And then he remembered that he actually knew somebody in French North Africa, a policeman like himself: Obersturmbannführer SS-SD (Lieutenant Colonel) Johann Müller, who had been raised on a farm in Kolbe not three miles from where Peis sat, was on the staff of the Franco-German Armistice Commission for Morocco.

Müller, who came home to see his mother from time to time, had once been a simple *Wachtmann* (Patrolman) on the Kreis Marburg police. But he had been smart enough to join the Nazi Party early on, and he had been transferred to Berlin and commissioned in the SS-SD. And now he was a big shot.

Who just might, Peis thought, *spend the rest of the war in an American POW cage. But better that,* Peis decided, *than the Eastern Front.*

It was an hour and a half before he saw Professor Friedrich Dyer walking toward the car.

"You won't mind, Professor, if I see the Reichsminister safely onto his train?" Peis said when Dyer had gotten into the car.

"We all must do our duty," Dyer said dryly.

Peis discreetly followed the Reichsminister's convoy to the Hauptbahnhof.

On the way from the Hauptbahnhof to the university, Peis asked, as casually as he could, "What did Reichsminister Speer want with you?"

There was no reply for a moment, as Dyer considered his response.

"We spoke of the molecular structure of tungsten carbon alloys," Dyer finally said. "Specifically, the effect of high temperatures on their dimensions, and the difficulties encountered in their machining."

Peis had no idea what that meant, and he suspected that Dyer, aware of that, was rubbing his ignorance in his face. Yesterday, the professor would not have dared antagonize him. But they both knew that things had changed.

"I have no idea what that means," Peis admitted. And then he changed the subject before Dyer had a chance to reply: "Radio Frankfurt just said the Americans have invaded North Africa."

"Really?"

"You're an educated man, Professor," Peis said. "Why would the Americans want North Africa?"

"No telling," Professor Dyer said. And then he added, "You must remember, Herr Obersturmführer, that the Americans are crazy."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well, for one thing, they believe they can win this war," Dyer said. "Wouldn't you say that makes them crazy?"

Peis's face tightened as he realized that the professor had mocked him again. And his anger grew as he realized that there was absolutely nothing he could do about it.

Peis did manage a parting shot, however. As the professor was about to slip out of the car, Peis stopped him with his hand and gave him a knowing, confidential look. "Do please give my very best regards to Fräulein Dyer," he said through his very best smile.

Professor Dyer had no reply to make to that.

[TWO]
Ksar es Souk, Morocco
0700 Hours
9 November 1942

The palace of the Pasha of Ksar es Souk was pentagonal. It was half a millennium older than the nearly completed world's largest office building, the Pentagon, in Washington, D.C., and bore little resemblance to it. But it was unarguably five-sided, and it pleased the somewhat droll sense of humor of Eric Fulmar to think of the palace as "The Desert Pentagon."

There were five observation towers at each angle of the Desert Pentagon. Over the centuries, lookouts had reported from these the approach of camel caravans, tribes of nomads, armies of hostile sheikhs and pashas—and in more recent times, patrols and detachments of the French Foreign Legion and the German Wehrmacht.

Today, there was nothing in sight on the desert in any direction, and it was possible to see a little over seven miles.

Eric Fulmar, who was tall, blond, and rather good-looking, sat in the northwest tower of the Desert Pentagon holding a small cup of black coffee. Except for olive-drab trousers and parachutist's boots, he wore Berber attire, robes and a burnoose. The cords around his waist, as well as those holding the burnoose to his head, were embroidered in gold, the identification of a nobleman.

Depending on whether his dossier was read in Washington, D.C., or in

Berlin, Germany, he was 2nd Lieutenant FULMAR, Eric, Infantry, Army of the United States, or Eric von Fulmar, Baron Kolbe.

The chair he sat in was at least two hundred years old. He had tipped it back and was balancing on its rear legs. His feet rested on the railing of the tower. Beside him on the stone floor was a graceful silver coffeepot with a long, curving spout. Beside it was a bottle of Courvoisier cognac. His coffee was liberally braced with the cognac.

Next to the coffeepot was a pair of Ernst Leitz, Wetzlar, 8-power binoculars resting on a leather case. And next to that was a Thompson .45-caliber ACP machine-pistol—which is to say, a Thompson equipped with a pair of handgrips, rather than a forearm and a stock. The Thompson had a fifty-round drum magazine.

Fulmar leaned over and picked up the Ernst Leitz binoculars and carefully studied the horizon in the direction of Ourzazate. He was hoping to see the cloud of dust an automobile would raise.

When he saw nothing, he put the binoculars down, then leaned to the other side of the chair, where he'd placed a Zenith battery-powered portable radio. He turned it on, and a torrent of Arabic flowed out.

Fulmar listened a moment, then smiled and started to chuckle.

It was an American broadcast, probably from Gibraltar, a message from Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States, to the Arabic-speaking population of Morocco.

