

PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY

more than a library...it's an experience

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A POWERFUL STORY OF "A FATHER AND SON IN WARTIME" AT THE PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY'S FALL LUNCHEON

CHICAGO – Their book began as *The Great Conversation* – a father and son chewing over life, faith, and philosophy, debating the reasons behind the war in Iraq and discussing the situation on the ground there. But with a sniper's bullet, the book became a father's *Last Journey* with his son.

On Friday, October 2, Darrell Griffin, Sr. will appear at the Pritzker Military Library to discuss his new book, *Last Journey: A Father and Son in Wartime*, in an interview with Rick Kogan of WGN-AM and the *Chicago Tribune*. The program, at 12:30 p.m., is free and open to the public; \$55 per person includes the reception (11:30 a.m.), lunch (12:00 p.m.), and a signed copy of the book as part of the Library's Member / Guest Luncheon. The program will also be webcast live and recorded for broadcast on WYCC-TV/Channel 20.

Staff Sgt. Darrell "Skip" Griffin, Jr. was a selfless leader and a rare intellect, widely read in history and philosophy, but possessed of a lifelong restlessness. He devoured Plato's *Republic* at 13, dropped out of high school, washed out of the Army for fighting, and did a stint in rehab; he found the focus to stay clean through love and books, continuing his search for truth through Calvin, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard, and re-applied for the Army in May 2001. During his three tours of duty in Iraq, Skip earned the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with Valor. On March 21, 2007, a few days after turning 26, he was killed on patrol in Sadr City.

Skip's voice appears in *Last Journey* through letters, emails, journal entries, and photographs, trying to make sense of the destruction he saw, and working through his own despondency about whether the invasion could justify the suffering it had brought into the Iraqis' lives. In order to better understand what his son experienced, Griffin petitioned the Army for permission to visit Baghdad. Through interviews with members of Skip's battalion and his own memories of a beloved, lost son, Griffin creates a portrait of everyday life for soldiers on duty in Iraq – doing the job no matter what, regardless of the mission, and bearing a painful weight that too few can understand.

Darrell Griffin, Sr. is a certified public accountant, now retired, who divides his time as a consultant to small businesses and as a writer. *Last Journey* is his first book. He lives in Southern California.

Reservations are required for the luncheon. There is a limited amount of free seating for the interview, which does not require attendance at the luncheon, but reservations are strongly recommended. Call 312.587.0234 or email events@pritzkermilitarylibrary.net.

Education professionals in Illinois may earn 1.5 Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDUs) for attending this event.

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About the Pritzker Military Library

The Pritzker Military Library is a non-partisan, non-profit research institution located at 610 North Fairbanks Court in the Streeterville neighborhood of Chicago, near the Magnificent Mile. Admission is free and open to the public, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and also for scheduled evening events.

Since opening in October 2003, the Pritzker Military Library has produced over 250 programs including events with award-winning authors, interviews with Medal of Honor recipients, and Emmy-nominated panel discussions on military issues. All programs are presented free of charge in front of a live audience, webcast live on the Internet, and recorded for later broadcast on WYCC-TV/Channel 20, a PBS affiliate. Programs are also available for download as audio podcasts.

The mission of the Pritzker Military Library is to acquire and maintain an accessible collection of materials and develop appropriate programs focusing on the Citizen Soldier in the preservation of democracy. The 5,000 sq. ft. facility features a collection of books and films on subjects covering the full spectrum of American military history, along with vintage posters, photographs, medals, uniforms, and other artifacts from private donors and the collection of the Library's founder, COL (IL) James N. Pritzker, ARNG (Ret.).

To learn more, please visit pritzkermilitarylibrary.org.

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