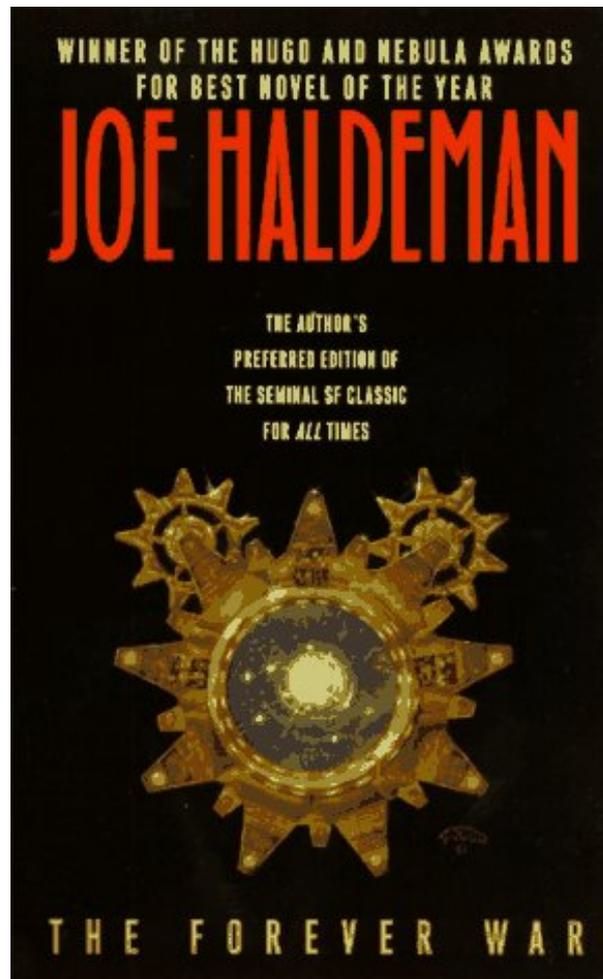


# THE FOREVER WAR BY JOE HALDEMAN



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Private William Mandella is a hero in spite of himself -- a reluctant conscript drafted into an elite military unit, and propelled through space and time to fight in a distant thousand-year conflict. He never wanted to go to war, but the leaders on Earth have drawn a line in the interstellar sand -- despite the fact that their fierce alien enemy is unknowable, unconquerable, and very far away. So Mandella will perform his duties without rancor and even rise up through the military's ranks . . . if he survives. But the true test of his mettle will come when he returns to Earth. Because of the time dilation caused by space travel the loyal soldier is aging months, while his home planet is aging centuries -- and the difference will prove the saying: you never can go home. . .

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- Great product!

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## Most helpful customer reviews

178 of 194 people found the following review helpful.

Space opera with a humanistic heart. Superb!

By Claude Avary

Haldeman originally wrote this novel as an allegory of the Vietnam war, told through the eyes of a reluctant soldier caught up in a battle that never seemed to end, while the world he left behind changed drastically. However, it applies to all wars, in any time, and the book has never lost its timeliness.

Main character William Mandella serves in the war against the mysterious Taurans, which, because of time dilation during his spaceship travels, lasts for seven hundred years while Mandella ages only ten. Earth alters, lifestyles completely change, and Mandella wonders the purpose of the senseless warfare.

Although specifically allegorical, Haldeman's novel is powerful enough to apply to all combat. In a way, this could be seen as the opposite to Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, with reluctant soldiers caught in purposeless combat, and a hero who is neither more skilled or heroic than any other soldier around him—he has merely lasted longer than the others. The book has many great touching moments in between the furious combat scenes (a few of which are confusing), such as Mandella's separation from his love Marygay Potter, and a sad return to an Earth that has aged beyond their understanding.

A deserving classic of many awards, and I'm sure it will never age as long as warfare is still with us.

536 of 564 people found the following review helpful.

This is not the version you're looking for.

By Amazon Customer

*The Forever War* is one of my favorite books. I've read it at least ten times over the years. However, what you're getting here is NOT the version you probably remember. It's an unedited version. Now, I'm sure you're thinking "Great! I LOVE the book, so more of it can only be a good thing. Right?"

Wrong.

It's Haldeman's terse prose and direct writing style that make *The Forever War* a great novel. Without the discipline and restraint that previous editors imposed upon his work, Haldeman rambles on like your great-grandpa telling you about life during the Great Depression. There are at least two entire chapters devoted to describing how Earth's economy is now based on calories instead of dollars. And by the end of those two chapters, Haldeman himself seems to conclude that it's dumb, impractical idea that's not very interesting in the first place.

There are reasons that the original cuts were made. What was once tense, quotable, action-packed and provocative is now a lumbering beast, sagged down by tons of extraneous ramblings that don't add to the story even a little.

I certainly don't expect you to believe me. And in fact, I suppose some of you might even like the extra material, bland and superfluous as it is. But for me, this version is a rough draft. I would much prefer to have a copy of the edited version. Editing is NOT a dirty word— it's part of the craft of writing.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Okay- if you like depressing sci-fi

By Hope

I'll be honest- I grew up on 90's and 00's Sci-fi shows like Andromeda, Stargate SG1, various Star Treks, and the like, so my sci-fi preference is adventures through space with hope and humor.

This book, therefore, was most decidedly NOT my cup of tea. The most prominent reason this is the case is that it combines my two least-favorite categories of science fiction: the dystopian where the future sucks and there is no hope in sight, and the political allegory that is about as subtle as a sledgehammer to the face.

If I studied the book as it was written- as Vietnam War literature or even War literature in general- I can see its importance to history, politics, and literature. (This part I could pick up on because I just studied the Vietnam War, so I could see where the author was coming from). So, as such, it probably deserves all the stars. BUT as I prefer to read fiction as escapism, I did not like feeling depressed all the way through, so I'm rating it on my personal tastes.

On the bright side, there was a glimmer of hope at the end. Yay. 2 stars for you.

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