

DISPATCHES

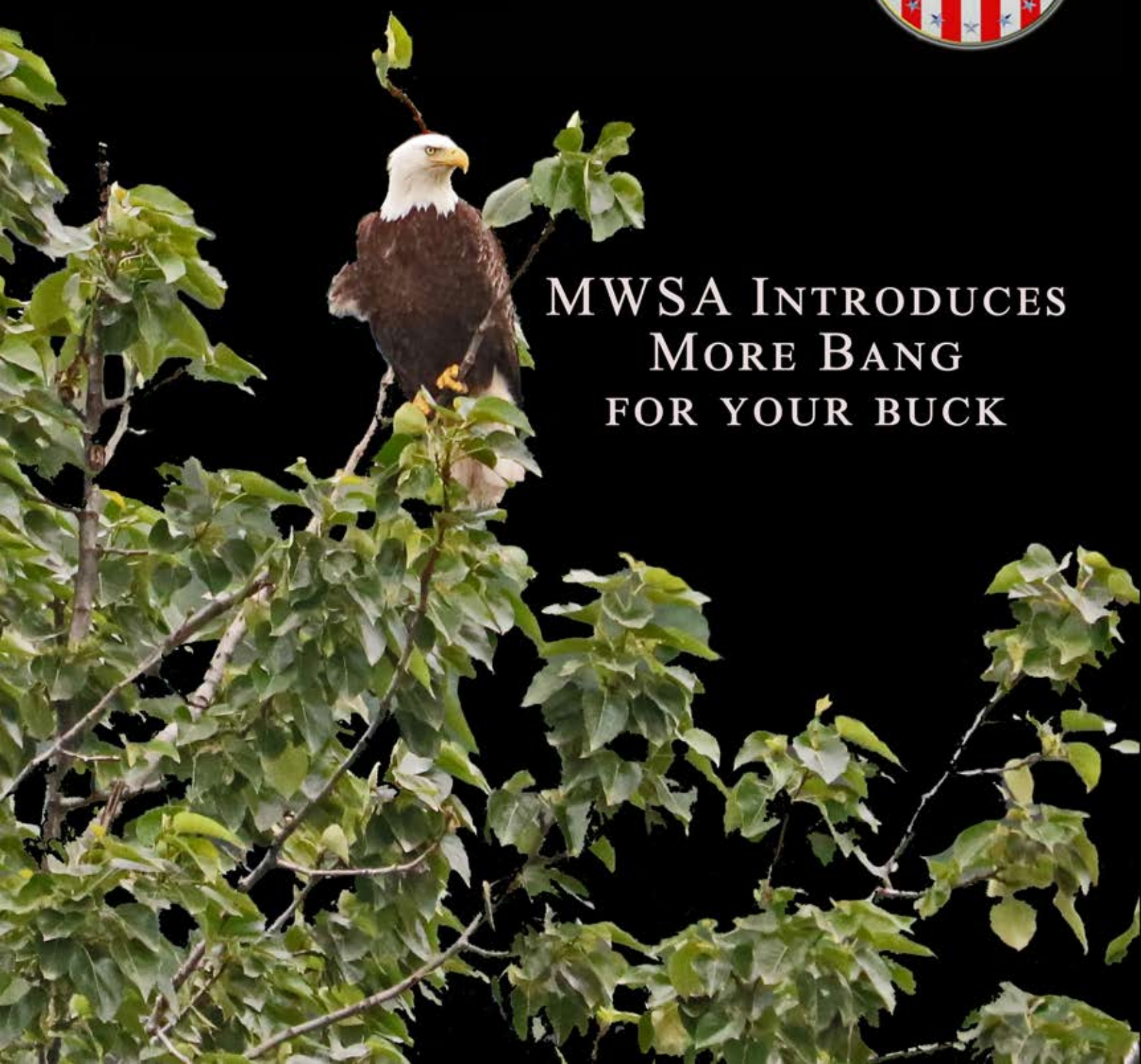
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WINTER 2019

MWSA INTRODUCES
MORE BANG
FOR YOUR BUCK



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Pat McGrath Avery

I'M WRITING THIS ON A DAY that extreme cold is hitting much of the country. I have to say that I'm happy to be in south Texas where it's warmer. However, take heart. This issue of *Dispatches* is sure to warm your hearts.

Jack Woodville London's report on his trip to the World War I memorial at the Meuse-Argonne American Military Cemetery in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France, is a solemn reminder of the sacrifices of thousands of Americans. Like so many life experiences, the event changed Jack. As I read, I too felt the power of the 14,000 graves that remind us of the horrors of war. Thank you, Jack, for sharing your emotional journey with us.

Thanks to Joe Campolo for his thought-provoking stories of the Vietnam War years. Those of us who lived through that time, are forever changed by the war, by those who gave their lives and those who came home.

Read the interviews with James Stanton, Robert Jacobs and Nancy Panko. Hopefully many of you will choose to read their books.

Paula Aragon, from the New Mexico VA Affairs office, discusses an issue that is at the core of our organization – healing through writing.

W. Larry Dandridge speaks for veterans at a Boeing Veterans Day event.

As usual, this issue is filled with helpful information from our leadership. I hope you read it from cover to cover.

Wishing you warmer days filled with hope and contentment.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bob Doerr

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope the holidays were great for everyone and that 2019 will be a great year for all.

Like many of you I'm juggling my life between writing another book and everything else life throws at us. I encourage all of you to keep writing, even if it's just articles for *Dispatches* or short stories for our anthology.

For those of you who have some time to spare please note that MWSA is always looking for volunteers to help out. If you can review a couple books for us as part of our book review/awards program your contributions will be greatly appreciated. If you are a computer/website genius (unlike me) we could use your assistance in keeping our website up to date. Don't worry, by volunteering neither program will be dumped on your shoulders, we're always looking for more people to help out.

We should have a great conference this year. We're trying something new and will be having a joint conference with the South West Writers, a group of a few hundred authors living in or around New Mexico. Check out the information regarding our conference on our website and don't forget to register early to get the early bird discount.

If you have any suggestions on what we could be doing better, contact us and share your ideas with us.

Hope to see you all in Albuquerque in September.



HEALING THROUGH WRITING

Paula Aragon, VA Public Affairs

NEW MEXICO VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM—MONDAY, DEC. 3, 2018—Albuquerque, N.M.

HERE AT THE VA, there are areas that offer innovative ways to help Vets work through varying issues that range from PTSD, anxiety, to panic attacks, just to name a few.

The Recreation Therapy Program offers a wide variety of programs, but one, in particular, is the creative writing class, which is offered on Thursdays at 8:15 in the morning, and runs about an hour and forty-five minutes.

The class assignment for the week of 25 November 2018, was to write a piece that compared the differences in how men and women view a particular topic or experience. One gentleman, Jim, wrote about his fondness for his blue Hawaiian shirt with white flowers and how his wife asked him repeatedly, “You’re not going to wear that, are you?”

Overall, everyone at the table could relate, and it evoked conversation and laughter.

Another individual, Chuck, wrote a poem as an ode to a fellow participant, named Earl. This poem was deep and some parts were dark. The writer wanted to have a better understanding of the emotional pain Earl experiences on any given day. The ebb and flow of the poem were cathartic. It conjured up memories for those at the table. Certain parts of the poem were just singular words such as pain, mud and alone.

Given that this poem was long, those single words created a poem. A poem within a poem.

The poem caused a stir of conversations. Earl, for one, was very appreciative, yet apologetic. He felt his own works may have triggered something in Chuck, which he didn’t quite understand. Although that was not the case. What it did was show Earl that his fellow writer cared and wanted

to help Earl in his healing process. A willingness to understand what someone saw, felt and went through is powerful.

Another gentleman, Mark, wrote a story similar to Jim’s. It concerned an article of clothing. The overall piece was how a day like any other work day should have been but this one specific day started off bad and progressively got worse. His piece was not only funny, it placed different visuals on the minds of those around the table.

Like Jim’s piece, laughter was key. One member stated that despite all of the bad memories they carry, this particular exercise brought about some funny memories. Knowing that the good stuff is still within them and learning to refocus on that, while acknowledging some of the bad is a way to help in the healing process.

This class not only showcases the exceptional talent they have, it also is a form of therapy that goes beyond measure. Their sharing of thoughts, feelings, and the basic need to get whatever is bothering them off their chests is therapeutic.

Writing, camaraderie, and a common ground are what can make the healing process more attainable.

For this group of people this type of therapy not only works within themselves, it also helps those who are there to listen have a better understanding and that they are not alone.

If you are interested in the class, you can contact Recreation Therapy Program @ 505-265-1711 ext. 4160.



2019 REVIEW & AWARDS INFORMATION

John Cathcart

THE 2019 REVIEW AND AWARD CONSIDERATION window is now open. All MWSA authors may submit their books until June 15. The cost is \$40 per book.

The process details are listed on the website at <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/awards>. To submit your book via our online request form, you must be a member in good standing. Be sure to read the "Fine Print" page before submitting your book. If you wish to submit an eBook, read the appropriate directions.

Make sure you check your submission and provide a working link to a website where visitors can purchase your book. We use this link to find your book's cover, which we'll use for our website listing. You choose the review genre, which determines the scoring criteria our reviewers use to evaluate your book.

A list of the award winners for this past season has been available on our website for some time. Now, you'll also be able to learn more about each book and read our MWSA review for each one.



Also, if you have a book listed on our website, please be aware that we updated the website and some of the URLs (or link addresses) were inadvertently changed. If you've set up a link to your book on our site from some other website or location, you'll have to update your listing to reflect the change.

How do you do this?

Go to our online library

Find the search block near the top of the page, and enter your book title or author name to find your book.

Once your book comes up, click on the title, which will bring you to your book's individual listing on our website

The new address will be visible in your browser's address block... that's the new address

Copy and paste the new address wherever needed

Sorry for any inconvenience this update caused our members!

If you have any questions, please contact our Awards Directors.

Thank you, and we look forward to your submissions in 2019.

MWSA DISPATCHES IS LOOKING for member submissions.

We've many opportunities available for you as a member in good standing, from [Author Interviews](#) to Poetry submissions, to [Book Profiles](#) (three books—first come-first served, which will be showcased in the *Dispatches* every quarter).

If you'd like to write a featured article, submit a book or you just have questions, please email sandstar62@msn.com.

Thanks for playing.

OVER THERE

Jack Woodville London; Director of Education

A Report to the Military Writers Society of America on the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I

THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 11, 2018, began with sunlight touching the graves, more than 14,000 of them, in the Meuse-Argonne American Military Cemetery in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France. The cemetery, on the edge of the village, is the largest American military cemetery in France. Every hero who is buried there, and every one of the 954 men who vanished in artillery attacks and shell craters who is remembered there, gave his or her life in World War One.



There is no particular road that leads to the town or cemetery. Sedan, an hour away, is five small, curving, poorly marked two-lane roads away. Verdun, even more distant and in the opposite direction, is four. Each of them passes through towns whose names raise the spectres of battle horrors from one hundred years before: Aubreville, Varennes, Montfaucon, Dun-sur-Meuse, Sassay-sur-Meuse, Bantheville, Mouzay, Stenay,

villages that were occupied for four years by German soldiers before the American Expeditionary Force massed well over one million men to attack the Hindenburg Line and shove them back and which, afterward, were craters, rubble, and graveyards.

