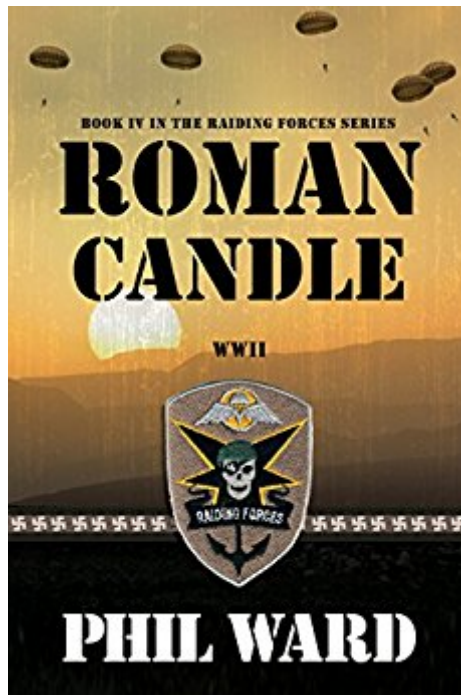


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Roman Candle (Raiding Forces Book 4)



Synopsis

In this sequel to Blood Wings, U.S. Major John Randal, commander of Strategic Raiding Forces, returns in Roman Candle, the second book in a trilogy within the Raiding Forces Series about the Abyssinian Campaign. Major Randal is raising a guerrilla army 600 miles behind the enemy lines in Italian East Africa. In the north Col. Orde Wingate will be leading a column of rag-tad band of Patriots to install the exiled Emperor back on his thorn, out of the Sudan the Kaid will be attacking with two Indian Divisions into the mountainous Kern stronghold and from the south out of Kenya the East Africa Force will be attacking up the Red Sea coastline to clear it of Italians in order for the British Middle East Command to qualify for Lend Lease. The Empire Forces are attacking against at least 10 to 1 odds. The only hope of success is for Major Randal's guerrilla army, called Force N, to disrupt the Blackshirts lines-of communications and for the attacking army to maintain the element of surprise. At the last minute it is learned the Italians have a master spy in Kenya. Unless he is discovered and eliminated the invasion will fail.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sometimes it's hard to distinguish bad writing from over-reliance on auto-complete and

spell-checker in lieu of thoughtful writing and professional editing. It seems like every time a person is referred to, even one of the main characters, we the same canned rank-title-given name-nickname-surname phrase as the last time the person was referred to, even if it was in the preceding paragraph. Ditto for descriptions of setting, situation, equipment, etc., etc. The 1940's were well over before I put in an appearance, but I question some of the idioms and phraseology the characters use. (Did people in 1940 use "rocket science" to describe something as being complex?) I'm also not an expert in small arms, but a short-barreled semi-auto shotgun with a shot diverter? A 9-mm sub-machine gun firing tracers? Rechambering some Springfield '03s to fire a 6.5mm wildcat round, so that our heroes can reload the necked-down 30-06 brass in the field, using captured Italian bullets, presumably disassembling Italian ammunition to provide the bullets, powder, and primers? On the other hand, there's adventure, derring-do, heroic good guys, bad guys of epic badness, venality, treachery, and depravity, heroic and/or gorgeous women (all of them), and some memorable mules. As long as you can suspend disbelief, you'll probably have a good time.

I enjoyed being transported to British special forces in Africa in a backwater of World War II and the development of a viable guerilla force from scratch. The characters are familiar from previous works but never become old. The book moves along at a nice pace. The author shows mastery of the classic unconventional warfare mission of special forces with modern theory/doctrine and world war II equipment. The very British economy of force effort utilizing talented amateurs doing things on a shoestring budget is well portrayed. I look forward to each new installment in the series. The only concern I have is that the book ending which is very abrupt "to be continued". Even the most accomplished of authors do not use such a convention to keep us coming back. The author shows subject mastery and does need to leave the reader hanging. I look forward to closure in the next novel and admire and respect the author's work.

I really like the "Raiding Forces" books, but this Abyssinian campaign is starting to be too big to keep track of. I know the story needs to expand, but sometimes it seems like the characters are spread out a little too far to keep track of. Also, it seems like every minor character from the first few books return out of the blue and suddenly get promoted and are sent out with units of their own to pad out the storyline. I think that the author should have stayed focused on Randal and the other handful of primary characters and stuck with the more limited omniscient narrative style from the first novels instead of the wider view of a fully omniscient narrative style. I like the writing style of the first few books, but some of the stylistic elements that added character to the first novels are

wearing thin. For example: the author's habit of calling each character 'Cpl Joseph "really long unnecessary nickname that most military people don't really get in real life" Smith-Powell' every single time that the character is mentioned is *really* starting to get old.

I actually enjoyed Roman Candle more than the first three in the series because it was not only more in-depth in it's details but the action is almost non-stop. Truly a fascinating read! Phil Ward does an awesome job of bringing "Raiding Forces" into the full frontline scenario of early WW2. I had never researched these events involving Britain's fight in Africa before America was forcefully drawn into the war. However, Mr. Ward has proven himself in his research, his attention to detail and his ability to create an entertaining fictionalized account of the years of WW2 that are largely overlooked by many. This series is one of best historical fiction novels I have ever read. Truly enjoying.

Just finished 'Roman Candle', by Phil Ward. An extremely enjoyable tale of 'Guerrilla Warfare' in Italian occupied Abyssinia. Continued adventures of Maj. Randal and rest of Strategic Raiding Forces. Rollicking good read that stutters a trifle from impedimenta allusions to behind the scenes political and military organizational bumpf*. There's more than enough action and intrigue to bring me back for "Guerrilla Command". Just not as interested in what and whom in Khartoum. I really liked this book. I really loved the others as well. Keep 'em coming Phil Ward please. "Horn of African Adventure with the Hair On!" "The Most Important thing to remember about..." Raiding Forces Series by Phil Ward, is they are good reading. Make's you wish someone in Hollywood had the capability of doing so.*Upon consideration the details offered may be necessary to flesh out knowledge of this otherwise obscure theater of operations. I just found 'essential Lion Hunting instructions' of more interest than General Staff analysis!

I like all the books in the series. I actually read the second book first, and then decided to get all of the series. This book, and the others, would appeal to those who appreciate the military historical fiction/espionage genre. This book deals with the little studied Abyssinian Campaign where the Commonwealth forces were preparing to attack the Italians in East Africa. The campaign was run on a shoestring, and deception was one of the keys. The deception included setting up a quasi-Patriot movement in Ethiopia allegedly to reinstate the Emperor Haile Selassie. I would recommend reading the books in order, although that is not necessary to enjoy them. That makes the story flow much easier. I also like the fact that the author is, as am I, a Vietnam veteran. We actually served in the

same area of that country, at different times and different assignments, but in the Infantry.

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