

# Nugget editor launches Kickstarter campaign for book

By Craig Rullman  
Correspondent

*Nugget Newspaper* editor Jim Cornelius was born and raised in the suburbs of L.A., but as a child his family had a cabin in the Angeles National Forest, where he roamed the woods with a pellet gun and stories of Apache warriors, Daniel Boone, and Davy Crockett informing his imagination.

“The first time I ever saw a movie in a theater was when my brother took me to see *Jeremiah Johnson*,” Jim says, and from those experiences his fascination with the frontier, and the men and women who occupied it, was born.

The result of that fascination and lifelong study is the book “*Warriors of the Wildlands: True Tales of the Frontier Partisans*,” 12 fascinating biographies of men who lived and operated on the world’s wild and dangerous frontiers, stretching from the 1770s to World War I. From Simon Kenton and Blue Jacket on the Ohio frontier, to Al Sieber and Pancho Villa on the borderlands, to legends of the African experience such as Deneys Reitz, a Boer commando, the book

is an in-depth, gripping, and historically valuable look into the lives of some of those who lived on the edge of civilization, and in many ways helped shape the future.

A Kickstarter crowd-funding campaign launches July 13, to help get the book into print. To support the campaign visit [www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com) and search “Jim Cornelius” or visit [www.frontierpartisans.com](http://www.frontierpartisans.com) for a link.

“Most of the book’s subjects were not professionals,” Cornelius says. “They were highly skilled guys who applied fieldcraft and hunting skills in warfare from the Canadian prairies to Mexico to Africa. When people think of the frontier they often think of North America, but the phenomenon was similar all around the globe.”

Cornelius explains that he chose to refer to his subjects as “partisans” because it “evokes small, irregular bands of men fighting in woods, mountains and deserts. The men I profile were warriors — but not soldiers. Simon Kenton formed his own, unsanctioned Ranger band. Jack Hays’ and Ben McCulloch’s Texas Rangers were volunteers ... Al Sieber

of Apache Wars fame was a professional scout — but always as a civilian contractor. Frederick Russell Burnham may have been ‘the greatest scout America ever

“ I’ve lived with these stories my whole life. I love these guys. Even the bad ones. — Jim Cornelius

produced,’ but his day job was prospecting.”

The politics of the frontier were never simple, then or now, and Cornelius says studying and writing about the people involved is “not as simple as good guys vs. bad guys. You can’t separate the heroism, triumph, and tragedy that is all tangled up in the stories of the frontiers.” Jim’s book is notable for his commitment to write “history that deals with the frontier honestly.”

Of those he chose to profile, Jim says, “Some of these guys were probably not so lovely as individuals. Pancho Villa is a great example, but

what interests me the most is that they came out of a way of life that created resilience and courage and they all have those qualities, whether they were good people or bad people.”

Cornelius experimented with historical fiction, but “as much as I love good historical fiction, I’ve never felt comfortable writing it. As soon as I start tweaking the history to fit the story, it stops working for me.”

Cornelius’ fascination with frontier history also led to the development of his blog, [FrontierPartisans.com](http://FrontierPartisans.com), which enjoys international readership and a lively conversation among fans of the frontier. With over 600 posts and 4,000 comments, the website helped lay the foundation for



PHOTO BY LYNN WOODWARD

Jim Cornelius has penned a book of biographies.

the book, which is important reading for those who sustain an interest in the lessons and lives that populated the world’s remote borderlands.

Says Jim, “I’ve lived with these stories my whole life. I love these guys. Even the bad ones.”

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