But, on this day, each of the towns was silent until eleven in the morning when, as eleven bells chimed, the citizens assembled in front of the square or church or war monument, placed wreaths, and saluted both French and American flags, acknowledging the solemnity and sacrifice of the war to end all wars that ended precisely one hundred years before. Speeches were read, prayers said, names called out, and the *Marseillaise* sung. Only the cemeteries and churches were open. It was a day of mourning. It was a day of celebration.

BACKGROUND

Interest had grown in MWSA having a role in the centenary of World War One after the annual meeting in San Antonio in August, 2017. The central theme of the meeting had been to share written and personal experiences about the war to end all wars. At the conclusion of the meeting it was decided that the forthcoming anthology would consist of contributions that members had written about World War One, both before the event and concurrent with the annual meeting.

In November, 2017, the American Battle Monuments Commission posted on its various cemetery sites that the World War One cemeteries in

Europe would have events in 2018 to recognize the centenary of World War One. In addition, both state and federal agencies and NGOs began to develop programs centered on World War One. The University of Texas hosted a scholarly seminar on the role of the United States in the war in which academics from across the country gave presentations on such subjects as individual battles (Belleau Woods, St. Mihiel), the state of military medicine (primitive by our standards, but improving), organization of units, and the extraction from farm, factory, home and shop of more than four million men in less than one year to be trained as soldiers in a war that was fought entirely overseas.

Having written on World War One for two publications, and having researched the battle in which one of my ancestors died within the first minutes of his first day in combat, my personal interest grew. Few occasions are as memorable as those that mark a significant anniversary of a world-changing event, such as the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy in 1994, the 200th anniversary of the United States in 1976, and the like. I decided that I would like to attend a memorial service in France for the centenary of World War One.

In early 2018 I asked if MWSA would send me as its representative to the memorial services to be held in France on the one hundredth anniversary of the Armistice. I had a strong wish to go and it was understood that I would undertake the role at no cost to MWSA. Bob Doerr, Valerie Ormond, and Dwight Zimmerman worked together with me to help define the scope of the assignment and the content of the plan. At the outset we decided that we would ask the American Battle Monuments Commission for me to participate in the ceremony on behalf of MWSA and that we would honor the graves of men and women who our members asked us to locate and remember with flags and photographs.

In February, 2018, MWSA sent out in its February

blast that we hoped to be represented at the November 11 memorial service and invited members to send information about anyone they knew of whose grave should be honored with a flag and remembrance. On April 16, 2018, Dwight sent a letter on behalf of MWSA to Mr. Bruce Malone, superintendent of the Meuse-Argonne American Military Cemetery, in which the organization named me as its emissary to the memorial service and asked the American Battle Monuments Commission to include MWSA in its plans.

The American Battle Monuments Commission was somewhat non-committal at the outset. Understandably, such events tend to be given to speeches by military officials and public officials who are known or, at the least, accountable. The corollary is that ABMC does not readily invite strangers to give speeches at solemn occasions for fear of not having any control over what the said stranger might do or say. Over the following months I developed a very cordial relationship with Mr. Malone and he decided that MWSA was both professional and well-regarded and that its representative, me, would have a part in the November 11 service.

The MWSA anthology, *Inspirations*, was published in August, 2018. It consists of twenty-two contributions by MWSA authors to the literature of World War One. They range from histories of the war, histories of particular battles and units, fiction, family histories, and other insights of every kind. It also reflects the diversity of the war. Not only does some of the work record that segregated troops fought with the same distinction as every other member of the AEF, including to earn the the Medal of Honor and to join the Lafayette Escadrille volunteer flying corps, but also that the doughboys, marines, and sailors came from every conceivable corner of the United States, both geographically and culturally.

Finally, as part of the mission, I proposed not only that I prepare this report to the membership

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of the experience but also that I try to record the experience in video and still images. It then emerged that the next MWSA annual meeting would take place in Charleston, South Carolina, and would coincide with the event in the cemetery. With advice from Val Ormond in particular, it was decided that the best way to capture the event for the conference would be to shoot video, upload it to YouTube on the spot, and send it to the conference on the morning of November 11. That decision took on a life of its own.

PREPARATION

Planning was a bit uncertain while waiting for members to provide names of men and women whose graves were to be honored. The decision was made to place American and, where appropriate for me, Texas flags on the graves, to say words of thanks, and to photograph and / or film them. Ultimately the names sent by MWSA members were only for graves in the Meuse-Argonne cemetery. If any members had requested that we honor graves at another American World War One cemetery we would have done so, but because of the remoteness of the cemeteries we almost certainly would have gone to them before November 11.¹ In the event, members sent in thirteen names and I added two whose stories compelled me. A list of the men and their graves is Appendix One at the end of this report.

I spoke by telephone several times with Mr. Malone and learned that the cemetery was under some pressure to keep the service to a tight schedule. By tradition and amity, the mayors of Romagne-sous-Montfaucon and other nearby villages, who have a very strong sense of friendship with the United States, send their mayors to attend the service. However, they also were to be

1. There are seven World War One cemeteries in Europe. Six are in France within a roughly rectangular area approximately 150 miles square, one in Belgium, one in England. All but one of them are in rural areas where the battles took place, and are as complicated to reach by road as the Meuse-Argonne cemetery. Each time I thought of this I reminded myself that it was a lot easier for me than it had been for the men who are in the cemeteries.

part of their own village remembrance ceremonies so finishing the memorial service in a way that permitted them to return to their own towns was important. Mr. Malone and I ultimately agreed that I would speak briefly on the uniquely American democratic nature of the men in all the cemeteries, the rich and poor, the educated and the humble, who are buried in France. We settled on Joyce Kilmer, an American poet laureate who left his wife and five children to enlist and who, during the war, wrote a poem honoring the men who died in battle with him.

Most of my personal preparation consisted of two efforts.

First, I re-immersed myself in the history of the first war. I won't write that history here (or likely anywhere) but I was struck that while the saying is that "history is written by the winners", in this instance it is strongly apparent that for most of the world, the history of the war is written by the British and French winners, not the American winners. During the United States' first year in the war, few American troops engaged in any combat. Those who did go into battle did so attached to British units in Belgium and along the Somme River.

However, three uniquely American engagements should be recognized by all historians, and generally are not. The Second Division, including US marines, stopped the German spring offensive advance at Belleau Wood² at a cost of almost 10,000 killed and wounded; had it not done so, the German army almost certainly would have seized Paris and forced France to capitulate. In the next two months, the United States engaged alongside French and British forces in the Second Battle of the Marne; US casualties were similar to British casualties but US successes exceeded both British and French gains. Finally, the Meuse-Argonne offensive from late September until November 11 was the largest battle in American history. With

2 Belleau Wood is now approximately 50 miles from Paris. It is revered by Marines for their sacrifice and victory. Its cemetery, the Aisne-Marne cemetery, is the one that President Trump was scheduled to attend on November 11.

over 1,200,000 Americans in combat in an area roughly the size of the Washington, D.C. – Annapolis – Baltimore triangle, someone in every household in the United States knew a man engaged in that battle. Different units were the first of any ally in the war to breach the Hindenburg Line and to command French units in battle. Historians other than American writers give virtually no recognition to these or any American role in the war.

The second task I undertook in preparation was to write a number of short (700 to 1200 word) local histories for several city newspapers. These were designed to tell local stories about local men in order to make the war more personal to readers. Four of these were published on November 11.³ My methodology was to search databases to find men from the town or county about which I was writing and who had died in the war. From my results I used Ancestry.com to learn more about the men individually. My goal was to learn their age, where they lived according to the 1910 census, names and ages of family members, occupation, names of friends and neighbors, date of enlistment / conscription, military unit (regiment / division, and on some occasions battalion and company), and date of death. In some cases I found US ship transport records that listed the entire military unit on board, with each man's hometown and nearest relative, which further enabled me to find men from the same town whom I had not found in the database. Finally, with the unit and date of death, I was able to reconstruct within a very few hundred yards where the man was in combat when he died. My primary source for each unit history and battle maps is <http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/ww1/index.html>

My story arc was generally to use the first paragraph to name some of the men in 1917, tell where they went to school, worked, or who their neighbors were. Succeeding paragraphs were very brief summaries of the US entry into the war, the buildup in France, and the onset of the

battles mentioned above. The follow-on paragraphs then told what happened to each man in the story: where he died, on what date, and any incidental information I might have discovered, such as one man who died within a few hundred yards of then-private Alvin York.

This had the unexpected consequence of not only making the war personal to the people who read the stories in their local papers, but also to make the men painfully personal to me. I found it difficult and emotional to have gotten to know more about them than almost any of their now-living relatives, only to learn how and when and where they died. For example, in one case I discovered that one of my soldiers was a 40 year old widower whose children were grown and had left home; his heirs eventually engaged in a probate dispute over how to share the servicemen's life insurance benefits from the policy he had bought a few days before he was killed in a machine gun attack. I am dismayed at how this dishonored the man who had given his life, first for them, then for us. Nevertheless, this effort educated me more about the US in the war than I would have gotten elsewhere, and put a pretty heavy cloak on my sense of reverence for these long-forgotten heroes.

THE JOURNEY

By November my troupe had grown from one to six. My wife Alice, who has produced the video that is part of this report, had decided to go from the earliest days. We were joined by John Knox, historian of the American Flag Foundation and his wife, Cynthia. John, whose grandfather served in the 90th Division in the war, transported flags from the US to the cemetery. We also were joined by Keith Kisner and his wife, Rebecca. Keith's uncle died in aerial battle approximately twenty miles north of the cemetery. All of them brought a work ethic, reverence, and respect for what we were doing. They were invaluable to the effort.

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³ Austin American-Statesman, Groom News, Albany News, Abilene Reporter-News

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I made the decision to travel through London, then Belgium, en route to the Meuse-Argonne cemetery. Travel to the cemetery is difficult; there are no nearby rail stations and certainly the closest airports that fly to the US are London, Brussels, and Paris. At the same time, I knew that England and Belgium had special reverence for what is there known as Remembrance Day. In London, the major streets and buildings were decorated with bunting and poppies. Belgium, the first country overrun and occupied by the German army in World War One, decorated each village war memorial. I uploaded a short test video from Belgium and sent it to Valerie and Bob at the MWSA meeting in Charleston. They had difficulty downloading it, putting a cloud over the plan to send same-day video of the ceremony directly from the cemetery on the day of the service, which was the last day of the annual meeting.

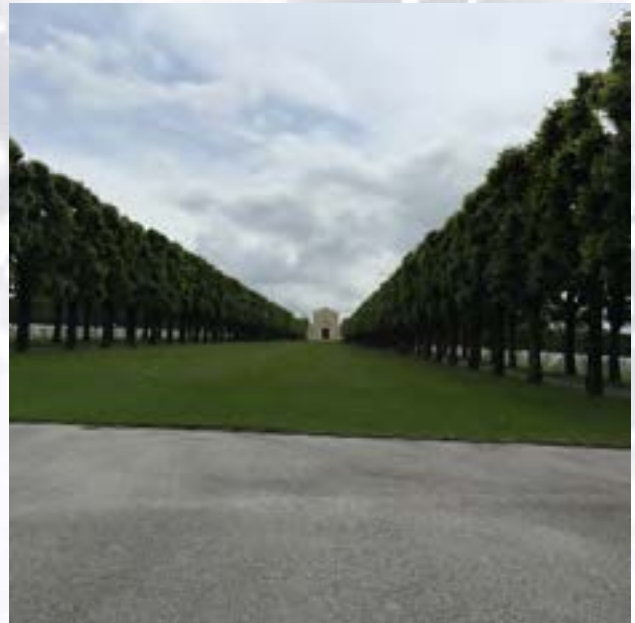


Glass poppies flowing down the front of the Imperial War Museum, London

We chose to stay in Sedan, France and used a combination of train and rental car to get both to there and to the cemetery. I attempted to re-upload the test video from the hotel in Sedan but its signal was too weak to complete the YouTube upload.

