

*Womens Air Service Pilots
Museum
Sweetwater, Texas*

*The Navajo Museum, Li-
brary, and Visitors Center
Window Rock, Arizona*



KINYAMASWA

An Epic Poem

Andreas Morgner

DISPATCHES

MILITARY
WRITERS
SOCIETY OF
AMERICA

Rescuing History One Story at a Time

www.militarywriters.com

SPRING 2016



Research by Dwight Jon Zimmerman

A Brutal War - Pat McGrath Avery

MWSA Programming Radio/Podcast - Beth Underwood

The WASP Museum - Carol Cain

Irish Music in the Ozarks - Laura Huffman

Meeting a Veteran - Nancy Smith

Treasure Hunting at the CAF - Pat McGrath Avery

The Petals - Jenny LaSala

Book of the Quarter - Kinyamaswa: An Epic Poem - Andreas Morgner

The Art of Lying - Joyce Faulkner

Spring Reading List - Bob Doerr

DISPATCHES

MILITARY
WRITERS
SOCIETY OF
AMERICA

Rescuing History One Story at a Time

www.militarywriters.com

SPRING 2016



Research by Dwight Jon Zimmerman

A Brutal War - Pat McGrath Avery

MWSA Programming Radio/Podcast - Beth Underwood

The WASP Museum - Carol Cain

Irish Music in the Ozarks - Laura Huffman

Meeting a Veteran - Nancy Smith

Treasure Hunting at the CAF - Pat McGrath Avery

The Petals - Jenny LaSala

Book of the Quarter - Kinyamaswa: An Epic Poem - Andreas Morgner

The Art of Lying - Joyce Faulkner

Spring Reading List - Bob Doerr

Letter from the editor

Pat McGrath Avery

Once again, we have an exciting issue to share with you. I am constantly impressed with our contributors' breadth of interest. Spring is a time of renewal and that's especially important for writers, historians and researchers.

Now is the season to look at information with a fresh, open mind. If we spring clean our minds of old cobwebby mindsets, we have the chance to see things in a new light. Writers always wait for that light bulb of a new idea or a better way to create a scene. I find that true in research too – to read different points of view on an issue. It's much easier to write a scene or a chapter if we've looked at all sides. Check out the president's message on page 3.

Our two events this year – Gettysburg in May and Pulaski County in September – give us the opportunity to look at American history at different times and in different parts of the country. The Civil War in Gettysburg is completely different from the Civil War west of the Mississippi, yet both are critical to an understanding of that period.

I visited the National WASP Museum in Sweetwater, TX, last month. One of my favorite displays included the photos and handprints of many of the women pilots. I loved putting a face to the names of these courageous ladies. I also met Carol Cain, the associate director of the museum. She happily and quickly responded when I asked her to write an article for this issue of *Dispatches*.

Jenny LaSalla gives us another veteran's interview. Beth Underwood brings us up to speed on the activities of the new Radio Committee, a subcommittee of Programming. Joyce Faulkner gives us more helpful tips on writing.

Last August Nancy Smith attended the Navajo Code Talker Day in New Mexico. She shares some of her memories of the day with us in her article, Meeting Veterans.

Laura Huffman, from Pulaski County Tourism, gives us another glimpse into southern Missouri

Continued on page 2

Staff

Editor - Pat McGrath Avery

Columnist - Dwight Jon Zimmerman

Columnist - Bob Doerr

Feature Writer - Beth Underwood

Feature Writer - Jenny LaSala

Feature Writer - Nancy Smith

Feature Writer - Carol Cain

Feature - Laura Huffman

Layout and Design - Joyce Faulkner

Photography - Pat McGrath Avery

Photography - Nancy Smith

Contents

President's Message - Dwight Zimmerman	3
A Brutal War - Pat McGrath Avery	8
Meeting Veterans - Nancy Smith	10
Petals of this Rose - Jenny LaSala	14
WASP Museum - Carol Cain	16
Podcasting Committee - Beth Underwood	19
Irish Music in the Ozarks - Laura Huffman	20
Lance Johnson	24
The Port of Brownsville	26
The Art of Lying - Joyce Faulkner	28
Book of the Quarter	30
Spring Reading List - Bob Doerr	31

**Turtle on palm tree in Brownsville, Texas
Picture by Pat McGrath Avery**

MWSA Leadership

Founder/Board Member - William McDonald

President - Dwight Jon Zimmerman

Vice President Bob Doerr

Treasurer - Pat McGrath Avery

Board

Sandra Linhart

Farrell Chiles

Mike Mullins

Valarie Ormond

Kathleen M. Rodgers

Joe Epley

Committees

Programming

Joyce Faulkner - Chair

Bob Doerr

Pat Avery

Beth Underwood

Kathy Rodgers

Jack London

Don Helin

Joe Campolo, Jr.

Dale Throneberry

Mike Mullins

Review Process Audits

Betsy Beard - Chair

Joyce Faulkner

Carolyn Schriber

Bob Doerr

Sandra Linhart

Web Design Committee

Dwight Zimmerman

Joyce Faulkner

Danial Murawsky

Consultant – Maria Edwards

Letter from Editor Continued from Page 1.

history with her article on Uncle Jim Haley, an Ozark fiddler.

I toured the Port of Brownsville (in south Texas) in March and saw several military ships in different stages of dismantlement. The port is one of three in the country approved for scrapping ships. Currently the USS Constitution, USS Ranger and the USS Saratoga are in the dismantling process.

In the winter issue, I introduced you to Molli Oliver, the flight attendant who has dedicated herself to reuniting soldiers and their military working dogs. On page 7, Molli is shown with Gus, the latest dog she picked up from Ft. Leonard Wood. By the time we go to print, Gus will be back with Sgt. Pendleton. Molli loves these dogs and we love her for caring!

Finally, spring brings color, beauty and warmth. Check out the spring photos throughout. What do you have planned for summer? Send in your photos to celebrate summer by June 15 for the summer issue. Photos must be at least 300 dpi to print.



