

DISPATCHES

MILITARY
WRITERS
SOCIETY OF
AMERICA

Rescuing History One Story at a Time
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WINTER 2021

2021
ANTHOLOGY
SUBMISSIONS
OPEN SEASON



2021-22
MWSA BOARD
BIOGRAPHIES
Pg 4





LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Sandra Miller Linhart

WRITE, WRITE, WRITE, AND THEN write some more! That's my advice for getting through the onslaught. Covid, politics, poverty—if we're able to stay above it, we all know people who're not able or willing. Remember we're in the same boat and there's no reason in the entire Universe to treat others in any way but kind—regardless of opposing opinions.

As editor for this wonderful organization's quarterly magazine, I do have a little bit of power to try to bring a smile to your face. Therefore, I decided this issue would be fun and inviting—hence the snowmen. I hope you find them engaging. No politics here. No postulating, no gloating, no fingers pointing, no rhetoric, no blaming, no bias or double standards.

We have much to be thankful for in this new year, 2021. We have good friends and family. We have organizations like MWSA in which we find a voice. I hope you use it.

One way you can use your voice this year is to write an article for *Dispatches*. Submission deadlines are listed on page 17. Another is to submit a short story, allegory, poem, or piece for MWSA's 2021 Anthology (page 21).

No hate. This country has had too much hate in 2020. No politics. This country has had too much divisive politics in 2020. Let's commit to each other to find the silver lining in all situations and submit articles that foster healing and growth rather than more divide. Rev. Bill McDonald created and grew this organization for healing through the written word. Nothing has changed in that respect. Enjoy & In Joy!



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bob Doerr

IT'S JANUARY, AND I'M HOPING 2021 turns out to be a great year for all of us. We have a new board (see page 4), an anthology in the works (more information is on page 21), and a much better chance of MWSA having a real membership conference this year. We have already started our periodic online writing classes, and if you haven't participated in one, I highly recommend them.

In 2021, we will continue to explore ways to enhance the value of membership in MWSA. COVID-19 halted many of our outreach efforts, and put a hold on the idea of small regional writer workshops. They will still be on hold for a while in 2021, but time and vaccine give us a light at the end of the tunnel.

Our membership is growing and most of our operations are running smoothly. We continue to look for book reviewers and someone to manage our social media platforms. If you would like to help out, please let us know.

Thanks again,

- Bob Doerr



MWSA OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 2021-22

MWSA New Board Biographies

PRESIDENT

BOB DOERR



AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR BOB DOERR HAS been a member of MWSA since 2010. He served as MWSA's previous president. Bob grew up in a military family, graduated from the Air Force Academy, and had a career of his own in the Air Force, reaching the rank of Colonel. His education credits include a Masters in International Relations from Creighton University.

After retiring from the Air force, Bob worked as a financial advisor for eight years before becoming a full-time author. He has fifteen published books and is the co-author of another, Bob was selected by the Military Writers Society of America as its Author of the Year for 2013. The Eric Hoffer Awards awarded Bob's book *No One Else to Kill* its 2013 first runner up to the grand prize for commercial fiction.

Bob lives in Garden Ridge, Texas, with Leigh, his wife of 45 years, and Cinco, their ornery cat. Bob hopes to continue to bring more value to membership in MWSA and to and expand MWSA's outreach programs.

VICE PRESIDENT

JIM GREENWALD



ANAVY VETERAN, NRA MEMBER, American Legion member, member of NARF (Native American Rights Fund) and lifetime member of MWSA, Jim has an undergraduate degree in Applied Science, Business Administration, Business Management and a Masters Degree in Human Resource Management & Industrial Relations.

He is the former MWSA lead reviewer from 2009-15 and worked with Joyce Faulkner on initial book review/awards process. He is responsible along with Louis Intres for

MWSA's successful application to become a non-profit organization. He has organized a number of MWSA conferences, including the 2020 New London, CT conference now rescheduled for 2021.

Jim feels MWSA needs to increase both membership and overall participation. This takes more than the board doing its job, it also takes active involved members.

TREASURER

HUGH SIMPSON



HUGH HAS SERVED AS MWSA Treasurer and Director since October 1, 2018. A retired Lieutenant Colonel in the USMCR, he served as an Aviator (H46,UH1-N,AH1-W), Forward Air Controller, and Battalion Air Officer.

A lawyer, he and his wife of thirty years have a law firm and title insurance business. They manage several other family real estate entities in Plano, Texas. They have three children.

In his spare time, he is an award-winning author, having published two books. The covid pandemic has delayed the release of his third book.

SECRETARY

PHIL KEITH



PHIL ATTENDED HARVARD ON AN NROTC scholarship, completed his AB degree in history, and was designated a Distinguished Naval Graduate upon commissioning in 1968. Phil trained as a naval aviator, then completed both the Naval Justice and Air Intelligence Officer Schools before joining his first squadron in Vietnam. He served three Vietnam deployments between 1970 and 1973 earning the Purple Heart, Air Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Commendation Medal, and several unit and campaign awards.

After his wartime service, Phil transitioned to the active Naval Reserve and from the line to naval intelligence. Between 1973 and his retirement in 1990, CAPT Keith served in various air intelligence assignments. During his reserve service, CAPT Keith was awarded the Naval Reserve Medal, a second Navy Commendation Medal, the Republic of

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DIRECTORS AT LARGE

JOSEPH BADAL



Korea Presidential Unit Citation, and Korean Defense Service Medal. Briefly re-activated for service during the Gulf War (1990-91), CAPT Keith served in Yemen and the US Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, earning a Bronze Star.

In his civilian career, Phil worked as a sales and marketing executive for the Jostens Corporation, a COO for Berlitz Publishing, and as a Senior Vice President of Simon & Schuster. He is also a former assistant professor of business at Long Island University and adjunct instructor at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Since 2008 Phil has been a full-time author and has written three fictional novels and seven nonfiction books to date, winning numerous awards.

Phil serves on the planning board for the Town of Southampton, writes an award-winning column for the Southampton Press, and is a member of VFW Post 5350, American Legion Post 924, the Disabled American Veterans, and Vietnam Veterans of America. He advocates for fellow veterans concerning disability compensation and issues related to Agent Orange, of which he, too, is a victim. He has served two years as a director for MWSA.

He lives in Southampton, New York, with his partner Laura Lyons and son Pierce.

JOSEPH IS THE AUTHOR OF sixteen award-winning suspense novels. He is an Amazon and Barnes & Noble Best-Selling Author, a two-time winner of the Tony Hillerman Prize, a three-time Military Writers Society of America Gold Medal Winner, an Eric Hoffer Prize Winner, and a four-time “Finalist” in the International Book Awards competition.

Prior to his literary career, he served six years in the U.S. Army, including tours of duty in Vietnam and Greece, from which he received numerous decorations. After his military service, he worked for thirty-six years in the banking and finance industries and was a founding director and senior executive of a New York Stock Exchange-listed company for sixteen years.

He is currently a member of the New Mexico State Board of Finance, Chairman & President of the New Mexico Small Business Investment Corporation, and a board member of Sacred Wind Communications. Joe is a member of Military Writers Society of America, International Thrillers Writers,



Sisters in Crime, Croak & Dagger, Public Safety Writers Association, International Crime Writers Association, and Southwest Writers Workshop.

JACK WOODVILLE LONDON



ZITA BALLINGER FLETCHER



ZITA IS A JOURNALIST, AUTHOR, and award-winning military history writer. She has published more than ten books, including the first published collection of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's war photography, and has written numerous articles published in the U.S. and the U.K. One of her military history articles won a 2nd place award from the National Federation of Press Women (NFPW) in 2020.

She is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and volunteers to support U.S. Veterans. She is also a member of the U.K. Military Historical Society. She serves as a book reviewer for MWSA and enjoys being active in the group.

JACK IS A WRITER, HISTORIAN, teacher, and retired lawyer. He is MWSA's Director of Writing Education. His writing career began with his appointment as managing editor of the University of Texas International Law Journal during law school. He studied the craft of fiction at the Academy of Fiction, St. Céré, France and at Oxford University.

He is the author of three novels, a non-fiction book on the craft of writing, and more than thirty articles on history, literature, travel, law, and art. His 2018 novel, *French Letters: Children of a Good War*, won the Gold Medal for Book of the Year in war and military fiction. Jack has written more than thirty articles on literature and history as well as a number of technical articles on court procedure and evidence. His article *Into the Hornets' Nest* in *Military Magazine* was cited as the best World War I article of 2015.

He regularly conducts writing programs for veterans. His teaching travels have included presenting talks and courses in cities throughout the United States.

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Jack lives in Austin, Texas with his wife, Alice.

JOAN RAMIREZ



JOAN LIVES IN THE New York metropolitan area, is a published photojournalist, and has taught English as a Second Language to students around the globe. She was the Manager of Communications for the Engineering Department of the Port Authority of NY/NJ for many years. During her tenure there, she taught a monthly writing course to staff and wrote reports that, ultimately, were signed off by the governors of both states.

She has just completed her first suspense novel, which is set in WWII and was created from war memorabilia left to her by her beloved medic and medal-winning uncle. History is her favorite topic.



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). We offer this opportunity to be published in a national magazine exclusively to our membership.

If you'd like to write a feature article (1500 words or less, please) or have further questions, please email:

dispatches@mwsa.co

2021 WINTER RECOMMENDED READING LIST

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. As this was a quiet period for book reviews, I took a look at some older books by our members, especially those by our new board members, to compile the 2021 Winter Recommended Reading List:

- ★ A Distant Field: A Novel of World War I.....by RJ MacDonald
 - ★ Borderline.....by Joseph Badal
- ★ Wesselhoeft: Traded to the Enemy.....by Adolf Wesselhoeft/Shirley Wesselhoeft
 - ★ Winged Brothers.....by Ernest Snowden
 - ★ Lighthouses of America.....by Tom Beard
 - ★ The Birdhouse Man.....by Rick Destefanis
- ★ Bernard Montgomery's Art of War.....by Zita Fletcher (Zita Steele)
 - ★ All Blood Runs Red.....by Phil Keith & Tom Clavin
 - ★ No One Else to Kill.....by Bob Doerr
 - ★ Across the Bridge.....by jim greenwald
 - ★ French Letters; Virginia's War.....by Jack London
 - ★ Borderline Decision.....by Hugh Simpson
 - ★ Youth in Asia.....by Allen Tiffany

The winter weather can be quite depressing, but as we can't go anywhere with this coronavirus hanging around, we might as well make the most of it and stay home and read a good book.

"Where might I find a great book to read?" you might ask. How about starting with the list above?

More info on these books and the authors can be found on our website:

WWW.MWSADISPACHES.COM.

MEDICAL JOURNEY

Frank Taylor

IN DECEMBER 2018 A TOUCHSTONE Imaging radiologist, Dr. Dale Fisher read my MRI. His findings: possibly a nasopharyngeal carcinoma at the base of my skull.

This type of carcinoma is usually found in heavy drinking and smoking Southeast Asian men. I'm a Caucasian Texan, do not smoke but drink two glasses of wine daily.

