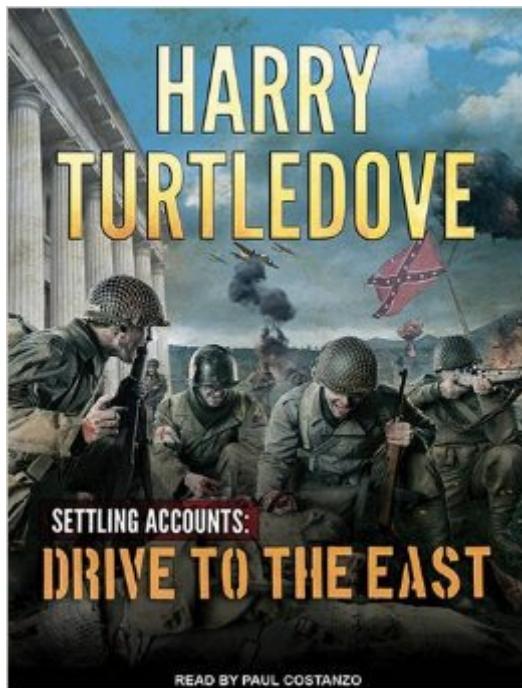


The book was found

Drive To The East (Settling Accounts)



Synopsis

In 1914, the First World War ignited a brutal conflict in North America, with the United States finally defeating the Confederate States. In 1917, the Great War ended and an era of simmering hatred began, fueled by the despotism of a few and the sacrifice of many. Now it's 1942. The U.S.A. and C.S.A. are locked in a tangle of jagged, blood-soaked battle lines, modern weaponry, desperate strategies, and the kind of violence that only the damned could conjure up for their enemies and themselves. In Richmond, Confederate president and dictator Jake Featherston is shocked by what his own aircraft have done in Philadelphia-killing U.S. president Al Smith in a barrage of bombs. Featherston presses ahead with a secret plan carried out on the dusty plains of Texas, where a so-called detention camp hides a far more evil purpose.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Harry Turtledove just drives me crazy sometimes. He can come up with some really interesting plots and characters, but his writing just makes me climb the walls sometimes. The plot itself has to be very interesting in order to grab me (which is why I only read one of his series). Settling Accounts: Drive to the East is just like Return Engagement with one exception: my annoyance meter shot through the roof. Turtledove is known for his excessive repetition, but this book just took that repetition to a new level. Add to that the clunky prose and bad dialogue, and you get a book where you really want to know what happens but really have to struggle to get there. As I have said before about this series, the plotting is wonderful. There are a few too many obvious choices, like having

another "Stalingrad" and having Featherston act too much like Hitler in all respects. Overall, though, I like what Turtledove has done with it. There are some little things that bothered me, such as why the there doesn't appear to be any US troops west of Ohio other than in the extreme southwest and fighting in Utah. The Confederates split the country in two, but in reading about what happens, they don't seem concerned at all about anything west of Ohio. The "drive to the east" from the title of the book takes up everything. The US is attacking in Virginia, but that's stalled. What about Illinois and Iowa? Overall, though, Turtledove gives us enough viewpoint characters that we get to see most of what's going on in North America, and that's a good thing. There is one area that we don't get to see, however, and I think that's a shame.

There is a good deal to like in Turtledove's latest installment of his ongoing alternative history saga of a divided America. The second volume of the "Settling Accounts" series picks up right where the last one left off, with the United States and the Confederate States at war once again. The American president is dead and the Confederate drive through Ohio has split the U.S. in two. Yet with a new president the war continues, and Turtledove entertains with his own version of the Second World War, following a number of characters from the previous volumes as they fight and live through the conflict. There is an interesting new note to this volume. The Mormon revolt in Utah - an ongoing subplot that dates back to the initial volume in the series - produces a new weapon that is more familiar to readers from today's headlines than from histories of World War II. It seems that Turtledove has decided to introduce an element of 21st century warfare to his 1940s battlefield as a way of commenting on current events, suggesting his own attitudes to today's violence. It will be interesting as well to see if he develops this idea further in the next volume. Yet as enjoyable as the novel is, it suffers from a degree of sloppiness. Some of the sloppiness is error borne of too little research - I doubt that his alternate U.S. would name a destroyer escort after a Southerner, for example - while some seems to be of exhaustion. Compared to the initial volumes of the series there seems to be a growing degree of repetitiveness in this book, not just of the last installment (a little understandable due to the need to refresh readers from what happened previously) but within the book itself.

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