On the morning of November 11 we drove to Romagne-sous-Montfaucon and the Meuse-Argonne

Cemetery. It rained as we drove the small local roads. We passed through Mouzon, a town used by the Army Expeditionary Force after the armistice as a gathering point to march into Germany. We next drove south to Stenay, where the 90th Division suffered terrible casualties in the last week of the war, and on to Dun-sur-Meuse, where the 5th Division fought its way across the Meuse River. The last village was Bantheville, where the 89th Division was shelled with mustard gas. As we continued on the way it was apparent that France was closed for the day. No shops were open, no cafes or restaurants, only churches, cemeteries, and town squares. We arrived at the cemetery at nine a.m.



Facing the Chapel, Meuse-Argonne Cemetery

Walking into the entrance of the cemetery is overwhelming. In November, 1918, American men were buried all over northeastern France. Moreover, the armistice called for American troops to march into Germany and occupy the Rhineland. At the same time, the Spanish flu epidemic had begun to kill Americans at home in even greater numbers than the war had done. It would not be for two years that the army began to build proper cemeteries for its honored dead. In the interim, graves details were assembled to find and identify each place where men were buried and to

identify each man who could be identified. Many of them, including my uncle, were buried in common graves where they fell, together with their brothers in arms and also with the German troops who died with them.

In 1921 the site for the cemetery in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon had been selected and dedicated. Graves details began to rebury the men. Of the twenty-seven thousand who died in the last six weeks of the war, some 13,000 were repatriated to the United States. During the next twelve years army units, architects, and volunteers worked to produce the cemetery as it exists today.

It now is a garden. On the right of the central drive there are eight sections of graves, row by row, column by column. Each section is lined by trees to give a sense of serenity and intimacy that is difficult to explain in a place where 14,600 men rest in clean, orderly graves. On the north end of the cemetery there is a visitor center. On the south end is the chapel and loggia.

Alice and my friends began to take video and photographs of the cemetery and to locate individual graves while I went to meet with Mr. Malone. It was there that I learned that it was unlikely that we would have adequate wireless internet to upload a video and also that there would not be a workspace for us to privately edit and compress video to upload.

All of us worked until 10:30, seeking each individual grave that we had been asked or chosen to honor. We took photographs, video, or both, confirmed the unit information and date of each man's death, and placed new American and, in some cases, Texas flags. We spoke or gave moments of silence to each man. Visitors began to arrive for the service. Clouds began to gather.

THE MEMORIAL SERVICE

We gathered in the chapel at the loggia. Shortly before 11:00 a.m. the chapel began to fill with visitors who, like us, had come to pay homage to the heroes. Special guests included family

members of men who are buried in the cemetery, all of whom in attendance were given seats adjacent to the podium.

At exactly eleven minutes past eleven a.m., Mr. Malone asked all to rise. An honor guard entered. The pledge of allegiance to the United States was given and then, in French, the French pledge of allegiance.

There were three speakers. Mr. Malone spoke on the history and service of the cemetery. There still are discoveries of men who can now be identified and who are reburied with their names. Within the last weeks two brothers who had been buried in separate cemeteries were reburied together in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery. He read a proclamation from President Trump. General Vick of US- NATO Africa Command spoke on the special friendship and relations that have existed between the United States and France for over two hundred years and especially including the special attachment that France shares with the United States from World War One. My remarks were on the democratic nature of American armies, exemplified by Joyce Kilmer, and I read a poem that he had written when an artillery attack killed fellow soldiers.⁴ The mayor of Montfaucon read proclamations from President Macron.

Wreaths were presented by the United States Veterans of Foreign Wars, by the American Legion, and by an honor guard of ROTC cadets from the Department of Defense High School in Kaiserslautern, Germany. The *Marseillaise* and the *Star Spangled Banner* were sung *a capella* by a woman with a beautiful and moving voice who, we were to learn, was Mrs. Malone. Every person in the chapel cried openly.

In one hour, the ceremony had concluded. It began to rain.

Despite the rain, we photographed the tablets that honor the men who are missing, some 954

⁴ The text is in the second appendix to this report

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soldiers from every state. Walking in the rain, we then returned to the graves themselves to complete the work that we had begun before the service, identifying the men, placing our own American flags, and photographing them.

By 1:30 all the visitors and dignitaries had left the cemetery. The cemetery again was silent and empty. We finished and began the return to Sedan. The rain continued as we passed back through the same towns. We stopped in Mouzon to visit the church and to find a bridge that Mr. Knox's grandfather had helped to build in 1918. By four in the afternoon we had arrived in Sedan, tired, wet, but otherwise all right.

Among us we had used seven cameras, including video cameras, as well as tripods and sound equipment (that rendered poorer quality sound than when tested). These yielded hundreds of photographs and approximately an hour of video. It was at that point, after we returned to Sedan and at approximately 8:00 a.m. EST in Charleston, that I received word from Valerie Ormond and Bob Doerr that, on the one hand, that the test video I sent from Belgium now had uploaded in the United States and, on the other hand, that very few members were still in Charleston. We all were tired from the emotional experience of the events of the day and from the hard driving in rain. Rather than try to rush edit a video that later proved to involve about 40 hours of editing and production, we concluded that we should end the day in a brasserie located across the courtyard inside the castle grounds of the Chateau Fort du Sedan.

We ended the day by giving toasts and thanks to the men with whom we had spent the day.

CONCLUSION

We returned to London the next day. It seemed impossible that on one day we had been in the center of a quiet, peaceful, and respectful place of heroism in the French countryside, a place of great respect and sadness, and that the next

day we were just six dots on the streets of a city of eight million people who were trying to get to work, to the tube, to the airport. However, it seemed even more improbable that in such a short time the events of one hundred years ago had become so remote.

Most historians agree that the poor judgement of the British and French at the peace conference set the stage for the next world war. Refusing to recognize what had happened, the same British and French had lost their grip on enormous colonial empires and would go on to become overstretched, almost bankrupt, and unable to control the world as they had done before World War One. America, ignored as a major combatant in the fighting, was universally regarded as the ally that brought peace to the battle. President Wilson's Fourteen Points were the basis for Germany agreeing to the armistice and were central to the Versailles conference. The parties adopted the main point, the creation of the League of Nations, whereupon the United States Senate voted that the United States would not be a member of the international peace keeping agency it had devised, relegating the country to twenty years as an outsider to the brewing conflict that would erupt as World War II.

Even so, the war was not yet forgotten. The Meuse-Argonne and the other American military cemeteries in France, Belgium, and England were planned and built with the most graceful and memorable cemetery architecture the world had seen. Monuments, stadiums, and war memorials were put together in American cities of every size and shape to honor the men who had gone over there. It was not until the Great Depression that the true ugliness of the war was most apparent: its destructive effect on American women, then on the soldiers themselves.

In 1930, the Army Quartermaster Corps succeeded in getting congressional approval and funding to honor the gold star mothers of the war. Between 1930 and 1932, it transported almost 8,000 women to France, and some to Belgium

and England, to visit the graves of their sons and husbands who had died over there. The army invited every woman who had experienced such a death in her family and, for those who accepted, it provided everything: train tickets to New York, hotels, steamships to France (in some cases on the very ships that their sons had taken to the war in 1918), hotels in Paris, spending money. For every woman who traveled, the army escorted her and to the cemetery where her son or husband was buried. She was given freedom to stay as long as she wished to stay. Rest houses were built at the cemeteries to accommodate the old, the weak, and the emotionally exhausted. Each woman's journey took approximately three weeks. It was a grand and gracious gesture from a grateful nation to those who gave too much.

The soldiers themselves, however, were another matter. The Depression had driven tens of thousands of them into unemployment, poverty, and homelessness. Some veterans organized a 'bonus army,' that in the summer of 1932 went by the thousands to Washington, D.C. They appeared at the capitol every day and petitioned that the bonuses that had been promised to them for service in World War One be paid now in their time of great need. President Hoover ordered General Douglas MacArthur, a veteran of the 42d Division, to clear them out. Against the advice of his aide, Ike Eisenhower, MacArthur sent tanks and machine guns against the rag-tag shanty town where the bonus marchers and their families had camped. Some were killed. George Patton, now a major, said of one of the bonus marchers 'I do not know this man. Take him away and under no circumstances permit him to return.' The man was Joe Angelo. Angelo had been Patton's aide in the Meuse-Argonne offensive and had saved Patton's life by dragging him to safety when he was crippled by shell fire. The destitute soldiers of World War One got nothing.

These thoughts and memories are with me and I am honored to share them with you.

The video that we took has now been edited and

completed and is a part of this report. The URL and upload is at https://youtu.be/VrHjNTeb_7o

I thank the Military Writers Society of America for the opportunity to represent all of us on November 11, 2018, at the memorial service for the men and women who died in World War One and which was held at the Meuse-Argonne American Military Cemetery in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France on the one hundredth anniversary of the end of that war.



A Conversation with MWSA Member & Author

JAMES STANTON

J E Stanton writes under the pen name of M H Burton

BORN 1945 IN FREEPORT IL son of a cheesemaker for Kraft Foods. Kraft closed plant in 1950 and we moved to Chicago. Closed that plant in 1958 and we moved to New Ulm, MN. Amazingly the NU plant is still operating. Graduated from NUHS in 1963. Went off to University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Five-year course in Engineering. Was midway through Year Four when my friendly Brown County Draft Board informed me that there would be no Year Five. 1967 was a banner year for the Vietnam War. Great need for “warm bodies and human sandbags”. Considered going to Canada. It wasn’t all that far away.

Took Army’s language aptitude test and scored high. Enlisted for 4 years with Army Security Agency as translator/interpreter. My choice of languages according to recruiter. Asked for Russian and Chinese. Got Laotian. Basic at Ft. Leonard Wood. Then to the US State Department’s Foreign Service Institute in Arlington VA. Forty hours a week full immersion, 49 weeks, no English spoken in class, native Lao teachers. The only way to learn one of the toughest foreign languages in the world. Finished at the top of my class of five.

Stationed at Student Detachment barracks next to Pentagon-now beneath Visitors Center of Arlington National Cemetery. Watched 100 blocks of DC burn during 1968 riots. War protest March on Pentagon passed 50 yards from my barracks window. Resurrection City sprang up next to Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool. 24/7 Protests in Lafayette Park across from White House. Interesting times as in the Chinese curse “May you live in interesting times”.

Then off to Thailand. Top Secret Signal Intelligence base called Ramasun Station. Two plus years there monitoring events in Laos. Married



a Thai woman. So did many other Lao “Lingies” as we were called. Still married to her. Back to States and unemployment in 1971. Stumbled into computers and stayed there for the next 30 years as Systems Analyst and Software Developer. Retired and began second career as market gardener, stamp dealer, and eventually-writer.

MWSA: Why did you become an author in the first place?

JS: Wife and I were in her home in “impoverished NE Thailand” during the winter of 2009-10. Small rural village, not a great lot to do. Got tired of reading so I decided to write something. Wrote a short story I called *Decker and the Dragon* about the spook and spy biz at Ramasun. Liked it so I wrote more. *Decker* got published in an anthology of stories by writers over the age of 50 so I decided to combine a bunch of my stories

into a book titled *Tales of Ramasun*. Couldn't find a publisher for it so I published it myself using Amazon's self-publishing software. Their software was bug-infested crap, but I figured out how to make it work. It's much better now than it was in 2012. *Tales* was a modest success. Is still selling seven years later and I'm still writing.