Dr. Fisher is a leading radiologist who provides accurate readings—at least that's what Touchstone's website states.

Touchstone Imaging, a private company headquartered in Franklin, TN, operates forty or so facilities located in the South and Mid-West, but none in Tennessee. I had no idea the life-changing journey I would take based on the word "carcinoma" showing up in a report.

My medical odyssey began in August of 2018, when Dr. Nimish Petal, ENT Plano, TX, did right and left sinus surgery for pain above my upper left jaw. Eleven days after surgery, a severe pain developed in my right ear.

For the next month, Dr. Calley, primary care, Dr Mitlyng, internist, and Dr Patel treated me with antibiotics, steroids, and saline sinus rinsing. To ease the pain, I took two Tylenol tablets, four times a day.

After a month with no relief, Dr. Patel ordered a CT scan of my head. Dr. Fisher read the image and found nothing suspicious. Suspecting an infected bone in my ear, Dr. Patel prescribed antibiotics while I completed a series of nuclear imaging at Texas Health hospital in Plano, TX. Another month passed with no relief. The pain prevented me from pressing

my right ear to a pillow while sleeping.

Searching for a second opinion, I consulted Dr. Kevin Lunde, ENT. He sent me to a neurologist, Dr. Supriya Thirunarayanan in Plano. She ordered an MRI.

Dr. Fisher's possible carcinoma findings prompted Dr. Patel to order PET-CT SK BS imaging.

On December 14, 2018, Dr. Rodney R. Bowman of Medical City Dallas reported nodules in the lungs and a mass in right nasopharyngeal consistent with malignancy.

Receiving recommendations for an oncologist, I made an appointment with Dr. Phillip Kavoor in Plano. Dr. Kavoor is one of 490 physicians and one lawyer practicing with Texas Oncology, a private cancer treatment company.

Dr. Kavoor said, "I treat patients that God sends me."

If God sent me, He did not share it with me.

Dr. Kavoor said, "Before there can be any treatment, we must have a biopsy." He recommended Dr. Robert M. Steckler, a head and neck surgeon associated with Texas Oncology.

Dr Steckler arranged for an operating room at Baylor hospital in Plano for December 20, 2018. He said he was going to do a blind biopsy. An old-school doctor, I thought he knew his business.

After three hours in the operating room, I woke up in recovery in extreme pain. Entering through my right nostril, it felt like

Dr. Steckler used a machete to cut his way to the back of my skull. I told the recovery nurse I hurt too much to go home.

“We close the recovery room in a little while and the only way for you to remain is to be admitted into the hospital,” the nurse said.

I wanted to check-in.

The nurse said, “You’ll be all right recovering at home.” She told my wife to call a neighbor to help me walk from the car into our home.

I felt closer to death than when wounded on a jungle trail in Vietnam as an infantryman and medevacked to a hospital in Japan.

Dr. Steckler’s biopsy found chronic inflammation with no malignancy. He called and said, “I could not reach it, you’ll need to have another biopsy.”

I replied, “I can’t go through that procedure again. I’ll die.”

“You must, and you cannot wait too long,” Dr. Steckler responded.

Blood would not stop oozing from my nose. Dr. Steckler told me to squirt some Afrin in my nose to help control bleeding.

I questioned, “A nasal decongestant?”

Three weeks later the blood stopped.

As the biopsy pain subsided, I returned to Dr. Kavor for Plan B. He recommended a specialty medical center, such as MD Anderson, for the second biopsy.

Submitting my medical records to MD Anderson, a few days went by before word came that I could become a patient in Houston, TX. As I waited, I saw Dr. John Waters, thoracic surgeon, in Plano about doing a biopsy on spots on my lung as a proxy for the

mass at the base of my skull.

“Too small, doing a biopsy on these spots could do more harm than good,” Dr Waters said.

Looking ahead to possible treatment options, I met with Dr. James Patrekis, radiation oncologist with Texas Oncology. He reviewed my imaging before my appointment.

“Using radiation to treat a malignancy at the base of my skull could be done,” Dr. Patrekis explained. He staged my mass as Stage III.

I returned to show Dr. Kevin Lunde the results of the MRI the neurologist he recommended ordered. He reviewed my imagining and said he would ask a radiologist friend of his to take a look also.

“Does not look like any tumor I have seen,” the radiologist said, as told to me by Dr. Lunde.

I met with Dr. Michel Kupferman, a head and neck surgeon at MD Anderson in Houston, on January 17, 2019.

After reviewing my MD Anderson MRI he said, “There is something there, and we’ll need to do a biopsy to find out what it is.”

Dr Kupferman read the biopsy report from Dr. Steckler with findings of chronic inflammation in my right nasopharynx.

“They sent you down here to get us to do a biopsy,” he said, implying the biopsy from Baylor-Plano did not tell the complete story.

Another three hours in the operating room at MD Anderson on February 4, 2019. A neurosurgeon, Dr. Shaan Raza joined Dr. Kupferman in performing the biopsy using GPS to guide the needle.

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Dr. Kupferman met with my wife after surgery and said, “No malignancy.”

What a relief. But it would not be official until the pathology report.

Up to this point, no doctor had made a connection between my original complaint, pain in right ear, to the mass in my nasopharynx.

I felt much better at first after the second biopsy. I remained in Houston the following day after surgery.

“What a difference,” I thought, “between the two biopsy recoveries.”

I met with a dentist, a radiologist and an oncologist, Dr. Bonnie Glisson, the day after my biopsy. They each reviewed my case and discussed various treatments for potential malignancy. Dr. Glisson said her interpretation of the mass showing on my MRI was a tumor.

“No question in my mind, I’ve seen many tumors and this mass is a tumor.”

Dr. Glisson’s plan: Await final pathology. Assuming SCC found CRT is indicated.

I inquired about chemotherapy. Dr. Glisson replied it depended on what type of cancer the biopsy found.

“How do you determine the mix of drugs used for treatment once the cancer cell is identified?”

She began to tell me about her training. Degrees from Ohio State, [BS, MD magna cum laude), fellow University of Florida, board certified medical oncology, and many years of experience.

I later found out she is a professor at MD

Anderson and has been listed among “The Best Doctors in America.” She made me feel like I was fortunate to have her on my team.

I also met with radiation oncologist, Dr. Gary Gunn at MD Anderson. His report stated, “I spent over 50% of our forty-five-minute visit discussing and counseling the patient on my findings today, the need for further evaluation, the usual place of radiation therapy in this setting, and in coordination of care.”

Several days passed before the official pathology findings reported, “Acute inflammation in the right nasopharynx.” Identical pathology as Dr. Steckler’s.

Four days later, I began to feel pain as I moved my head left and right and up and down. The pain intensified each day. When tilting my head away from completely vertical, I felt excruciating pain. I called MD Anderson and spoke with Dr. Kupferman’s physician assistant, Shawn Terry. He prescribed Celebrex. No relief. I called back.

“Go see a pain doctor,” Terry said.

Feeling bad, I went to a class about thirty minutes from home on the night of February 12, 2019. The pain made it difficult for me to drive home. I made it without killing myself or someone else. After a couple of hours in bed, I asked my wife to take me to the emergency room.

We went to Baylor in Plano, TX near our home. Pain radiated from my neck and culminated at the top my head. It felt my head would erupt like a volcano. I checked in at 1:00 AM, saw a doctor at 3:00 AM, and was discharged at 6:00 AM.

This was the second time I questioned whether I would live another day.

The doctor prescribed a pain cocktail, Dexamethasone, Morphine, Ativan, Zofran, and a lidocaine patch. It worked. I went home with prescription for Valium. Diagnosed as severe cervical sprain.

The doctor explained, "Like a whiplash."

An MRI ordered by Dr. Calley, primary care, revealed no damage to neck. He ordered physical therapy.

Because my ear pain remained, Dr. Mitlyng, internist, recommended I see an infectious disease doctor. I scheduled first available appointment with Dr. Prokesch at UTSW, six weeks away, which seemed like a long time to wait if indeed I had an infectious disease.

While waiting for infectious disease appointment, Dr. Mitlyng prescribed fluconazole, doxycycline, and metronidazole. Following up on a recommendation to see a rheumatologist, Dr. Jack Vine suspected Wegener's disease, now called granulomatosis with polyangiitis, although I had none of the symptoms of the disease. Treatment would be with corticosteroids and cytotoxic agents.

Returning to MD Anderson for a follow-up appointment with Dr. Kupferman on April 17, 2019 he said, [The pain after the biopsy came from the occipital muscle and nerves I had to move to reach the mass.]

I replied, "Your post-operative symptoms did not include severe pain. I recommend you add that."

A follow-up MRI revealed, "The process in the right upper carotid space/submucosal nasopharynx has significantly progressed, extending across midline to involve bilateral petrous apices, clivus, nasopharynx, prevertebral muscles and extending inferiorly

to the C2 level. The findings are suggestive of an inflammatory/infectious process given recent pathology results."

Yikes! I felt like I did not have long to live. Returning home, I updated my medical directives, power of attorney, and will. I wanted an orderly aftermath.

Upon Dr. Kupferman's recommendation to see an infectious disease doctor and rheumatologist, I returned to MD Anderson on April 25th. Because I had a rheumatologist in Dallas, I did not meet with a MD Anderson rheumatologist. I met with Dr. Mahnaz Taremi, an infectious disease doctor who also taught at the MD Anderson medical school. I now refer to her affectionately as the "Nutty Professor."

Dr. Taremi's advice: "I would strongly recommend you repeat diagnostic biopsy for culture and pathology and start broad spectrum IV antimicrobials treatment while awaiting culture results, send for fungal serology (cryptococcus antigen, coccidioidomycosis antibody, urine for histoplasma antigen, galactomannan antigen, blastomycosis antibody), T spot, ESR and CRP, ANA, RF, ACE and rheumatology consult for possible noninfectious etiology."

Dr Taremi: "I'm going to have my nurse escort you to the emergency room for admittance."

"Why?" I asked.

Dr. Taremi said, "For another biopsy."

I replied, "We have a two-thirty flight home and we plan on being on the plane. Have you talked to Dr. Kupferman?"

"I'll call him right now," Dr. Taremi said.

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Returning in ten minutes, “I’ve spoken to Dr. Kupferman and he agrees,” Dr Taremi said.

“We are going home,” I replied.

Dr Taremi replied, “I’m going to record that I recommended immediate admission for biopsy and you refused.”

“Thank you, Dr Tameri. We are going home.”

Dr. Taremi no longer works at MD Anderson.

This would not be the last recommendation for a third biopsy. My “near-death” hallucinations after the two previous biopsies prevented me from agreeing to another biopsy unless my life hung in the balance.

“Why wasn’t a culture taken on the first two biopsies?” I wondered.

The answer, “We were looking for cancer” is like a hammer to a nail, to a cancer doctor a mass is a tumor until proven otherwise.

Back to Dallas and another appointment with Dr. Vine, rheumatologist. Blood work indicated elevated SED and CRP, indications of inflammation. Not showing symptoms for Wegener’s disease, Dr. Vine recommended I go to Cleveland Clinic and meet with a doctor in the rheumatology department. He helped me get an appointment at the Cleveland Clinic with Dr Carol Langford.

