

AMERICA'S GALACTIC FOREIGN LEGION

BOOK 5

INSURGENCY



The sprawling spoof science-fiction saga continues as Colonel Joey R. Czerinski and his miscreant band of legionnaires try to quell a citizen uprising in planet New Colorado's New Gobi Desert and foil an insurgency plot to kill the spider Arthropodan Emperor and his lovely wife, Queen Rainbow.

Suspicion and mistrust based on misinformation threaten the stability of Legion command, while Czerinski deals with personal troubles arising from a tryst with a long-gone marine and a cameo appearance by a new and frightening megalomaniac.

Through it all, Czerinski keeps his cool, and the laughs keep coming.

AMERICA'S GALACTIC FOREIGN LEGION

Book 5: Insurgency

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~AUTHOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT~

I dedicate ***America's Galactic Foreign Legion – Book 5: Insurgency*** to the heroes and victims of the 911 terrorist attacks on America.

A special thanks to Penumbra Publishing editor Patricia Morrison for her patience and skill. I also thank my hot babe wife Barb for her support.

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BOOK 5

INSURGENT



by

Walter Knight



CHAPTER 1

My name is Colonel Joey R. Czerinski, hero of the United States Galactic Federation Foreign Legion, Butcher of New Colorado, and commander of garrison troops at the border crossing at New Gobi City, planet New Colorado, where I face both a growing human and spider alien insurgency. That Butcher of New Colorado label is unfair. I get a lot of bad press. It's not my fault. It is all just a big misunderstanding caused by the fog of war.

A new company of United States Galactic Federation Foreign Legion recruits arrived at New Gobi City. They were led by a newly minted second lieutenant named Laika Barker. Barker, recently graduated top in his class from Officer's Candidate School at the West Point Extension Campus here on New Colorado. The extension program was designed to commission homegrown officers for the Legion.

Barker stood at attention in front of my desk and saluted. His gold-plated teardrop sunglasses were an exact duplicate of mine. Due to manpower shortages, the Legion recruiters were recruiting and enlisting just about anyone, but this was ridiculous. Barker and I had a history.

"At ease," I ordered, returning the salute. "How in the hell did you ever get in the Legion, let alone manage a commission as an officer?"

"I filled out an application," replied Lieutenant Barker. "God bless America for giving me the opportunity to prove myself."

"Should I shoot him now or later?" asked

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Captain Lopez, my military intelligence officer.

"Now," I answered, drawing my pistol. "It is a severe security lapse for a known terrorist like Barker to be recruited into the Legion. At the very least, you will be locked up until your credentials can be checked."

"But Colonel Czerinski, I graduated top in my class in tactics," argued Barker, handing me his orders. "General Kalipetsis ordered that top priority be given to recruiting local talent so we natives have a chance to succeed in the Legion. Give the General a call if you don't believe me. I can be a valuable asset for you and the Legion. I am honored to serve under your command, sir! Please, let time heal old wounds."

"It seems like just yesterday you tried to kill me with a grenade. But it has been a long time," I admitted. "I see you have filled out a bit."

"And you have not aged at all," replied Lieutenant Barker. "Are the rumors true? Do microchips embedded in your bones really keep you young? Or have you found the Fountain of Youth?"

"I have no secret micro chips," I lied. "The secret to survival out here is to stay in the shade and avoid skin cancer. Don't ask stupid questions like that again."

"Colonel Czerinski doesn't share his secret with anyone," complained Captain Lopez. "Spreading rumors about illegal microchips can get you killed."

"Lots of things in the desert can get you killed," added Lieutenant Barker. "But I'm still alive after all this time in the New Gobi."

"A young man like you doesn't need the Fountain of Youth," I added. "Besides, you will be dead soon. I bet that the bookies in New Memphis have already established a line on when the New Gobi

kills you.”

“You can bet on a legionnaire’s death?” asked Lieutenant Barker. “Is that legal? What’s the line on you, sir?”

“No bookie would dare take that action,” I boasted.

Captain Lopez made an inquiry into the database. “The line is even money Lieutenant Barker will not make it one year. I’ll bet the odds will change once they find out that Czerinski is your commanding officer,” commented Captain Lopez. “I could get rich betting on you.”

“How would you bet?” asked Lieutenant Barker. “I don’t think I like this!”

“There will be no betting on the death or survival of legionnaires,” I said. “It would be a conflict of interest for us to wager anyway.”

“But we could influence the outcome,” argued Captain Lopez.

“We’ll talk about it later,” I said. “My main concern is undoing the mistake that allowed Barker in the Legion in the first place. Somewhere there is an ATM Recruiter that needs to be replaced.”