MWSA: When and why did you join MWSA?

JS: 2011. Looked at the stories MWSA was putting out and they seemed to be right up my alley. Still read many of them. Sent my *Tales* off from a review and was pleased with the professionalism of the review and the fact that the reviewer had obviously read my book.

MWSA: Why did you choose to work in this genre?

JS: My first books were all memoirs and short stories. Easy to write. Little or no research involved. Wanted to do a book about the CIA's Secret War in Laos. I knew quite a bit about it because I'd "covered" it for more than two years. Also knew that I didn't know anywhere near all there was to know about it so I decided Historical Fiction would be my best bet. Still did a great deal of research. Much harder than writing memoirs but I enjoyed it and learned a lot.

MWSA: Will you briefly list your other books for us?

JS: In addition to the already mentioned *Tales of Ramasun* two follow-up collections: *Tales of Ramasun II* and *The Ramasun Files*. A borderline pornographic novel about a golf pro "Sherlock" and his sexy Thai Princess "Watson" called *Mixed Foursome*. And an historical fiction novel set during the Dakota War of 1862 in Minnesota titled *Dacotah Blood*.

MWSA: Tell us a little bit about this book.

JS: In June of 1960 Mike Bauer is a naïve idealistic 22-year-old Minnesota farm boy with a freshly-minted Agronomy Degree who wants to do good in the world and have some adventures while doing it. "Those faraway places with the strange sounding names" are calling him. He signs on for two years at \$75 a month as an agricultural advisor with a missionary society supported by his church and hits the jackpot. Laos is almost exactly half way around the world from New Germania, Minnesota, can't get farther away than that. Xiengkhouang and Naxaithong and Lhat Houang sound exotic enough for you? Those are just some of the places. How about the people? Is Prince-General Phongphasansk Inxixiangmai enough of a mouthful? Mike gets what he signed up for, and a lot more. Finds himself posted to a mission at Lhat Houang which is in middle of a war his superiors hadn't told him

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THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW YOU NEVER KNEW

...about the MWSA Website.

We list the types of correspondence members can anticipate receiving from MWSA here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/membership/> (3rd bullet under "New Members" section)

Archived, electronic copy of past email blasts (back to Nov 2017) can be found on our website here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/mwsa-news/>

MWSA Blasts can be found here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/mwsa-news?tag=Blast>

If you have any questions about navigating the MWSA website, please reach out to MWSA and we'll answer as best we can. Thank you.

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about-possibly because they didn't know about it themselves. That's just beginning of the craziness, danger and adventure. He soon begins to call Laos "Alice in Wonderland". Things just keep getting "curiouser and curiouser" for sixteen years.

But long before those sixteen years are up in 1976 and Mike returns to his native Minnesota he has become "Mysterious Mike". A CIA master spy? An international drug Lord? The "Lawrence of Laos"? A bloody-handed war criminal? An unsung hero? Or is he just what he says he is, an agricultural advisor to the Hmong mountain people. The brave men and women (and children) who fought so long and hard and skillfully against the Communist takeover of Laos. They needed much more than advice on how to improve their crops. They needed help surviving...and in the end they needed help escaping the Communists and

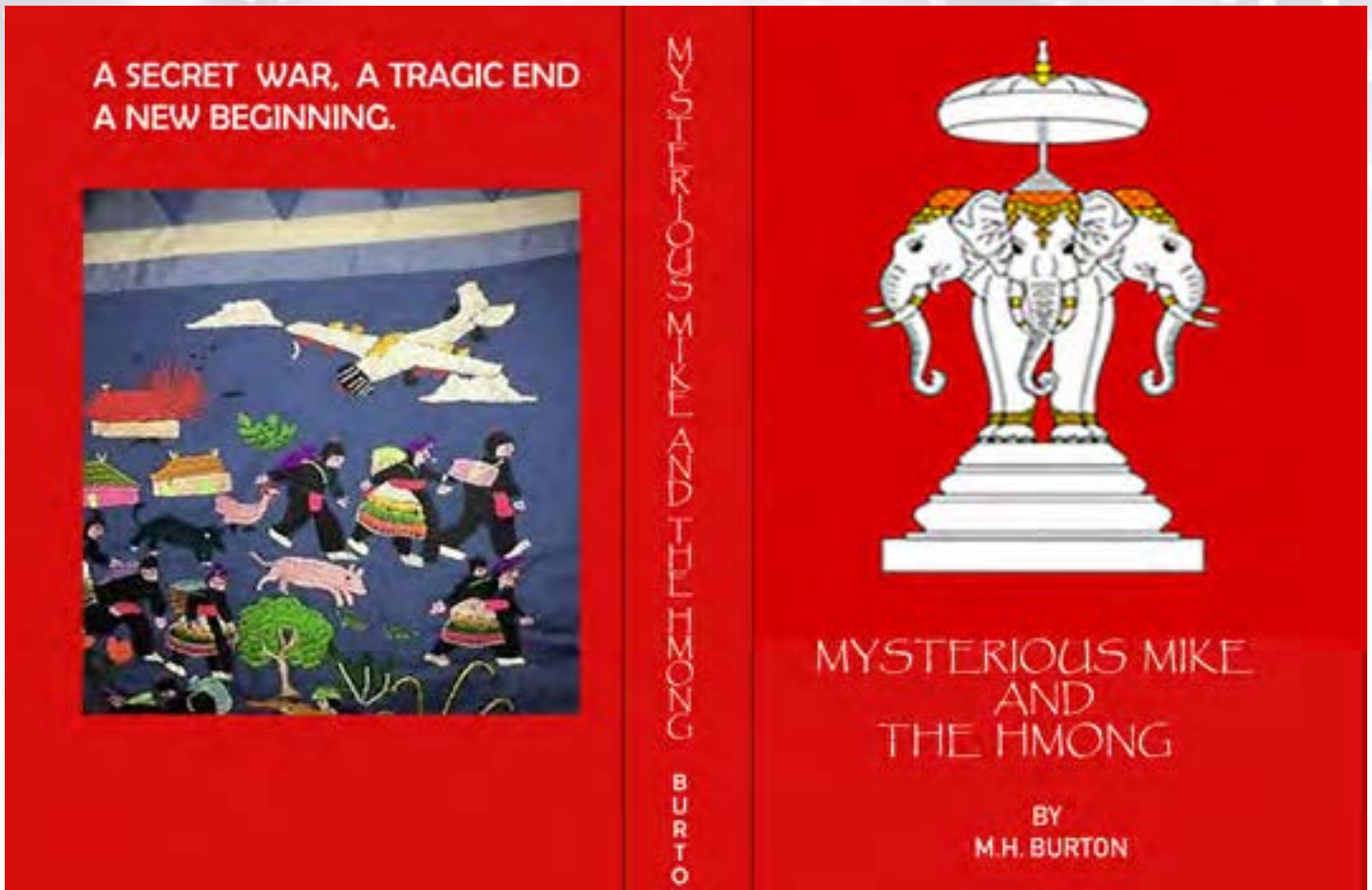
finding a new home...in Minnesota. Mike Bauer did what he could to help them. With all of that!

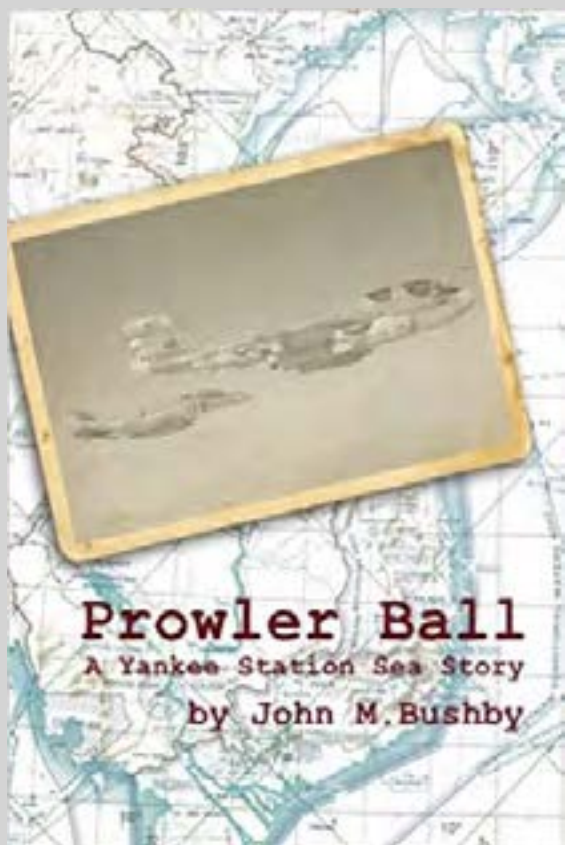
MWSA: What made you interested in writing a book on this particular topic?

JS: My military background. What I learned about life in rural Thailand and Laos when I was stationed there 1968-71 and in the many extended visits I've made there since. What my Thai wife has taught me over the years. What I've learned from the many Hmong and Tai Dam and lowland Lao refugees I'm met in Minnesota.

MWSA: What makes this particular book special to you?

JS: I have always wanted to write something about what I consider to be my "home town" of New Ulm, Minnesota, but had never done it. I was able to put a lot of New Ulm into this book thinly disguised as "New Germania".





Prowler Ball - A Yankee Station Sea Story
by John Bushby

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/149286112X>

Genre: Fiction

Format(s): Soft cover, Kindle

ISBN/ASIN: 9781492861126

No amount of politically correct smugness can detract from the courage and heroism that they displayed in the skies over Vietnam. Though a novel, the chapters in *Prowler Ball* are filled with true incidents and details of missions that were carried out during September 1972 through the middle of 1973, by the members of an elite electronic warfare squadron embarked aboard USS Enterprise. The missions culminated in December 1972 with the airstrikes known as Linebacker II.

WELCOME TO THE MWSA ~ WHO WE ARE

John Cathcart

WE ARE A NATION-WIDE ASSOCIATION of authors, poets, and artists, drawn together by the common bond of military service. Most of our members are active duty military, retirees, or military veterans. A few are lifelong civilians who have chosen to honor our military through their writings or their art. Others have only a tangential relationship to the military. Our only core principle is a love of the men and women who defend this nation, and a deeply personal understanding of their sacrifice and dedication.

Our skills are varied. Some of us are world class writers, with many successful books. Others write only for the eyes of their friends and families. But each of us has a tale to tell. Each of us is a part of the fabric of Freedom. These are our stories...

For more details, [click here](#) to read more about us on our website. Feel free to browse our site and get to know our organization, our members and their works.

Thanks very much for being a part of the MWSA organization.

SAVING HISTORY ONE STORY AT A TIME

MEMOIRS AND ESSAYS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Joe Campolo Jr

INTRODUCTION



The Vietnam War Memorial in Washington D.C, a wall of healing.

This week's story is a collection of memoirs and writings from a group of people who were involved in or affected by the Vietnam War, in some fashion. Many of the people are my personal friends and/or people I have become acquainted with through my writing. There are thousands of other stories out there, and each one deserves to be heard.

This collection of stories includes authors, reporters, military veterans and civilians alike. Each story reflects an effect or experience of the Vietnam War by that particular individual, and yet at the same time common to many of us who were affected by or involved in the war.