President's Message

RESEARCH



Regardless of how simple or complex the research, the act of information-gathering and discovery, refreshing my memory over something already known and especially finding a nugget of new information no matter how trivial, is endlessly fascinating.

Research can range from something as mundane and familiar as noting the layout and contents of your kitchen to something as arcane as how Lockheed's Skunk Works solved a vexing oil leak problem during the design stage of the U-2 spy plane. (I won't leave you hanging. They used, and I kid you not, industrial-strength Kotex.) Good research can help elevate a work, and this applies to fiction as well as non-fiction, to a level that makes the reader's experience memorable and fun, and wanting to come back for more from you.

In the thirty-plus years I've been writing, it's my belief that we are right now living in the Golden Age of Research. The reason for this is the Internet. Hallelujah for the Internet! As with so many other things in life, the computer and the Internet have transformed research. Information and material gathering that would have been time consuming and/or cost-prohibitive a generation ago is now just a few keystrokes and the hit of a return key away. At the same time, the Internet is also an information frontier that can just as easily trip-up or trap the unwary (as it did me early on).

Since we have a pair of upcoming events that are notable for their opportunities for on-site research (amongst other things), I thought I'd take this opportunity (actually, Pat Avery told me to do it, and I never argue with my editor or publisher) to write about Internet research.

For me, research is the third most enjoyable experience I have in writing. The second is when I finish a project. (It's done!) The first is, you guessed it, getting paid for my work. (I can pay my bills—finally!)

When doing Internet research, you need to keep this thought uppermost in your mind: caveat emptor—buyer beware. But, you're telling me that information on the Internet is free? My point exactly. You need to be confident that the site you're on is reasonably trustworthy and I'm going to use two examples for this: Wikipedia and the Smithsonian.

First, let's dispense with a chestnut regarding Wikipedia that undeservedly persists: Wikipedia is unreliable. If that were true, it would

no longer exist. Case in point: Encarta. Encarta was Microsoft’s encyclopedia and competitor to Wikipedia (which was founded in 2001). Both had teething problems regarding accuracy, but Wikipedia’s business model proved more resilient and inspiring. Experts of all kinds volunteered to clean up and correct data in Wikipedia and that clean-up happened so fast that in 2009 Microsoft threw in the towel and shut down Encarta. Now, I’m not saying Wikipedia is totally error-free and nor should it be your only source, but as a general first step to easily find and obtain information Wikipedia is the go-to site. And then there’s the Smithsonian’s website . . .

Known as “America’s attic,” the Smithsonian Institution is the repository for anything and everything imaginable in America’s history. It’s got everything from the priceless (Hope diamond) to sublime (Cher Ami, a registered Black Check Cock carrier pigeon used by the Army in World War I who carried a message that saved the “Lost Battalion” and in so doing earned the French Croix de Guerre with palm). I came to know its website as the result of receiving an assignment to write and select images for the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum photographic card deck, an oversize collection of 100 cards about the most significant aviation and space aircraft and artifacts in the museum. You would think that because this is the Smithsonian, with its resources it would have a top-flight, easy-to-navigate website containing information that was totally accurate. I was surprised, frustrated, and ultimately horrified to discover that was not the case.

Even when working with a site such as the Smithsonian’s, which for the obvious reason was my primary source for the project, I always try to double-check facts using either other Internet sites or books in my library. Aside from the fact that it should be standard operating procedure anyway for everyone, for me it got acutely personal. I had a situation occur on a project years ago in which some errors weren’t eliminated and the experience almost wrecked my career. So ever since then I’ve been a maniac about cross-checking.

I discovered an error in one of the Smithsonian

website’s entries, and it was an important error, one that I told my contact. From that point on I even more rigorously double-checked every fact that I could. As it turned out, I did find a few more.

Caveat emptor.

With respect to Internet trolling of military-themed sites, the most common are official military and government sites (the “.mil” and “.gov” urls), unit associations (usually “.org,” sometimes “.net”), and commercial and personal sites and blogs (“.org,” “.net,” or “.com”). A rare exception is the Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library which, though about the Army and located at Fort Leavenworth, is an organization. Each has advantages and disadvantages.

The military branch sites break down between active duty and historical, with crossovers occurring in certain circumstances like an ongoing conflict. For the most part I’ve found these sites most useful for photos. When it comes to government sites, I’ve found the Library of Congress (www.loc.gov) to far and away be the best of them. Its website is so easy to navigate, particularly the prints and photographs section, that you can quickly find and download what you want, often in high resolution. The website for the National Archives and Records Administration, unfortunately, is another matter. It’s gotten better over the years, but for research purposes, I’ve found it to be less useful than the Library of Congress.

As you might expect, unit association and individual sites are most useful to obtain anecdotes that can help round out your work. And this leads me to another important point: attribution. It’s always good policy to acknowledge sources. It lets readers know you’ve done your homework, and, in the rare event they want to follow up on a point themselves, they can go to where you found the information you did for verification. When it comes to government and military sites, a simple acknowledgement is all that’s necessary as all that material is public domain. That’s not the case with private operator websites. Thanks to changes in the copyright law, even if the website doesn’t contain

an official copyright registration notice, copyright is still implied. That means, unless you’re only using a sentence or two of text, you need to ask permission—especially if you’re wanting to use a photograph, even one photograph. It’s been my experience that sites often freely give permission, seeing it as free publicity for themselves. Some request a nominal fee.

There are far too many websites for me to list and address. Here’s a list of official military history websites, with a couple of additional ones I need to point out at the end.