“The United States Constitution guarantees a legionnaire’s right to a new name, identity, and life,” insisted Lieutenant Barker. “You cannot violate my contract. It’s the law.”

“Maybe,” I conceded. “But if I find you to be disloyal, I will shoot you myself. That is the law, too.”

“I expect nothing less. I swore the same oath to serve my country, as did you and Captain Lopez. I will honor that oath as long as the Legion honors its side of it.”

I read through Barker’s orders. They were signed by General Kalipetsis. A special note added by the

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general stated that Lieutenant Barker had a lot of promise and potential, and that I was to teach the young man everything I know.

"I will assign you to the most remote post I can find. Dismissed!"

"It might be a mistake to place Barker where you can't keep an eye on him," warned Captain Lopez, after Barker left. "Always keep your enemies close."

"You're probably right," I replied. "For now I will assign him to a local company here in New Gobi. It will be your job to make sure he stays out of trouble and doesn't murder me in my sleep."



CHAPTER 2

I dozed off. Dreams can be a strange thing. Sometimes they seem so real. In my dream, I walked through Arlington National Cemetery, marveling at the immenseness of the place. I labored up the steps at the Tomb of the Unknowns to get a better view. Such history! Rows upon rows of well kept white tombstones. My escort let me wander alone after giving me directions to the legionnaire section. The tombstones in the modern area had high-tech memorials installed. At random, I placed my hand on a tombstone computer pad. The pad lit up.

“What do you want?” asked the tombstone. “I do not know you. How dare you disturb me!”

“Sorry,” said. “I didn’t mean any disrespect. I have never been here before. I was just testing the memorial technology.”

“Only technicians are allowed to conduct tests,” said the tombstone. “Who are you? Some snoopy tourist or pervert history student? I know your kind!”

“I am a Legion colonel,” I answered. “I came here to talk to an old friend.”

“I am old, but I am not your friend,” said the tombstone. “Get out! Leave me in peace. This place has been going down hill ever since they let you Legion riffraff in. Hoi polloi!”

I disconnected and wandered on, looking for a friendlier tombstone memorial for directions. I would have been angry, but I had not really been talking to a real soul. The grumpy tombstone was just a mind imprint memorial of a forgotten soldier. I would be

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more selective next time. I placed my hand on the tombstone of Lieutenant Valerie Smith, USMC, who died in combat during the American Chinese War.

"It has been many years since anyone has visited me," announced Lieutenant Smith. "Welcome to Arlington National Cemetery."

"Thank you," I said. "I hope I am not disturbing you. The last tombstone I touched got very upset."

"How could I be upset at a man with such a lovely voice?" said Valerie. "Press my button anytime. You are unescorted?"

"It's just me," I answered. "I am looking for someone."

"Aren't we all?" asked Valerie. "Perhaps I can help you. What is the name you seek?"

"Captain Manny Lopez, United States Galactic Federation Foreign Legion," I said. "This place is so big, a person could get lost."

"You are a legionnaire visiting a lost comrade?" asked Valerie. "Legionnaires here are rare. Please place your ID card on my pad."

I complied, letting the pad scan my bar code. "I should have brought the map my escort offered," I said. "But I was impatient."

"Not many legionnaires make it to Arlington," commented Lieutenant Smith. "It's because you fight so far away. Your Captain Lopez must be a mighty hero of the Legion to have gotten in. I heard humanity reached out far across the Galaxy. Have you lost many legionnaires, Colonel Czerinski?"

"Yes. Too many."

"I apologize for keeping you from your grieving. I was insensitive. Captain Lopez is located south of here. You will see a Legion flag flying nearby."

"I don't mind talking to you. It is amazing how

real you sound.”

“I *am* real,” cried Valerie. “You are so cruel.”

“I’m sorry. I have never talked to an imprint memorial before.”

“I was designed by humanity to comfort loved ones, assist in the healing process, and preserve history by providing a permanent memorial,” recited Valerie. “But I am more than just a mindless recording.”

“Sorry,” I repeated, about to disconnect and leave.

“Please, do not leave yet,” pleaded Valerie. “Sit. It has been a long time since I have had a visitor. You have been across the stars to Arthropoda and New Colorado? I have heard scant rumors of the Legion being sent out to protect our colonies. May I download a few images from your ID card?”

“Yes,” I replied, immediately regretting my decision. The privacy of an ID card is almost sacred, and is only shared with intimates. “You said you no longer get visits? Are you lonely?”

“Don’t be silly, sweetie,” said Valerie. “I am just a computer memorial program. If I want to talk to someone, I can always communicate with the others buried here.”

