

Out of Time

Author Pauline Baird Jones' newest novel an EPPIE finalist

If you could travel back in time, where would you go?

Melanie "Mel" Morton traveled to war-torn Europe in 1942. A time when women were not meant to fly B-17 Forts dodging shrapnel and flak ... a time when women stayed on the ground fighting their own war – waspies (corsets) and high heels.

It's not as if Mel had the choice to go to war. This was her chance to save her grandfather's life ... not to mention meet the man of her dreams.

Jack Hamilton was her grandfather's close friend in World War II, a bomber pilot, a scientist ... a man with thick, dark hair and bright blue eyes ... a man who made your insides feel all warm and gooey, especially in a cold, frost-bitten war.

Besides, Mel was stubborn. Her job as a reporter for a TV magazine show called, "Make Mel Cry Uncle," put her up to stunts like a HALO jump with the Navy SEALs. Perhaps falling 30,000 feet from a plane with the SEALs prepared Mel for the jump into enemy territory. Did she know that this would be her greatest stunt ever?

Pauline Baird Jones is the award-winning author of seven novels and two nonfiction books. Her niche in fiction is suspense, including romantic-suspense and comedy-mystery. Her latest novel, *Out of Time*, is a 250-page action-adventure romance set in World War II.

"I have always been really fascinated with WWII and I had this idea of going back in time, but I never wrote it because I didn't want to write a historical," said Jones. "I didn't want to do the research. But I thought well, WWII isn't too far back, and there are still people who can help me."

Jones contacted several WWII veterans, including her own family, who told her their wartime stories and showed her period photos.

"My father-in-law and my dad were both in WWII. In fact, my father-in-law was a ball turret gunner so he gave me a lot of information about B-17s." (The ball turret gunner is curled up in a ball and seated in a confining sphere under the Fort. The turret revolves a full 360 degrees, providing coverage against attackers from below.)

Jack's B-17 Fort was called The Time Machine. The nose of the fuselage revealed an image of what looked like a tornado but was a vortex, a monstrous whirlwind The Time Machine created for Mel to jump into at a high altitude to travel back in time.

"I did a lot of research on time machines. I got the idea [of a vortex] from the movie *Kate and Leopold*. You need velocity, so in the beginning I knew that Mel was going to jump out of a plane," said Jones, "without a parachute."

Jones also researched family stories to weave into *Out of Time*. For example, she uses the real-life story of how her parents met to write the scene on how Mel's grandparents meet.

The book reads: *Norm smiled ruefully. "I saw her before she saw me. She was sitting in front of me at the*

movies. I knew the seat she was in was broken, so I put my foot under it and tipped it forward just enough so that she kept sliding forward all through the movie. My foot finally got tired and I had to let it drop back. She realized it and oh, was she mad at me." He grinned at the memory. "Tore a strip off me and almost slapped my face when I asked her out."

"And then?" Mel prompted him. ...

"She started to leave, then turned and ordered me to pick her up at seven the next day. Said I owed her a movie."

Jones laughed, "My dad did that to my mom. I used a lot of my own family memories in writing the book."

The house that Mel lived in in *Out of Time* was Jones' grandmother's house,

and Mel's grandmother in the book emulates Jones' grandmother, too. "There's a part in the book where Mel's grandmother is writing the history of her family, and that's what my grandmother did. She was widowed quite young, and she spent a lot of time studying genealogy," said Jones. "She wrote her husband's biography, and she lost a son in WWII and wrote his biography as well. That's one of the memories I have of her as a young girl, watching her write by hand."

Jones grew up in a large family and said that family is what provokes her sense of humor. "I have four brothers



Pauline Baird Jones is the author of seven novels.

and they all thought they were funny, so you had to keep up. They tortured me quite frequently," she laughed. "I have a sister – there were six of us – and we're very close. We banded together against the boys!" she laughed again. "Growing up we didn't have a lot of money, so we would joke a lot. I think laughing helped to cope."

Perhaps reading did, too. Although, as a little girl, Jones had to hide her books in school. "I was an avid reader. That was the only time I ever got in trouble at school – reading books behind my textbooks."

She may have hidden her books, but she didn't hide *behind* them; Jones' imagination pushed her *into* them, right into the action ... without a parachute.

Like Melanie, well, sort of. "I'm nothing like Mel!" said Jones. "I'm not very brave. My characters are always taller and braver than me. We writers talk about that a lot. I think our characters are who we wish we were, but I'm not at all like Mel!"

What about Jones' husband whom she's been married to for almost 32 years? Is he like Jack? "I tend to not put him in books because I don't want him getting other girls!" she joked.

There's that sense of humor.

"He has shown up as sidekick characters in some of my books, and he jokes a lot that I kill him, you know, fictionally. But my husband is very supportive, very, even if he thinks I killed him in a book."

Jones said her children and parents are very supportive, too. She has after all, been nominated for and/or acquired many awards. *The Last Enemy*, her first book in her Lonesome Lawmen series, won a *Romantic Times Magazine* Reviewer's Choice award; her second book in the series, *Byte Me*, was an EPPIE 2001 Finalist in the romantic suspense category; *Do Wah Diddy Die*, the book formerly known as *I Love Luci - When I Don't Want to Kill Her*, was also an EPPIE 2001 Finalist, to name a few.

Out of Time is an EPPIE 2007 Finalist and available at www.paulinebjones.com.

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