United States Air Force

Air Force History Support Office

AFHSO/HOS

Reference and Analysis Division

200 McChord Street, Box 94

Bolling AFB, DC 20332-1111

Telephone: (202) 404-2261

Web site: <http://www.airforcehistory.hq.af.mil/>

U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency

600 Chennault Circle

Building 1405

Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6424

Telephone: (334) 953-2395

Web site: <http://www.au.af.mil/au/afhra/>

U.S. Air Force Museum

1100 Spaatz Street

Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433-7102

Telephone: (937) 255-3286

Web site: <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/>

United States Army

U.S. Army Center of Military History Building 35

102 Fourth Avenue

Ft. McNair, DC 20319-5058

Telephone: (202) 685-2733

Web site: <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/default.htm>

U.S. Army Military History Institute Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5008

Telephone: (717) 245-3611

Web site: <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usamhi/>

United States Coast Guard

U.S. Coast Guard Historian’s Office United States Coast Guard Headquarters

Room B-717

2100 Second St., SW

Washington, DC 20953

Telephone: (202) 267-2596

Web site: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/collect.html>

Coast Guard Museum U.S. Coast Guard Academy

15 Mohegan Avenue

New London, CT 06320-8511

Telephone: (860) 444-8511

Web site: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/museum/MuseumInfo.html>

United States Marine Corps

Marine Corps Historical Center Washington Navy Yard

Building 58

1254 Charles Morris Street, SE

Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5040

Telephone: (202) 433-3483

Web site: http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/HD/Home_Page.htm

Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum Marine Corps Combat Development Command

2014 Anderson Avenue
Quantico, VA 22134-5002
Telephone: (703) 784-2607

Web site: http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/HD/Home_Page.htm

United States Navy

Naval Historical Center Washington Navy Yard
Building 57

805 Kidder Breese Street, SE
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060
Telephone: (202) 433-3634

Web site: <http://www.history.navy.mil/>

Now for the two other sites: Home of Heroes and the Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library.

Home of Heroes (<http://www.homeofheroes.com>) is a private organization dedicated to preserving the history of recipients of the Medal of Honor. It originated and helped form legislation for the Stolen Valor Act. I found it to be an excellent resource when I was working on my book UNCOMMON VALOR The Medal of Honor and the Warriors Who Earned It in Afghanistan and Iraq. Its scholarship and reputation is such that it has been used as the reference source for the Congressional Medal of Honor Society and for the FBI in its Stolen Valor investigations. It has other features useful for the military historian and is a lot of fun just to visit.

The Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library (<http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org>) is an amazing digital repository for U.S. Army documents most of them from World War II to today. From its website: "The collections contained within the Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library are largely composed of digital versions of paper documents from the Combined Arms Research Library collections and student papers produced at the US Army Command and General Staff College. We have recently partnered with several Army educational and historical organizations whose collections appear here also. The

collections of digitized materials are uploaded in the CONTENTdm® Digital Collection Management System which allows for greater search and retrieval of the individual documents."

A highlight is the information available on the country's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: after-action interviews conducted by Army historians. This gives valuable information of ground-level happenings. The site is easy to navigate, though sometimes I've found you have to get weirdly creative with your keywords when the obvious choices produce no results.

If anyone has any questions regarding research on the Internet, feel free to contact me personally at djonzimmerman@earthlink.net.

Happy hunting!

Dwight Jon Zimmerman
President, Military Writers
Society of America



Molli Oliver picks up Gus at Ft Leonard Wood



A BRUTAL WAR

Pat McGrath Avery

Anger, hatred, revenge, brutality, the killing of innocent people and the destruction of property – does that sound familiar? No, I’m not talking about the world today, rather the lands west of the Mississippi in the late 1850s through the 1860s.

The war that would tear apart our country began early. A deadly Civil War threatened Missouri and Kansas long before Confederate troops fired the first shots on the Union forces at Ft Sumter.

Many pro-slavery Southerners settled in Missouri and from the beginning, the state was sharply divided. In 1854, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which granted residents of both territories the choice of entering the Union as a free or slave state. The pro-slavery forces of Missouri and Arkansas pushed for Kansas to become a slave state. However, abolitionists came from the North to lobby for a free state. In 1855, John Brown, the most infamous, settled in with his sister and brother-in-law, Samuel Adair, in Osawatomie, Kansas. Adair, a

preacher, was a strong abolitionist and his home served as a stopping point for runaway slaves. Trouble between the two states erupted full force under Brown’s leadership. He is credited with turning the territory into the “Bleeding Kansas” border war.

What began as intimidation and small skirmishes soon became horrific massacres, many times ruthlessly killing whole families. By 1855, the proslavery forces set up a Confederate government in LeCompton, the first capital of Kansas.

When proslavery troops captured freestaters and executed them on the banks of the Marais des Cygnes River, John Brown retaliated. One act called for retribution by the other side and each seemed to escalate in violence.

Sneak attacks and bloody massacres became a common occurrence as each side struck the other. Cities like Butler, Missouri, and Lawrence, Kansas, were burned to the ground – Butler by the Union forces and Lawrence by the Confederate forces. Both sides committed atrocities.



Guerilla warfare raged. Men became infamous and names like “Bloody Bill” Anderson, William Quantrill, Cole Younger and the James Brothers became part of history.

By 1858, a proslavery Kansas constitution was published and accepted. The next year, the Union Army set up a supply base in Ft. Scott. In 1859, when Abraham Lincoln was campaigning for the presidency, he visited the Kansas territory. Upon learning of John Brown’s execution for treason, he said, “Old John Brown has just been executed for treason against a state. We cannot object, even though he agreed with us in thinking slavery wrong. That cannot excuse violence, bloodshed, and treason.”

Lincoln’s talk had little effect on the killings along the border. Even when Kansas joined the Union as a free state in 1861, the violence continued. When the Civil War broke out nationwide, many of the proslavery raiders joined the new Confederate forces.

Meanwhile Missouri fought its own Civil War. Both sides set up their own government, although the Union Army would eventually overpower the Confederate government. Missouri contributed over 100,000 men to the Union Army and over 30,000 to the Confederates. By the end of the war, the state recorded more than 1200 bat-

ties within its boundaries.