On April 29, 2019, I met with Dr. Prokesch, infectious disease at UTSW. Dr. Prokesch recommended I see a doctor in UTSW’s ENT department.

“It took me six weeks to see you, Dr. Prokesch. How long before I can get into the ENT department?”

“Not that long,” she replied.

True to her word, I saw Dr. Truelson in UTSW’s ENT department on May 2, 2019. He mentioned the need for a third biopsy but said my case did not fit his expertise.

I asked Dr. Truelson, “Could inflammation seen on the MRIs be caused by the surgeries I’ve had? It seems like the inflammation came shortly after surgeries.”

“Yes. Inflammation can occur after surgeries, and the radiologist can recognize the inflammation as coming from surgery,” he replied. He recommended I see Dr. Ryan in their department.

I made an appointment with Dr. Ryan for May 14, 2019.

Concurrently, I had a follow-up appointment with Dr. Patel, the ENT who performed sinus surgery. He ordered nuclear imagine of the whole body for bone inflammation. Results showed no bone inflammation.

“Dr. Patel, the mass in my nasopharynx was found after sinus surgery. Could something from the surgery have caused inflammation?” I asked.

“I did not do work in that area” Dr Petal responded.

I continued, “The sinus and the nasopharynx are connected. Could something have made it back into the nasopharynx and cause inflammation?”

“I don’t think so,” he replied.

I continued, “I reviewed your post-surgery symptoms and ear pain is not listed. From another ENT practice, I found post-sinus surgery symptoms included ear pain as a possible outcome from sinus surgery. Could my ear pain be as a result of the surgery?”

“Yes, ear pain can happen, but it would not be like the pain you are experiencing,” he replied.

I continued to take Tylenol and/or Advil for ear pain relief. The pain level had somewhat subsided, but the pain was also moving from my right ear to my left ear. For eight months I took pain relief medicine every four hours. I then reduced pain medication to one or two times daily.

I met with Dr. Ryan at UTSW on May 14, 2019. He mentioned the need for a third biopsy and noted he had seen in my records a reluctance to do a third biopsy.

“Yes, unless I start feeling worse, I do not want to do a third biopsy.”

He said, “Okay, but a third biopsy is not

uncommon for patients like you.”

Dr. Ryan prescribed four weeks of prednisone, starting at 40 mg daily and reducing the dosage to 10 mg daily.

On July 12, 2019, results of the MRI at UTSW that Dr Ryan ordered showed a somewhat diminished inflammation in my nasopharynx.

I explained, “When taking the prednisone, all of my ear pain disappeared. The ear pain returned after I sopped after taking prednisone.” I asked Dr Ryan for more prednisone.

He replied, “No more prednisone.” He ordered a follow-up MRI for October 2019.

By this time, three-way communications

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between Dr. Carol Landford at the Cleveland Clinic, Dr Vine, Dallas, and me resulted in appointments on August 21, 2019 with ENT Dr. Lorenz, August 22 with Dr. Langford, and August 23 with ENT Dr. Sindwani, Cleveland Clinic.

On August 22nd, an infectious disease doctor reviewed my records and gave an opinion but did not see me.

Dr. Lorenz said the MRI image looked like a tumor and would take my case before the Tumor Board the following day and call me the day after with the Board's recommendation.

He called the day we were traveling back to Dallas. I returned his call multiple times, but he has never followed up with what the Tumor Board decided.

Dr. Sindwani said, "Let's wait and see," indicating to me he did not have an answer.

The pain in my ear eased by this time but I still had to take ibuprofen or Tylenol.

Dr. Langford reviewed my records as well as the blood sample results from their lab. She prescribed: prednisone 60mg/day x 4 week then taper by 5 mg each week. Check MRI at 6 weeks after starting prednisone. If MRI shows improvement begin either azathioprine (if TPMT acceptable) or mycophenolate mofetil. Begin Pneumocystis prophylaxis with Bactrim DS three times a week.

After reviewing blood samples, Dr. Langford found I tested positive for latent TB. Putting me on steroids would reduce my immune system's effectiveness and could promote

TB. As a precaution, she would contact my infectious disease doctor, Dr. Prokesch at UTSW and have her prescribe latent TB medicine, isoniazid 300 mg oral tablet.

The VA tested me twice and could not verify latent TB.

Dr. Mawhorter, Cleveland Clinic infectious disease, discussed with colleague testing that could help inform a non-biopsy diagnosis of the mass, as well as testing to understand patient's infectious disease background and current status which can impact vaccination recommendations and/or treatment needed before immunosuppressive therapy.

The follow-up MRI at UTSW in October 2019 found reduced levels of inflammation. Dr Ryan recommended I return to Dr. Vine and Dr. Langford for treatment. Dr. Langford and Dr. Vine felt the MRI results did not warrant treatment with steroids but would treat me if I so desired.

I choose no treatment at the time.

Dr. Vine requested a follow-up MRI in March 2020. Scheduled MRI was canceled due to COVID-19 and rescheduled for June 3, 2020.

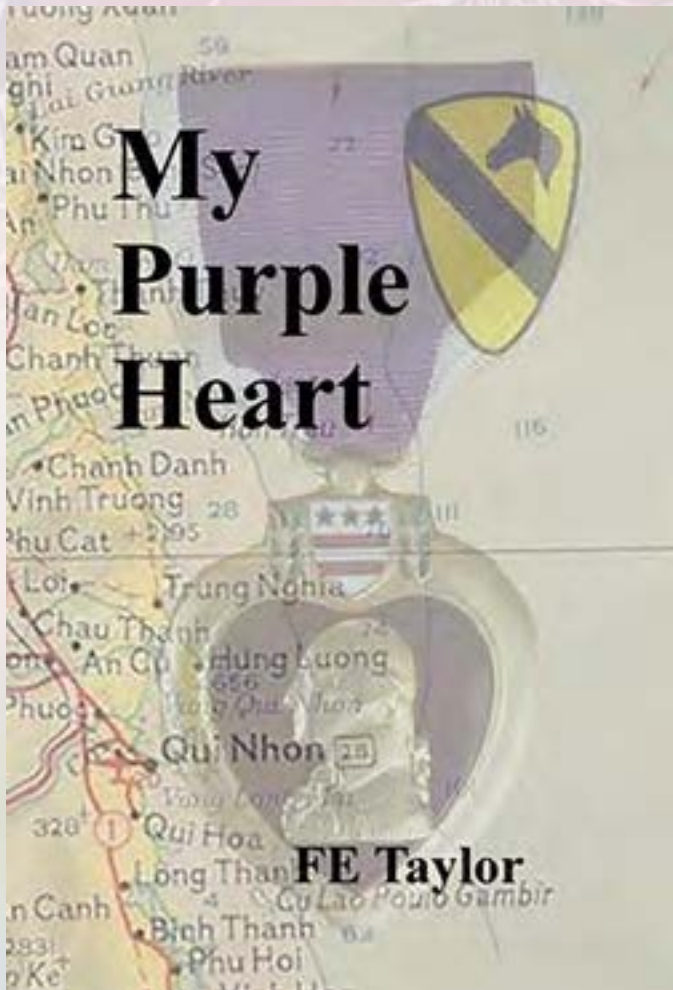
MRI (Two states without Stay at Home orders have the same mortality rate as Texas): FINDINGS: There is redemonstration of mild signal abnormality in the left greater than right superior carotid spaces adjacent to the skull base demonstrating mild contrast enhancement, greatly improved compared to prior exam.

There is continued mild extension of the abnormal enhancement of the left hypoglossal canal. The previously seen residual area of

non-enhancement on the left is no longer clearly identified. Previously seen signal abnormality in the clivus is no longer identified.

Dr. Mawhorter, infectious disease at Cleveland Clinic, had noted, “This is a very challenging case without a definitive diagnosis.”

So true.



Read more about Frank Taylor's book, *My Purple Heart* at:

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/fe-taylor/my-purple-heart/>

and:

<https://www.mwsadispatches.com/library/2020/my-purple-heart>

MWSA Dispatches Seeks 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 (1500 words or less), submit a book, or you just have questions, please email dispatches@mwsa.co

Thanks for playing.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

- ✓ MWSA 2021 Spring Dispatches Magazine releases on 15 April 2021. The deadline for submission is 1 April 2021.
- ✓ MWSA 2021 Summer Dispatches Magazine releases on 15 July 2021. The deadline for submission is 1 July 2021.
- ✓ MWSA 2021 Fall Dispatches Magazine releases on 15 October 2021. The deadline for submission is 1 October 2021.

Submit poetry, short stories, fiction, non-fiction—you name it! Please keep submissions around 1500 words.

If you have any questions please contact the Dispatches Editorial Team at:

Dispatches@mwsa.co

TRADED !

Adolf "Wes" Wesselhoeft, LTC USAF (RET) & Shirley Anderson Wesselhoeft

IT WAS MARCH 1943. MY mother and I had been alone in our Chicago apartment for some time. I am not sure how long. I was six years old at the time and had no idea the country was at war. I knew nothing of Pearl Harbor or the German declaration of war. My parents never talked about such things to me or around me. I was living the happy life of an American boy—playing hide and seek, riding my bike, and going to first grade where we stood every day and said the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

My father had been away, perhaps I thought it was business related but instead he had been taken to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. While he was away, some men came to our apartment and ransacked the whole place, throwing contents of drawers on the floor. I did not know who the men were or what they might have been looking for.

One day, my father returned with three large overseas shipping containers for us to fill with our most important items. Then, he was gone again.

Eventually, my family would be reunited. The three of us and many other German Americans went by train under armed guard to a faraway location. My parents kept me entertained along the seemingly endless journey by pointing out sights. Eventually, we arrived at Crystal City, Texas.

One of the first things I remember seeing was a statue of Popeye. He had been a hero of mine, as I read his stories in little booklets we got when we shopped at the Piggly Wiggly in Chicago.



From the train, we were loaded onto flatbed trucks, all under armed guard. Honestly, I thought they were protecting us from something, although I had no idea what. The truck took us to a gate and as we entered, I saw the eight- or ten-foot-high barbed wire fence and the guard towers at each corner and in-between. I soon found out we were no longer free. We were interned.

Crystal City Internment Camp was about 110 miles southwest of San Antonio. I've heard it referred to as *the Siberia of the US*.

Crystal City is the self-proclaimed 'Spinach Capital of the World'. Before the camp was used for internment, migrant workers lived there. The internment camp was originally built to hold Japanese—which it eventually did, but the first occupants were German American "enemy aliens".

Fortunately, I was quite young and easily

entertained. I met other boys about my age. We played ‘cowboys and Indians’ and other games.

There was a store at the camp where we could buy a few things. I liked to buy the superhero comics and postcards with pictures of cowboys out west. The camp, unlike Chicago, was very quiet—the only noise I remember hearing came from the nearby wood shop. Someone made us wooden guns for our games in that wood shop.



We lived in a one room hut that had two beds, a table, an ice box, and a small heater. We didn’t have any running water nor any way to cook our meals. The toilets were all located in a building nearby, as was the dining facility.