Some people have multiple stories from those days. I, like many other military veterans of the war, also have memories as a civilian during our long military involvement in Vietnam. Many of my military experiences appear in some of my earlier blog stories.

I believe everyone from that era has a story to tell, and I am honored to pass on these memoirs and writings which have been shared with me.

I believe you will enjoy them.

JOE GALLOWAY



Joseph Galloway is an award-winning author, newspaper correspondent and columnist. His service during the Vietnam War earned him a bronze star for heroic actions during the battle of the Ia Drang Valley. Along with General Hal Moore, Joe co-authored *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young* along with the sequel, *We Are Soldiers, Still; A Journey Back to the Battlefields of Vietnam*. I am proud to count Joe among my friends. He kindly provided this quote to set the tone for our article:

“We who have seen war will never stop seeing it, in the silence of the night we will always hear the screams.....so this is our story....For we were soldiers once and young.”

*~Joseph Galloway
Vietnam War Correspondent and Author*

JOANN FORRESTER



JoAnn Forrester is an author and business consultant. She has shared her thoughts on those days, and the aftermath.

VIETNAM!

Vietnam, the war of the Baby Boomer generation, left a multitude of raw scars on our national conscience. A war, where 9.2 million American men and women served through-out the world, mostly during an eight year period (Jan. 1, 1965 – March 28, 1973), as warriors and peace keepers.

Of that number, 2,709, 918 Americans, or about 3.5 percent of the boomer generation served in Vietnam, leaving 58,228 killed, 304,705 wounded and 2,400 listed as missing at the end of the war.

For those who came home from the war...it really never ended. There were no parades, no thank you, no you did a great job...for most there was rejection, blame and hostility. Coming home and adjusting to an uncivil world took its toll on our men, women and their families. Many problems resulting from PTSD and Agent Orange were ignored and/or denied by the Veteran Administration and US government thus creating more hardships that resulted in early deaths, suicide, disabilities, and alienation.

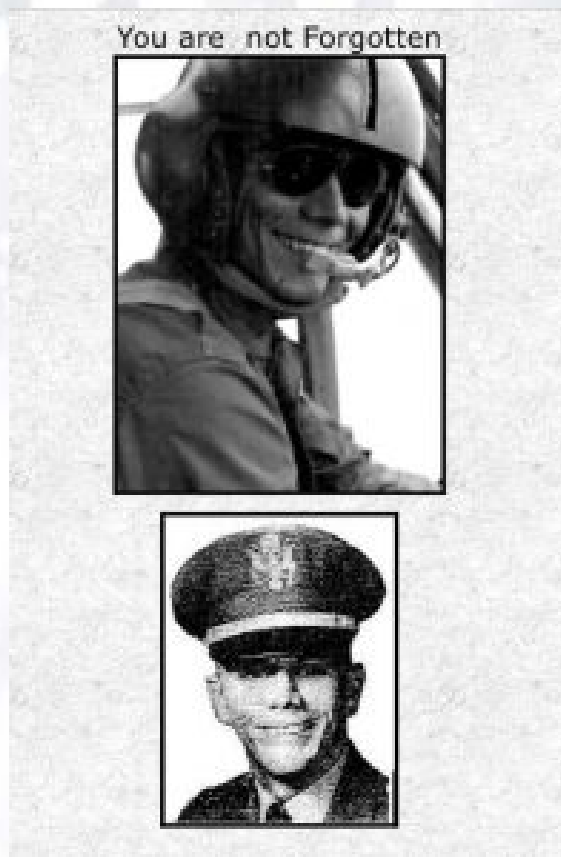
Slowly we have begun to deal with our past and

try to soothe the wounds. Each man and woman who served has a story to be told and heard.

A salute to all who served.

~JoAnn R. Forrester

MAJOR MICHAEL O'DONNELL



Major Michael O'Donnell was a helicopter pilot killed in action near Dak To, Vietnam in March of 1970. Although I did not know Major O'Donnell, we were in Vietnam at the same time, and in some of the same places. This is a poem he penned several months before his death.

*If you are able,
save them a place
inside of you
and save one backward glance
when you are leaving*

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MWSA Recommended Reading List Winter 2018-19

By Bob Doerr

The Military Writers Society of America (MWSA) is an organization of hundreds of writers, poets, and artists drawn together by a common bond of military service. One purpose of our Society is to review the written works of our members. From a compilation of books by our members, we've selected the following as our 2018-19 Winter Recommended Reading List:

U.S Coast Guard by Tom Beard

Uncommon Valor by Dwight Zimmerman

Loose Ends Kill by Bob Doerr

Delta 7 by John Cathcart

All Gave Some by Betsy Beard and Joyce Gilmour (editors)

Child Finder by Mike Angley

Chita Quest by Brinn Colenda

Gated Grief by Leila Levinson

Stay the Rising Sun by Phil Keith

The Final Salute by Kathleen Rodgers

World War I: Inspirations by Pat McGrath Avery and Joyce Faulkner (editors)

Journey of an Adventurousome Dane by Jasmine Tritten

This quarter's list is shorter than most because it comes after our Awards Banquet and before the review season begins. These books reflect the works of a number of our past award winners. I know many of you might be dreaming about the sun and summertime, but forget about it—more snow and cold are on their way.

Besides what's wrong with staying inside and reading a good book? A good mystery, some historical fiction, someone's stories about their experiences in conflict (heck, I can read most anything), can help this winter pass by quickly. Get your face out of your iPad or phone and read a good book! And, if you're looking for a good read, just look at this list.

More info about the books and authors in MWSA can be found at www.mwsadispatches.com

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*for the places they can
no longer go.
Be not ashamed to say
you loved them,
though you may
or may not have always.
Take what they have left
and what they have taught you
with their dying
and keep it with your own.
And in that time
when men decide and feel safe
to call the war insane,
take one moment to embrace
those gentle heroes
you left behind.*

*~Major Michael Davis O'Donnell
1 January 1970, RIP*

JIM NORTHRUP



Jim Northrup was a U.S. Marine Vietnam War Veteran, a proud member of the Ojibwe tribe, a fellow author and a personal friend.

He passed away in August of 2016. *Shrinking Away* is one of Jim's many fine writings, I believe you will enjoy it.

SHRINKING AWAY

Survived the war, but was having trouble surviving the peace. Couldn't sleep more than two hours—was afraid to be without a gun. Nightmares, day mares, guilt and remorse, wanted to stay drunk all the time.

1966 and the VA said Vietnam wasn't a war, they couldn't help but did give me a copy of the yellow pages. Picked a shrink off the list. 50 bucks an hour... I was making 125 a week.

Spent 6 sessions establishing rapport, heard about his military life, his homosexuality, his fights with his mother and anything else he wanted to talk about.

At this rate, we would have got me to 1999. Gave up on that shrink, couldn't afford him and he wasn't doing me any good.

Six months later my shrink killed himself. Great, not only guilty about the war but new guilt about my dead shrink.

If I only had a better job I could have kept on seeing him. I thought we were making real progress, in another 6 sessions I could have helped him.

I realized then that surviving the peace was up to me.

~Jim Northrup (Chibenashi) RIP

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ART REAGAN



Art and his wife

Art Reagan and I became acquainted through my writing. Art pens many short articles himself. He is an avid historian and a very thorough researcher. One of his earlier works also appears on my blog. Art has shared some of his thoughts for our article:

“Vietnam is more than a country, more than a war. It’s the stuff 60’s kids are made of and will be till the day we die. More than anything else, it changed our culture and the way we think about ourselves. Let’s face it, there was a draft on and many young people—confronted with mandatory military service in a country no one had ever heard of—were unwilling to trade the comfort of familiar surroundings to defend a South East Asian country from the specter of a communist takeover. Since then, of course, we’ve all become experts at defending our views of the war and the recollections we are allowed to share.”

~Art Reagan, Vietnam Era Veteran, Veteran of the unseen war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia

JOYCE FAULKNER



Joyce Faulkner is the co-owner of Red Engine Press. She is also an award-winning author and long-time board member of The Military Writer’s Society of America. (MWSA) In addition to being my publisher, I am proud to have Joyce as a friend.

Joyce shared this writing with us:

I was born to hate war. There, I’ve said it. You see, my father was a combat Marine who fought all thirty-six days of the Battle of Iwo Jima. His squad was killed off to a man, except for him. Twice. That experience colored the rest of his life—and most of mine. He had nightmares. He screamed in the night if my mother rolled over and accidentally touched him. He sobbed with pride and sorrow every time he saw the film of those guys raising the flag on top of Suribachi. He made me crouch down under the picture window lest the “Japs” shoot me through it. He beat my mother—and me. When I was ten, he planned to kill us and his parents. Fortunately, my grandfather and uncle wrestled the gun away from him and the cops put him in a straight jacket. He spent at least a year in the hospital writing letters filled with ghosts and anger and paranoia—and sent them to my mother. Inexplicable, unintelligible letters that she hid unopened in her jewelry box where I found them after her death years later.

In the 1960s, I was a college student. Period. I didn't protest the war in Vietnam, although an unending stream of friends, classmates and acquaintances did. That was because an unending stream of our friends, classmates, and acquaintances were going to Vietnam and an unequal number of them were coming home safe and sound. Throughout all of this, my philosophical explorations never veered left or right of center. Neither abyss offered much comfort.

My interactions with young men making the transition from warrior back to student were sorrowful, tender and empathetic. I hung out with them. Held their hands. Listened to their stories. Grieved with them. Wrote about them. Welcomed them home.

However, I had one rule. One absolutely unbreakable rule. I didn't actually date service men—or veterans of war. Any war.

I had a horror of falling in love with a man like my father, who I adored, feared, and worried about day and night. Most especially, I didn't want to wake up in the middle of the night to find my husband pacing the house with a loaded rifle. I didn't want to find him in the bathroom crying until he threw up. I didn't want to sit outside a hospital room while he had shock treatments. I didn't want any more of that. No way.

But then I found the perfect man. We studied together in the library. We both wanted to travel. We both were straight arrow kids. No guns. No smoking. No drugs. Okay, so he drank beer. Our dates consisted of dinner out, a trip to a hobby store to buy a model airplane kit, back to his apartment to watch Star Trek—and then the rest of the evening assembling and painting the model. The best thing about him was that he hadn't passed the physical. You know. THE physical. So, eventually, with all of these special qualities, I let myself fall in love with him.

We had been married three years and six months and were living in Japan when the letter arrived. He'd been drafted. He was one week from turning

twenty-six. The bastards at the draft board decided "latent sugar diabetes" didn't really exist so they reclassified him and drafted him on the same day. And we had to go home.

I was terrified. I cried. I prayed. I begged. I threw up. But no, he wanted to go home and report. He really was a straight arrow, you see. It was Thursday. He had to report on Monday. He packed what he could while I sulked. We telegraphed the draft board that we were out of the country but that we were coming. Despite all the complications, we arrived back in the States late Sunday. In the middle of the night, we got a phone call from Japan. The draft board, on hearing we were hurrying home, had given him a break. He had ninety days to join something. We spent the reprieve arranging for our things to be shipped home—and joining the Air Force.

I was still mad the day we showed up for him to enlist and immediately be sent to off to Basic Training. My fear—that I'd have to stay with my parents and endure my dad's heartbreaking craziness again—was assuaged when my husband arranged for me to stay with his perfectly lovely and sane parents.

He was the oldest inductee that day so he had to carry the orders. By the time we arrived at the airport, my heart was pounding.

"Don't let this change you," I begged.

"I won't," he promised.

