

[Books In Sync Author Spotlight Interview With J. A. Hunsinger](#)

[Books In Sync Historical Literary Fiction Author J. A. Hunsinger's Books Include *Axe of Iron: The Settlers*, And *Confrontation -The Axe Of Iron Novel*.](#)



[J. A. Hunsinger](#) lives in Colorado, USA, with his wife Phyllis. He writes and promotes fulltime. [Vinland Publishing](#), published the first novel of his character-driven, historical fiction series, *Axe of Iron: The Settlers* on August 1, 2008. The second book of the series, [Axe of Iron: Confrontation](#), will be released in December 2009. The other four books of the series will follow annually.

Although he has long been a writer, much of his adult life has been associated with commercial aviation, both in and out of the cockpit. As an Engineering Technical Writer for Honeywell Commercial Flight Systems Group, Phoenix, AZ, he authored two comprehensive pilots' manuals on aircraft computer guidance systems and several supplemental aircraft radar manuals.

His manuals have been published and distributed worldwide to airline operators by Honeywell Engineering, Phoenix, AZ. His first published work for the general public, *Flight Into Danger*, appeared in *Flying Magazine*, (August 2002). Many of his articles have been featured in other periodicals and websites or are featured on his blog.

After his flying career ended on his 60th birthday, he found himself with time to continue his writing; this first novel was actually begun more than twenty years ago. He attended many writing classes and seminars, but couldn't sustain a head of steam as a writer. All of that changed abruptly in 2004, when he remarried. Phyllis provided the necessary push and as a result he treated writing as work, which it most certainly is.

Writing is a learned craft. In order to learn to write, you must write. Eventually the classes must be set aside; set a daily work schedule and stick to it. That is not to say you should stop taking classes altogether; learning is a lifetime experience. Sooner or later though, you must take the plunge and go at it on your own.

Have a story to tell, one that you like. Then sit down and get busy. Have your work professionally edited: rewrite, edit, rewrite, until you've gotten it as good as it can be.

That's all there is to being a writer.

Q: Tell us what makes you proud to be a writer from Grand Junction, Colorado?

A: Writing is the culmination of a lifetime of learning and working at my chosen profession. My first composition for hire was as an air transport engineering technical writer. Now, for the first time I am able to work at my own pace in response to my criteria for the task at hand. I always wanted to write, but my primary mission was to make a living for my family, so I had no time for pie-in-the sky dreams. Now that my career has ended and my life is settled I can write without the worry of making a living. If my books continue to find a market, one day I might perhaps make a success of this. In the meantime I

am telling my stories, people are buying and reading my books, and that is what this is all about for me. It never was about the money; rather it is about telling the story.

Q: What or who inspired you to become a writer?

A: I have been a writer all my life, but I merely dabbled at writing. But I did have a story to tell that gradually possessed me, so I had to tell it. My wife, Phyllis provided the support and advocacy that I needed to actually write a novel.

Q: When did you begin writing with the intention of becoming published?

A: I began to write the story 20-years ago, but the time and desire to write and finish the work did not manifest itself until I retired from flying and remarried. My soul mate entered my life in Feb. 2004. From that point on she gave me the shove that I needed to organize the details of what had been rattling around in my head over most of my adult life.

Q: Did your environment or upbringing play a major role in your writing and why?

A: Yes, definitely! I came from a military family of readers and I was raised before TV ruined the family unit in American society. My Dad wrote many short stories and articles, so his grasp of the English language and his amazing vocabulary impressed me from the beginning. My entire education was in Parochial schools and Parochial College, so I received the best stimulus available to become whatever I wanted.

Q: Do you come up with your title (s) before or after you write the manuscript (s)?

A: I have all the titles of my Axe of Iron Series noted, as each covers a certain segment of the series and that title reflects a major scene of that particular book.

Q: Tell us why you write the genre (s) that you write?

