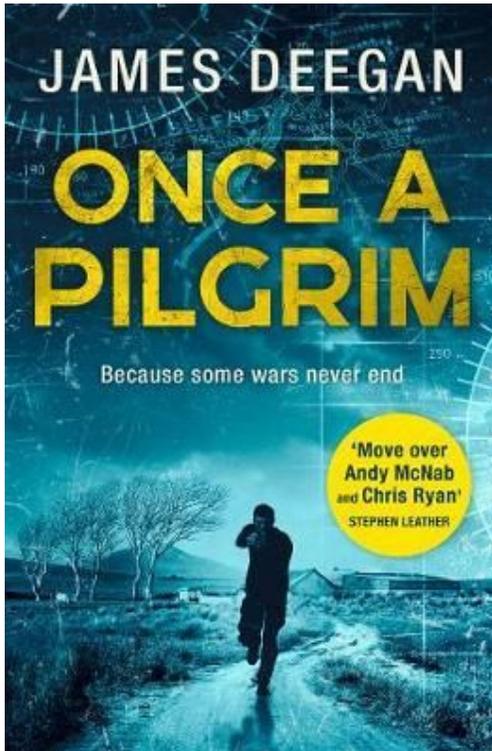


LoveReading Reader reviews of Once A Pilgrim

By James Deegan

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Ian Watkin

Within a few pages 'Once a Pilgrim' has you hooked. The drama, the detail and the way that Deegan uses his military experience to describe the story is amazing.

This is a must read for 2018.

Wow wow wow. What a book! From the first few chapters I was hooked and felt an urge to read on. The level of detail and the way in which the story is described keeps you hooked page after page.

The author has clearly used their vast military experience to craft a crime thriller that is up there with any offering from the likes of Lee Child or David

Baldacci.

This book should be on any dad/grandad/uncles Christmas list.

I will be keeping an eye out for the anymore books from this author.

5 stars!

Carole Tuckett

A book I didn't want to put down. Many more to come I hope.

John Carr ex SAS had been deployed to many hot spots while serving. Now

Head of UK security for a Russian business man. Always aware of danger, he has a second sense of anything out of the ordinary. This has come in useful when the past comes back to haunt him. Irishman Pat Casey has decided to get back at him and his mate Mick Parry for the death of his brothers.

Victoria Emerson

Simply brilliant.

Once A Pilgrim by James Deegan is a brilliantly written book.

It tells the story of John Carr who has recently left the SAS and what happens to him after that.

The story is fiction but the detail contained within the story is spot on, and could only have been written by someone who has actually been in similar situations themselves.

I would highly recommend this book.

Sabine Little

A three-dimensional, engaging read, and a fascinating perspective on the Northern Ireland conflict to boot.

I have to admit, I hovered around the first few pages of the book a while, as I was willing it to grab me. But once it did, it didn't let go. I have seen John Carr compared with Jack Reacher, and in terms of competence, bearing, etc., that might be the case, but John Carr seems overall more three-dimensional, more complex, the descriptions of his missions rougher and more realistic. Deegan's writing is at once more profane and more complex than Lee Child's. I don't know whether it is because of the Northern Ireland context that the book feels 'closer to home', it is a complex background, written from the perspective of a man who served there. That realism is hard to beat, and that makes the two protagonists - Carr and Reacher - difficult to compare. Both have their place, and I enjoy reading them both immensely, but Once a Pilgrim requires more head space, more engagement, and pulls you deeper into John Carr's world.

More please.

Cathy Small

Meet John Carr, ex SAS man who has found another life since recently leaving. But his past is about to catch up with him and it's time to return to the old ways.

*John Carr has recently left the SAS but the book takes time to share his great achievements and why he was respected in his role. He has forged a new & well paid life for himself where is happy in what he does. But his time in Ireland is about to catch up with him. The police are looking into past cases but not everyone can be trusted and the news of John Carr's exploits are discovered and revenge is attempted. Fascinating to read about an SAS adventure that takes you into **a story that will keep you gripped to the end.***

Angie Rhodes

*The blurb on the back says "Patriot Games meets Taken" hmm, let me let you in on a little secret, this is far better! John Carr, ex SAS, is a man not to be messed with. 6ft 2in, just over 15st, broad shouldered, hair black, eyes blue, he can be your best friend or your worst nightmare. Having left the SAS, he is now working for a Russian oligarch as private security, but something that happened years ago, something from his past, is about to resurface. A hitman is out for revenge and John Carr is ready to make his life hell. **Written by an ex SAS officer, this was one of the most exciting thrillers I've read this year. If you love Jack Reacher, you will love John Carr.** Like Reacher, he is a hero, and I loved every single page of this debut book, **waiting with bated breath for the next "Carr" novel.***

Lindsey Whittle

An interesting and authentic take on soldiering in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, and how decisions taken then reverberate decades later.

