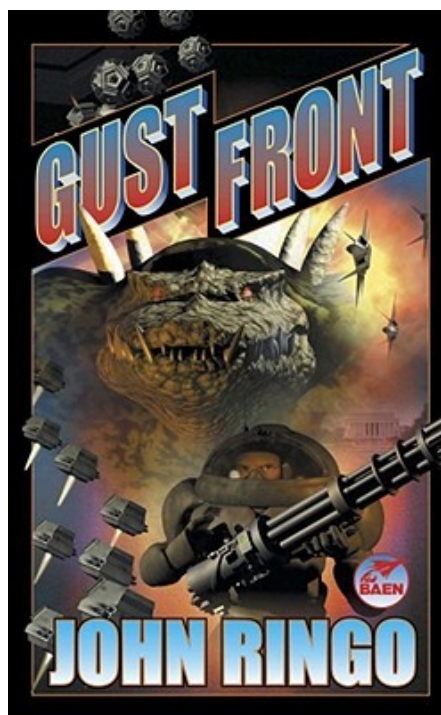




Gust Front

John Ringo

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Thanks to human valor and alien technology, the Posleen were fought to a standstill. But the invasion of Earth is just months away. Only these shell-shocked survivors can save the Earth from utter devastation.

Gust Front Details

Date : Published April 2nd 2002 by Baen (first published 2001)

ISBN : 9780743435253

Author : John Ringo

Format : Paperback 736 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, War, Military Fiction, Fiction



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From Reader Review Gust Front for online ebook

Stephen says

Crikey...talk about overcoming steep odds with **gusto**, **verve** and **quality** execution, Mr. Ringo somehow succeeded in making me “really like this” book despite its having some serious obstacles holding back its rating potential:

First: **Bean** books, without doubt, have the dumbest, most “**short bus**” looking covers of any publishing company I have ever read. Just picking one up makes you feel very **duuuuuuh**. They are so bad you have to treat them like porn and wrap them in brown shelf-paper to read them in public (*thank you e-books and my iPad for the nice camouflage*).

Second: **Military SF** is not generally my bag...baby... and so it has to be really interesting to keep my attention. I hate stories that are nothing more than an endless series of battle sequences fought by idiotic meatheads against evil idiotic meatheads.

Third: A **750 page** Military SF story...are you kidding me? This could have been more painful than a sandpaper loofer on a third degree burn.

However, despite the above, *Gust Front* succeeds very well and turns out to be among the best examples of military SF I have yet come across. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

BACKSTORY:

This is second installment of [??] in the *Posleen War* series (aka *The Legend of the Aldenata*). In short, a Galactic Federation of pleasant seeming, but ulterior motive-hiding, pacifist aliens recruit the human race to be their ~~cannon fodder~~ soldiers in a war against an aggressive race known as the Posleen.

In exchange for humanity’s help, the aliens provide us with advanced technology (rejuvenation serums, battle armor, artificial intelligence devices, etc.). Since the Posleen are on their way to Earth anyway, we have little choice but to accept the aliens help and agree to fight for them.

Rather than do a full repeat on both the Galactic Federation and the Posleen, I will now pimp out my previous review for book one which you can check out at ~~right now, go read it right now~~ your leisure:
<http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...>

PLOT SUMMARY:

Book 2 begins with the Posleen advancing towards Earth with an ETA of about 2 years. The nations of Earth have, for the most part, put away their nationalistic pissing contests and childish flag waving in favor of staying alive and are cooperating in a global mobilization and military preparedness campaign. Meanwhile, select divisions of battle-armored soldiers have begun engaging the Posleen in hopes of giving Earth more time to prepare for the inevitable invasion.

It is all very *300*-like and quite well done.

SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS BOOK:

In deciding whether this book is right for you (assuming you have gotten by the cover, the military SF sub-

genre and the 750 pages), here are a few elements to consider:

1. This book is laid out with a very “epic” feel to it and the scope of the story is vast. This is one of the elements that sold me on the book as I would much rather read about the planning and the background than the actual battles which I generally find chaotic and hard to follow. Thus, a big bonus for me was that almost two-thirds of the 750 pages are taken up preparing for the Posleen’s arrival on Earth. With the panic and breakdown of society that occurs as a result, and the hoarding of food and equipment, there is a certain **post-apocalyptic/survivalist** vibe to story which adds a nice element to the plot.

2. This book is gung ho. Really gung ho. As **GUNG HO** as gung ho gets. The military, especially the sergeants and grunts, are definitely the heroes, and there is a very eye for an eye tone to the story. Killing the bad guys is the mission and there shall be no further discussion about that. Peace will be achieved when the last Posleen is a smoking corpse over which we roast marshmallows and drink whiskey.