I guess the food was alright but certainly not memorable. I don’t remember eating there at all. My dad planted some cantaloupes. My mother grew morning glories by the door. We spent that Christmas in the camp and I do not remember much of it at all.

There was an irrigation pond on the camp, and while I was there it was drained in preparation

for a swimming pool. I went over to have a look at what was going on and saw they had two 55-gallon barrels, each half full of snakes from the pond. I sure was glad I was never tempted to cool off in that pond!

After being drained, the pond was filled-in with concrete to form a rather large swimming pool. It was round in shape, with one side shallow for the kids then sloped down to a deeper side with a diving board. The pool was poured while I was there but not completely

cured. When the concrete was dry enough, the older kids used it as a skating rink until it could be filled with water. By then, I was no longer interred at the camp.

Crystal City Internment Camp had three schools—an American school, a Japanese school, and a German school. I had to attend the German school.

English had been our household language. Not only did I not speak German, I knew nothing about German culture or even one German song. I do not recall learning any

German while attending that school. The most memorable thing about it was it was my second time attending first grade. It would not be my last.

In February 1944, we were taken, again under armed guard, to the train station. We were headed to New York, where we would board the *SS Gripsholm* bound for Lisbon. We were being traded with the Nazis into an active war zone.

In Hamburg Germany, we went to live with my grandparents where we endured the

Continued on page 20

Continued from page 19

daytime bombing by the Eighth Air Force and nighttime bombing by the British. We were severely deprived of life's basic necessities. Our shelves were empty. We had to rely on barter to get any essentials.

My two first grade experiences had not prepared me for school in Germany. I had to attend first grade for a third and last time.

Somehow we survived, and in 1958 the American Consulate, with whom I maintained contact after the war, told me I could return to the US. I was, after all, an American citizen.

I bought my passage to New York City where, upon arrival, I went to the recruiting office at Times Square and joined the Air Force. I served 22 years, including two tours in Vietnam.



In an ironic turn of events, I flew as a B-52 electronic warfare officer, serving in the Mighty Eighth, the same unit which had bombed Hamburg so brutally during WWII.

We have told the story of these events in our book, *Wesselhoeft; Traded with the Enemy* which has been honored with a silver award by the Military Writers Society of America.

Japanese Monument

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rises, thirteen tiers
beside Santee Basin
a fourteenth century pagoda
how serenely this replica of
(Read from bottom up)

and
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*Intr
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Valiant*
dauntless, ever vigilant, ride the tides,
reminding us that detachment also has its limits.

Nancy Arbuthnot

MWSA 2021 ANTHOLOGY

BoB Doerr

MWSA WILL BE PUBLISHING AN anthology this year. All members are encouraged to submit a short story or poem to be included in it. The submission window is now open. The theme for the MWSA 2021 Anthology is “Untold Stories,” and we hope you may have military, military family, or military-related stories to share. When we say stories, we also mean poetry. Your stories can be fiction or non fiction. This is your opportunity to bring that story from the back of your mind onto the pages of this collection of stories from fellow MWSA authors.

Stories and poems must be written by MWSA members and not previously published. Authors will grant a one-time right to publish in the anthology with all rights other than the anthology publication remaining with each author. The maximum word count is 3000 words. Black and white graphics, maps, and photographs to which you have permission may be included with your work with proper attribution and within the publisher’s specifications. In accordance with the MWSA Ethics Policy, MWSA cannot accept submissions that include politically, religiously, or racially biased or anti-U.S./U.S. military material.

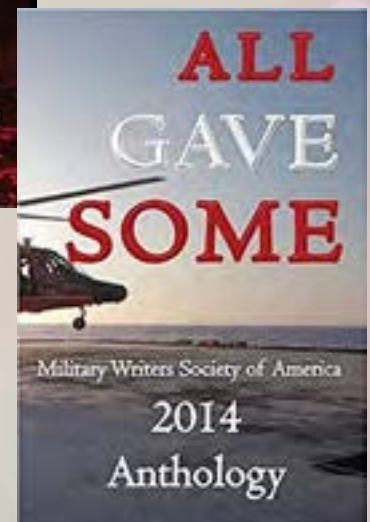
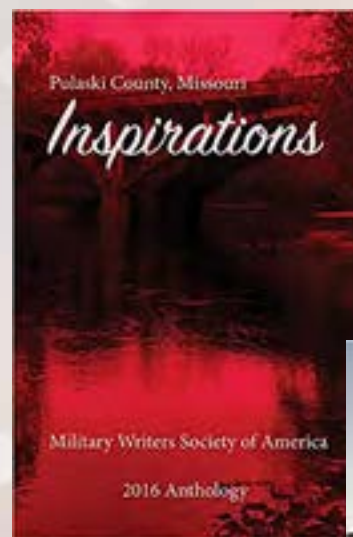
Submissions need to be in Word, New Times Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced, and well edited before being submitted. Along with each submission, we will need each author to give us a short 200 word max bio and a B&W head shot.

Our goal is to limit this anthology to 300

pages, so don’t wait until the last minute to submit. Unless we meet our 300 page goal early, we plan to be open for submissions until June 1, 2021. Submissions should be sent to info@mwsa.co as an email attachment.

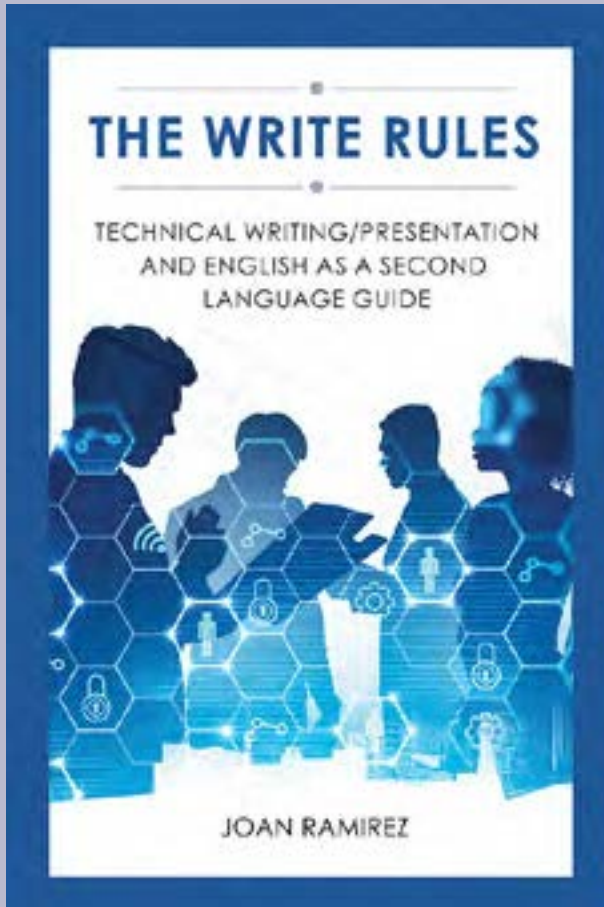
Get those writing muscles working and get ready to have your story published in 2021! This opportunity is one of your MWSA benefits, so take advantage of it. For some, this will be the first time they have a story published. Over the years, many of us have learned much about and from our fellow members through their stories published in MWSA anthologies.

PREVIOUS MWSA ANTHOLOGIES



PRESS RELEASE: FOR DISTRIBUTION

Joan Ramirez announces the debut of her "E" and Print Handbooks on Amazon.com, B&N Nook, Kobo, and Apple.

**ENDORSEMENTS**

"This book gives clear writing guidelines—keep it concise and simple."

Kelly, Professional Engineer (PE)

"Joan has compiled a fine communications guide. If you're looking for a concise reference to help you with your verbal and written communications skills, The Write Rules is for you."

Steven, French teacher

This handbook is intended to help individuals in Engineering/Technical industries and English as a Second Language professionals enhance their client list. It is a guide for startups as well. Its contents are not a guarantee of same. Only perseverance can accomplish that task.

Please use this link to order: <https://books2read.com/thewriterules>

WORKSHOP Details: Log onto joansbookshelf.com as of 9/21/20

For handbook/workshop inquiries: joan@joansbookshelf.com



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LinkedIn / Instagram / Tumblr / Blogger*

PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THE word about MWSA programs and initiatives. Friend us, like our various pages, read and make comments, re-tweet our messages, and engage with other authors.

FACEBOOK

- ★ [MWSA Public Facebook Page](#)
- ★ *MWSA main website news stories updated here.*
- ★ *Open to everyone.*
- ★ *Members-only section coming in the future.*

GOODREADS

- ★ [MWSA Goodreads Page](#)
- ★ *Includes books from the 2015 season until now.*
- ★ *All our reviews copied here, and are subsequently mirrored in our dedicated [MWSA Blogger Page](#).*
- ★ *If you're interested in managing (or monitoring) this page, please contact us.*

TWITTER

- ★ [MWSA Twitter Feed](#)
- ★ *Our Twitter page gets all books and reviews added to our library.*
- ★ *Other items are posted on an ad hoc basis.*
- ★ *Are you a Twitter addict? Please help us out.*

INSTAGRAM

- ★ [MWSA Instagram Feed](#)
- ★ *At this moment, our library books are not automatically syndicated to this social media outlet.*
- ★ *We'll be using it for future advertising and book marketing efforts.*

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Images must be of higher resolution—at least 300 dpi. Your Dispatches team will do their best to make your ad look professional but your best option is to send an already completed ad in jpg or png format.

Contact info@mwsa.co for questions or concerns. *Thank you.*



VESUVIUS OUT MY WINDOW; PT II

Evarts Erickson

Continued from MWSA Fall 2020 edition of Dispatches

YOU'D THINK MAYBE I MIGHT know for certain that he was infantry and what unit he belonged to, and all the other details of his life. But each of our beds in that ward was like a little island, and add to that the fact we were already separated by rank, what mostly united us was our hostility toward the major. That didn't necessarily mean we shared much else.

But once, when I woke in the night to look at the Roman candle that was Vesuvius in the distance, I knew my friend in the corner office was also awake because I heard him crying, his head turned toward the wall. I didn't know what to do about it, or what I should do. I was sure he didn't want me or anyone else to hear him cry. Even if our beds were close enough I could reach out and touch him, I could have never brought myself to do it. Besides, in traction, I'd have probably fallen out of bed if I tried, and the noise would have brought everyone running. So I laid there listening to him cry until I fell asleep again. And the next day, since he seemed in no way different, I wondered if I was mistaken.

So that was life in the hospital. We didn't do a lot of talking, except when our trays were brought in. And then it was mostly about food. Most of us were recuperating slowly or rapidly, and more than anything else, we seemed to do an incredible amount of sleeping. And when the exploding ammo dump, after a while, finally blew itself out, hardly anyone even noticed.

Then one morning arrived that was very different from the others. I sensed it even before I awoke to see the lieutenant lying on top of his covers, flaunting his stump as if to stay, go ahead and look. His face was pale and he had blood all over the front of his pajamas, but he was such a bundle of sunshine, throwing out rays to me and everyone else who was just waking up.

"I did it, I did it!" he told all of us in sight, as a gaggle of nurses and orderlies burst into the ward to screen him off. They gave him something to put him under.