Once it gets started, this is an absorbing story. The plunge into Northern Ireland at the height of the Troubles is a convincing portrait of the realities of that time, and reminds us how savage and violent that conflict was. Decisions taken then bring consequences decades later.

Coming up to date, the action intensifies between Northern Ireland and UK, including John Carr's present occupation providing security for a visiting

oligarch, demonstrating the different attitudes between modern Russia and England. Body count rises, and it all comes to a satisfactory, if bloody, conclusion, signposting a continuing series.

It's written in short chapters, punchy sentences and authentic dialogue; if you enjoy Lee Childs, Stephen Leather, Chris Ryan, you'll enjoy James Deegan.

Quibbles: I'm not sure how relevant the Iraq chapter at the beginning is, which establishes the kind of soldier John Carr is. Likewise the few pages covering his exit interview from SAS, which briefly displays his relationship with the Director, Special Forces. There's a lot of military slang and acronyms, usually understandable in context, and personally I found the occasional 'cannae' and 'dinnae' to underline our hero's Scottish upbringing a bit jarring, but these are minor issues and overall this was a very enjoyable read.

Phylippa Smithson

Quite the most remarkable thriller reflecting what happens to an ex-SAS officer when his past catch up with him his present. Superb.

John Carr has serviced his time. At 17 he had a choice – follow the steps of his close friends and either end up in prison, a junkie or dead, or do something with his life. He took the tough option and 30 or so years later he is retiring from the SAS having served time in Ireland during the worst of the troubles, and Afghanistan.

He leaves the service having gained the respect of his men – he has always been in the heart of things and never shirked his responsibilities towards his men – and those in more senior positions. And after a highly profitable role providing security in war torn countries around the world, he is now based in the UK as body-guard to a Russian oligarch, unaware that his past, when serving in Belfast, is about to catch up with him and his family big time.

Incredibly fast-paced, gritty and compelling read. John Carr is a mix of all those elite fictional characters that command the top shelves of fictional thrillers – think Reacher, Solomon Creek and so on. What differentiates him from those others is that Carr is a three-dimensional survivor who's story is set in the real world – historically, IRA/Sinn Fein as the time of greatest conflict – and present, with London ever an attractive location for the beyond wealthy

Russians.

Top marks to former military man Deegan.

Susan Wallace

A gripping and enthralling page turner. You must read this book!

James Deegan has produced a cracking story, fast moving and enthralling. An ex-member of the SAS, he clearly knows his stuff, but also has the ability to write in a way which makes a believable, gripping story, which I stayed up far too late to finish, as I couldn't put it down! The story delves into the history of the troubles in Northern Ireland and shows how our actions in the past can come back to haunt us. The hero, John Carr, is a proper action man, who shows that he can look after himself and those he cares about in a very emphatic way. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and would recommend it as a very good read.

Lee Ruddin

The decision by the Police Service of Northern Ireland to investigate British Army killings during The Troubles has caused outrage among veterans. One veteran is Andy McNab, a former SAS sergeant, who believes this “witch hunt” may soon find its way to his door. On a purely literary basis, this would be a shame for his memoir Bravo Two Zero is one of the bestselling military titles of all time and arguably paved the way for other Action Man-like authors to enter the fray. James Deegan is the latest although it is unclear if, like Chris Ryan, ghost writers have assisted the veteran in writing his thriller. But this is relatively unimportant. What is important is if a page-turning plot is undergirded by a high level of authenticity and, in these respects, Deegan passes muster – just. His plot revolves around John Carr, a Scottish-born ex-SAS soldier, who in the present day provides security for a Russian oligarch when visiting London. His tours of duty took him as far afield as Afghanistan and Iraq, but it is a theatre closer to home, specifically Northern Ireland, which catches up with him. The leaking of his identity (after an investigation into purported past sins) kick-starts a deadly affair yet only the pulses of Republicans – not readers – exacting revenge are set racing. As admirable as the debut author’s description of inhospitable Belfast is, both past and present, Gerald Seymour’s debut novel Harry’s Game remains unrivalled in terms of

nerve-shredding suspense in Belfast's back streets.