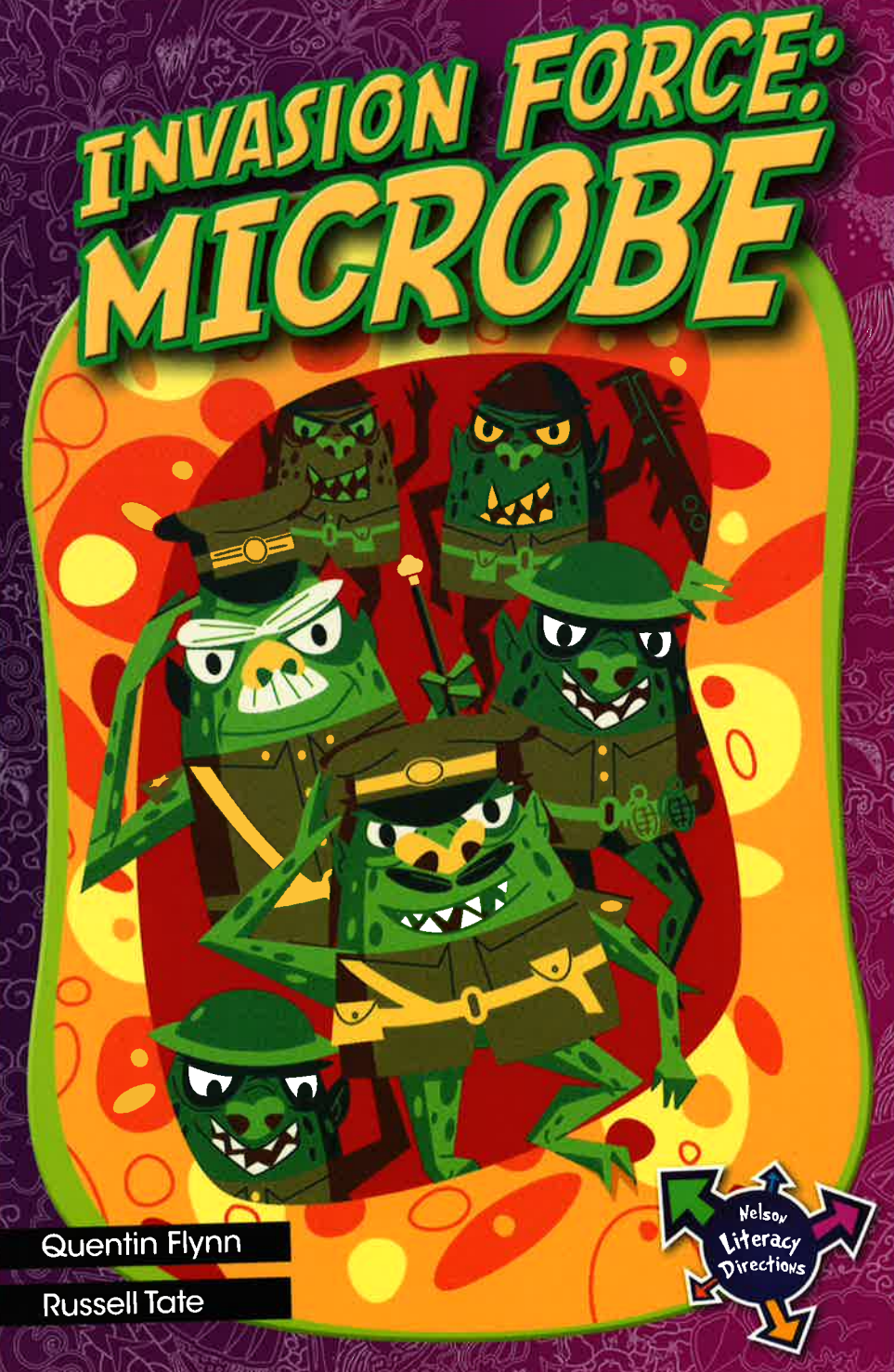
Invasion Force: Microbe



Quentin Flynn

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Nelson Literacy Directions

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Invasion Force: Microbe

Written by Quentin Flynn
Illustrated by Russell Tate

Contents

1	Emergency Evacuation	4
2	Be Prepared	11
3	Invasion Underway	18
4	Under Attack	24
5	A Dreaded Enemy	31
6	Heavy Casualties	38
7	Never Surrender	44

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Meet the Characters

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S Battalion

A bacterial invasion force.