This is *Patton* meets *Rambo* meets *Inglourious Basterds* meets *Independence Day* meets *Aliens* meets some other movies that I can’t think of right now. For example, when asked how best to attack the Posleen, one character responds, “*nuke em till they glow and then shoot 'em in the dark.*”

You get the idea.

3. While not burdened (or enhanced depending on your viewpoint) with the heavy techno-detail of your typical Tom Clancy novel, there is a significant amount of time devoted to strategy and tactics to be employed against the invading aliens. As I mentioned in 1 above, this was some of the most interesting parts of the story. However, if you could care less about hearing the various responsibilities of the global fighting force and how they undertake to prepare for the Posleen, you may find this a bit of a plod.

4. There is significant time spent getting to know a fairly large group of characters (mostly soldiers) as they carry out their little piece of the puzzle. While I would not say deep, emotional character development is one of this story’s strong suits, we do get to enough to at least be able to cheer for them.

THOUGHTS:

This is the second volume is a large, epic story-line and I thought Ringo does a great job of keeping his story interesting while really doing little more than “stage setting” for future novels. The last 150-200 pages move extremely quickly as the opening salvos of the invasion begin and the battle scenes are very well done without becoming overly bogged down in minutia. I also thought the writing was effective and struck the right balance of macho and rah rah without falling into groan-inducing:

Mueller paused, his face hard as he remembered the results of following incompetent orders. The general whose bright idea it had been had never even commented, not even obliquely apologized. Just handed out the medals, tapped them on the shoulders and went on to his next star.

...Ringo peppered the narrative with a lot of slick phrases like “went on to his next star” and that was something that added to my enjoyment of the tale.

Overall, I was very pleasantly surprised.

The writing was engaging...

The enemies are ruthless but interesting...

The good guys are tough and intelligent...

The federation races are well-drawn and compelling in their hidden nefariousness...

The technology is fascinating and complements to plot...and
The scope of the overall storyline is epic and a lot of fun.

For someone who needs something extra to become engaged in military SF, I thought Ringo did exactly what he needed to do. He also won me over as a fan of this series and I look forward to continuing it the next time I am up for some well done, gung ho action.

4.0 stars. Highly Recommended.

Dan says

5/21/17 re-read. 3rd read. What an enjoyable series. I am so glad I decided to revisit it.

Lee Apte says

Must read the series

Michael Chatfield says

If you're thinking about reading this book, go and do it. You will not be disappointed! One of my favorite series of all time. true military science fiction at it's finest!

Vinh-Thang says

Read this book on one night in 2014. It is one of those macho science fiction books that can make you cry. Each character, however short their screen time is, has a lesson about courage and sacrifice to teach. I know I nearly cried. At the end of the book I knew the layout of Washington inside out and almost felt 'Merican.

Bonus for one short passage about a (believable) Vietnamese character.

Dr. Jim says

This is the second book in the Posleen War. I do not like to write spoiler reviews, so I will say nothing more than the cover blurb says. This is a war facing an intergalactic bully. Earth finds out that for centuries, many intergalactic societies have existed in the neighborhood. They have been at peace for so long that war is anathema to them.

Earth is on the path of the Posleen destruction armies of evil. So some of the other galactics enlisted military forces to fight off planet (book 1). The Posleen come to Earth in book 2.

There are 12 books in the series. If book 2 is any indication, it will be like telling the story of World War II is some detail - thus needing several volumes.

What I truly like about this series so far is that the tech is not vastly beyond the tech available today. The galactics have had no use for war, so they have not produced magical war machines. The Posleen have, but they are considered "evil" and even call themselves "devils."

I have read only the first two books of the series. But so far it has been great military Sci-Fi. One review I read said there was too much foul language. Indeed, there is a lot of foul language, but I doubt it is more than a military would use during a furious battle. I am an ordained pastor and I take such things as part of reality.

Regina says

Overall, I enjoyed this "Earth prepares for and then is invaded by aliens" book, the second in the 'Posleen' series. It is another war story, basically, though has more that is Earth-based this time round than the first book. It's a bit of harmless escapism for me, so I don't expect too much from it. I'm already reading the third book, so I enjoyed this one enough to move on.

Kathy says

This series (this is book 2) always leaves me confused. While I'm reading I have, both volumes, decided that I will not read the next one in the series. But by the end, I kind of want to know how those scrappy Earthlings are going to pull it off.

Waaayyyy too much military detail for me, but I realize that's what the book is largely about. He gives just enough characterization that I actually want to know more of some of the characters' backgrounds, etc. But we don't get it here.

I still need to decide whether I'm continuing. But I do know that some military fiction fans would enjoy all the jargon and detail (I prefer mine with more characterization like Honor Harrington, etc.) I'm sure glad I have been to Washington, DC, and nearby Virginia because it really helped when visualizing the action.

Oh, and I found the author's afterword interesting. I especially found his comments about the WWII generation v. today's generation(s) and their readiness for pulling together. And his tribute to Kipling's poems was fitting; I enjoyed the bits he added throughout the novel.

