

## **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](#)). 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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