The brutal fighting continued throughout the war years. On August 25, 1863, Union General Thomas Ewing issued Order No. 11, which required all residents to leave their homes within fifteen days. Only about 30% returned to their homes after the war. The order nearly destroyed four counties in western Missouri.

It would be 1864, and the Battle of Westport (in the Kansas City, Missouri area) that would turn the tide. Union troops under General Samuel Curtis defeated Confederate General Sterling Price’s Army and the Confederates began a retreat that eventually – after many more battles – drove them back into Arkansas. The bloodiest retreat battle took place at Mine Creek (just across the Kansas line). The Union forces killed more than a thousand of Price’s retreating troops. Although the Confederates would fight again, their cause was lost.

I’ve only touched on a few highlights. Plan to attend the Pulaski County History Crawl in September to learn more about the war west of the Mississippi. If you have the time, plan a pre- or post-trip to discover some of the Border War battle sites.



MEETING VETERANS

Nancy Smith

During the last several years, I have tried to discover new ways to learn about our veterans of World War II. Since the men and women are dying at a high rate, it is important to do this as quickly as possible. I have gone to several events to meet and interview them. I have also been to museums, memorials, and reunions, and have read many books about these outstanding veterans. I would like to share some of those experiences with you.

Navajo Code Talker Day

In a previous issue of *Dispatches*, I talked about visiting the Navajo Code Talker Museum in Tuba City, Arizona. Although it is fairly small, the artifacts are interesting and authentic. It displays a little known and very important function of the most effective secret code in WWII history. It was through this trip (on the way home from an MWSA conference) that I learned about the Navajo Code Talkers Day celebration.



Chester Nez was the last of the original 29 code talkers who actually developed the code. He lived until June, 2014

From the beginning of their service in the Marines during WWII, until declassification of the code in 1968, these Native American heroes were not allowed to tell anyone of their part in the war, or anything about the code. Nobody

else could know that creating a new code based upon the Navajo language, memorizing that code, and using it to pass information from unit to unit was an integral part of winning the war in the Pacific.

In 1982, President Ronald Reagan declared August 16 to be Navajo Code Talkers Day. The celebration actually takes place each year on this day in Window Rock, Arizona. I was delighted to attend this wonderful reunion with all its glory last August. After a short parade from the Navajo Nation Museum, many of the remaining code talkers made their way to the actual Window Rock where there is a wonderful statue of a code talker. The parade included a marching band, members of the Young Marines group, Navajo queens and princesses, and many dignitaries representing the state of Arizona and the Navajo Nation, as well as Senator John McCain.

The tribute that honored the group of talkers and code talker wives and widows was quite moving. Although the men who originally developed the code have all passed now, there were still about 20 or more of the later veterans attending. Code talker Bill Toledo sang the Marine Hymn in his native language with much enthusiasm, proving that the quote “Once a Marine, Always a Marine” is true to this day.

You might ask how secret was this mission by our Native Americans? Toledo explained to the group that early in his tour in WWII, he was actually captured by his own men, thinking that they had found a Japanese soldier dressed in an American uniform. They marched him like a prisoner back to the camp to find out that he was actually one of them.

Many of you may have seen the movie, *Windtalkers*, starring Nicholas Cage, as the body-guard to one of the Native American communicators. Toledo explained that the men actually didn't know that they had body guards. Toledo is one of the few who got to meet his. While

attending a veteran event, his wartime body guard came up to him and introduced himself. Much to the surprise of the former, the guard's duty was not only to watch over, but also avoid any capture of the code talker by the enemy. They were to shoot the men and also themselves if a capture was inevitable - whatever it took to protect the code.



Two code talkers participated with other dignitaries during the 2015 celebraCon. Standing on the podium are (left to right) Peter MacDonald and Bill Toledo. Toledo sang the Marine Hymn in his original Navajo language.

The rest of the August 16 event included Apache dancers, meeting with code talkers and their wives, and much more. Vender booths were set up to sell Navajo items, books written by the men and also information by service organizations. I can honestly say that this event, meeting the code talkers, meeting others among the Navajo Nation, the food, and last but not least, the scenery within and around Window Rock, changed my life forever. I hope I can attend another year.



During World War II at a time when the Japanese possessed the ability to break almost any American military code, over 400 Navajos, with 29 being the original Navajo Code Talkers, stepped forward and developed the most significant and successful military code of the time using their native language. So successful was this innovative code that military commanders credited it with saving the lives of countless American soldiers and with the successful engagements of the U.S. In battles of Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, they paved the way to victory for Allied Forces in the Pacific Theater. “Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima,” 5th Marine Division signal officer, Major Howard Connor declared. Far from their homes, these brave young men served our nation with honor. Sadly, the tale of their exploits remained a closely guarded secret for decades in the event that the Navajo Code Talkers unique talents would be needed again. Many Code Talkers have passed on, never knowing of the honors a grateful nation are now bestowed upon their remaining brothers. It was not until 1968 when the Navajo Code was declassified.

The Navajo Code Talker Memorial was designed and executed by famed Navajo/Ute sculptor, Orelan Joe. The Navajo Code Memorial was made possible through the Navajo Code Talker Memorial Foundation, Inc.

The image shows the exterior of the Navajo Museum, Library & Visitor's Center. The building is a two-story structure with a combination of dark brown metal siding and light-colored stucco. Large glass windows are prominent on the upper level. A glass-enclosed entrance is visible in the center. To the left, there is a modern pergola with thick, reddish-brown wooden columns and a roof made of alternating light blue and white horizontal slats. In the foreground, there is a red brick-paved area and some green shrubbery. A red bicycle rack is located near the entrance. The sky is clear and blue.

NAVAJO MUSEUM, LIBRARY & VISITOR'S CENTER

Not far from the Veterans Memorial Park, one can learn more about the Navajo life in the Navajo Museum, Library, and Visitors Center. There you can find a whole section dedicated to the Navajo Code Talkers.