Lieutenant Colonel Spittle

The commander of S Battalion.



Major Phlegming

An officer in S Battalion.



Enemy T-cells

A type of white blood cell.



Enemy B-cells

Another type of white blood cell.



Enemy Macrophages and Neutrophils

Other white blood cells.

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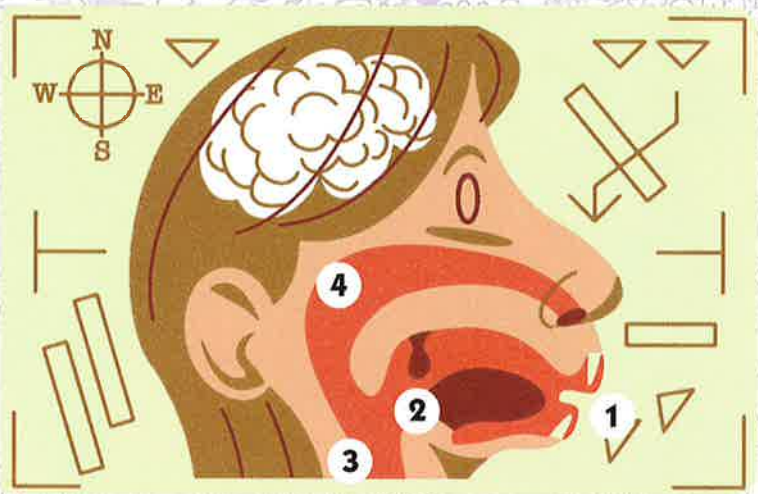
POSTCARD

Dear Reader

Getting a sore throat is no fun. When tiny bacterial microbes invade our bodies, they usually make us feel very unwell – until our immune system starts to fight back! It's amazing to think that, for almost every type of bacteria, there's a single white blood cell with the unique ability to fight it. All our bodies have to do is find the right one!

Quentin Flynn
Author

Invasion Map



1. Entry point (mouth)
2. Invasion point (scratched skin)
3. Battle site (throat)
4. Secondary battle site (nasal passage)

1 Emergency Evacuation

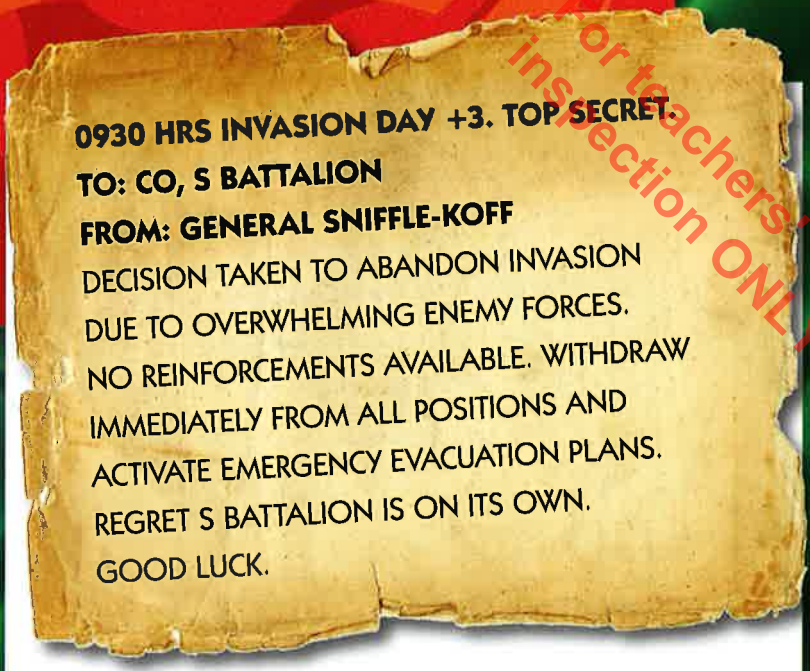
After three days of dangerous combat, the order to move out finally arrived. The last twelve hours of bitter fighting and heavy casualties had taken their toll on every one of us: me, my commanding officer and our weary troops.



