



A GROUNDBREAKING NEW SERIES FROM THE NO. 1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF GONE

# FRONT LINES



## MICHAEL GRANT

**‘World War II may be the single biggest event in modern history. It was slaughter on a scale the world had never seen before and thankfully has not seen since. But statistics don’t really tell the whole story. For that you need people – characters.’ Michael Grant.**



**Front Lines is a novel about conflict. Conflict between nations in the front lines, but also conflict behind the front lines, in the barracks, in the training camp, and in life.**

World War II did not distinguish between race, religion, social class, sexuality – or even gender. Nobody was left untouched by the conflict. In *Front Lines*, Michael Grant reimagines the contribution that women made to war by placing them in the front lines of battle. The call-up of women creates tension in the ranks

but gender is not the only thing that invites prejudice.

Meet 3 recruits and learn a little about their individual conflicts. Read each extract and think about the nature of the prejudice that each of the girls experience.

**Rio Richiln – an underage farm girl from Gedwell Falls, in Sonoma County.**

*“Rio assumes, has always assumed, that she will be like her mother, who is like her grandmother. For the most part Rio accepts that. But there is a small voice in her mind and heart that senses something off about it all. Not bad, just off. Like she’s trying on an outfit that will never fit, and isn’t her color.”*

*“Rio has been cold, miserable, sick, and scared for twenty-four hours now, and is in no way prepared to fight. She hasn’t even started, and she’s already exhausted. She has an overpowering desire to check her rifle to make sure, doubly sure, triply sure, that it works, and she repeatedly touches the pockets of her ammo belt, reassuring herself that she has a full load. Despite the wet everywhere else, her mouth is dry.”*

**Frangie (Francine Marr) – a black girl from Tulsa, Oklahoma**

*‘Two fears vie for the upper hand in Frangie’s mind. First, that she might do something stupid and kill the wounded captain. He’s almost certainly dying anyway, but the Hippocratic oath is pretty clear: First do no harm. She has done what she can; now she can only offer comfort and morphine. The second fear is simply of the sounds of trucks and men approaching. She does not want to serve out the rest of the war in a prisoner of war camp. It is inconceivable that the racist Germans would be any better than the racist Americans in their treatment of blacks.’*

**Rainy (Elusheva Schulterman) – a Jewish girl from New York City**

*“Sergeant Schulterman,” Captain Herkemeier says.*

*“Captain, it’s good to see you. I didn’t know you were in theater.”*

*“Just a week behind you, Sergeant.”*

*They shake hands while Colonel Clay looks on in disdain. He says, “I understand I have Captain Herkemeier to thank for your services here,” he says.*

*“Yes, sir,” Rainy says. Thus far she assumes this is just some sort of awkward reunion, though Colonel Clay would be the very last person she’d suspect of arranging any sort of social event.*

*“He speaks highly of you,” Clay allows, studying papers in his hands. “Says you come from criminal stock.”*

*“Sir, I—”*

*“Which I consider to be a plus,” the colonel went on. “There are far too many well-bred gentlemen in military intelligence and not nearly enough aggressive Jewesses with a potential for criminality.”*

**Class exercises**

**First Exercise)** In groups discuss the kind of difficulties that Rio, Frangie, and Rainy would encounter in the army. Think about what you know about this period in history. What prejudices might a girl in the army face? What did it mean to be black in a society like the American South like Frangie? What did it mean to be Jewish like Rainy? (10 mins)

Feedback (5 minutes)

**Second exercise)** as a class, discuss other possible factors that might cause a soldier to experience prejudice or hostility in their own troops (In the Allied forces there were soldiers of many religions and ethnic backgrounds, there were also gay soldiers). (10 mins)

**Third exercise)** A writing exercise – come up with a character who you think might experience conflict and prejudice from the soldiers fighting on their own side. The prejudice the character experiences can be related to race, religion, nationality, sexuality, gender – just about anything. Think about how your character might respond to the hostility they encounter. How does it shape them as a person? You should write a description of your character. Come up with the obvious things such as name, age, and where they come from. But also think about how they live their lives. Is the thing that makes them a minority something visible such as skin colour? Or is it something they can conceal in the way that Rainy hides her religion. Come up with an incident where that character encounters hostility or discovery and think about how they navigate this situation. Or possibly they are in a situation where they find more tolerance or understanding than they expected. (25 mins)

## Creative Writing Exercise

Now you have created your character, you can bring them to life in your own piece of creative writing. We want writing from you that propels us –the reader - into your character’s conflict. Their own individual experience of World War II. We are looking for pieces of between 500 and 700 words that transport us into that character’s experience. This can take any form: it can be a diary entry, a monologue, a letter, or it can read like the extract of a novel.

