

# tawanifoundation

distinction through transformation

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## **Matterhorn: A Novel of the Vietnam War Wins 2011 Colby Award**

CHICAGO (February 10, 2011) – As a young man, Karl Marlantes was highly decorated for his service in Vietnam. More than three decades later, his novel inspired by those experiences, *Matterhorn* (Atlantic Monthly Press), has received the 2011 William E. Colby Award.

Named for the late Ambassador and former CIA Director William E. Colby, the Colby Award recognizes a first work of fiction or non-fiction that has made a significant contribution to the public's understanding of intelligence operations, military history, or international affairs. The \$5,000 award will be presented by Tawani Foundation in association with the Pritzker Military Library on October 22, 2011 at Chicago's Palmer House Hotel at the Library's 2011 Liberty Gala ([pritzkermilitarylibrary.org](http://pritzkermilitarylibrary.org)). The annual Pritzker Military Library Literature Award for Lifetime Achievement in Military Writing will also be presented at the Liberty Gala, with a live webcast announcement of this year's recipient on June 21, 2011.

*Matterhorn* draws from Marlantes' service as an officer in the Marine Corps. The year is 1969, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Waino Mellas has been assigned to lead a rifle platoon of forty Marines as their company builds a fire support base in the mountains near the border of Laos. His platoon is full of young men who'd been at war for months and some for several years; Mellas, fresh out of college, is overwhelmed by his responsibilities as a leader and the dense jungle landscape that surrounds them.

As casualties mount, Mellas and his platoon fight through a series of conflicting missions – they are ordered to abandon their newly-built base, then ordered to take it back from the North Vietnamese Army, and then ordered to abandon it again. While their commanding officers fight the war from a distance, little aware of how their decisions affect men on the ground, Mellas and his platoon endure sweltering heat, monsoon rains, racial tension, and a growing sense of futility; they struggle to understand and trust each other, and they forge powerful bonds that will overcome fear, doubt, and loss.

"*Matterhorn* is a powerful first work that defines the tragic cost of the Vietnam War in human terms," said Colby co-founder and *New York Times* best-selling author W.E.B. Griffin. "Marlantes' breakneck writing style is both passionate and haunting, thrusting the reader into alternating moments of chaos and courage reflecting the fragility of our Marines on the ground – and their leadership – in combat."

Karl Marlantes received the Navy Cross, the Bronze Star, two Navy Commendation Medals for valor, two Purple Hearts, and ten air medals for his service in Vietnam. A graduate of Yale and a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, he lives in rural Washington.

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### **ABOUT THE [PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY](#)**

Since opening in 2003, the Pritzker Military Library has produced over 300 programs including events with award-winning authors, interviews with Medal of Honor recipients, and Emmy-nominated panel discussions on military issues. All programs are presented in front of a live audience, webcast live on the Internet, and recorded for later broadcast on WYCC-TV/Channel 20, a PBS affiliate. Programs are also available for download as audio podcasts.

Winner of the 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the Pritzker Military Library features a collection of books and films on subjects covering the full spectrum of American military history, along with military-themed posters, photographs, medals, uniforms, and other artifacts from private donors and the collection of the Library's founder, COL (IL) J.N. Pritzker, IL ARNG (Retired).

To view Karl Marlantes' 2010 appearance at the Pritzker Military Library on *Matterhorn*, visit: [www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org/events/2010/09-23-karl-marlantes.jsp](http://www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org/events/2010/09-23-karl-marlantes.jsp)

### **ABOUT [TAWANI FOUNDATION](#)**

Founded by COL (IL) J. N. Pritzker, IL ARNG (Retired), Tawani Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) grant-making organization whose mission is: to enhance the awareness and understanding of the importance of the Citizen Soldier; to preserve unique sites of significance to American and military history; to foster health and wellness projects for improved quality of life; and to honor the service of military personnel, past, present and future, through an awards program that includes the JROTC/ROTC Award for Military Excellence, the William E. Colby Award and the Pritzker Military Library Literature Award for Lifetime Achievement in Military Writing.

### **ABOUT THE [WILLIAM E. COLBY AWARD](#)**

The award has been presented by the Tawani Foundation since 2009, and was originated at Norwich University in 1999. Ambassador Colby authored two important books, *Lost Victory: A Firsthand Account of America's Involvement in Vietnam* and *Honorable Men - My Life in the CIA*. He was a decorated World War II veteran who served with the OSS in World War II and later with the CIA. From 1951–1962, Colby served with the American Embassies in Stockholm, Rome, and Saigon. He was Ambassador and Deputy to the Commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam from 1968 to 1971. Colby served as Director of the CIA from 1973-76. In honor of his commitment to Norwich University and the symposium, the program was named [The William E. Colby Military Writers' Symposium](#) in 1997. The 2011 Symposium will take place March 30 – 31, 2011.

Previous recipients of the Colby Award include James Bradley, Nathaniel Fick, Colonel Jack Jacobs (Ret.), Dexter Filkins, Marcus Luttrell, and John Glusman, among others.