THE PETALS OF THIS ROSE ARE NOT EASILY WILTED

Jenny LaSala

My mother, Elizabeth Williams, joined the Army reserves and served for a few years. My paternal uncle, Carl Crutchfield, served as well.

I have been in the U.S. Army for 10 years and a Drill Sergeant at Fort Jackson for five months. The most rewarding aspect of being a drill instructor is that I have an opportunity to positively influence the new generation of the Army. I have a chance to groom tomorrow's Soldiers and influence their future leadership styles.

The pictures are of my co-worker, DS West and myself. The other shows me on the left on the family day of graduating Drill Sergeant School. The last picture shows me in the field teaching Soldiers how to react to contact battle drills.

I love seeing the Soldiers at the end of a cycle try and emulate me because they admire me, or the fact that they can execute any task I give them, not out of fear, but out of respect. I use my role to positively influence, motivate, inspire, and educate them. I enjoy the fact that I am the new soldiers' first real example of what the Army standard is. Being a drill instructor humbles me, because looking at the trainees, it reminds me of where I came from, and the fact that I used to be a private, and how I saw my drill sergeants as super heroes, and now there may be a young soldier that sees me the same exact way.

It brings me great joy to know that my soldiers are graduating, despite the hurdles that were before them, be it physical fitness issues, discipline, weight, etc. The fact that at the end of the cycle the soldiers have made significant improvements, are now walking across the graduation field with their shoulders back, head up, and their chest out, makes me proud. I almost feel like a parent to 60 kids at a time, because I feel obligated to give them the best of me, to ensure that I draw out the best in them.

I suffered a great loss in 2008 and felt that I was alone in my time of bereavement. The loss of my mother was the driving force behind finally putting a book together. I never really had a chance to grieve and the book allowed me to take time and focus on my feelings.

I began to write down my feelings and would like to share my tears, anger, smiles and laughter with the world in my book, *THE PETALS OF THIS ROSE ARE NOT EASILY WILTED*, now available on Amazon http://www.amazon.com/Petals-this-Rose-Easily.../ref=sr_1_1...

There is so much that keeps me motivated about being a drill instructor, and I use it all to push me to be a better leader, soldier, and overall person.

~ Dani Sieben, U.S. Army Soldier

Comes A Soldier's Whisper Veteran tribute page on Facebook invites you to share your service photos and a memory of your wartime experience.

God Bless all who serve and keep us safe.

FOLLOW OUR VETERAN TRIBUTES:

<https://www.facebook.com/ComesASoldiersWhisper>

<https://www.instagram.com/soldierswhisper24/>

<https://twitter.com/SoldiersWhisper>

www.JennyLasala.com



NATIONAL WASP WWII MUSEUM

Avenger Field - Sweetwater, TX

Carol Cain

WASP – the first women to fly America’s military aircraft – who forever changed the role of women in aviation.

One thousand eight hundred thirty (1,830) women pilots – ages 18 to 35, with a private or commercial pilot’s license and at least 500 hours cockpit time (later lowered to 200 and then 35 hours) – answered the call of their country from the fall of 1942 to 1944 and joined the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) to train at Avenger Field, Sweetwater, Texas. Avenger Field was and is the only all-female training base in U.S. military history. Patriotism was running high, women like men, were caught up in the fever to “do their bit for the war effort.” Though they never left continental North America, the contributions of the 1,074 who graduated, received their wings and were deployed to 126 bases all over the United States, helped turn the tide in favor of America and our Allies. Today there are 114 surviving WASP, ranging in age from 91 to 103.

In addition to being an elite corps from the standpoint of skills, ability and experience, the WASP were guinea pigs. No program like this had ever been tried before. The future of women in military aviation hung on how the women performed professionally and conducted themselves morally and socially. Although they were Civil Service, they maintained military standards and observed military regulations. The objectives of the program were to relieve male pilots for combat, determine if women could serve as military pilots and decrease the air force’s total demand on manpower pools.

Even though these women knew how to fly,

they were sent to Avenger Field-Sweetwater, TX, to learn to fly the Army Way – under the direction of Jacqueline Cochran and General Hap Arnold. Their assignments were to ferry planes from factories to bases, tow targets for live ammunition ground/aerial gunnery practice, simulate strafing using smoke, searchlight missions, test pilot repaired aircraft (sent to the U.S from the front), instruction and tracking. They trained in PT-17s, PT-19s, BT-13s, BT-15s, AT-6s, AT-17s, UC-78s, UC-43s, and UC-81s. Most went on to advanced pilot training flying high-powered fighter and bomber aircraft – P-47s, P-38s, P-51s, the B-17 and B-29 – from coast to coast. Of the 77 types of planes in the Army Air Force arsenal, at one time or another, a WASP flew each type of these aircraft.

Training at Avenger Field lasted thirty weeks. Requirements were 393 hours of ground school, including math, physics, maps, charts, navigation, weather, communication, Morse code, first aid and other topics. Two hundred-ten hours of flight training included 70 hours-Primary, 70 hours- Basic, 70 hours- Instrument, 50 hours-Advanced and 20 hours- Multi-engine.

Because the WASP were paid under Civil Service and not part of the military, they received no military benefits or insurance. They had to pay their way to Avenger Field and their way home when the program was de-activated. The thirty-eight who were killed in service to their country could have no American flag on their coffin, could not be buried in military cemeteries and their families could place no Gold Star in their windows. Political maneuvering led to their deactivation on December 20, 1944. Gru-



eling schedules, sacrifices, gender bias and the loss of 38 women pilots apparently meant nothing. Their records were sealed and they were asked not to talk about their training. The women were expected to go home and assume their proper place in society.

In the 1970s, as Military Institutions were opening their doors to women, the U.S. Navy announced that they were training women cadets to fly military aircraft – “the first women to fly military aircraft.” After being denied military status by the U.S House of Representatives in 1944, (although the WASP Bill was favorably reported on by the Military Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives) the WASP petitioned Washington, and with the help of Sen. Barry Goldwater, received military status in 1977.