He was already unconscious before they wheeled his bed away to what I guessed may have been the operating room, but the expression on his face to those of us who could see it told us that at that particular moment, he was the happiest man alive. Though we still didn't really know what happened, one of the nurses who stayed to check on the rest of us told us what facts were available. We were forming mental pictures as she spoke, maybe added a few imaginative details of our own.

Sometime in the wee small hours, he'd hauled himself out of bed and over to crutches that were always stacked against the wall near the entrance. In fact, not far from his bed, since he was right in that corner—"the grunt in the corner office."

No doubt that was the easy part, as was getting out into the corridor. But then the challenge was that the corridor went on nearly forever and ended in slippery marble steps that led down to the main entrance. And how he got from there into the street, and managed it

all with no one to see him or stop him, was beyond us.

But what happened afterwards was what we really wanted to know. Because somehow in the middle of the night, down in the stew of Naples, wearing his hospital pajamas, on crutches, missing one leg, and maybe already bloody, with the way his stump must have been hurting, he'd hooked up with two whores, who'd taken him home to bed and brought him back.

That was one of the big events that night, and the other was that the kid down the hall had died in his straitjacket: they hadn't been able to keep his temperature from soaring out of sight. That was the end of him. Maybe they had been too busy with that to notice what anyone else was doing.

So one of us had died that night. But it balanced out. Another, in a sense, had been born again.

POSTSCRIPT: I never saw the lieutenant again, though I guessed it was not long before he was back home and living happily ever after. As for me, as soon as I was out of traction, and could put on my new boots, I hopped on a truck and traveled back north. It was still raining on and off, still muddy, but seemed colder, and the ridges on either side of the highway were shrouded in mist.

There was a lot of traffic on the road, even in what passed under that sky for daylight, and I craned my head to see the smashed army gear along the route, the wooden crosses where the Germans sometimes had time to bury their dead, and the occasional smashed houses that were often painted with fascist party slogans, or bits from Mussolini's speeches.

Even though I hadn't yet learned Italian, I could read most of them quite easily. THE MEDITERRANEAN, a few of them said, in billboard-sized letters smeared over a billboard-sized map. MARE NOSTRUM. *Our Sea*. Some other words you saw quite often—or as often as a wall was standing where they had once been painted—shouted, “Crede, Ubbidire, Combattere!” *Believe, Obey, Fight!*

When I reported in for duty, the first thing the sergeant told me was that a friend of mine had died a couple of nights earlier. He had taken some shrapnel and they hadn't been able to staunch his wound in time to save him.

We were only a few miles farther along than when I had left, and while I waited for my next stint with the forward observation party to begin, I made a home for myself just to the side of a cleft between two smallish hills that were the last barriers between us and a plain that led up to a taller mountain that was beginning to see some action.

My second or third day back on the lines, at dusk, the members of a British infantry unit (looking uncommonly cheerful in spite of khaki uniforms that seemed better suited to Africa), walked briskly in single file, and very quietly, moved past me toward the defile, only a few yards farther on, and then disappeared down into the plain beyond, within sight of whoever might be looking down at us from Monte Cassino.

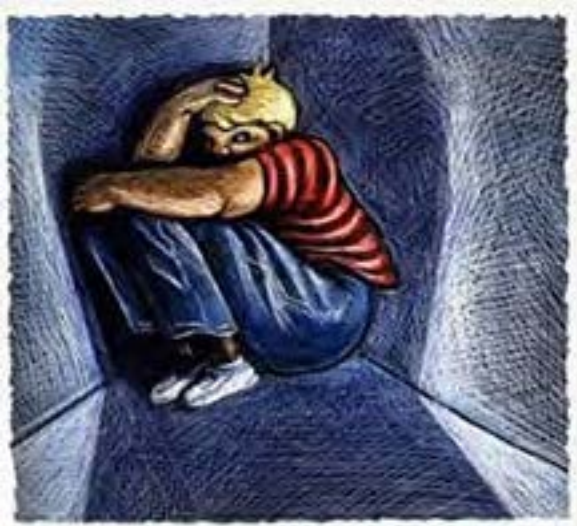
Writing these words more than sixty years later, I am surprised by how many of the faces I can still see quite clearly, and all of them so young. And even myself, lying there in bed in Naples, propped up on my elbows, looking at Vesuvius out my window.



HAVE YOU EVER BEEN REALLY SCARED?

John Podlaski

Cherrieswriter.com
 Posted 7 August 2012



I DON'T MEAN FRIGHTENED BY reading a horror novel, seeing a scary movie, walking through a spook house, hearing scary stories around the campfire or having to go into the basement after it's dark.

I'm talking more about the fear you experience when your very life is in danger such as being in battle during a war, those seconds prior to an imminent automobile accident or when falling from the roof of your house, street fights, getting robbed or discovering that you are in the house alone with a burglar.



Some of those experiences above happen so quickly that fear doesn't even have a chance to manifest itself—most likely, there is only enough time to say "Oh shit" before dying.

Other occurrences may only happen once in a lifetime, and only for a few moments or maybe several hours, but then if you survive it's over with.



Now consider those deployments by military personnel in war, be it Vietnam, Iraq or anywhere else in the world. Running patrols to seek out the enemy is like walking through a spook house. You expect something to happen any moment. It could be a live person or some prop lurking around every corner, ready to jump out at you. At times, spook houses can be scary, but after exiting, you're able to take a deep breath and laugh about the experience.



In a war, the fear continues day in and day out; a prop or live individual jumping out from its hiding place could kill you in an instant. You are always on heightened alert and the adrenaline boils over, looking for an outlet. Even when returning to the base after a patrol, you're still afraid of incoming snipers, mortars, rockets, and ground attacks.



Night is the worst, especially in Vietnam, where visibility was limited to only a couple of feet in the dark jungle. Not only are you scared of the enemy, who may be out there watching you, but you also have to worry about what may crawl into your sleep area with you during the night.



Scorpions, lizards, snakes, spiders, centipedes, and other creatures of the night may be attracted to your warmth and cozy up to you.

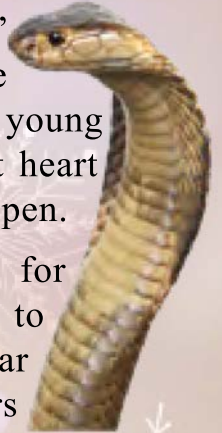
It's pitch black outside and if you feel something drop on you or come in contact with any part of your body, you just can't sit up and turn on the light to investigate.

Instead, you have to "man up" and just lay there hoping for the best. Thankfully we were so young back then, because every night heart attacks were just waiting to happen.

Yeah, I was really scared for that entire year and continue to nervously react whenever a car engine backfires, firecrackers pop or when thunderstorms pass through the area.

I also have an extreme fear of spiders and snakes—if you've read my *book*, you know why.

WELCOME HOME to all veterans and returning heroes!



PRESS RELEASE

MWSA Member Tom Beard Receives Award



Certificate mentioning MWSA

MWSA MEMBER TOM BEARD RECEIVES the Coast Guard’s Meritorious Public Service Award from Coast Guard Commandant Karl L. Schultz.

The certificate and medal were presented by retired Coast Guard Captain Jeffery Hartman, representing Commandant and the Coast Guard Aviation Association, and Commander Scott Austin, executive officer at the Coast Guard Air Station Port Angeles, WA, where the ceremony was held on 10 October 2020.

Retired Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander Tom Beard is an active writer and editor with several published books and dozens of articles. He received three MWSA medal awards for his books plus recognized by the

Naval Aviation Museum Foundation with The Admiral Arthur W. Radford Award for “Excellence in Naval Aviation History and Literature.”

Tom was recognized by the American Aviation Historical Society with the “2012 Best Article” award among other recognitions for his writings.

Tom is an MWSA book judge and participates in MWSA’s Ambassador program.



Award ceremony photos:



This is now apparently a standard Covid-style military ceremony. Instead of troops standing in formation in the background, masked participants stand before a representative piece of machinery. In this instance, the background is a Coast Guard HH-65D helicopter.



Also in this photo is Senior Master Chief Jusko, apparently as a stand-in for the previously, standard enlisted ranks. Makes sense. It was never enjoyable to be one among the ranks at one of these events in the past for me. Didn't mind this time, however. You can tell by all the grins.

On Behalf of a Grateful Nation

one for my grandfather
 one for my uncle
 one for my brother
 one for my dad

tightly folded into
 thirteen triangles
 fabric snapped
 folded in precision
 hand over hand

stars for our states
 face outward
 stripes of the original thirteen
 concealed inside

white gloved hands extended
on behalf
of a grateful nation...
 never heard what was next
 emotion overtaking
 the undertaken
 thanked for
 their service
 their sacrifice

constellations
 confined
 inside isosceles
 of glass and oak
 three cornered
 shadow boxed
 each grief contained

Annette Langlois Grunseth

A Conversation with MWSA Member & Author

TRAVIS KLEMPAN

Date of Interview: 7 October 2020

TRAVIS Klempan served in the Navy for twelve years, deploying three times. He earned a degree in English literature from the US Naval Academy and master's degrees in creative writing from the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics and ethics from the University of Colorado Law School. His fiction and poetry have appeared in *Ash & Bones*, *Windmill*, and *Bombay Gin*, among others, and his short stories have received recognition from the *Veterans Writing Project*, *Line of Advance*, and *Flyway Journal*.

MWSA: What do you think are the main benefits of being an MWSA member?

KLEMPAN: One of the most common answers to “What was your favorite part of being in the military” is “The people I served with.” Now, having been out of uniform, I’m always looking for ways to stay connected with a community of like-minded but diverse people. MWSA seems like an organization with a common mission and a broad base of support. Knowing that other military writers face the same troubles and celebrate the same triumphs means that I’m not doing this alone.

MWSA: What do you hope readers “take away” from your novel *Have Snakes, Need Birds*?

KLEMPAN: Everyone is going to come to my book with their own life experiences and for their own reasons. I would love for people—especially military readers—to walk away from it with a sense of seeing something of themselves in it. HSNB has a huge cast of characters (and that’s even after editing many

storylines out or combining characters), so hopefully, they get a sense of how quirky men and women in the military can be, and how hard it should be to stereotype them. I also want people to respond in a deeper way since this isn’t the “typical” war story. Sure, there are firefights and convoys, but there’s a spiritual and mystical element at work that should unnerve people and make them think after they’ve put the book down. My biggest hope, though, is that they enjoy reading it and recommend it to a friend.

MWSA: What was the hardest part of writing *Have Snakes, Need Birds*?

KLEMPAN: More than the mechanics of getting a story onto the page, and editing it and cleaning it up so that it’s sharp and tight and fluid and all those things, one of the hardest things to do—and still makes me pause each time I reread it—was to say goodbye to any character. It’s a war story, but there’s so much loss that it’s hard to end a storyline or know that two characters will never get to reunite or meet and that people, even with fictional lives, have such an impact on everyone they meet.

MWSA: What’s your next writing adventure?

