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Time Fall: A Chat with Tim Ashby
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Today we are joined by Tim Ashby, author of TIME FALL, who stops by for a chat and a Q & A as part of his virtual book tour...

Hello! I enjoy writing and reading historical fiction; and both my books -- DEVIL'S DEN and TIME FALL --center on historical events. In my new book, TIME FALL, I gave myself the job of creating realistic characters from two different time periods who must interact with one another. This task turned out to be both challenging and fun! I had a time-traveling WWII soldier falling in love with a modern day medical student, and I had to make it all believable. Many readers have asked me questions about the process, and why I choose to write historical fiction, so I hope you'll enjoy this Q & A.

In **TIME FALL** six US Army soldiers are sent, in 1945, on a mission to hit Nazi targets behind enemy lines. They parachute into a crazy electrical storm and disappear, officially Missing in Action for almost 70 years. In fact, they are pulled out of their own time and into ours. They land in deeply forested Germany, still believing it is 1945, and begin to attack.

I hope this work keeps readers on the edge of their seats as they are torn between rooting for these brave men, and knowing that the targets the men seek to destroy are innocent.

Q. TIME FALL is an interesting hybrid -- a novel set in the present day, but featuring soldiers who accidentally "time travel" to today while on a mission during WWII. Would you consider this work historical fiction?

A. All of my novels have strong historical elements, but I don't consider TIME FALL to be historical fiction. Only the opening scenes in the book actually take place in the past – April 1945.

The remainder of the novel happens in the present day, and there's plenty of action packed into just the 48 hours in which those scenes are set! My other books, such as the "Seth Armitage" series set in the 1920s, are historical mystery thrillers.

My approach as a writer is to take a factual historical mystery and build a seamless fictional plot around it. The "time travel" plot device in TIME FALL is based on an actual incident that took place during the Vietnam War – the disappearance of a helicopter and its crew.

Q. What prompted your interest in writing works with a strong historical fiction component?

A. I've always had a keen interest in history, particularly the US Civil War, World Wars I and II, and the 1920s. I enjoy the historical research that adds authenticity to my books. I've actually published several non-fictional "academic" historical works, including an article about a British military campaign in the Caribbean.

Q. Do you think writing historical fiction is more or less challenging than contemporary fiction might be, for you, and why?

A. I think writing ANY fiction is challenging! However, for historical fiction, the author has to ensure that EVERY detail is correct because so many readers are experts in their own right.

For example, in TIME FALL, I had to research every detail of weapons and equipment that would have been carried by US Army Rangers in combat in 1945. I even had to get the wording on their "dog tags" right, as patterns changed during the course of the war. I also spent time learning how American soldiers spoke in the 1940s (WW II veterans alive today actually use different expressions than they did in their youth), and I learned about the culture of the 1930s and 1940s – the movies, songs, news events that soldiers in the Second World War – both American and German – would have grown up with.

Q. Your first book, DEVIL'S DEN, is set in 1920, with

flashbacks to the mid-1800s. You seem to enjoy writing books involving two or more time periods. What attracted you to this interesting technique?

A. I've always been fascinated by the relative shortness of time. For example, the Battle of Gettysburg took place 150 years ago, but I knew an elderly relative raised by her grandfather, Captain John Ashby, who had been an officer in a Virginia regiment during Pickett's Charge during the battle. Her grandfather lived to a great age and told her many stories about his service in the Civil War, which she relayed to me. Some of the scenes in DEVIL'S DEN are based on Captain Ashby's reminiscences. My own grandfather was born during the "horse and buggy" days, yet lived long enough to watch television, drive cars, fly in jet planes, etc.

Q. War factors prominently in both your books. Can you talk a little about that, in terms of your own experience?

A. Throughout my life I've been both intrigued and repelled by war. I'm very sympathetic to military veterans, and my books always have prominent characters who are veterans. IN TIME FALL, an American Vietnam veteran and a German WW II Luftwaffe veteran – both physically and psychologically damaged by their wartime service – interact with the US Army Rangers who jumped from 1945 into the present. I have not served in the military, although I held two Top Secret security clearances, worked in Latin America with the US Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), served as a "hostage" during a training exercise of the British Special Air Service (SAS) regiment, and spent my 21st birthday in the British Army's Jungle Warfare Training School in the Maya Mountains of Belize – but those are stories for another time!

Q. What do you find particularly gratifying about writing historical fiction?

A. Immersing myself so deeply into the research that I literally (no pun intended) begin dreaming about the historical eras I depict in my books. I become a virtual actor in put myself in my characters' minds and bodies so they become real personalities on the printed (or electronic) page.

Q. Your first novel is set in the 1920s, and the second book in the present day, but with characters for whom it is 1945. What are you working on now? If it is historical fiction, why have you decided to stick with that genre?

A. I'm currently working on the second book in the "Seth Armitage" series of historical mystery thrillers, a novel titled IN SHADOWLAND which is set in 1925. Seth, who has returned to the Bureau of Investigation at J. Edgar Hoover's request, is investigating the mysterious disappearance of Quentin Roosevelt – son of President Teddy Roosevelt – a WW I pilot shot down behind German lines in 1918. The 1920s provide a rich vein of characters and events to mine for writers. The period is fascinating, as it was transitional in so many ways. The era is also perennially popular – note the new film version of THE GREAT GATSBY, as well as BOARDWALK EMPIRE, DOWNTON ABBEY, etc.

Filled with historically accurate details, Time Fall is a complex tale that keeps readers riveted through every surprising twist. To read an excerpt and to enter to win a FREE copy of Time Fall, visit <http://www.timefallbook.com/>. To get your copy now, visit <http://amzn.to/12mA0mW> (print) and <http://amzn.to/1aK4Xzt> (digital). You can also get your copy at all major book retailers.