In 2010, the Woman Airforce Service Pilots received the Congressional Gold Medal from President Barack Obama. The Tuskegee Airmen and the Navajo Code Talkers are also Gold

Medal recipients. Bestowed by the United State Congress, the Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom are the highest civilian awards in the United States. The Gold Medal is awarded to persons “who have performed an achievement that has an impact on American history and culture that is likely to be recognized as a major achievement in the recipients’ field long after the achievement.

Although the WASP have been left out of American History text books, denied rights, given inferior equipment and subjected to gender bias, their story is now being told. The young women who fly today’s advanced military aircraft give credit to the WASP for paving the way so they can follow their dreams. Female commercial pilots know that it was the WASP who put the “first crack” in the glass ceiling, allowing them to have careers in aviation.

In May of 2015, eighteen WASP and three trainees returned to Avenger Field for Homecoming 2015. The ashes of five WASP have been spread

over the runways where they trained in 1943 and 1944. In interviews most have said: “These were the best years of our lives.” One said: “We would have flown for free if they had let us.” Although these women came from all walks of life, different social and economic climates, they had one thing in common; they loved their country and they loved to fly.

I encourage you to visit the National WASP WWII Museum, overlooking the old runways. At sunset, on quiet evenings, if you listen carefully, you can hear the echoes of the WASP singing their marching songs ... on this hallowed ground.

Mission Statement

The National WASP WWII Museum seeks to educate and inspire all generations with the story of the Women Airforce Service Pilots – the first women to fly America’s military aircraft- women who forever changed the role of women in aviation.



The National WASP WWII Museum overlooks the runways where the WASP flew. The north horizon is exactly as they saw it in 1943-44. The Museum Hangar is the original Sweetwater Municipal Airport that was used for civilian air traffic, repairs and frequented by WASP in 1943-44. Avenger Field’s original barracks, administration buildings, classrooms and control tower burned in 1955. All that remains of the original site is the wishing well where trainees were dunked after solo flights. Texas State Technical College is now located on the site where the buildings once stood and maintains the wishing well and the Memorial Wall with the names of every WASP and her class designation.

The battle for equality goes on today. In 1977 the Women Airforce Service Pilots were granted military status and in 2002 the Army granted the WASP military funeral honors – including interment at Arlington National Cemetery. Last year the Army withdrew that privilege. These women could give their lives for their country but there is no room for their ashes in the National Cemetery. Today, there are two bills before the House of Representatives and Senate that will correct this injustice but there is not much time left for these aviation pioneers.



MWSA Podcasting Planning Committee

Beth Underwood

Modern technology surrounds us these days. So much so that it can be a true test (though not entirely impossible) to elude its reaches. For writers and other creatives, technology can open the door to new experiences, better relationships with readers, and warp-speed communication. As various forms of new media have grown, many MWSA members have embraced the interwebs by starting their own websites and using social media accounts, such as Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Another up-and-coming technological marvel can be found in the world of podcasting — a world that MWSA is about to explore. And we’re counting on you to come along on the adventure!

By way of a little background, as you may know, a podcast is basically any digitally formatted programming that can be listened to live or as a recording, and is available for playback via computers, laptops, smart phones, tablets or media players. It allows a great amount of freedom for both the person creating the programming (the podcaster) as well as the listening audience.

One of the biggest advantages of podcasting is that podcasters can record audio from anywhere in the world, and audiences can listen from anywhere in the world, at a time that’s convenient for them. This will prove to be a major advantage for MWSA’s journey into podcasting, as well, as our members reach from coast to coast, and a little bit of everywhere in between.

For those MWSA authors who’ve been a guest on a podcast, you likely know the benefits of being interviewed. It’s a prime opportunity to reach regular listeners to a podcast now and in the future, with a simple search through podcast

archives. The interviews you participate in can be shared on social media and linked to your websites. Perhaps of biggest benefit, authors have an opportunity to go beyond the words on a page, lending their voice to help nurture relationships with their readers.

Needless to say, MWSA’s journey into the podcasting realm can offer a huge advantage to our authors as we move forward. But in order to make this a success for everyone, we’re going to need help. About 20 of you took the recent podcast survey, and while many of you are watching and waiting to see what this new adventure is all about, almost 80 percent of you are interested in tuning into a news, awards and interviews-style podcast. And that certainly seems like the logical place to start.

So let’s get the ball rolling! Send us an email at mwsapodcasts@gmail.com to volunteer, ask questions and even to inspire us if:

- ✓ •You’re willing to be interviewed in an upcoming podcast, and we’ll get you on the schedule.
- ✓ •You know of a person or place of interest for an upcoming podcast.
- ✓ •You want to volunteer your time and/or talents. We’re going to need people behind the microphones and behind the scenes. Just note what skills you’d like to offer up and we’ll put you to work.

Also be sure to hang on to this email address and use it to submit any news you’d like to get out to listeners. As we move forward, we’ll be continually on the lookout for ideas for show ideas, including anniversary editions and educational topics (from how to improve writing skills to how to set up social media profiles). We also hope to offer ad space, which will be one more way your writing can reach a larger audience, so stay tuned as things progress.

How Traditional Irish Music Came to the Ozarks

Laura Huffman

Fiddle playing in the Ozarks belongs to oral tradition and has been passed down through letters and a few newspaper articles.

James E Haley, born in 1836 to Irish immigrants John and Johannah Haley, grew up in Pulaski County (MO). Jim learned to play the fiddle by ear. When he was nine, his mother taught him “The Prettiest Little Girl in the Country,” an Irish song.

John Haley did not look kindly upon his son’s becoming a fiddler. When all the grown-ups were out on the fields at work Jim sneaked the hired man’s fiddle into his own room. Holding it over his feather bed lest it should fall and be damaged, he persisted in his determination to play. An aunt caught the lad at practice and told his parents when they came home at noon. Jim’s father allowed him a brief recital then and there. After hearing his son play John Haley went into town and bought him the best

fiddle he could find. Jim won his first contest.