KLEMPAN: Without giving away too much of the plot of HSNB, the main character Mack falls in love with a woman Sera (that much you can learn from the back cover). He loses Sera, though, in a way that he’ll never get her back. However, Sera’s best friend Mo—whose life continues on outside the events of HSNB—re-encounters Mack after he’s left the military. Mo becomes the main character

of her own story, and Mack is an important part of her journey. It's been tough to write and I really want to "get it right," but I hope to have a "follow-on" book (not a sequel) out next year or the year after, with a third and final follow-on after that.

MWSA: Any advice for new writers, or those who want to try their hand at writing?

KLEMPAN: Figure out who you're writing for and why. If you're writing for yourself, that's absolutely legitimate and no one should say otherwise. If you're writing for others, there are additional demands on what you write and how you broadcast it. Once you've released your writing into the world, it's not totally yours any longer. More practical advice: read, a lot. Join a writing group (even a virtual one)

or take writing classes (Lighthouse Writers in Denver is just one example). Read some more. Don't be afraid to edit, edit, edit, and while you should take your work and your craft seriously, try not to take yourself too seriously.

MWSA: How has your military experience influenced you as a writer, and how did it influence your book *Have Snakes, Need Birds*?

KLEMPAN: I'll answer that second question first. To start, HSNB follows an Army sergeant deployed to a combat zone. I was an officer in the Navy, and while I was enlisted before that and while I deployed to Iraq, Mack's experiences were, by definition, very different from mine. However, I used the "improvise, adapt, and overcome" mentality that seems so useful and ubiquitous in the military to figure out what parts I needed to get "right" (language, ranks, dialogue), what parts I could "fudge" (the battalion Mack deploys with, the 33rd Infantry Regiment, hasn't been activated since the Korean War, which allowed me some latitude and flexibility), and what was the "most" important (the feel, the heat, the grit, the day-to-day and the big picture, along with the impending but delayed sense of doom). Generally speaking, I'm not quite as disciplined now in my personal life as I was in the military, but I still try to write or think about writing every day. I keep notes on my phone and computer and in a notebook, and I'm not joking when I say I do a lot of my writing in my head...it's just a gamble if I can get it out of there before I lose it.



ATTACK!

Jorge Torrente

San Luis Valley,
Sierra del Escambray
east of Trinidad, Cuba
December 20, 1960

GENTLY, ALMOST IN A CARESS, a sturdy finger squeezed the trigger. The firing pin of the old but well-oiled Springfield nicked the cap of the center-fire cartridge tightly encased in the chamber. Powder exploded inside the brass case and fired the sleek projectile. It twisted over the inner grooves of the barrel and streaked out with lightning speed toward the target.

As if this first shot had sparked him also, Elpidio García sprang from beside the sniper and ran toward the military outpost's main entrance one hundred yards away. Twenty-four of his thirty men followed him, all of them leaving behind the concealment the forest had offered them so far. The six oldest, all of them natural-born hunters and marksmen, were scattered around the army base with long-range rifles fitted with telescopic sights.

In the short time since they had joined the region's mountain uprising, Elpidio's men hadn't been able to assemble much of an arsenal. The heaviest piece they had was an old Thompson machine gun. The rest were six bolt-action Springfields from World War I, five M-1 rifles, three Czech submachine guns wrestled away from an army patrol a few days before, three twelve-gauge shotguns and a motley assortment of handguns.

Three of Elpidio's men charged the outpost with only machetes in hand. It wasn't because they were suicidal—it was all they had. They

followed behind Elpidio, ready to cut off heads or limbs and grab whatever firearm they could get their hands on. The precariousness of their predicament didn't seem to cross their minds. The attackers knew there was only a platoon stationed at the outpost that day. They also knew every soldier had a brand-new Belgian automatic FAL rifle with plenty of ammunition. For the attackers, everything rode on guts, speed, surprise—and lots of luck.

The insurgents had all been unanimous in their decision to go through with the attack. They needed modern firepower, and it was about time the region, and maybe the whole country, woke up to the fact that fighting was going on in the Escambray. Hopefully that would inspire others to take up arms as well.

The new government had launched a vicious attack on tradition, family, and religion—the very fabric of society, and the proud men and women of the region were not about to take it lightly. And it was ironic. Not long ago, Castro had rebelled against Batista. Now the Escambray population rebelled against Castro. New rebels challenging old.

The San Luis Military Outpost located in the middle of the San Luis Valley, sixty kilometers east of Trinidad, was an old country house the army had taken over a few months before.

The front courtyard was cobblestoned all the way to the entrance of the property. All around the property ran a stone wall some four feet tall. Outside the wall, the surrounding land had been bulldozed clean of standing vegetation out to one hundred yards. The only

entrance to the walled-in area was a wooden gate always left ajar, overlooked by a one-man ramshackle hut.

The bullet hit the front gate sentry squarely in the sternum. As the projectile exited his back, bits and pieces of his trachea, esophagus, spine, and lungs blew out in a shower of blood. When his body hit the ground, the man was already dead. Before his partner could even blink, a second bullet ripped through his head.

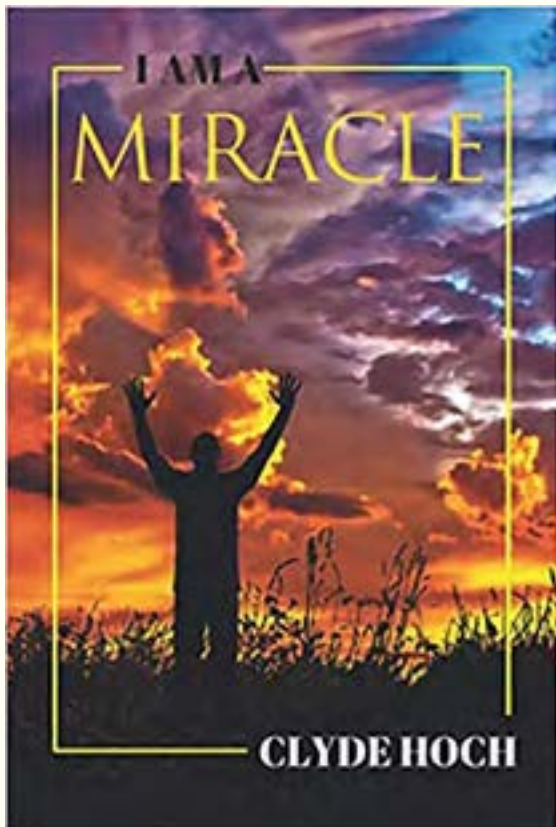
Out in the open between the end of the forest and the outpost, Elpidio and his men ran for the gate. From their positions around the compound, the snipers shot at those bewildered soldiers who had been surprised outdoors. Through their telescopic sights they switched swiftly from victim to victim, aiming to decimate the garrison with surgical precision.

Gripping a Colt .45 in his left hand and a twenty-seven-inch Latin machete in his right, Elpidio was the first one to reach the main gate. Two of his unarmed men snatched up the fallen sentries' new FAL rifles and rounds, took cover behind the stone wall, and lay down covering fire. Elpidio and the rest just kept on going.

Inside the compound, soldiers screamed out orders and insults. After the first moments of surprise and confusion, the resistance found some momentum. Rifles with increasingly hot muzzles poked from windows and doorways.

Running at Elpidio's right, Machito swept their path with short bursts from the Thompson he carried. The young tall mulatto didn't show a trace of fear despite the bullets that buzzed like raging wasps and the shouts and screams flying back and forth. The acrid smell of

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I AM A MIRACLE

by Clyde Hoch

Genre(s): Autobiography

Format(s): Kindle, Paperback

ISBN-13 : 979-8688720518

I AM A Miracle by Clyde Hoch is an inspiring and gritty take of a man who faced life head-on, in spite of all the physical and emotional challenges he faced and his battles with addiction. This is as real as it can get. It is not fiction, but a real and honest account of a real person and his awe-inspiring, real and motivating recounting of events. As Clyde says, this book does help and push people who need that assertion and backing in their lives and the hope that things can change, if only they have the will for it.

Read more at:

<https://rothsbookreviews.wordpress.com/2020/10/13/1206/>

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powder infused the air with the urgency and tragedy of men bent on killing each other.

A porch ran along the front of the house, and it was from this shaded area that fiery bursts could be seen spurting from doorways and windows as the defenders rallied.

Elpidio immediately realized how critical the situation had become and charged even more furiously towards his first goal: the porch. By now, several soldiers lay dead or wounded midway along the sixty yards of cobblestoned ground that separated the main gate from the house's front porch. As Elpidio and his followers came closer to the house, one of the men lying wounded on the cobblestones with lieutenant's brass insignia on his epaulets, regained consciousness, and propping himself up on his left arm, pulled a Makarov pistol from his holster and fired at them.

The man running next to Elpidio fell. Without slowing, Elpidio swung his machete with all the might of his strong arm, hacking off the man's shooting arm from the shoulder—it felt to the ground still holding the Makarov.

The mutilated officer, still reclining on his remaining arm, looked at his sudden loss in disbelief and a frozen scream formed on his face. His life spurted away as thick pulses of blood shot into the air with each heartbeat. Soon, a cadaverous paleness overcame the man's face and his left arm crumbled under his body's dead weight.

"Left window!" Elpidio ordered.

Machito paused mid-stride and aimed the Thompson at the window. At less than thirty yards, it was an easy target. He pressed the trigger and let go a long burst. Splinters and

larger pieces of wood flew into the air. Elpidio jumped onto the porch and slammed his body into the wall on the right side of the destroyed window. Behind him, Machito dashed forward in a desperate sprint, ducking his head low as if he saw Death's scythe swinging for him.

Glued against the wall, Elpidio hastily wiped clean the machete's blade between his pressed thighs and slid it into the sheath on his back. Not much blood remained on his pants, so strong and swift had the blow been. He dropped the Colt's empty cartridge and slammed in a fresh one. The rest of his detachment arrived, each man shooting point blank at the defenders crouched behind the windows and the main door. The noise was deafening. Two of Elpidio's men went down right there. The soldiers fell back from the windows, retreating farther into the house in the face of such resolve and audacity.

Taking advantage of the moment, Elpidio jumped into the house through the shot-up window and launched himself into the unknown. Behind him, one of his men followed. Two seconds later, like a tightly choreographed movement, Machito made it safely to the same spot on the wall Elpidio had just left.

The attacking force was divided into two groups. The main one led by Elpidio stormed the house head on. The second and smaller group ran low and fast along the house's left side. This group was to break into the house



through side doors. They were hoping to catch the soldiers inside in a crossfire, taking advantage of their initial confusion. This detachment carried two of the three shotguns and was led by Mario.

Inside the house, Elpidio and his companion found themselves in a large room with a table and two chairs against the right wall, a filing cabinet and a radio transmitter against the other. Two soldiers were sprawled on the floor, one dead, one still twitching. Blood pooled on ornamented tiles. The two rebels rushed across the room to a door at the far end.

A commanding voice farther inside the house shouted: “Fall back! Fall back behind the patio!”

Just then, shotgun blasts sounded from the left side of the house. A fusillade erupted in the interior patio, one so intense that it drowned all noise of the fighting outside. Elpidio heard curses, shouts, screams of pain, and running footsteps. Mayhem!