A: I am an avid reader of both history texts and historical fiction novels. Written history has many holes, gaps if you will, that give an author an endless supply of fodder. It is natural for me to tell stories about subjects in which I have an interest. The Greenland Vikings and the medieval Viking culture in general have always been my focus. My Swedish/German heritage is another reason for my interest in the medieval Germanic tribes.

The Axe of Iron Series are character-driven, historical fiction books. My characters tell the story and the reader sees the events through their eyes. I have had a lifelong interest in the medieval Norse people. That interest became focused on the five hundred year history of the two known Norse Greenland settlements. The mystery surrounding their abandonment and the disappearance of every single person living therein has captured my imagination. My books offer a plausible story of what my reading and research has indicated may have happened to them.

Q: Tell us your most rewarding experience while in the writing process?

A: That would have to be when the rough draft is finished and I read the entire manuscript and realize that I have written a good story.

Q: Tell us your most negative experience while in the writing process?

A: The road to publication has been a nightmare because of the time and money wasted while I learned the business. I wish I could say that there is lots of help out there for the newbie's, but actually, the reverse is true. You are prey swimming in the shark's pool— take heed. Believe nobody, and get everything in writing, research, research, and research. Even then, you will have picked the worst time in the world's economy to enter the business.

Dealing with agents is a most disheartening undertaking for a writer. Agents act like the writer exists because of agents, when in fact it is the other way around. I wasted a year trying to find an agent from among those professing to have an interest in my area of my genre only to find that there are not any in existence. I have no need for an agent. Having said all of that, though, clearing the air so to speak, I do have a few suggestions if you are interested.

Do your homework on the submission guidelines for any query. All literary agents will have their own guidelines; adhere to them absolutely. Do not ever send a manuscript unless it is requested. Hire professional editors to edit everything that another person will read, especially the final draft of your manuscript. Spell check, spell check, and spell check.

An English teacher is not an editor and you cannot edit your own work, so hire someone. Your professionalism will determine whether you ever make the grade. A shabby cover letter on your submission packet will guarantee its demise. Agents and publishers are busy people and they have no time to waste on people who do not follow their submission guidelines.

Q: Tell us your most rewarding experience in your publishing journey?

A: When you hold your finished book in hand. You will have been through a gutwrenching, mind-numbing roller coaster ride. You will have wanted to get off more than a few times, but you stuck it out and your finished book has made it worthwhile.

Q: Tell us your most negative experience in your publishing journey?

A: Having to learn the trade, write my book, take care of copyright, ISBN, barcodes, etc. and find a reputable house to print, manage, warehouse, and distribute my books was a negative from the outset. It made the process all uphill and much of the pleasure was lost as a result. I did find such a house in BookMasters, Inc., Ashland, OH, but it was a long search. Bookmasters can and will do everything they tell you. However, be aware that there are MANY unscrupulous people and companies out there waiting to take your money while promising the moon. Now that I know something about the business I have found this second book of my Axe of Iron series to be a satisfying experience. I would have preferred to hire a literary agent and publish my work through a large house. That did not happen due in part to the continued decay of publishing in this country. In this economy, which will continue to worsen at all levels, few large houses will survive, leaving the small independent publisher as one of the few avenues to publication for an author. Those publishers that survive, large and small, will be extremely selective in the books that they publish, leaving many authors to wither away.

Q: What one positive piece of advice would you give to other authors?

A: Our mission as authors is to get published. Let's assume that your manuscript is a first draft. Before you can send out query letters telling the world of the birth of the great American novel, your work needs editing. I do not mean having a friend, an English teacher, your boss, or any other layman read your manuscript, no, I mean that you must engage the services of a professional editor. Thus begins the process of polishing your manuscript until it is the best it can be. This process can involve numerous corrections and rewrites. Done correctly it is a lot of work. I do all editing electronically within MS Word. The time and expense involved varies with the quality of the work. One hundred thousand words will cost in the neighborhood of \$2000.00, or more, by the time you get it right.