In the beginning of his fiddler career, Jim had to ride behind his brother on the family horse to get to the dances at different country homes. When he had earned \$15 he bought a horse of his own. With three months formal education, and considerable experience in fiddle playing, Uncle Jim Haley (as he became known) was already a professional musician for Saturday night country dances.

Uncle Jim’s reputation for fiddling grew as he competed against rival fiddlers, like Tom Wyman, whom he roundly defeated at Union School at a pie supper, winning a \$10 prize. Teamed with John Cassady and John Hays of Pulaski County, he began to play for the



weddings and square dances held in people’s homes. He became the focal point of the Ozark country dance.

To earn a regular living, and support a wife and nine children, Uncle Jim farmed, or took a job, but he was ever the fiddler, collector and purveyor of traditional music. A story is told that during the winter of 1902, after a bad harvest, Uncle Jim went to Freeburg to get a job feeding horses for the railroad in order to pay for grain. There he heard a fiddler named Mahanney, who worked for Rock Island, play a tune he had written “Mahanney’s Tune.” When Uncle Jim went home the next week and played for a dance he tried to reconstruct the tune in his head. He played what he thought was the tune; what came out was something different. People liked it and called it “Haley’s Tune,” a title that stuck. The tune has passed into oral tradition and is still heard today.

When the telephone came to Pulaski County about 1910, it brought new possibilities to the country fiddler. Of course, people were on

“party lines” then, and all secrets were shared. On Saturday nights, when the weather was too fierce for people to venture out to dance, the telephone operators would open circuits all the way to St James about 40 miles from Big Piney. Uncle Jim would get his fiddle and play into his telephone. The signal that Uncle Jim was “broadcasting” was six short rings, the distress signal. Operators in Bloodland (now Fort Leonard Wood) and Big Piney would pick up the signal and send it on through their lines. Thus people over a large area would know Uncle Jim was playing and unhook their receivers, and like their modern day counter parts, be entertained in their homes.

Soon the listeners were putting their receivers in milk pails to amplify the sound. In doing so they anticipated the advent of radio, in particular the Saturday night “Grand Ole’ Opry” in Nashville, the National Barn Dance in Chicago, and the countless radio stations which from about 1925 on broadcast local country musicians. Playing over the telephone with the milk



pail in place in the middle of the living room in rural homes is a paradigm of mass electronic communication. It was “discovered” by the folk imagination, an instance with many precedents in other realms of invention.

Other musicians soon took to the telephone on Saturday nights-Arthur Pippin on the “French Harp,” Clarence Haley on guitar, Rudolph Haley on banjo, both Uncle Jim’s sons – to entertain a whole rural community over Pulaski and part of Phelps County before the arrival of radio.

An occasional revival would pass through Pulaski County and put a stop to the dancing and fiddling for a while. Uncle Jim, a Catholic, kept right on fiddling without fear of eternal damnation. About six months after people “got religion” they went back to dancing.

The story of Uncle Jim Haley is the history in part of how the Ozarks evolved from isolated frontier farms to communities built around small towns and linked them by roads. Among the inventions that changed the geography of

the Ozark’s and the lives of those who dwelt there were the automobile, the radio, and the telephone. When the automobile penetrated the Ozarks rural people began to go to town on Saturday; and every summer to county and state fairs. The first fiddler’s contests were held, along with spelling and singing bees, in the old log schoolhouses. Now they were made part of fairs. It was only natural that along with the judging of homemade preserves and livestock that the fiddler-farmers should want to compete.

At first Uncle Jim brought his fiddle to the fair in Waynesville. In 1925, Sam Rollins, the owner of the Waynesville Bank, sponsored Uncle Jim at the Jefferson City fiddling contest, which he won. Uncle Jim’s success appeared in the Pulaski County Democrat; he was a local celebrity.

At another contest in Jefferson City he was asked to play from the State Capitol over the radio station, broadcasting from the top of the Capitol, at the behest of a State Representative. He played eight hours without stopping. On this

occasion people drove to Sam Rollins’ home in Waynesville to listen to him on the radio. The early system of electronic communication-putting the telephone receiver in the milk pail- had come full circle.

Fiddle playing now reached country homes throughout the state; mass communication of country music had arrived.

Soon after World War I, a man named George D Hay from Memphis visited a county dance in the Ozarks, completely by accident, liked the fiddle playing so much that he decided to incorporate country stringed music into what became The Grand Ole Opry. Country Music, as we know it today was born with mass communication.

Uncle Jim Haley never went to Nashville; instead he went to St Louis, along with many other rural Ozark people, in search of a regular income. Working as a carpenter during the day Uncle Jim played a regular program for radio station KMOX, with his wife Elizabeth accompanying him on the guitar.