I downloaded the novel from the Baen Free Library.

Aaron Anderson says

Book 2-4 were roughly 3.5 stars. I'm going to give them 4 just because I gave the first book 3 stars and they were slightly better. I still like all Ringo's later work/series better.

Book 5 was just bizarre, but it was co-authored, and the way it read it seemed like Ringo at most glanced at it instead of actually helped write it. I'll talk more about that on book 5's review.

Jim says

This book is a mess. Everything that made the first book a good read is pushed to the side in this one. In an apparent attempt to show us a global impact of the events unfolding we jump to seemingly random characters. In one section we jumped to two different countries in less than two pages and the characters mentioned were never heard from again.

The preparation for the defense of Richmond is written in excruciating detail. I've never been there, and may never go there. So I really don't care to know which side streets are the ones that were blocked off. I certainly don't need entire chapters devoted to telling me this stuff.

This book reads like an outline that was then filled in randomly as the author had time (and he ran out of time).

M Hamed says

apparently the US has awesome weapons from the aliens that they don't bother giving to anyone because every body else is not an American citizens ,and no body have their shit together .

what else

and don't get me started about the hyper intelligent 8 your old who can read body language from behind walls and execute people in cold blood and curse like a redneck sailor

what else ,what else

and the Chinese are bad at war (little did he know ,or did he!!!)

and the Iranian are idiotic people who had no idea that there is an invasion for the last 5 fucking years and they believe it's all American devilish plot WTF ,and they only move there ass when

wait foouooooooooooooor it

the soldier who is warning them that the aliens are coming
invoke (and yes he did use that word) a mongol king from like 700 years ago name

do you see my beloved fellow Americans how dumb all of our enemies are

what else ,what else ,what else

i can understand why Led Zeppelin \Immigrant Song can motivate soldiers in fights with the vikings and stuff

but what i don't get is why Rolling Stones\Paint It Black ,a song about a depressed person who wants to paint things black would also be used for that

any who ,the book isn't worth the effort

Craig says

This a well-written combat book. The problem is that you could easily take out the alien enemy and substitute Germans or Japanese or Russians. The action scenes are good, but there's not enough science in the science fiction. A few mobile armor suits, some energy weapons. Good combat novel, not so much good science fiction.

Neil says

[So the ships/vessels left behind on Diess are discussed in this book (173-174). The Darhel apparently tell the Fleet the Fleet is responsible for getting rid of the military vehicles/vessels on Diess. The AIDs should have been able to assist the humans in flying (some of) the vessels back to Earth to be used for Earth's defense. The vessels had plenty of weaponry that could have been used against the alien invaders when the waves started their approach. The

Nicholas J. Lazos says

Excellent military sci fi

The best part of this story is the character development. In the end you enjoy the story of the individual characters and want to find out what happens to hem. Character is the sign of a good author.

Neda Stojkovic says

I'm not even ten percent into the book, but I'm already at the eye roll stage. Seriously, this book is quite disgusting with saccharine american supremacy bull. Don't know if I'll finish it at this moment.

edit 1: oh my god, this was first published in 2001. I pegged it for 70s or 80s with all racist and misogynistic slurs and comments filled with casual cruelty.

edit 2: I just can't.

Mike (the Paladin) says

New weapons...the war goes on...will we triumph? Will we even survive...will the quieter interludes hold my attention????

Nathaniel says

Most of what you might want to know about this book was covered in my review of the first book in the series: *A Hymn Before Battle*.

Short version: if you would like 30 hours of non-stop combat descriptions, than this book is for you. If you'd like, well, anything else then maybe not so much.

The good? Well, I do like combat scenes, for one. And there are some pretty poignant scenes as well. I may or may not have gotten misty-eyed once or twice as the defenders rallied for a last-ditch defense of the Washington Monument from the alien invaders.

The bad? It's a very, very one-note symphony. The protagonist gives an inspirational speech to some trainees at one point. The heart of the speech is: "We have to kill, and kill, and kill, until there are no more Posleen." That's pretty much the heart of the book, right there. (Posleen are the bad guy aliens.)

This whole series is about the warrior ethos, and *that's all*. It turns military competence into something like a fetish, exemplified by meticulously plotted battle schemes where everything goes *just so*. This is kind of ironic, given the oft-repeated observation by the characters that no plan survives contact with the enemy. In John Ringo books, that only means the *first* plan falls through, but then the hero comes up with a new plan and--no matter how intricate or fragile--it works out *perfectly*.

Compared to books like, say, those by Marko Kloos, there just isn't enough going on outside the battles. None of the characters have any life, ambitions, or tastes outside of military concerns. There is a tiny, insubstantial thread of a political plot, but it gets like, 3-4 scenes in a book that is 30 hours long (audiobook version). And--other than a kind of reveling in the warrior ethos--there's just no room for any kind of philosophical consideration at all.

