

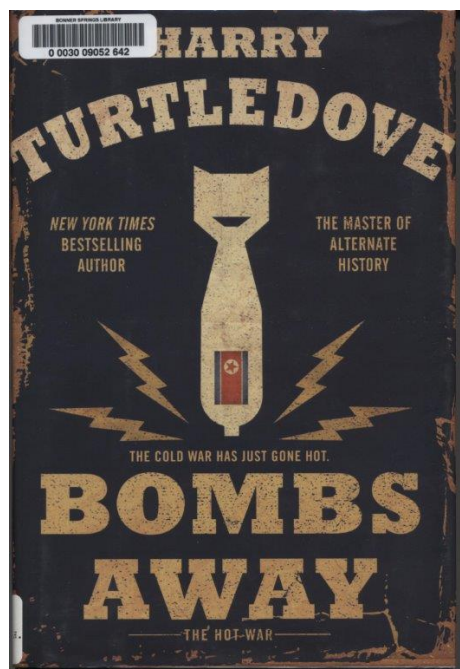
# ***Bombs Away: The Hot War***

**By Harry Turtledove**

**Reviewed by Rich Barbuto**

Readers of alternate history will recognize the name Harry Turtledove. Starting with *The Guns of the South* and working through multiple volume series of the Civil War, the Great War, WWII, and even alien invasion, Turtledove tells rousing good stories, most with a heavy military component. Thus, with his latest, *Bombs Away*, Turtledove investigates another “What if” scenario.

Now, professional historians often look down upon the buffs who ask ‘what if’ questions, especially in public forums. “What if Custer brought the gatling guns with him?” “What if Hitler got the A-bomb before the US did?” All interesting questions, but not history. Professional history has a tough enough time finding out what really happened and why, and what it might mean for us today and in the future. However, I’m one of those historians who likes to read “What if” stories, knowing full well that they are just stories.



Now, not all alternate history is “What if.” Historical situations aren’t ‘What if,’ if they start with totally fictitious worlds: for example, America in an alternate dimension. The typical “What if” starts with a single incident happening differently, and then narrates totally plausible events based upon the new turning point. For example, “What if the Union army scout had not found Lee’s orders wrapped around a bunch of cigars in 1862?” Thus, McClellan would have no idea what Lee was up to and perhaps would not have moved toward Sharpsburg. Lee might very well have created considerable damage to the Union cause rather than having to face the fight of his life along Antietam Creek. Would the Civil War have turned out differently? Anyway, you get my drift.

In *Bombs Away*, Turtledove starts with the Korean War. The Red Chinese are pouring into the Korean peninsula and driving UN forces before them. To halt the onslaught, MacArthur requests permission to use atomic weapons on a few Manchurian cities in order to stanch the flow of Chinese reinforcements and supplies. In a turn of events, Truman agrees. A few cities in northern

China are reduced to radioactive rubble. However, Stalin sees an opportunity to win western Europe and he answers with atomic attacks on Britain and France. Hordes of Russian tanks pour through the Fulda Gap on their way to the Rhine River. NATO forces manage to slow the attacks, but not stop them. Truman is no one to be trifled with and retaliates by striking cities in the Soviet Union. Soon, cities on America’s west coast are toast.

What does this offer the solo wargamer? Well, if you want to pit T-54s and JSIIs against Centurions and Pershings, here you go! NATO even allies itself with the German Emergency Militia, made up of thousands of Wehrmacht and SS veterans, who know a thing or two about fighting hordes of Russians and their not-too-willing allies. This is good reading and may inspire one to try out a scenario set in this alternate history world.