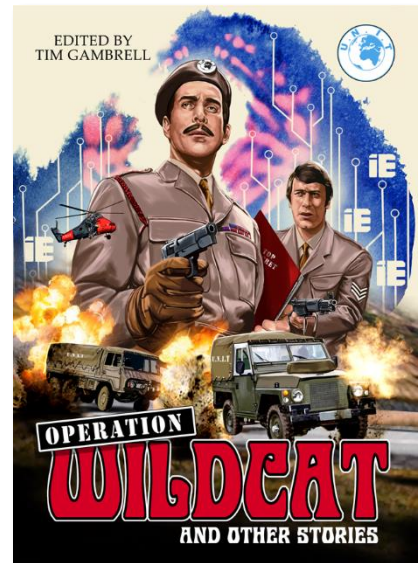




## **UNIT: OPERATION WILDCAT**

Candy Jar Books is proud to announce that a brand-new anthology of UNIT short stories is now up for pre-order directly from the Candy Jar webstore.

From early 2023, Candy Jar will begin publishing a series of novels covering the adventures of UNIT – featuring Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart, Benton, and other characters from the *Doctor Who* story *The Invasion* (all authorised by Kate Sherwin and Hannah Haisman). In advance of those novels comes the first short story anthology: *The UNIT Files: Operation Wildcat and Other Stories*. Compiled by Range Editor Tim Gambrell, it brings together nine adventures.



Tim explains further: “Candy Jar has already set a standard for short story collections with *The HAVOC Files* books. *The UNIT Files* will continue in that vein. There are a lot of aspects – personal or otherwise – of life in UNIT that haven’t been covered on TV or within spin-off media published to date. That opens up a deep well of potential material that really suits the short story medium. I think we’ve pulled together a collection of pieces for this first *UNIT Files* that truly reflects that.”

“Everyone who was able to contribute seemed hugely fired-up by the opportunity and pitched some tremendous ideas. My story in *The Benton Files* book sparked an idea for a pair of linked situations within Benton’s career, so I’ve used those shorter ‘scenes’ to book-end the collection.”

Among the authors contributing to *Operation Wildcat and Other Stories* are recent *Lethbridge-Stewart* writers James Middleditch (*The Overseers*), Jonathan Macho (*The Serpent’s Tongue and The Two Brigadiers*) and Baz Greenland (*Bloodlines: Foreword to the Past*), along with the return of popular author Iain McLaughlin (*Mind of Stone*) and long-standing Candy Jar stalwarts Sharon Bidwell and Sarah Groenewegen. In addition, Candy Jar welcomes new author Simon A Brett.

Tim says: “I’ve enjoyed Simon’s work on other projects, and I was keen to introduce some new voices early on in the *UNIT* range. Simon had a basic

concept inspired by a recent trip to the Shetlands Islands. I knew I needed to bottle that inspiration, and we quickly worked out a storyline together (along with a punning title). As expected, what Simon delivered was spot on."

The story that gives the collection its title, *Operation Wildcat*, is by Sarah Groenewegen. Of the opportunity to contribute to *The UNIT Files*, Sarah says: "I've loved writing for the Brigadier, and when the opportunity came to contribute a story involving more of the UNIT family I leapt at it. Sergeant Benton was, for me, the obvious choice to focus on as an ordinary squaddie facing extraordinary foes."

Sarah goes on further to explain the background to her story: "I grew up with the original UNIT stories, and later spent a fair proportion of my law enforcement career alongside serving and former special forces soldiers. Some of the tales they shared about their training made me wonder about the adventures prospective UNIT soldiers might face and what qualities the organisation would look for in new recruits."

*The UNIT Files* sees the return of author Iain McLaughlin, whose last book for Candy Jar was *Mind of Stone* (which is being re-released with a brand new story very soon). Iain explains about his return: "My dad was a staff sergeant, so I've always been hugely fond of the UNIT stories on TV. That also means that any time there's a chance to do a UNIT or Brigadier story I'm happy to join up and do my duty."

"My contribution, *Shadow*, is set early in Benton's time with UNIT. He's still learning how things work and the brass at UNIT are still getting to know him. I wanted to do a story that gave him a chance to show there was a lot more to him than just snapping to attention and saying 'Sir'. He wouldn't survive – and indeed thrive – in UNIT if he wasn't resourceful and capable as well as brave. It let me have a bit of a delve into what Benton thought he was getting into in those early days."

