

Book of frontier biographies hits shelves

By Craig Rullman
Correspondent

“Warriors of the Wildlands, True Tales of the Frontier Partisans,” the first book by *The Nugget’s* editor Jim Cornelius, has recently been published and is now available.

Warriors of the Wildlands is a collection of 12 fascinating and engaging biographies, focusing on an eclectic set of individuals who operated on the world’s wild and dangerous frontiers. The book covers a broad spectrum in time, from the 1770s through World War I, exploring subjects such as Simon Kenton and Blue Jacket on the early Ohio frontier, to Al Sieber and Pancho Villa on the Mexican borderlands.

The book also explores the lives and legends of the African frontier experience, such as Deneys Reitz, a Boer commando, and Frederick Selous, a hunter and soldier in the African wilds. 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.

One of the great draws of the book is in its exploration of lesser-known, but historically important, figures.

“Most of the book’s subjects were not professionals,” Jim told *The Nugget* in a recent interview. “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 said that although the book is the result of years of research and study into the frontier experience, “These are compelling stories that you don’t have to be a history buff to enjoy.

“Warriors of the Wildlands has been extremely well received, and sales are ‘brisk.’ I appreciate people’s interest,” Cornelius said, “One of the most gratifying things is that I really care about this stuff — which is not so mainstream anymore — but other people still care about this, too, and want to know more about it.”

By concerning itself with frontier life, Warriors of the Wildlands also, perhaps inevitably, fearlessly faces some of the more hot-button issues of our time. Cornelius told *The Nugget*, “Race is an inevitable aspect to all of these stories. But it’s never been simple, it’s never been as straightforward” as some suggest.

Jim’s choice to pursue an independent publication — a strategy many writers are pursuing in a volatile and increasingly difficult-to-crack publishing industry, was deliberate.

“Publishing is weird, not

anything like it used to be,” he said. “It is much like the music industry now. I have not met a writer who is happy with the relationship with their publisher.

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“People have been really blown away by the look and feel of the book — which is all Lynn Woodward,” Cornelius said. “For all intents and purposes she is a co-creator of this book. I couldn’t be any happier with the process of publishing this book independently.”

Cornelius said that while publishing independently creates additional work for the author, the reward is retaining more control over the final product. He noted that building an audience on his blog, *FrontierPartisans.com* — which enjoys a wildly eclectic and international audience — in the preceding three or four years certainly helped



PHOTO BY TERESA MAHNKEN

“Warriors of the Wildlands” is now available in Sisters.

in launching Warriors of the Wildlands so successfully.

Cornelius is currently at work on a second book, which will focus on the “people who were caught between cultures in the expansion of Euro-America,” and will include, like the first book, looks at native cultures from the frontiers of both North

America and Africa. Jim has his eyes set on a 2018 release of his second title.

Warriors of the Wildlands, True Tales of the Frontier Partisans, is available locally at Paulina Springs Bookstore in Sisters, and at Pegasus Books in Bend. Or you can contact Jim directly at 541-390-6973.

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