We were hugging when the plane taxied up to the gate. He tucked the envelope with the papers under one arm and turned to face the passengers as they came through a sliding glass door. The last passenger through was a business man in an expensive suit. Without a word or even a moan, he dropped his briefcase and fell against me... knocking me backwards. His head crunched when it hit the marble floor. Lying face down at my feet, he released his urine and died.

I screamed. My husband dropped the manila

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PHILIP CAPUTO

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envelope filled with all the draftees' papers, rolled the man over and loosened his tie. "Sir? Sir?"

The airline called for the inductees to board first. The young draftees gathered around the prostrate man, eyes wide.

"Sir?"

"Johnny, he's dead," I said to my husband.

The airline called them again.

My husband stood up. His face had already changed. He picked up the envelope and squared his shoulders. Then he turned—and with the younger draftees following behind him like puppies—went through the gate.

I sat down beside the dead man, realizing that I'd already changed too.

The loud speaker blared. A crowd formed around me. Some blurry someone tried to say something to me. His lips moved but I couldn't understand him. I was still staring at the dead man on the floor, when paramedics hurried up and checked his vitals. "I'm sorry about your father," one of them touched my arm. "He's passed."

That got through to me and I cried—great, open-mouthed sobs—as the plane took off with my husband.

"That's not my father." I pointed at the corpse and blubbered. "I don't know *that* man. My daddy's a Marine."

~Joyce K Faulkner

Author of In the Shadow of Suribachi, Windshift, Vala's Bed, USERNAME, and other books available on Amazon.



Philip Caputo is a Vietnam War Veteran and an award-winning author. His book *A Rumor of War* is considered to be one of the finest writings on the Vietnam War.

I am proud that Phil has shared this excerpt with us.

"Everything rotted and corroded there: bodies, boot leather, canvas, metal, morals. Scorched by the sun, wracked by the wind and rain of the monsoon, fighting in alien swamps and jungles, our humanity rubbed off of us just as the protective bluing rubbed off the barrels of our rifles."

~Philip Caputo, A Rumor of War

RIC HUNTER



Ric Hunter is a Vietnam War Veteran, a retired USAF pilot, and a Red Engine Press award-winning author. His stirring book *Firehammer* has been widely acclaimed.

JIMMY FOX



THE PHABULOUS PHANTOM IN VIETNAM

In May of 1975, I was privileged to fly the F-4D “Phantom” as a pilot in the last battle of the Vietnam War. In that battle, I avenged the loss of my high school best friend, a Marine, killed by an NVA sniper near the Demilitarized Zone in '66.

What’s it like to fly the world’s leading fighter aircraft against an enemy? This enemy was trying to kill some 150 marines trapped on an island in the Gulf of Thailand. Flying the aircraft at this point is instinctive, I can’t remember any particular inputs as I rolled it over on my back and dove at the ground at 500 MPH. What I do remember is making sure I had the weapon switches and gun sight set and above all—not wanting to blow any marines to kingdom come. They were at times in hand-to-hand combat in the jungle. That meant we had to get very close to the bad-guys, Cambodian Khmer Rouge of the “Killing Fields” fame. My wingman and I put 78 rockets and 20 MM cannon on the enemy and ultimately helped free those trapped marines.

The F-4 was a beast, and in the right hands was lethal. Over 5000 of them were produced by McDonnell-Douglas and the Phabulous Phantom was considered the “work horse” of the Vietnam War.

~Ric Hunter is a retired Air Force fighter pilot who wrote a historical fiction novel about this period in the war. It is entitled FIREHAMMER, and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. It is available on Amazon.

Jimmy Fox, a U.S. Army Vietnam War Veteran and I became acquainted at a Veteran’s event some years ago, and I am proud to count him among my friends. Jimmy has penned several writings on the war, *No Peace* is an excellent one.

NO PEACE

We came home nearly forty years ago to a place that we didn’t know, and that didn’t know us. We tried our best to fit in, to go back in time, trying to return to who we were and what we had been just a few short years earlier.

For most of us, it didn’t work. The world that we knew, and that thought they knew us, was no longer there, gone, along with our innocence, and a lot of our friends.

Many things, and in some cases, people, that just a few years earlier had meant so much to us, meant nothing now—and the feeling was mutual. Often, the one who had promised to wait forever, didn’t... but we never knew ‘til we came home.

Sometimes, even churches that we went to before didn’t want us sitting in the same pews with “good” people on Sunday. After all... WE had blood on our hands... Things like this are hard to forget, or forgive.

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EMILY STRANGE

Our “before ‘Nam” buddies, the ones who didn’t go, weren’t anymore. The ones that would still talk to us just wanted to know what we had “DONE” over there. And then didn’t want to listen when we told them.

They soon figured out that we weren’t puttin’ up with their bullshit, and stopped coming around. We had lost friends before... We tried to forget.....

So, time goes by, many of us found someone who accepted us, and was willing to put up with our little “quirks.”

Soon we had kids, a place to live, and in some instances, after many failed attempts, a pretty decent job. And, we had a dog. (him we could trust) It seemed as if we had everything we needed.....We almost forgot..... BUT.....

But there was NO PEACE.

There was NEVER any PEACE. Not really.

Things were just never the same for us. Everyone always wondered why, but they didn’t really want to know.

Some people said “If it’s that Vietnam thing, get over it. It wasn’t really a war, and besides it was a long time ago. Grow up.” Most people don’t deserve to know, most never will. We do.

The people we choose to let into our lives are either like us, or accept us for who we are. We seem to surround ourselves with others, who like us, also cannot forget, yet who we know we can forever, and always, really trust. Those that know what we are about, what is in our hearts, and that share the love we have for each other.

WE WILL NEVER FORGET, that’s what makes us,.....The Vietnam Veteran,..... BROTHERS FOREVER

~Jim Fox. 1st Cav Vietnam War Veteran ’67-’68



Emily Strange, a Vietnam War Donut Dollie, was a writer as well. She passed away in 2016. One of her close friends, fellow Donut Dollie, Rene Johnson, was kind enough to provide one of Emily’s writings for us.

DONUT DOLLIE

I flew to desolate fire bases filled with the tools of war and the men who used them.

It was my job to perform the miracle of making the war disappear (however briefly) for boys who had been trained to kill.

It was my mission to raise the morale of children who had grown old too soon watching friends die.

It was my calling to take away fear and replace it with hope; to return sanity to a world gone insane.

I was the mistress of illusion as I pulled smiles from the dust and heat, the magical genie of “back-in-the-world” as I created laughter in the mud.

But when the show was over I crawled back into my bottle and pulled the cork in tightly behind me.

~Emily Strange, U.S. Red Cross Donut Dollie, Vietnam War, RIP

2018 MWSA ANTHOLOGY

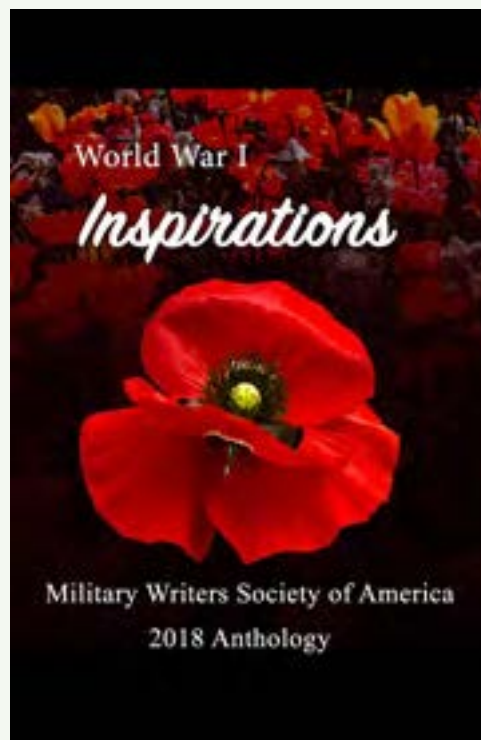


Vietnam, 1970

Putting this article together was a very enjoyable experience. I am indebted to all of the contributors who took the time and effort to provide these writings.

~Joe

From Joe's Blog, originally printed on 8 October 2018 - <https://namwarstory.com/2018/10/memoirs-and-essays-of-the-vietnam-war/> Reprinted with permission.



WORLD WAR I INSPRIATIONS 2018 MWSA ANTHOLOGY

**Other MWSA Anthologies
Available for Purchase:**

*Pulaski County, Missouri
Inspirations
2016 Anthology*

[HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/DP/194326743X](https://www.amazon.com/dp/194326743X)

*Gettysburg Inspirations 2016
Anthology*

[HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/DP/1943267340](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1943267340)

Two volumes of collections of short fiction, historical pieces, poetry, and songs written by members of the Military Writers Society of America.

Be sure to get your copies before they're gone.





MWSA is introducing several new membership improvements for 2019—“More Bang for your Bucks.”

Social Media

We’ve recently launched several new social media initiatives to help spread the word about MWSA and our members’ books. As you know, for the past two awards seasons, we’ve been putting all our books and reviews on our MWSA Goodreads page. Starting with the 2019 season, we’ve expanded that presence to include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Trumblr!

MWSA Social Media Connections



[Facebook](#) | [Goodreads](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Tumblr](#)

You'll also find links to these social media sites at the bottom of every page of our website. Please have a look around when you have a chance. Like us, follow us, retweet us, friend us... in general, please help spread the word about MWSA, the services we provide, and the wonderful literature being produced by our talented members!

See our website's social media page (<https://www.mwsadispatches.com/social-media/>) for more details.

We've automated a lot of this "syndication" process, but we could still use your help if you're interested in volunteering to work with our communications team. Remember, all the time you spend helping MWSA, is also helping you master the social media skills required of all writers these days. Consider it on the job training. To let us know you're interested, just click on the Volunteer button on the "Contact Us" page of our website, or shoot us an email at volunteer@mwsa.co.

Newsletters

Want to keep up with what's going on with *your* MWSA? Want to be the first to know when new books are submitted into our review and awards system (or submitted by member-authors for inclusion in our online library)? Want a reminder when a new edition of *Dispatches* comes out?

You can now do this now via our new Newsletter system. Just sign up to receive these monthly informational emails.

Just visit our website's Newsletter page (<https://www.mwsadispatches.com/newsletters>) to see more details and to sign up. Don't worry, you can always opt-out of any of these newsletter emails with a few mouse clicks.

A Conversation with MWSA Member & Author

ROBERT JACOBS



WITH A LIFELONG PASSION for history, Robert Jacob has been heavily involved in living history interpretation and reenacting for over 40 years. He has participated in activities covering a wide range of time periods including numerous French and Indian War and Revolutionary War reenactment groups, Western Gun Fighter groups, regularly attending Mountain Man Rendezvous and Renaissance Fairs. During the past 12 years he has focused on the golden age of piracy with a concentration on Blackbeard.

Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, Robert graduated from Duquesne University with a Bachelor's Degree in education in 1978. He taught in the West Point public school district, West Point, VA for five years while completing his Master's Degree from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1983.

In 1982, Robert entered the United States Marine Corps reserve and augmented to active

duty in 1983. During his service, he became a military occupational specialty instructor and earned the designation of Master Training Specialist. Later in his career, he became the Commanding Officer of the Marine Detachment at the same school where he had earlier instructed. He achieved the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 5 and retired after 31 years of service in 2013.

While researching information on the golden age of piracy, Robert realized that most of the publications on the subject were contradictory and even incorrect. This motivated him to write his current publication, *A Pirate's Life in the Golden Age of Piracy*.