Of contributor James Middleditch, Tim says: "I approached James just as he was completing work for Andy Frankham-Allen on *The Overseers*. He was very buoyed up from the experience and eager for the next challenge."

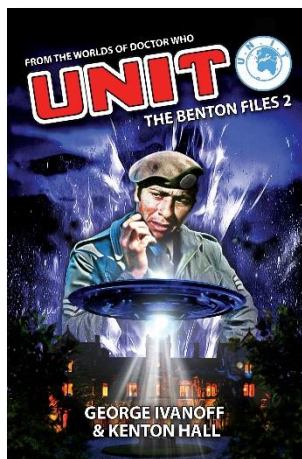
James explains: "*Doctor Who*, while rightfully focusing on the Doctor and his companions, leaves us some tantalising clues about what UNIT and its troops are up to in the background – including how personnel are managed, trained and promoted. Although he holds a number of positions across his various appearances, usually Benton is referred to as sergeant – it's the rank he seems stuck with! At last, we can find out how he took on this mantle and what challenges he had to overcome."

Jonathan Macho first came to Candy Jar's attention as a runner-up in the second South Wales Short Competition. He then went on to write the short story *The Two Brigadiers*, as well as the hugely creative *Lucy Wilson* book, *The Serpent's Tongue*. He says: "When Tim kindly asked me to contribute to the

first UNIT adventures at Candy Jar, my head flooded with bonkers ideas for the Brig and Benton. Where I ended up was Bong Joon Ho's *The Host* in West Wales and the most fun I've had writing a story in a long time. I can't wait to see what my fellow writers have in store for the team too!"

Baz Greenland's first novel, *Foreword to the Past*, closed the *Lethbridge-Stewart: Bloodlines* series in 2020. He says: "I was delighted to be asked to contribute to *The UNIT Files* and to have the opportunity to write for the Brigadier once again. Not only that, I got to write for one of my favourite characters from *Doctor Who* – Sergeant Benton – in a story that explores just how the members of UNIT are considered by their armed forces peers."

The cover for *Operation Wildcat* is by ever-popular *Lethbridge-Stewart* artist Martin Baines. Shaun Russell, head of publishing at Candy Jar, says: "It's always a pleasure working with Martin. His creativity is second-to-none and our readers seem to appreciate his style." The cover for *The Benton Files 2* is by Candy Jar favourite Richard Young. Shaun continues: "As always Richard has done us proud. His work just gets better and better."



*The UNIT Files: Operation Wildcat and Other Stories* is a hardback anthology, similar to the recent *Lethbridge-Stewart* books *Downtime: Child of the New World*, *Kiss of the Ice Maiden* and the illustrated *Beast of Fang Rock*. It will come with a postcard of the cover art and an exclusive short paperback book, *The Benton Files II*, featuring two new Benton short stories by George Ivanoff and new author Kenton Hall. It will be available exclusively through the Candy Jar website. Please get your pre-orders in early to ensure you have a copy of what will undoubtedly be a popular anthology.

Blurbs:

### **The UNIT Files: Operation Wildcat and Other Stories**

Join Benton and the Brigadier in nine short stories looking at life in the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce. Ever wondered what happened on Benton's first official day in UNIT, or why he left to sell used cars? Ever wondered how Benton earned his sergeant stripes? Or what he got up to on his days off? How Does UNIT select new recruits? And what happens when the clean-up after an alien incursion goes wrong? In *Operation Wildcat and Other Stories*, you'll find these things out – and a lot more.

Features stories by Tim Gambrell, Simon A Brett, Iain McLaughlin, Sharon Bidwell, James Middleditch, Baz Greenland, Sarah Groenewegen and Jonathan Macho.

## **The Benton Files II**

It's all in the mind... Or is it?

Retired Sergeant Major John Benton recounts two more tales of his experiences serving under Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart in the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce. In *The Lady Jessica Affair*, by George Ivanoff, Benton and the Brigadier take tea with an apparently harmless elderly lady at her stately home – and end up defending the world. In Kenton Hall's *Life Assurance*, life has apparently thrown a different set of circumstances John Benton's way. But will he be able to find a path back to his true calling?

*The UNIT Files: Operation Wildcat and Other Stories* is up for pre-order now for £25 (+ p&p) directly from Candy Jar Books.

**NB: *The UNIT Files: Operation Wildcat and Other Stories* is not included in any subscription or multi-book deal.**