

Science Fiction by Scientists

PRESS RELEASE

AIAA Houston Section member Dr. Larry Friesen has recently had a book published. It is a work of science fiction: three novellas published as a collection. The publisher is Firefall, whose web site is www.firefallmedia.com.

No two of the stories are connected. In fact, they don't even inhabit the same "future history." The overall title of the book is *Betrayal/Battle/Storm*.

The first story is "Buddy System." A geologist/planetary scientist stationed at a lunar settlement wakes up in a pressurized lunar rover, while on an exploratory probe well away from the base. He realizes (a) he has been unconscious, and (b) his partner on this expedition is nowhere to be seen. Both men seek the affection of the same woman, and jealousy has reared its ugly head. His partner has sabotaged the rover, but has made it look like an accident due to poor maintenance. It's basically a survival story: The geologist knows of a supply cache he just might be able to walk to. Question: can he make it before his one remaining air tank is exhausted? That's the "Betrayal" part of the title.

The second story is "Sail a Dusty Sky." It's a combination of a love story and a survival story of a different sort. It's the first human expedition

to Mars. Two ships (with two landers), a dozen crew members, six in each ship. Two members of the expedition are on a long-range cruise in a giant blimp that's just able to carry the two of them and a modest payload. The two are the pilot, a man, and the woman he is in love with, a scientist. He tries to win her affection and commitment. She sends back mixed signals; part of the time she responds to his attempts, part of the time she rebuffs him. When the blimp is more than a third the way around Mars from the landing site, they get caught in a dust storm that sends them crashing to the ground, breaking open a couple of the blimp's gas cells in the process. Can they repair the tears in the cells? Do they have enough lifting gas (hydrogen) left to re-inflate the blimp? And can they do everything to get the blimp back to the landing site in time to make the launch window for the return trip to Earth? (The planets wait for no man.) That's the "Storm" part.

The "Battle" part is the third story, "Armor in Aristoteles." It is a conflict story: a tank battle on the Moon. A hypothetical future mid-East nation is trying to develop nuclear weapons in secret. By this fictional future date, there are multiple bases and even communities on the Moon, sponsored by various nations. The US has one (with contingents from various countries, but the US is the major sponsoring power); the mid-East nation has another. Espionage work finds that in order to hide its work from inspectors, the mid-East nation is moving the nuclear project to the Moon. Each side starts a clandestine

buildup of military personnel and weapons at or near its own base. A triggering event sets the forces in motion against each other.

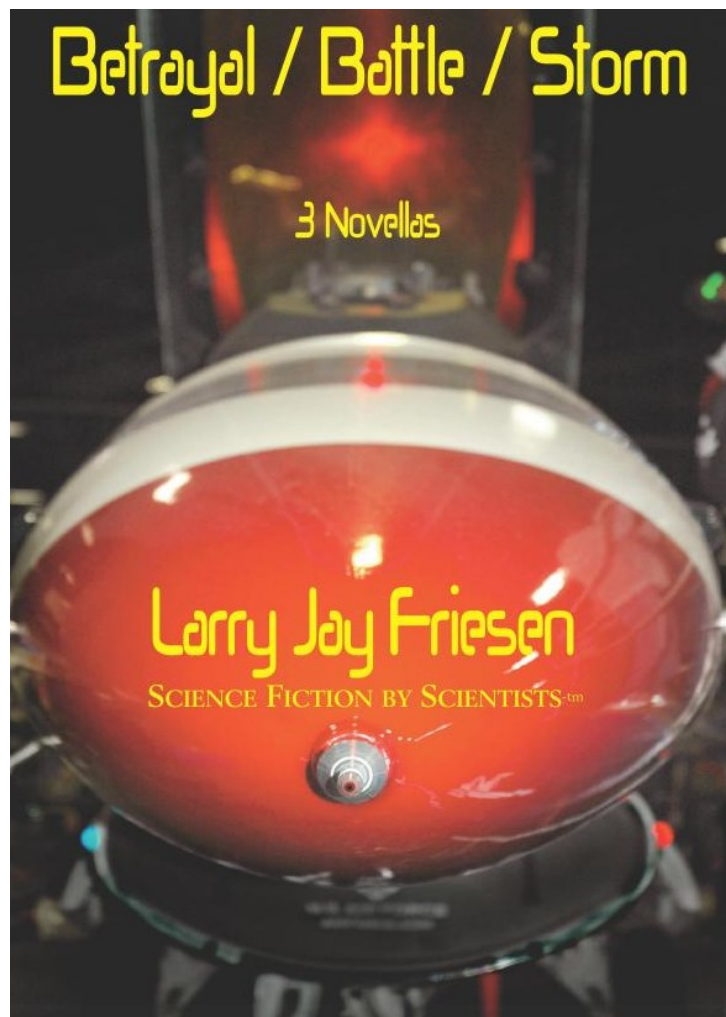
With a PhD from Rice University in Space Physics & Astronomy, Larry Jay Friesen worked at Johnson Space Center from 1976 through 1998, mostly for McDonnell-Douglas and Lockheed-Martin. He currently teaches Astronomy and Physics at the University of Houston - Clear Lake. He was elected as an Associate Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). He brings a wealth of accurate detail to the highly probable reality of his stories.



photo: Martha Friesen

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*Above: Larry Jay Friesen, author of the new book *Betrayal / Battle / Storm*, published by Firefall. Image credit: Martha Friesen.*



Betrayal / Battle / Storm

3 novellas

Larry Jay Friesen