The attackers running along the side of the house had found that both side doors, one leading to the kitchen and the other to a storeroom, were locked. Mario nodded at el Negro, the dark-skinned rebel with a common Cuban nickname, who nodded and aimed his shotgun at the storeroom door. “Blast it!”

Almost simultaneously, Mario fired his shotgun at the kitchen door. A deafening blast. Wood splintered. Mario kicked it open.

He rushed inside, shouting, “Nino! Curita! Follow me!”

The kitchen was empty. Mario ran quickly through it, shouting “Vamos! Vamos!”

The door to the interior patio stood wide

open. Soldiers ran past it towards the back of the house.

“The sonsofbitches are running away!” Mario charged into the patio, blasting away with the shotgun. “Nino, Curita, shoot them all down!”

El Negro advanced through the empty storeroom. He wasn’t taking any chances. Behind him, el Chino (the Chinaman) and el Rubio (Blondie) also advanced, trying not to make a sound. The three of them were tense, pale, and wide-eyed.

The door to the interior patio was locked. El Negro pointed his shotgun and fired. The lock disintegrated in the blast. El Negro kicked the door open and walked through holding the shotgun at the hip. As soon as he stepped outside, a running soldier’s abdomen collided with the end of the barrel of his twelve-gauge. He pressed the trigger and blew the man’s guts out through his back.

El Negro took two more steps into the patio and into a cacophony of violence. Clenching his jaw, he fired at every moving figure in army fatigues. At the edge of his vision he sensed his two friends standing with him, weapons blazing. Moments later, Blondie’s head exploded.

El Negro felt like he was in hell. The scent of gunpowder hung in the air. The popping gunfire, the hot lead whizzing. Shouts of men slaughtering each other. Bodies on the ground. Blood everywhere. Mario shouting orders and obscenities as he swept through the mayhem as if nothing could touch him. And nothing could stop this. The madness would go on until one side was wiped-out. And it felt like an eternity, everyone expecting to be shot at any second, the intense pain, not seeing the

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next day, attackers and defenders united in death.

“No! No! Mario! No!” Nino shouted.

El Negro watched as Mario stared wild-eyed at his chest, a shout of encouragement frozen on his lips. His left hand moving to cover the bullet hole in a vain attempt to stop the bleeding while his right kept a tight grip on his weapon. Disbelief taking hold of his face—and then the realization that he would not survive, would not make love again to Soledad, not even in his mind, because he had no more time left. His legs failing him, his body falling to the floor, his head bouncing hard against the cold tiles. Dead. Everything taken away from him in a split second.

The few soldiers who escaped the shoot-out in the patio never stopped running. One by one they traversed the grass clearing behind the house and jumped the four-foot stone wall.

One by one, the snipers shot them down.

The army garrison was wiped out.

The surviving insurgents left the valley in silence and deep in thought. They had won the fight, but no one had foreseen the steep price in lives they had paid. As they left the outpost behind, every one of them, each at his own time, looked back as if trying to imprint in his mind a lasting picture of the place where their resolve had been tested and the course of their lives determined.

They all knew that from this place there was no turning back.



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.

JOHNNY 'S SALOON

Joseph Campolo



Grand forks had a squadron of the giant bombers.

FROM DECEMBER OF 1968 TO December of 1969, I was stationed at Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota. The sprawling airbase was about fifteen miles from the town of Grand Forks and was primarily a SAC (Strategic Air Command) base, containing a full complement of B-52 Bombers. Grand Forks was also home to the 18th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, an ADC (Air Defense Command) unit, consisting of Voodoo F-101 Fighter Interceptors. I was a member of the F-101 Fighter squadron.

The desolate area was frozen and windswept for much of the year, and holds the honor of being the 2nd coldest spot in the continental United States, just behind its frosty neighbor to the north, International Falls, Minnesota.

For bachelor airmen of low rank, options for entertainment were limited. There was an Airmen's Club open two days a week, a base theater, and a gym. Most of us, however, spent much of our off-duty time in our barracks, that's where the real partying went on. If we were lucky, we might snag a ride to the town of Grand Forks from one of the more senior members of our squadron. Occasionally we would walk to town, covering the fifteen-mile trek twice in one day, unless we found somewhere to stay over till the next day. In the bitter winter months walking to town was not an option.



Right alongside every major U.S. military installation there is usually a small town consisting of a cluster of businesses that cater to those on base. Whatever product or service you couldn't manage to find on base, the small group of entrepreneurs, within walking



I'm a Blue Fox for life

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distance of the main gate, unencumbered by military convention, rules or regulations would provide you with almost anything you should so desire. The name of the town outside of Grand Forks Air Force Base was Emerado.

In 1968 Emerado, North Dakota consisted of a handful of hard scrabble dwellings, one tavern called Johnny's Saloon, and one diner known as Lou's Café. There was also a small fair ground where two or three times a year traveling carnivals would set-up shop providing cotton candy, various carny rides for the Air Force dependent children, and a host of slight of hand gamesters who fleeced naive airmen out of whatever cash they carried with them. Often these carnivals left in a hurry when word got out of major scamming activities.



Johnny's Saloon in Emerado, North Dakota is still in business!

Like many of my peers at the airbase, I was drawn to the earthy charms of the small community of Emerado. Johnny's Saloon was a real old west type honky tonk. It offered tap and bottle beer, several types of hard liquor, a

juke box featuring country & western and rock, and usually a couple of dust ups every night. The air police from base would, on occasion, have to come to Johnny's when major brawls involving base airmen broke out. Otherwise the occasional state trooper would be called in to dispense justice and restore order. Once order was restored, the trooper would usually stay for a beverage or two.

Lou's Café, owned by a large reticent woman (named Lou) served hamburgers, hot dogs and a very thin, spicy no frills chili. The joke was if you couldn't finish your chili at Lou's, you could always take it with you and lube the axles on your vehicle with it. If any customer asked Lou for her chili recipe, she merely scowled and said "grease". She had a captive customer base and needn't perform any airs or jump through hoops to bring them in. Airmen from the base in various stages of sobriety filtered in and out of Lou's all night long, seven days a week.



The Northern Lights were mesmerizing

Whether we went to Lou's or not, we'd usually finish off our nights at Johnny's Saloon. The back deck of Johnny's faced the north and on many winter evenings the Aurora Borealis provided a beautiful light show for all those

in attendance. I have fond memories of sitting on a picnic table at Johnny's Saloon, drinking beer and watching the fascinating gyrations of the northern lights.

I left North Dakota in December of 1969 with orders to Vietnam. In Vietnam, I witnessed a light show almost every night as well, though one of a much different nature.



MWSA MEMBER BENEFIT: BETA READER FORUM

John Cathcart

AS A NEWER SERVICE TO our members, MWSA reminds you of our Beta Reader Forum. The idea is to easily expand our authors' pool of potential beta readers—an important part of our creative process for books nearing completion.

As with our review swap program, MWSA is only providing a venue to get authors and beta readers together. Once there, you might also agree to swap reviews once the book is published. The page is available to members only (username and password required).

Here are the details (which are also posted at the top of the forum page):

PURPOSE

- ★ Use this forum to line up beta readers for your book.
- ★ This is a member-to-member program, MWSA will not monitor any individual agreements made via this system.

SUGGESTIONS

- ★ Provide a short paragraph describing your book.

- ★ Include title, author, genre, expected publication date.

- ★ Keep your initial posting short—you can always share more details once another MWSA member responds to your request.

- ★ What format(s) you'll provide your beta readers.

- * Paper copy: manuscript, proof, etc.

- * Digital format: Word document, PDF, eBook format (.mobi, .epub).

- ★ How you'll collect feedback—i.e. via paper questionnaire, online form, email responses.

- ★ When you'll collect feedback—i.e. your expectation on how long beta readers have to read and provide feedback.

- ★ Whether or not you'll be posting beta reader names into your book's acknowledgment section.

MWSA recommends authors acknowledge beta readers... and that authors allow the readers to opt in or out!

A Conversation with MWSA Member & Author

DANIEL L. BERRY

Date of interview: 15 June 2020

DANIEL L. BERRY ORIGINALLY WROTE the poem that became his first book, *You Are Always with Me: A Poem for Those at Home When a Loved One Deploys*, as a way to connect with his family while working overseas in support of the military. As a civilian contractor pilot, Daniel had the privilege of flying over 500 combat support missions over 14 deployments during Operations Enduring Freedom and Freedom's Sentinel. He continues to work as a professional pilot.

Daniel has always been passionate about writing. He earned a bachelor's degree in English Writing from the University of Colorado and has completed additional coursework through the UCLA Extension Writer's Program.

When Daniel isn't writing or spending quality time with his supportive wife and two rambunctious daughters, he enjoys playing guitar, and is a songwriter, recording artist, and performer. He lives in Fairfax, Virginia.

To find out more about Daniel, visit www.daniel-berry.com

Facebook: @DanielLBerryAuthor

MWSA: What do you think are the main benefits of being an MWSA member?

DANIEL L. BERRY: Participation in MWSA's annual review and awards contest has helped me to get my book in front of my readers through MWSA's website and social media connections. The review I received from MWSA's professional reviewer not only provided excellent feedback on my work,



but also aided my marketing efforts. Being associated with MWSA's cadre of authors working to honor the Military has lent additional credibility to my work as well.

MWSA: How did you come up with the idea for your book, *You Are Always with Me: A Poem for Those at Home When a Loved One Deploys*?

BERRY: As a deployed defense contractor, I was always looking for ways to connect with my wife and young daughters. For my children especially, I wanted to address the emotions they might be feeling while I was overseas—loneliness, sadness, fear, and even anger—and let them know that they were always in my thoughts. My wife informed me that my oldest daughter kept her copy of the poem close by her bed and would read it often. That's when I realized the poem could help others connect in a really positive way

with their loved ones back home as well.

MWSA: There are several books on the market aimed at families of deployed service members. With that in mind, why did you think it was important to publish another book on this subject?

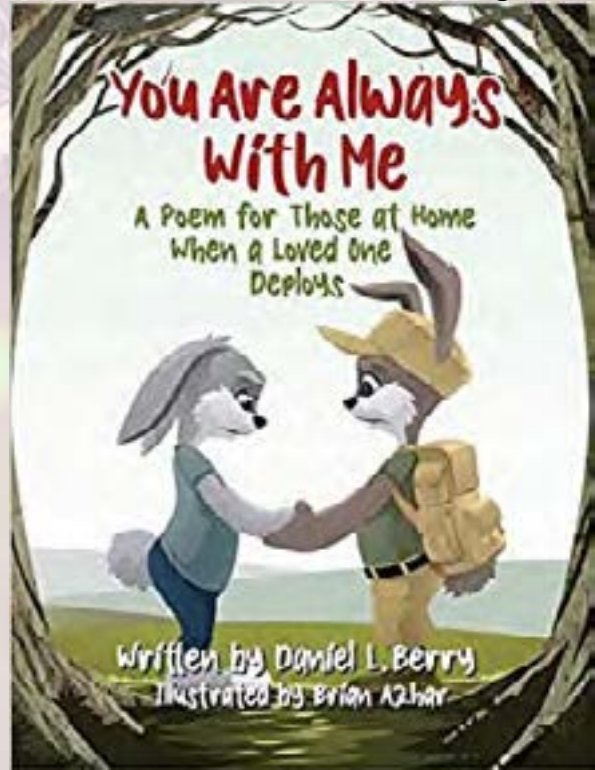
BERRY: Many of the books that address deployment are intended for male soldiers at a time when not only many women deploy, but also many contractors in support roles. In fact, in Iraq and Afghanistan, at times contract personnel outnumbered those in uniform two-to-one. While these personnel do not necessarily face the same dangers as our troops, they do face many of the same hardships—namely, being separated from their loved-ones for long stretches of time. My aim with *You Are Always with Me* was to create a book that can be given by any deployed person to the ones they love, regardless of race, gender, branch of service, sexual orientation, or family formation.