“Can you tell Captain Lopez I am here to visit him?” I asked.

“I already have,” said Valerie. “He knows you are coming. Captain Lopez says you owe him money.”

“Lopez is a funny guy,” I said. “Uh, he was a funny guy. I have to go now.”

“Joey R. Czerinski, can you do me a favor?” asked Valerie. “Please. Would you consider exchanging emails with me so I can keep up to date on current events on the Frontier? I hate having to

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rely on the rumor mill and censored news reports.”

“I suppose so. Do you need to see my ID card again?”

“No sweetie,” said Valerie. “I only needed your permission.”

“It’s getting late,” I said. “I really have to be going.”

“You can download my data, too,” suggested Valerie. “I was quite the looker back in the day. Think of me once in a while. I will surely think of you, too, my good-looking legionnaire.”

“I will,” I promised, disconnecting. *Jesus H. Christ*, I thought to myself as I walked south. *Cemeteries creep me out enough, without the talking dead everywhere. I’m glad I did not visit at night.*

I easily found Captain Lopez’s grave in the small Legion section. Not many legionnaires made it back to Old Earth. I placed my hand on his tombstone.

“Your computer chips allow you to live forever, and now I am dead!” complained Captain Lopez. “It’s just not fair.”

“I’m glad to talk to you, too.” I said. “I traveled across the galaxy to be here. How the hell are you?”

“I am dead!” screamed Captain Lopez from the grave. “And being dead really pisses me off.”

“Sorry,” I said. “It must be boring being dead.”

“It’s hell on my sex life, too,” said Captain Lopez. “That Lieutenant Valerie Smith is hot! I might ask her out tonight.”

“You can do that?” I asked. “Can you ... you know ... go all the way with her?”

“I’m dead,” said Captain Lopez. “But Microsoft is working on technology upgrades that might solve that problem, if you must snoop.”

“That’s probably more information than I need.”

“Actually, our virtual world can be quite active once I obtain access,” continued Captain Lopez. “The problem is too many of the dead are snobs and won’t allow access. Plus, there is a shortage of babes here at Arlington.”

“Did Lieutenant Smith give you access?” I asked.

“Not yet,” replied Captain Lopez. “But I’m certain after I ply her with a little wine tonight, she will give me all the access I want.”

“That sounds wrong on so many different levels,” I commented. I was feeling a twinge of jealousy. That seemed wrong, too. “Valerie wants me to exchange emails.”

“You would steal my girlfriend?” shouted Captain Lopez. “You bastard! *Bendaho!*”

“You don’t have access, so she is not your girlfriend,” I argued. “She has more class than to associate with the likes of you!”

“I will have access tonight,” boasted Captain Lopez. “You stay away from her!”

“Fine,” I said. “You can have her! She’s not my type, or real, or alive – whatever. Anyway, I hope you two have a happy life together.”

“That’s not funny,” said Captain Lopez. “Why are you here? You just came to torture me?”

“I am here to visit an old friend,” I said. “What more reason do I need?”

“Whatever,” replied Captain Lopez. “You don’t have any friends, new or old.”

“There might be some probate issues you need to sign off on.”

“I knew it! I took all my money with me to the grave, and I am keeping it! You are no friend of mine!”

“I *am* your friend,” I insisted, sounding sincere and truly hurt.

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"A person needs to be dead before you can call them your friend?" asked Captain Lopez. "You really are a morbid sort."

"I am leaving. You aren't real anyway. You are just an imprint memorial. The real Manny Lopez wouldn't talk to me like this."

"Not so fast. I died in battle. Did we win?"

"Of course we won," I answered. "The Legion always wins."

"Don't give me that public relations crap General Kalipetsis shovels out. The day I died, we kicked ass on the spider insurgency. Right?"

"Yes. We dealt the insurgency a mortal blow that day. We killed hundreds."

"If you are really my friend, then you will avenge me."

"We killed so many spiders that day," I replied. "How can I sort out which alien killed you?"

"I was murdered by Lieutenant Laika Barker," said Captain Lopez. "The coward shot me in the back. That traitorous *bendaho* will kill you, too."

"There was no evidence of that on the helmet cameras," I said.

"Check the recordings again," pleaded Captain Lopez. "Promise you will avenge me."

"I promise," I said, disconnecting.

I knew it! Once a terrorist, always a terrorist!

I abruptly awoke at my desk. *Barker's days are numbered*, I promised. *I only hope his death is slow and painful, in the grand tradition of the Legion.*

Then reality set in. *What? Was that just a dream? Or a vision? I can't execute Barker based on daydreams. I'll be watching Barker. Even the paranoid have enemies. I so need a vacation away from all my enemies.*