

EAST ALTON – East Alton native Michael Ringering is at it again with a new novel, "A Debt of War," inspired in many ways by, "The Best Years of Our Lives," one of his favorite movies.

Always intrigued by stories of World War II, Ringering said he has had a lifelong interest in the life of medics in the war, because he believes they were some of the most courageous and least celebrated of all service members.

ADVERTISEMENT
Article continues below this ad

Protect your digital masterpiece.

Keep hackers away with the most advanced WordPress security.

LEARN MORE

WPengine GLOBAL EDGE SECURITY



"A Debt of War" is a work of historical fiction involving World War II that revolves around a dying wish and a mysterious manuscript that bring to light a heart-rending tale of one soldier's undying commitment to pay a debt owed. At his mother's funeral, Paul Bacca, an accomplished publisher, is approached by a mysterious decorated military veteran who claims to have been sent by Paul's mother, as her final request, to deliver an unpublished manuscript of the only novel written by an acclaimed, yet obscure poet. Paul subsequently discovers a shocking family secret that forever changes his life and those of his siblings. The propulsive, gut-wrenching story details an inconceivable friendship and a tale of lives forever entwined in a debt owed between enemies.

Ringering, a 1984 graduate of East Alton-Wood River High School, took creative writing classes in college at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, earned a bachelor's degree in business administration, and for most of his career, has worked in the marketing industry.

After gaining marketing experience on his college campus, he interned in the marketing department for the St. Louis Cardinals. In 1989, he began working in public relations for the Atlanta Braves, and later, with the Cincinnati Reds media department, where he helped develop The Cincinnati Reds Community Fund.

Eventually, his career took a turn toward healthcare marketing in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and a few years ago, he moved back to the local area, where he currently works as a surgical specialty administrator on the Alton Memorial Hospital campus.

Though he had always been a writer at heart, his marketing career kept him busy, and his dream of producing a novel was put on hold until a decade ago, when he released his first book, "Six Bits."

"A Debt of War" has actually been in the works since 2011, not long after "Six Bits" was released.

"It's sometimes tough keeping a consistent writing schedule while working full time and making room for life's many surprises, but I've enjoyed the journey and really like how the story turned out," Ringering said.

The research was time consuming, adding to the time it took to complete, because his goal was for his writing to be very detailed and as accurate as possible.

"I think that can really draw in readers and make them a part of the book, rather than spectators," he said.

Because it is a work of historical fiction, he wanted to make sure the scenes in which his characters were placed coincided with historical fact as it related to the end days of the war. And since one of the main characters in the story is an infantryman in the German Wehrmacht, he had a lot of research to do on that side of the war, as well.

"That's not to say I didn't take a few creative liberties, of course, because it's also a book of fiction," Ringering added. "But I tried to stay as accurate and credible as possible, as I had no intention of making light of the times or the sacrifices made by many."

Ringering hopes readers will come away with the realization that you cannot judge a book by its cover, or a man by his country or the uniform he wears.

After working on the book for several years, just when the end was in sight, COVID hit, bringing a host of challenges that prolonged the process even further.

"I committed to seeking traditional representation by securing a literary agent. I felt that's a process every author needs to go through once," he said. "It's a ton of research, a ton of rejection, but instills commitment, determination and organization."

As COVID made its way across the U.S., a lot of agents closed shop, others seemed to drop off the radar, and many didn't respond.

"I figured I could not have picked a worse time to try and sell an idea, but it all worked out in the end," Ringering said.

The book was picked up by Evolved Publishing, and Ringering is very happy with the relationship. They not only picked up "A Debt of War," but are planning to re-release his first novel, "Six Bits" in December, several of his short stories, and his next novel, which will be loosely based on a childhood memory (about a business in Wood River, back in the day) that he's planning to develop into a three-book series. The basic premise is a returning World War II vet who comes home to find his wife has died, and he heads off on a journey to fulfill a promise made to her. He hopes to complete the first one in the series in the next year or two.

"A Debt of War," will be released in eBook format, Monday, Sept. 13, with the paperback version available Monday, Sept. 27. To pre-order, visit www.evolvedpub.com/books/a-debt-of-war. For more information, visit www.michaelringering.com.