MWSA: How did you go about making the book universally appealing to all of those who deploy?

BERRY: I decided to use cartoon rabbits for the main characters of the book—one leaving for deployment, and the other staying home. The two rabbits are physically different from one another, but not of one specific age, race or gender. This allows anyone to relate to the characters, whether they are deployed or staying at home. This did pose some challenges, since military clothing often seems very masculine. However, I think that the illustrator, Brian Azhar, did an amazing job of making the characters universally relatable. Also, the poem that comprises the text of the book was written for a first- or

second-grade reading level. So it is easy to understand for all readers, young or old.

MWSA: Since the book has been published,



what has been the response, and what plans do you have for the book in the future?

BERRY: The book went on sale just last month, and the response has been nothing short of stunning. I have received an outpouring of support not only from friends, but from total strangers. I was contacted by a prominent marriage and family therapist who learned of the project, and who wrote a beautiful editorial review for the book. Most importantly, the book is getting into the hands of my intended readers—those who deploy—and is helping them connect with their families back home. I heard the other day from a high-school friend I hadn't spoken to in over twenty years, who bought the book for his sister-in-law whose husband deploys. She loved the book.

Ultimately, I would love for everyone who

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deploys to know about the book as a way to create meaningful connection with their loved-ones during their absence. I have contacted several organizations that provide deployment support for families with the hope of getting the book listed as a resource. I would love to get the book included in programs such as the USO's UNITED THROUGH READING. Also, I plan to run a fund drive in the near future to provide copies of the book free of charge to military units currently on deployment around the world.

MWSA: Do you have any advice for other authors contemplating writing a book?

BERRY: Do it! Publishing has never been easier or more accessible. There is a wealth of knowledge and support at your fingertips. I knew nothing about the publishing process when I started. And I put off getting started for several years, worried that "I just wasn't ready". It felt great when I finally committed to doing it. I hired my own illustrator and editor and, in a matter of a few months, had created a work with the power to change lives for the better. At a time when much in the world can seem dire, and in which so many of us are divided in our beliefs, the most important thing we can do is create something beautiful that brings us together..



I'D WALK WITH MY FRIENDS...

by **Jesse Goolsby**

Genre(s): Literary Fiction

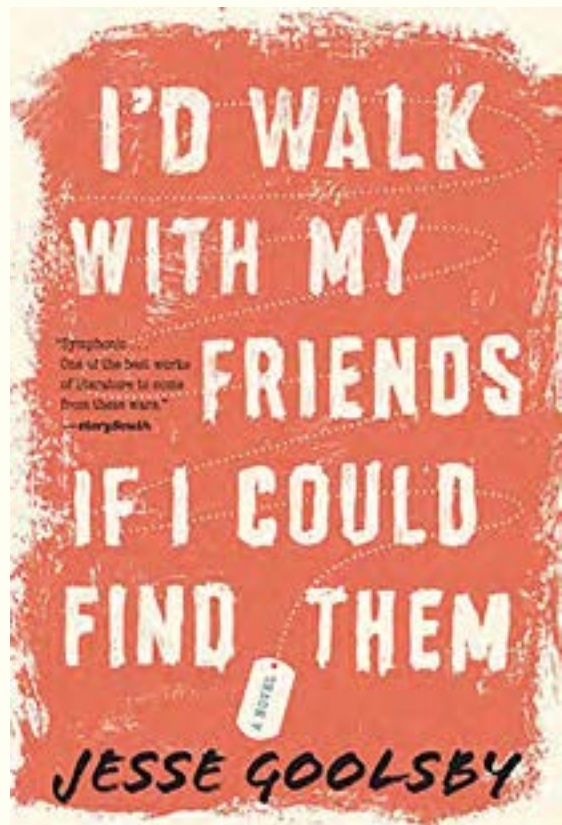
Format(s): Kindle, Paperback, Hardcover, Audio

ISBN-13 : 978-0544380981

This richly textured novel telescopes through time to track these unforgettable characters from childhood to parenthood, from redwood forests to open desert roads to the streets of Kabul. Throughout, Jesse Goolsby tackles questions we all face. What is the price of forgiveness? Where can we turn for companionship and understanding? Most of all, what responsibility do we bear toward friends, parents, lovers, children, strangers halfway across the world? When violence threatens to sever the links between us, we must strive for connection at any cost.

Read more at:

<https://www.mwsadispatches.com/library/2015/12/21/id-walk-with-my-friends-if-i-could-find-them>



A Conversation with MWSA Member & Author

DAVID TUNNO

Date of interview: 14 July 2020

DAVID TUNNO GRADUATED CUM LAUDE from the University of Portland (OR) with a B.A. in theater and an M.A. in communications. His career path passed through high school teaching, TV news cinematography/writing for Oregon State University, radio news writing & broadcasting and corporate communications and video production for a large utility company before he left Oregon for southern California and found a new career in trial consulting with a national firm.

Four years later, he left the firm to form Tunno & Associates Trial Consulting, a practice he recently retired from, but not before penning a non-fiction critique of the American jury system entitled, *Fixing the Engine of Justice: Diagnosis and Repair of Our Jury System*. The book and his trial consulting career are detailed on his website, www.tunno.com. During the course of his career, he consulted his attorney clients in many high-profile cases throughout the U.S. and was a television and newspaper commentator for trials, including; the O.J. Simpson, Rodney King, Unibomber and Michael Jackson cases. He was a guest lecturer at the Anderson School of Business (UCLA), many bar associations throughout the U.S. and the American Bar Association's annual litigation conference, which also published a condensed version of his training manual of expert witnesses, previously published by Lawyers & Judges Publishing.

Going back as far as high school, continuing through college and many years thereafter, David was an actor



with stage, TV and film experience and is a member of the Screen Actors Guild. In 2006, he wrote a screenplay, *Constitution*, about a fictional adventure involving that ship ("Old Ironsides") in modern times. He has since adapted that screenplay into the novel, *Intrepid Spirit*, and is currently engaged in seeking both agency representation and publication by an independent publisher.

MWSA: How did you find out about MWSA?

TUNNO: In conducting research connected with my manuscript for *Intrepid Spirit*, I purposely sought out associations of agents,

Continued on page 44

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publishers, and writing contests. I was delighted to find MWSA. The “mission” of MWSA couldn’t target my goals for my novel any more closely and I’m hoping my connection with other writers in this genre will be rewarding. On that score, I also hope to offer tips from my own experience that might be helpful to others.

MWSA: What is *Intrepid Spirit* about?

TUNNO: In a sentence, it pits the crew of *USS Constitution*, in a modern-day epic battle against a terrorist group bent on igniting a world-wide jihad.

THE story takes place against the backdrop of pending mid-east peace talks. The hero is a navy lieutenant who get into hot water and is unjustly punished for an action seen as jeopardizing those talks. He’s “banished” to command of *Constitution*, currently in Italy on a goodwill PR tour of the Mediterranean – purgatory, if you will, for a man of action. That action leads to his redemption when, by chance and circumstances, he, the ship, and its crew are the only fighting force in a position to rescue the US Vice President from a terrorist group bent on lighting the fuse on a world-wide jihad launched by the assassination of the VP.

ONE of the twists in the story is the fact of *Constitution* in a battle with the progeny of her historic foes, the Barbary Coast pirates. The hook is that she’s still a commissioned US warship, the oldest in the world. So, we have a battle between the crew of *Constitution*, with nothing but their antique weaponry, against a well-armed force, requiring a great deal of ingenuity on the part of hero and bravery on the part of the crew.

MWSA: How did you come up with that idea?

TUNNO: It started out as a screenplay idea not long after 9/11. I knew the history of the ship from when I was a kid and read everything I could find about it. Built the model, like a lot of other boys. I knew she was built to fight the Barbary Coast pirates and it occurred to me that, here we are 200 years later at war in the same region with the same enemy. I also knew her status as a commissioned warship and that the navy had just put the ship through an extensive refit and thought those ingredients, together, made for a story. I wrote the screenplay, had an agent for it, and made considerable progress toward selling it, but all that fell through years ago. Not giving up on the story, I decided to turn it into a novel

MWSA: What has been your experience with the manuscript so far?

TUNNO: I’ve been in the agent search phase for some time. The difficulty with this novel is that it is an upmarket piece, meaning it has been written with considerably more literary qualities than a typical action/adventure military novel. That means it doesn’t fit so neatly into the category that is filled by so many other books in the genre. At this writing, I’m waiting on responses from a good many agents and every once in a while I discover a new one that seems appropriate.

MWSA: What else have you done to market your manuscript?

TUNNO: I’ve also been researching independent publishers that don’t require agents. There are lot of good ones out there. I’ve created a list and have prioritized them for submission. I’m working my way through that list and waiting on them as well. Like the agents, every once in a while I find a

new one. Along the way, I have solicited reviews to help in finding either an agent or a publisher and have entered contests. The manuscript has received great reviews and, at this writing, is a semifinalist in the Adventure Writers Competition. I'm hoping to advance to the next round.

MWSA: What is your connection with the military?

TUNNO: My father was a career marine. He enlisted before WWII and, with a private pilot's license, entered the "flying sergeants" program, was sent to Pensacola and eventually became a Corsair fighter pilot in the south Pacific. He also served in the Korean War and retired after his 21 years. The biplane in the photo was his. I inherited it from him and it was he who taught me how to fly it, my having a private pilot's license at the time. It's a US Navy built N3N, the same type he flew at Pensacola. It's now in the museum at the Great Park in Irvine, California at the former El Toro Marine Base, where my father's Corsair squadron was commissioned.



WELCOME TO THE MWSA ~ WHO WE ARE

John Cathcart

WE ARE A NATIONWIDE 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 your MWSA organization.

SAVING HISTORY ONE STORY AT A TIME

[Your MWSA Membership Team](#)

Where to go for information. Who to contact with questions.

[Membership](#) | membership@mwsa.co
[Review & Awards](#) | mwsaawardsdirectors@gmail.com
[Events & Conferences](#) | events@mwsa.co
[Dispatches Magazine](#) | dispatches@mwsa.co
[Outreach & Education](#) | outreach@mwsa.co
[Volunteer](#) | volunteer@mwsa.co
[Website & Contact](#) | info@mwsa.co