MWSA: Why did you become an author in the first place?

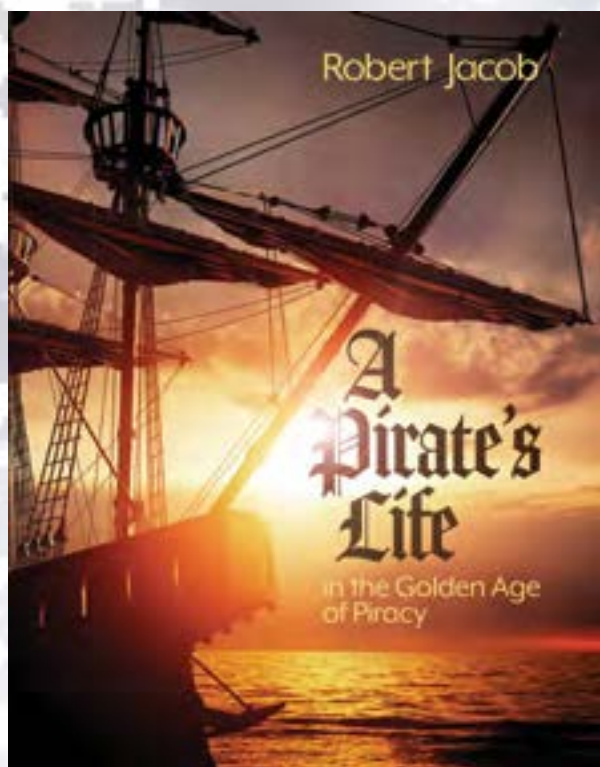
ROBERT JACOBS: I am a living history historian and re-enactor. In 2006, I became interested in pirates and began to do research. I was continually disappointed as I read literally every book on pirates that I could find. Over time, I began to realize that I could do a better job. That was the start of this book. After ten years of research and literary composition, my book was published.

MWSA: When and why did you join MWSA?

RJ: Back in August of 2018 just after my book was published, I began looking for organizations to join in order to connect socially with experienced authors and publishers, to learn about the strange and confusing world of marketing literary works, and to network within the publishing world. In googling organizations, I found the MWSA and immediately joined.

MWSA: Why did you choose to work in this genre?

RJ: I have always loved history. It is the only genre I regularly read.



MWSA: Will you briefly list your other books for us?

RJ: This is my first one.

MWSA: Tell us a little bit about this book.

RJ: In researching the historical record of pirates in the golden age of piracy, I quickly realized that many of those books were contradictory, non-factual, or downright wrong. Even the good ones didn't tell the entire story. I have gotten to the truth about all the most famous and important privateers and pirates between 1625 and 1722 and tell their stories in a chronological order, tying in the politics of the day. I also delve into their daily lifestyles, even describing what they ate and how they dressed.

MWSA: What made you interested in writing a book on this particular topic?

RJ: As mentioned above, I am a living historian and re-enactor who became interested in pirates. As I researched the topic, I quickly realized that most of the books on the market were inaccurate, poorly written, narrowly focused, or just rehashes of earlier publications. There needed to be one

book that told the entire true story of pirates in the golden age. What began as a small historical document I intended to share with my fellow re-enactors, eventually developed into my book, *A Pirate's Life in the Golden Age of Piracy*.

MWSA: What makes this particular book special to you?

RJ: In addition to being my first book, it is definitely a product of intense research over a ten-year period. Beyond that, it is precisely the book I wanted to read back in 2006. It is a work that I am very proud of.

SYNOPSIS

Think you know everything about Pirates? Fascination with Pirates has for centuries driven stories of heroic proportions—true, exaggerated, and imaginary. Legends of their high seas debauchery continue to inspire modern day books, movies, and groups, dedicated to acting out their past. Pirates are heroes to some and the lowest of crooks to others, but do we really know the truth?

The facts are that the historical record on pirates is vague, contradictory, and rarely accurate. Digging deep into the true history of Piracy and those who lived this life, Robert Jacob has unearthed a treasure of information that allows you to see, feel, and experience the true life and motivation of pirates in their Golden Age.

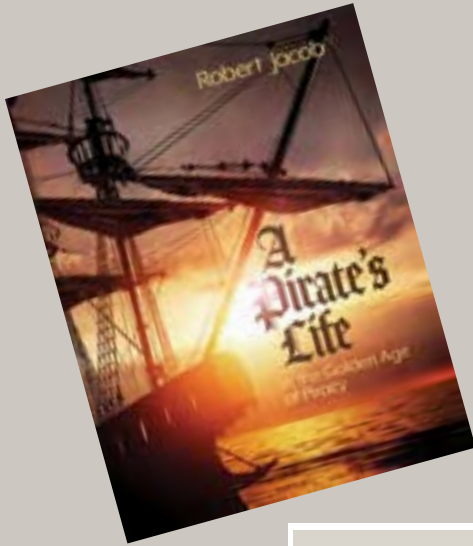
Come aboard and see what pirates actually wore, the type of ships they used, and how they planned and executed some of the most cunningly successful heists ever known. *A Pirate's Life in the Golden Age of Piracy* will fascinate and transport you back in time with rich stories and visual accuracy. If you thought you knew all about pirates you're in for some surprising revelations that will leaving you even more intrigued!





DOCUMEANT PUBLISHING

Keeping the Author at the Helm of their Authorship Journey Since 2005



Robert Jacob



Attention Members of MWSA:

We are offering another benefit to members of Military Writers Society of America. If you are launching a new book, send us the good news and we will introduce it to our MWSA audience. The first three submissions each quarter will receive a 1/3 page ad (\$100 value for non-members) in Dispatches. On submission, you will be told if your book will appear in the magazine. If you miss the magazine, you can request an announcement in the monthly email blast.

In addition, each issue of Dispatches will feature one two-page spread MWSA author interview which will include cover art, author headshot and bio. The interview will be limited to the first request each quarter.

Here are the rules:

- ✓ You must be a member in good standing of MWSA.
- ✓ Your book must be published, complete with an ISBN. We will not accept ARCs or manuscripts.
- ✓ Your date of publication must be no more than twelve months before requested date of ad in.
- ✓ Your book must comply with the rules specified by the Awards Program, i.e., no pornography, must be respectful of the government of the United States of America and the United States Military.

Here's how to submit:

- ✓ Submit your cover art (jpg), genre and subcategory, a summary, and where your book can be purchased.
- ✓ The quarter you would like your ad to appear in.
- ✓ If you would like a staff member to interview you for a full article about your book, please indicate that in your submission. Only one interview per issue, so first come first serve.
- ✓ Send to patavery@gmail.com

BECOME AN MWSA REVIEWER

If you'd like to help out and become one of our MWSA reviewers, we'd love to have you join us!

All it takes is about 45 minutes to an hour of training via video conference—or over the phone.

- You'll get to read a wide variety of books
- Books are assigned on a volunteer basis—you pick what you read.
- After submitting your review, the books are yours to keep

Reviewers evaluating a minimum number of books (exact number varies) will receive a small Amazon gift certificate acknowledging their contribution. The more books you review, the larger the certificate.

Most importantly, you can "pay it forward" by helping out a fellow MWSA author!

If you'd like to get more details or volunteer to help out, please use our [Contact Form](#)

A CHANCE TO SPEAK UP FOR VETERANS

W. Larry Dandridge



Lt. Colonel (Retired) W. Larry Dandridge giving the keynote address to the leaders of Boeing Charleston and 1300 Boeing Employees (almost 20% of their workforce) who are veterans.

LT. COLONEL (RETIRED) W. LARRY DANDRIDGE was invited by the Boeing Employees Veterans Association (BEVA) and the Boeing Company to speak at their annual Veterans Day Celebration.

Larry is a Vietnam era wounded warrior, volunteer Patient Adviser at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, Friend of Fisher House Charleston, the VP for Veteran Affairs for the Charleston SC Chapter of the Association of the US Army (AUSA), and the author of a the non-fiction, all five-star reviewed, 2018 Award winning, military

history and action book, *BLADES OF THUNDER* (Book One).

Larry and other guests of BEVA were given a tour of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner factory and lunch.

Afterwards, at the ceremony, Larry thanked veterans and their families for their selfless military service. Larry also thanked Boeing and its employees, especially the employees who are veterans, for supporting our veterans, for transitioning military men and women from military life to becoming Boeing employees, for donating to and supporting the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center and Fisher House Charleston --- and other generous support they provide to veterans, our troops, and the LowCountry communities in SC.

Larry also talked about:

- The history of Veterans Day and the sacrifice of our military men and women and their families, the wonderful Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center and its clinics, the beautiful and terrific Fisher House Charleston.
- The need for veterans and their family members to find out what their federal and state VA benefits are.
- The great source of help the SC County Veterans Affairs Offices are to veterans.
- The need for all Americans to support our military service members, veterans, and their families.
- The need for businesses, patriotic organizations, and individuals to volunteer and donate at our Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, a five-star hospital that has been in the top 10% of all public and private hospitals in the US for quality of care and customer satisfaction for many years.
- The need for folks to volunteer and donate

at our most beautiful and miraculous Fisher House Charleston. A place where veterans and their family members can stay for free while their loved one is in the VA and other hospitals in Charleston.

- The need for veterans (and all Americans) to re-double their efforts to promote tolerance and to prevent hate, bigotry, lack of tolerance, and discrimination of all kinds in our country.

Larry is on several advisory committees, including the Director's (CEO's) VSO Advisory Council, the Customer Service Council, and the Patient and Family Advisory Committee, at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center.

He has given over 80 speeches, done free meet-the-author events (book signings), and appeared on Channel 2 and 4 television supporting our beloved VA Medical Center and Fisher House Charleston.

Larry also gave a Veterans Day Speech for the Crossings at Westcott Senior Community on Monday, November 12, 2018.

He assisted the Ladies of Edisto Island Blanket Ministry deliver blankets to Fisher House Charleston on November 14, 2018.

He spoke to and gave out Veterans Appreciation pins at the Southern Palms Senior Community in Summerville, SC on Thursday, November 15th 2018 in Ladson, SC. He also spoke and did a book signing for the Clemson SC Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Chapter on Monday, November 19, 2018 in Clemson, SC.

Larry always promotes our troops, veterans, and their families, the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, and Fisher House Charleston when he speaks and does book signings.

Larry primarily wrote ***BLADES OF THUNDER*** (Book One) to help raise funds for Fisher House Charleston.

Larry's speeches, book signings, and book sales have thus far raised more than \$65,000.00 for Fisher House Charleston.

Larry's contributions and unending charity have earned him the nickname "Fisher House Charleston's Ambassador of Goodwill".

You can contact Larry at phone 843-276-7164 or email LDandridge@earthlink.net



A Conversation with MWSA Member & Author

NANCY PANKO

BASED ON ACTUAL EVENTS, Nancy Panko's award winning novel, *Guiding Missal*, is narrated by a small Catholic prayer book carried in the pockets of three generations of servicemen, beginning in 1942 during WWII and ending in 1993 with the Battle of Mogadishu during Blackhawk Down. It is a tale of faith, family, patriotism, and miracles both on and off the battlefield. The book began as a result of efforts to re-create her father-in-law's military history as a birthday present for her husband, Butch, on the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. As she held the Military Missal in her hands, Nancy thought, "If only this little book could talk." In her novel, she gives the prayer book a voice.