Believe it or not, writing your book is only the beginning. With a final draft of your manuscript in hand, it is time to query. Famous people query with a proposal before writing the manuscript. I will assume that you are not yet famous. As an author, you cannot deal directly with one of the large publishing houses, so your next challenge is to interest a literary agent in your work. If you find a literary agent, your relationship will be contractual. Do nothing with anyone without a contract. Fully understand your

part of the contract before signing, or hire an attorney versed in literary contracts to help you understand. There are numerous listings of literary agents on the Internet. Research each agent for their submission guidelines, select those receptive to your genre, be certain that they are accepting submissions, submit only what they require, and never send an unsolicited manuscript. They will not read it. Your literary agent will handle your contractual relationship with a publisher; they are your agent acting in your behalf.

If you are fortunate enough to become a published author through the literary agent/publisher/reader sequence of progression, congratulations, you have hit the big time. Your publisher will handle all the details of composition/format, cover design, printing/binding, fulfillment/marketing, and warehouse/distribution, leaving you free to crank out books. You will have little or no input regarding any of the production aspects of your book, nor will you retain any rights other than copyright. The publisher will own the ISBN and all future negotiations for anything concerning that work will be through, or with the permission of, the publisher.

Q: Who is your favorite author?

A: Why I am my favorite author, of course! But, I continue to read with pleasure: Cecil Scott Forester, Wilbur Smith, Ayn Rand, W.E.B Griffin, Ken Follett, and too many others to list in this space.

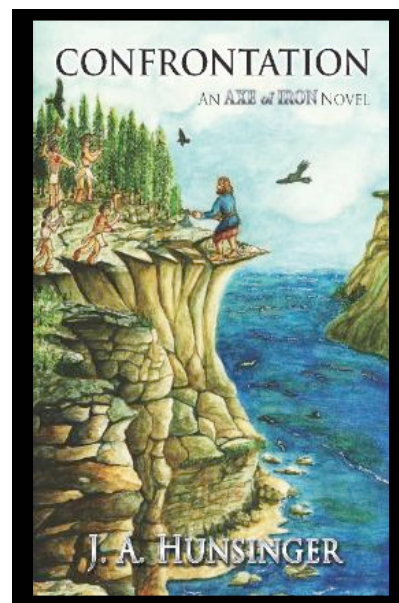
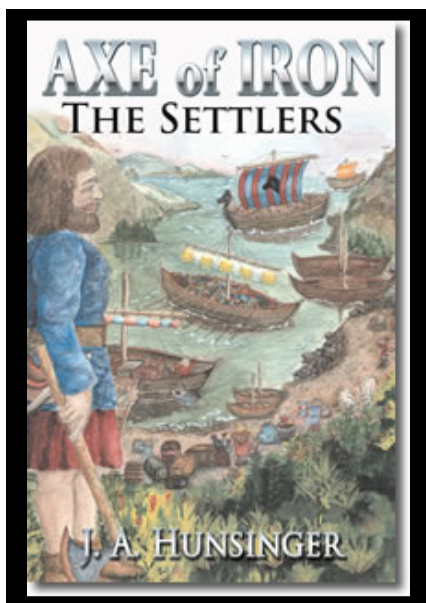
Q: What Format (s) are your books in: Print Only.....E-Book Only....or Both?

A: Both print and eBooks: Kindle, MobiPocket, Sony, etc. With the exception of Kindle all the eBook formatting and sales are handled by Richie O’Brian, theebooksale in Ireland.

Current Book(s):

Axe of Iron: The Settlers, ISBN 9780980160109

Axe of Iron: Confrontation, ISBN 9780980160154



Q: Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?

A: Keep your powder dry and good luck.

[J. A. Hunsinger's Website](http://www.vinlandpublishing.com)

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J. A. Hunsinger's Blog

<http://www.vinlandpublishing.blogspot.com>

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