Michael Grant’s writing is particularly visceral and uses all the senses. He tells us what his characters can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell.

**This is Frangie describing her experience:** *‘The noise is catastrophic. Frangie’s ears scream in pain from the noise but more from the sucking away and rushing in of air following each explosion. Her mind is scattered, unable to form a thought. Just a series of flashes, segments of thought. Scared. Tears. Terror. Like some mythical thunder god is beating the earth with a hammer the size of a house, hammering on her, her personally. A flash of flying dirt. Flash of foxhole collapsing. An incongruous image of her room back home. A flash of Doon’s terrified face, looking almost green. She and Doon hold each other like frightened children in a thunderstorm, but this thunderstorm is unlike anything they’ve ever experienced. This thunderstorm has malice behind it. This thunder and lightning is bent on murder...’*

Can you apply a touch of Michael’s dark genius to bring your character and setting to life?

The Front Lines series may be fictionalised history but Michael’s attention to historical research is the blood in the veins of his writing. Therefore you will get bonus points for evidence of original research! There is so much out there and a good place to start is the [Imperial War Museum](#) and the [BBC History website](#). We’ve added some other online resources to get you started.

### Resources:

#### Resources relating to women’s roles in World War II:

National Women’s History Museum <https://www.nwhm.org/>

The National Archives: [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/womeninuniform/wwii\\_intro.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/womeninuniform/wwii_intro.htm)

BBC History Website

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain\\_wwtwo/women\\_at\\_war\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain_wwtwo/women_at_war_01.shtml)

VE Day 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary report on the role played by women in WWII

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-women-of-the-second-world-war>

Imperial War Museum <http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-vital-role-of-women-in-the-second-world-war>

#### Resources relating to sexuality in World War II:

Homosexuality in WWII <http://www.historyextra.com/feature/same-side-homosexuals-during-second-world-war>

'Out ranks' <http://glbthistory.org/OutranksWeb/WorldWarII/World%20War%20II.htm>

Stories of gay men in WWII

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/36/a2688636.shtml>

#### **Resources relating to religion in World War II:**

The experience of Muslim soldiers <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/02/muslim-soldiers-first-world-war>

The first Muslim soldier to receive the Victoria Cross <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/11199649/First-Muslim-to-be-awarded-Victoria-Cross-needs-recognition-say-former-Army-chiefs.html>

The World Holocaust Remembrance Centre

<http://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about?oldsite=true>

Life as a Sikh soldier in India

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/50/a3289250.shtml>

#### **Resources relating to race:**

The Asian Contribution to World War II

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/asians/worldwars/theworldwars.html>

The Indian soldiers of World War II <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-33317368>

African Americans in World War II <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/aframerwar/>

Experiences of a Black British Servicemen

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/96/a1921196.shtml>

#### **Videos:**

The Night Tulsa Burned (recounting events described by Frangie)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLwVxyD7A98>

Nazi Propaganda Film about the Jewish people <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2lazzwru7yE>

### About Michael Grant



Michael Grant has always been fast-paced. He's lived in almost 50 different homes in 14 US states, and moved in with his wife, Katherine Applegate, after knowing her less than 24 hours. Deciding they wanted a new career, Katherine and Michael began their foray into writing together over 30 years ago. Since then, Michael has now written around 150 books (with Katherine, as himself, under pseudonyms and as a ghostwriter), including the long withstanding Animorphs series, the international bestselling YA series *GONE* which has now sold around 800,000 copies, the groundbreaking *BZRK* trilogy and the *Messenger of Fear* duology. He lives with his family in San Francisco. You can find him here: <http://www.michaelgrantbooks.co.uk/> @MichaelGrantBks

**Also available:**