The making of *Guiding Missal* was a May 2017 segment on WRAL-TV's The Tar Heel Traveler. Nancy and her book participated on Robby Dilmore's WTRU radio show, Kingdom Pursuits. The Military Writers' Society of America presented *Guiding Missal* with the 2017 Silver Award-for Historical Fiction. *Guiding Missal* has over two dozen five-star reviews on Amazon and has been lauded in the Raleigh News & Observer in Cindy Shaffer's Book Beat column.

Nancy is a retired pediatric nurse and a twelve-time contributor to *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and *Guidepost* magazines. She is a member of the Cary Senior Writing Circle, The Light of Carolina Christian Writers' Group, and The Military Writers' Society of America.

She and her husband migrated from Lock Haven, Pennsylvania to North Carolina in 2009. They have two children and four grandchildren. They love being in, on, or near the water of Lake Gaston with their family.

MWSA: How did you find out about MWSA?

NANCY PANKO: My Publisher, Wally Turnbull



of Light Messages in Durham, NC, sent me an email saying he thought I ought to enter my novel, *Guiding Missal*, in the 2017 contest as a Historical Fiction contender. He continued, "I think it could win a medal." I joined MWSA, entered the contest, and won a Silver Medal for Historical Fiction.

MWSA: What was your inspiration for your book?

NP: A pocket-sized Catholic Military Missal was returned to my husband in 1994 after having been carried in the pockets of three generations of service members over a 50-year span. It had given guidance and solace to the men who carried it in their pockets during The Battle of the Bulge in World War II, the cold war and building of the Berlin Wall in the 1960s, and during fighting in the dusty streets of Mogadishu, Somalia during what became known as "Blackhawk Down." As I held the fifty-year old military missal in my hands, I thought, "If only this prayer book could

talk.” I think it was then that the seed was planted to write about its journey.

MWSA: What writing projects are you working on these days?

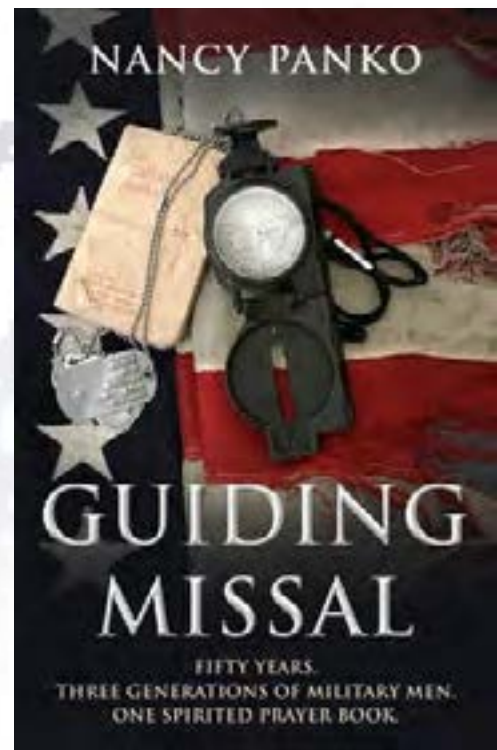
NP: I had my tenth submission to *Chicken Soup for the Soul* published in a January 9, 2019 release, *Messages From Heaven*. Presently, I’m working on a second novel about a guardian angel who comes into the human realm with a newborn baby and stays to protect the child until her days are done. It is a generational story beginning during the World War II era on a dairy farm in central New York State. I continue to submit short stories to *Chicken Soup* based on my personal experiences in hopes of reaching the magic number of 20 contributions.

MWSA: Now that you’ve finished writing and publishing *Guiding Missal*, what do you know now that you wish you had known before you started?

NP: I wish I had had more education in the writing process. When I started *Guiding Missal* I had only taken a Creative Writing class in my Senior year of high school. I learned that I had some talent to write but life took some twists and turns. As a Registered Nurse, we had training on how to write clear, concise nursing care plans. Twenty-three years of care plans and charting gave me a background of proper grammar and use of the English language, the rest was desire to tell a story. I learned as I went along with the help of great editors, through participating in webinars, and taking advantage of free writing classes at our local colleges and universities. It was a process but I had a lot to learn. The payoff was that I was first published with *Chicken Soup for the Soul* at age 71 and published my first novel at age 74!

MWSA: How did becoming a Silver Medal Winner help promote your book?

NP: The prestige and honor of being recognized by MWSA was respected by folks who looked at my book and made it more likely that they would buy it. The Silver Medal sticker on the book was



always an attention getter. I believe being an award-winner has resulted in more speaking engagements. We live in an area populated by military and former military families and the book is very popular with them. I have affiliated myself with a local organization, Military Missions in Action, attending events selling books with a portion of my proceeds going to this worthy cause of helping vets and their families. Everyone always wants to know about the Military Writers’ Society of America.

MWSA: How did you get started writing?

NP: I loved English, literature, reading and wrote stories and poems for special occasions for my family from the time I was a school aged child. I tried my hand at submission to *Reader’s Digest Humor In Uniform* in the mid 1990s and was accepted. It was only a 400 word count submission but they paid \$400! I thought I was “hot stuff.” The next evening our water heater exploded and it cost us \$475 to replace it. I learned quickly not to get too “puffed up” because the deflation isn’t worth it. Years later, after my nursing career of twenty-three years, I was relating a story of a

Continued on page 38

Continued from page 37

patient who changed my life. My friend encouraged me to write the story in the hopes that it could help someone reading it. I did. It was published in a magazine in California then in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, and finally under a different title in *Guidepost* Magazine. I had the writing bug from that point on.

MWSA: What was the most interesting part of your writing journey?

NP: In order to begin *Guiding Missal* I had to re-created my father-in-law's military history. Everything he'd brought home from his Tour of Duty, including citations and medals, was gone. A fire in the Army records center in St. Louis, Missouri had destroyed his section of records. After unsuccessfully trying the court house and other leads, I felt defeated.

A week later, a phone call changed everything. My brother-in-law, Pete remembered Dad receiving a yearly newsletter from the secretary of the 289th Cannon Company. He had kept it! It had names, addresses and phone numbers. I felt like I'd won the lottery.

I contacted the gentleman who sent the newsletter. He encouraged me to call others on the list, giving me names. These men had served with Dad and knew stories no one in our family had ever heard. I began personal interviews and received letters from members of the company, men in their eighty's, who were eager to tell their stories, as well as Dad's. They gave life to Dad as a soldier. One man sent a booklet of the history of the 289th Cannon Company. Others sent actual war maps detailing their trek across Europe, driving the Germans out of France, the liberation of concentration camps and the surrender of the Germans.

A long letter from Uncle Joe, Dad's brother, gave me much more information and some very funny stories. Both Dad and Joe were serving in the ETO (European Theater of Operations.) It was 1945 in France, and the brothers had not seen each other

for two years. As fate would have it, they were reunited when they literally ran into each other in a tent. Both were marking time while waiting to be shipped back to the States. Uncle Joe added humor and laughter with page after page of stories of their antics.

Without the volume of material these men provided, it would have been impossible to tell Dad's story. I began to compile the information in a notebook. That single notebook grew to three notebooks.

MWSA: What would like us to know about you and/or *Guiding Missal*?

NP: *Guiding Missal - Fifty Years*. Three Generations of Military Men. One Spirited Prayer Book was an honor for me to research and write. I spoke to many heros and listened to their stories. In tribute to all who served, I needed to get this story right because men died serving our great country. The story is historically correct but the human element also had to be authentic. The men I interviewed made it all possible. Receiving validation from MWSA was a great honor. I am happy to say that through this validation, *Guiding Missal* has been recently approved by the U.S. Army to be featured in a book signing event at the 82nd Airborne Museum in Fayetteville, NC to be announced.

MWSA: How is your book, *Guiding Missal* available?

NP: It is available in print, digital and audio formats. Through Amazon, Audible.com, and iTunes."





Onishivan, 1945

by David Andrew Westwood

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1520932359>

When one of the paper's combat correspondents is killed, Gil is offered the chance to finally write for the paper, but on what will become the arena for the last battle of WWII, the Japanese-held island of Okinawa.

Gil flies out, and follows a unit of Marines around the island until they are stopped at the hideous battle for the south. He watches as one after another of his new colleagues is killed. But there is a larger destiny in store for Gil, one that affects his wife back home.

Genre(s): Fiction, Historical Fiction

Format(s): Soft cover, Kindle

ISBN/ASIN: 978-1520932354

Deliberate Deception

by Joe Porrazzo

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07KPV4L46>

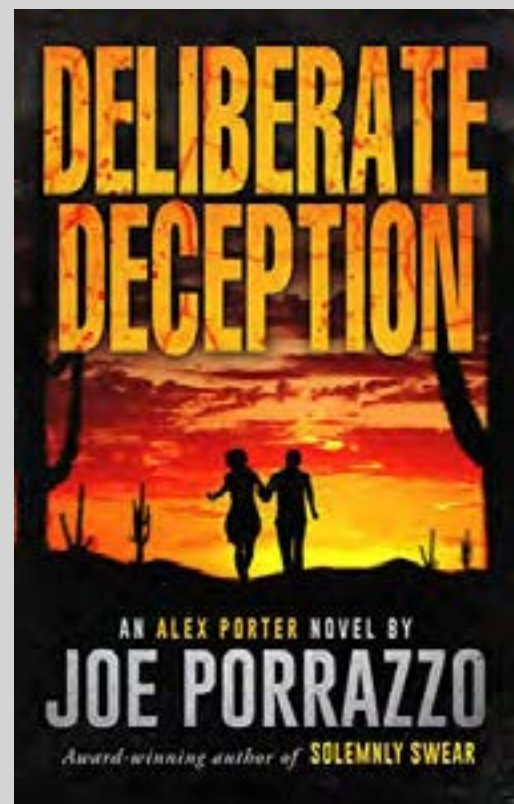
DELIBERATE DECEPTION heralds the return of Alex Porter; retired United States Air Force OSI agent turned private investigator, in another heart-pounding Joe Porrazzo suspense thriller.

Seven months after leaving New England, Alex, still grieving the tragic deaths of his wife and daughter, gets a call from his friend Joe Prater. Prater's old army buddy has gone missing from his home in Tucson, and Joe wants Alex to check it out.

Genre(s): FictionMystery/Thriller

Format(s): Soft cover, Kindle, ePub/iBook

ISBN/ASIN: 978-0578422626 ASIN: 057842262X



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...from \$0.00

THIS IS FOR SUBMITTING your book to the MWSA library only.

- MWSA will **NOT** review your book, nor will it be considered for award using this option.
- Members in good standing may submit one book per year cost-free (as a member benefit) for inclusion in our online library.
- If you'd like to add additional book(s), please chose the "Extra Book" option (cost \$5.00 per book).
- MWSA will add your book as quickly as we can... but it may take some time (depending on webmaster workload).
- We are limiting submissions to 50 for each option to make sure we can handle the workload and get your book included on our website in a timely manner.
- If an option is listed as "Sold Out," please check back later or contact the MWSA Awards Directors... we may be able to include your book once we've cleared any backlog.
- MWSA's online library will include your book for at least one calendar year after it's added and will remain online until and unless MWSA transitions to a new/different website.

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<http://www.mwsadispatches.com>



MWSA DISPATCHES IS LOOKING FOR MEMBER SUBMISSIONS.

We have opportunities available for you as a member in good standing, from [Author Interviews](#) to Poetry submissions, to Book Profiles (three books, first come-first served, will be showcased in the Dispatches every quarter).

If you'd like to write a feature article or have further questions, please email Sandi Linhart at sandstar62@mail.com or Pat McGrath Avery at PatAvery@gmail.com. Thanks.