We were S Battalion, part of an invasion force facing a relentless enemy attack. In the face of overwhelming numbers and superior weapons, our dire situation had worsened by the hour.



Now, the choice we faced was stark. Abandon our position – or face death at the hands of our merciless foes.



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Within seconds of receiving the order from General Sniffle-Koff, my commanding officer, or "CO", Lieutenant Colonel Spittle, swung into action.

"Major Phlegming!" he yelled. "Give me an urgent situation report."

"It's bad," I confirmed. "Since the battalion first saw action in Operation Delta Echo Romeo Echo Kilo, we've lost around half our strength. We're down to about 300 infantry. We can rebuild, but it'll take time, and we don't have that. We're surrounded, and

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we've had unconfirmed reports that a vast number of fresh enemy troops are heading this way."

"Tell our forces to get ready for immediate evacuation," ordered Lieutenant Colonel Spittle. "You know the plan, Phlegming. Assemble the battalion in one place and prepare to move out."

"Yes, sir!" I nodded. I wheeled around and raced for the front line, barking orders as I went. I knew that time was against us and if I was too slow, our entire battalion would be annihilated.

Less than a minute later, the survivors of our once strong S Battalion found themselves fighting a desperate rearguard action. Evacuation meant assembling in one location – and, for a few deadly moments, that meant the full force of the enemy was focused upon us.

"Wait for my command," hollered Lieutenant Colonel Spittle. "Wait for it!"

Suddenly, there was a lull in the fighting as the enemy gathered its strength for one final attack.

"Now!" shouted the commanding officer.

Simultaneously, every member of S Battalion fell to the ground, bracing themselves for the inevitable. One second passed. Two seconds.

And then, just as Lieutenant Colonel Spittle had hoped, there was a gigantic convulsion, roaring like a massive earthquake.

"Here we go!" shouted Lieutenant Colonel Spittle above the roar of the impending chaos. "Remember! Stay together!"



"Sorry," croaked Derek, after his coughing fit had calmed down. "Sudden tickle in my throat."

"Are you sure you're OK?" asked his teacher, Mrs Morrison. "Do you need a drink of water?"

"No, it's just this sore throat," replied Derek glumly. "I've had it for three days now, but I'm slowly starting to feel better."



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"Situation report!" barked Lieutenant Colonel Spittle.

I assessed the area we'd landed in. "Looks like a pencil," I reported. "We've landed on a pencil on a desk."

"Hmm," grunted the lieutenant colonel. We were both thinking the same thing. A pencil wasn't ideal – but it was better than being overwhelmed by enemy forces with only one possible outcome.

"Most of the troops have made it, but we'll need water, sustenance and a warm environment. And we'll need it fast," I said. "This pencil has a hard, non-porous surface. At least we're not at risk of direct sunlight – but I'd give us an hour at the most."

Lieutenant Colonel Spittle knew he had to rally his troops. After narrowly escaping a terrible defeat, he needed to keep morale up.

"I won't lie to you," he said, addressing the remnants of his battalion. "Some of you won't make it." There was a murmur amongst the survivors of S Battalion. "Things are tough – and, as this pencil starts drying out, things will get tougher."

The faces of his loyal soldiers looked grim. Grim, but determined.

"But we're tough too," said Lieutenant Colonel Spittle, raising his voice. "And I know that no matter how long we're marooned on this pencil, as long as there's one member of S Battalion left, this proud invasion force will carry on its mission!"

"Yes, sir!" shouted a voice from the assembled troops, to a rumble of assent.

"S Battalion will never surrender!" cried the lieutenant colonel. "Remember our motto!"

"Infection, infection, infection!" thundered the voices of the troops.

The lieutenant colonel turned to me. "Now we wait, Phlegming," he murmured. "Let's hope it won't be too long."

"Yes, sir," I replied. The commanding officer and I settled down. We'd made it out of Delta Echo Romeo Echo Kilo alive. But there was no anticipating what the future held.

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