"Behold, the lionhearted American warriors have arrived," the announcer solemnly proclaimed. "Speak with our fighting men and you will find them pleasing to the eye and gladdening to the heart."

"You bet your ass," Fulmar said, chuckling.

"Look in their eyes and smiling faces," the announcer continued, "for they are holy warriors happy in their sacred work. If you see our German or Italian enemies marching against us, kill them with guns or knives or stones—or any other weapon that you have set your hands upon."

"Like a camel turd, for example," Fulmar offered helpfully.

"The day of freedom has come!" the announcer dramatically concluded.

"Not quite," Fulmar replied. "Almost, but not quite."

He was thinking of his own freedom. Second Lieutenant Fulmar was at the moment the bait in a trap. Well, there again, not quite. Some very responsible people considered it likely that the bait—whether through cowardice, enlightened self-interest, or simply ineptitude—would, so to speak,

stand up in the trap and wave the sniffing rat away. The bait himself kind of liked that idea.

That, of course, hadn't been the way they had explained the job to him. In several little pep talks they'd assured him they were *totally* confident that he could carry this "responsibility" off. But Fulmar's lifelong experience with those in authority had taught him otherwise.

Fulmar had his current situation pretty well figured out. It was kind of like a chess game. From the time he had received his first chess set, a Christmas gift from his mother's employer when he was ten, he had been fascinated with the game—and intrigued by the ways it paralleled life. In life, for instance, just as in chess, pawns were cheerfully sacrificed when it seemed that would benefit the more powerful pieces.

In this game, he was a white pawn. And he was being used as bait in the capture of two of the enemy's pieces, whom Fulmar thought of as a bishop and a knight. The problem was that the black bishop and knight were accompanied by a number of other pawns both black and white.

If the game went as planned (here Life and Chess differed), the bishop and the knight would change sides. And the white pawn wearing the second lieutenant's gold bar would be promoted to knight. If something went wrong, the second lieutenant pawn and the black pawns (who didn't even know they were in play) would be swept from the board (or—according to the rules of *this* game—shot) and the remaining players would continue the game.

The bishop was a man named Helmut von Heurten-Mitnitz, a Pomeranian aristocrat presently serving as the senior officer of the Franco-German Armistice Commission for Morocco. His knight was Obersturmbannführer SS-SD Johann Müller, presently serving as the Security Adviser to the Franco-German Armistice Commission.

Helmut von Heurten-Mitnitz, who had been educated at Harvard and had once been the German Consul General in New Orleans, had not long before established contact with Robert Murphy, the American Consul General for Morocco.

Von Heurten-Mitnitz informed Murphy then that he was convinced Germany was in the hands of a madman and that the only salvation he saw for Germany was its quick defeat by the Western Powers. He was therefore prepared, he said, to do whatever was necessary to see that Germany lost the war as quickly as possible.

The German diplomat went on to tell Murphy that Obersturmbannführer Müller, for his own reasons, had come to the same conclusion and was similarly offering his services: Through his own "official" sources, Müller had come into knowledge of the atrocities committed by the SS "Special Squads" on the Eastern Front and of the extermination camps operated at several locations by the SS. Müller was a professional policeman, and he was shocked by what the SS was doing (it was not only inhuman, it was unprofessional).

Also, Müller understood that his one great ambition in life—to retire to the Hessian farm where he had been born—would not be possible if he were tried as a war criminal and hanged.

This being not only the real world, but also the real world at war, Helmut von Heurten-Mitnitz's noble offer could not be accepted at face value. His intentions had to be tested. He was offered a choice: He could do a job for the Americans, at genuine risk to himself; or he could choose to satisfy other needs.

Enter the pawns:

There were in French Morocco a number of French officers, Army, Service de l'aire, and Navy, who did not regard it as their duty to obey the terms of the Franco-German Armistice. Rather, they saw it as their duty as officers to continue the fight against Germany. These officers had provided considerable information and other assistance to curious Americans. And they were fully aware that what they were doing was considered treason.

Helmut von Heurten-Mitnitz's controller told him that he would be expected to round up twenty "treasonous" French officers whom the Americans wished to protect from French forces loyal to Vichy, and from the Germans themselves, and take them to the palace of the Pasha of Ksar es Souk, where they would be turned over to an American officer.

The American officer was to be parachuted into Morocco shortly before the invasion began. As soon as possible *after* the ships of the American force appeared off the Moroccan coast, he would contact Helmut von Heurten-Mitnitz to furnish the names of the twenty officers.

Finally, Helmut von Heurten-Mitnitz was informed that the American officer's name was Second Lieutenant Eric Fulmar. Von Heurten-Mitnitz would not fail to take note of this. A U.S. Army second lieutenant, even one assigned to the Office of Strategic Services, was small potatoes. But Second Lieutenant Fulmar, Infantry, United States Army, held dual citizenship. His