This is combat book, the end.

Think John Wick... but with less flare.

PCress says

Intergalactic intrigue is added to the formula from the last book and it works very well.

Mr. Matt says

After an interlude of several years, the crisis is finally here, on Earth. The Polseen are invading Earth. Millions of carnivorous, voracious aliens land on Earth to capture human cities and towns, use our resources and, oh yeah, eat all the people. Fortunately, the combined armies of the world given access to futuristic technologies and weapons are here to stop them! And foremost among those armies is none other than the US Army.

Gust Front focuses on the invasion of North America by the Polseen - specifically the Richmond to DC area. The first half is the build up to the invasion and the second half is the invasion itself. Throughout the whole

thing, I felt like someone was slapping me on the back saying "'Merica! Fuck yeah!" I have nothing but respect for the US military, but this whole book felt as if it was written by John Jingo - not John Ringo. At every turn, the Americans were better fighters, thinkers and etc. It was just a bit much.

The book itself was just too much - too long, too much gun love, too many cardboard characters, and so on. The whole point of a book like this, I think, is to revel in the actual business of fighting aliens - not dwelling on Mike's last tropical vacation to the Florida Keys with his wife and daughter. Too much time was burned, I think, on this nonsense rather than just opening a can of whoop-ass on the Polseen.

Two stars out of five. The combat is fun, but not fun enough to really overcome the other problems with the book.

Brad says

Rating based on military SF and combat.

Following the adrenaline rush of *A Hymn Before Battle*, I was hoping for more sustained intense SF combat scenarios. After his previous success, Ringo seems to have gotten too ambitious and maybe a little too serious. *Gust Front* has a prolonged engagement but the scale is much larger than the previous book. The larger scale brings a bigger feel to *Gust Front* providing multiple perspectives but Ringo's choice of narrative style lacks the focus I was expecting from *A Hymn*. Additionally the first 200 pages or so of "build up" does nothing to provide a real background of what takes place later in the book and is terrible. It's a missed opportunity to give the later characters more depth and misses out on the goofy fun we had in the last book. The later combat scenes are often very good but constantly challenged by a disjointed perspective. There is a true climax that delivers some gratuitous violence and wraps the book up nicely. The main story arc of this "trilogy" gets moved along but the only reason to read this is to enjoy the combat scenes.

Gust Front kicks off with plenty of male adolescent fixations with a generous amount of thrilling descriptions of tobacco use and crushing handshakes. The writing is really cheesy again but, unlike *A Hymn*, the story isn't advancing. Among other wasted words, there was way too much time and emphasis on the trip to FL. At the time I read the first 200 pages, I assumed Ringo was providing some background info for what was going to take place later in the book or even the sequels. But having finished this and the next two books I now know that my suffering was utterly worthless. It isn't background info at all. Just a poor attempt to give the feeling of a lead in to a large military engagement. Back to back boring and unneeded chapters full of crap no one cares about. Ringo doesn't come close to delivering the caliber of writing that one reads just for the enjoyment of the quality. He needed to quit trying to be a well rounded author and stick to what he does well: cheesy characters and combat.

Once into a combat scene the action is great and the reading becomes engaging. Unfortunately there is a lot of jumping around to other perspectives during combat. When an author does this well it can bring added depth to a story or action sequence but Ringo fumbles it most of the time. Locations are described in detail but without reference to other locations. Apparently readers are expected to have intimate knowledge of back roads, creeks, and fields if they are going to know where things are happening. The maps provided in the back are absolutely useless in helping to figure things out. As the story moves along, the random jumps increase in frequency, suddenly landing on an unknown character in an unknown location and Ringo writes like we're supposed to know them already. Where are these different characters in relation to other characters and the Posleen? The place and time headings at the beginning of chapters should be helpful but there are multiple changes to minor characters in positions that are unclear to each other. Out of the blue there are even cut scenes to the Middle East and Asia. Ringo fails in his attempt to coherently relate action occurring at

multiple fronts. The result is recurring disorientation and characters I don't care about. And unfortunately I could already know these characters if Ringo had felt it was more important to tell me about them instead of what will happen to the dolphins at Sea World in the event of an alien invasion during the wasted, first 200 pages of this book.

Despite the disjointed narrative, the combat scenes and the stories around recurring characters are good when the writing sticks with them for a decent length of time. Obviously Ringo is an amateur author whose weakness shows as he writes a more complex novel than his first. *A Hymn Before Battle* was written without serious aspirations of publishing. Ringo wrote the kind of book that he wanted to read himself. He approached *Gust Front* like he was an accomplished author. I wish he would have stuck to his strengths and not over extended himself. Hopefully he learns from his mistakes and cleans up his style in the next book, *When the Devil Dances*.