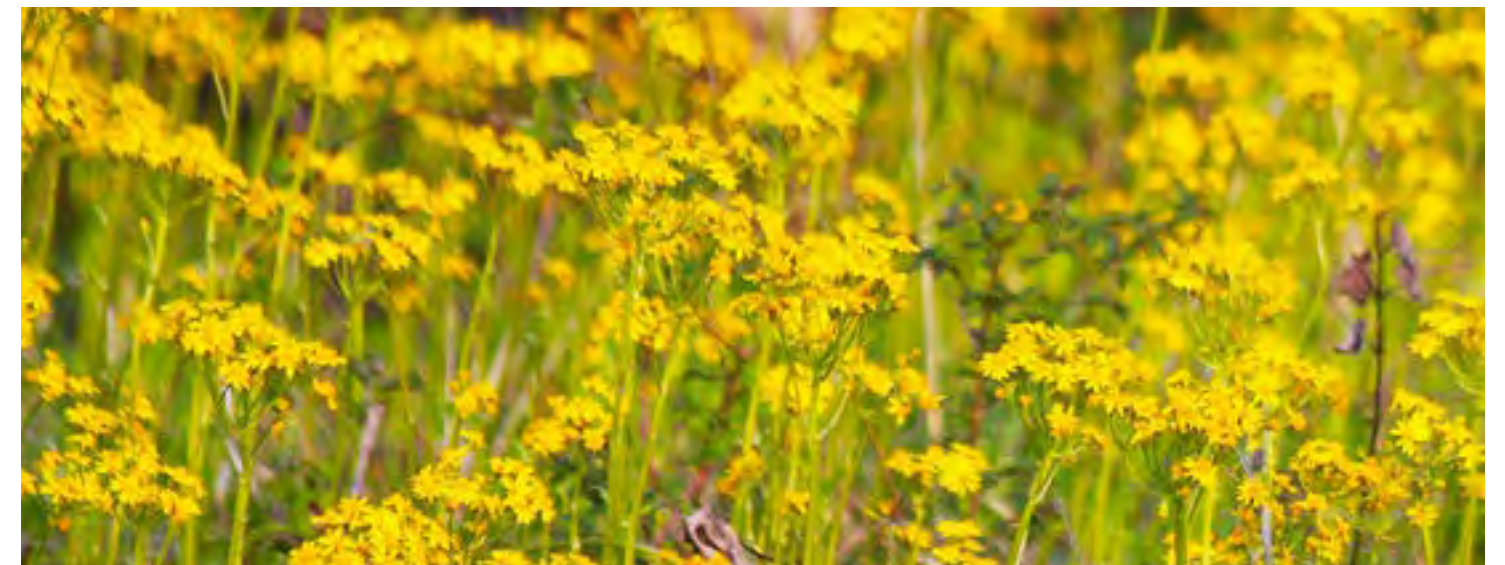
Playing for square dances took Uncle Jim, who had won 14 first prizes at state contests, to dance halls in Webster Groves and Maplewood. In rented halls he played schottisches, waltzes, hornpipes and reels, as well as a new genre called popular music. Uncle Jim’s wife made sandwiches and sold them; often to the same people she and Jim had known in Pulaski County. These dances were always crowded, not only with friends from home, but also with rural people from other counties and states.

Dance halls began to thrive in the cities at the time Uncle Jim began to play in St Louis, during the early years of the Depression. The customers were rural folk who had immigrated to the city in search of work and hungered for the music they had known at home. Uncle Jim, displaced from his Pulaski County birthplace, played the fiddle for the dispossessed of Missouri, Illinois, Arkansas, and Tennessee. The loneliness of rural isolation became, in the city, the loneliness of urban alienation. The dispossessed still craved Bacchus’ inspiration. Uncle Jim Haley, an unwitting instrument of cultural and social history, was among those who led the way.

One night, at age 87, Uncle Jim rose from his bed where he had lain sick for several days. As was his habit before retiring he got out his fiddle and began to play. He fiddled one tune this night. “The Prettiest Little Girl in the Country,” the song his Irish mother had taught him when he was a child, the first tune he ever played on the fiddle, and the song he played the night he first saw his future wife at a dance. When he finished playing, Uncle Jim Haley – Ozark fiddler – lay back on his pillow and died.

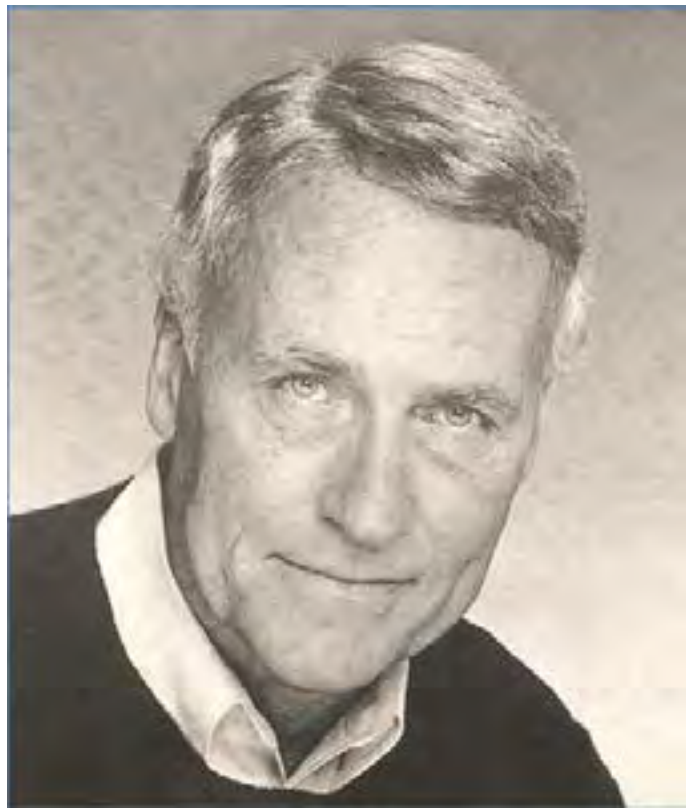
Submitted by Laura Huffman. Adapted from “Bacchus in the Backwoods: Uncle Jim Haley, Ozark Fiddler – Abridged”

Version Mid America Folklore 7, No 2 p 41-50
Written by Douglas C Wixson 1979 Via www.familysearch.org.



30-year Army Veteran Wins Palisades Theatre and Marine Award

Lance Johnson's new play, *Community Service*, won Theatre Palisades' 7th Annual Playwrights Festival. As part of the award, a staged reading with costumes, movement, and sound track will be performed on Tuesday, April 19, at 7:30 p.m. at the Theater in Pacific Palisade. Wine and goodies will be served at 7 p.m. as part of the celebration



Lance was an officer in the Army Reserves for thirty years including active duty and helping high school students gain admittance to West Point. *Community Service* touches on the importance of helping returning war vets, be it 1947 or today.

Community Service has been honored several times including a 2016 award from the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation "for a distinguished play or screenplay...dealing with U.S. Marine Corps heritage." Lance will be honored at a black tie dinner at the National Museum of the

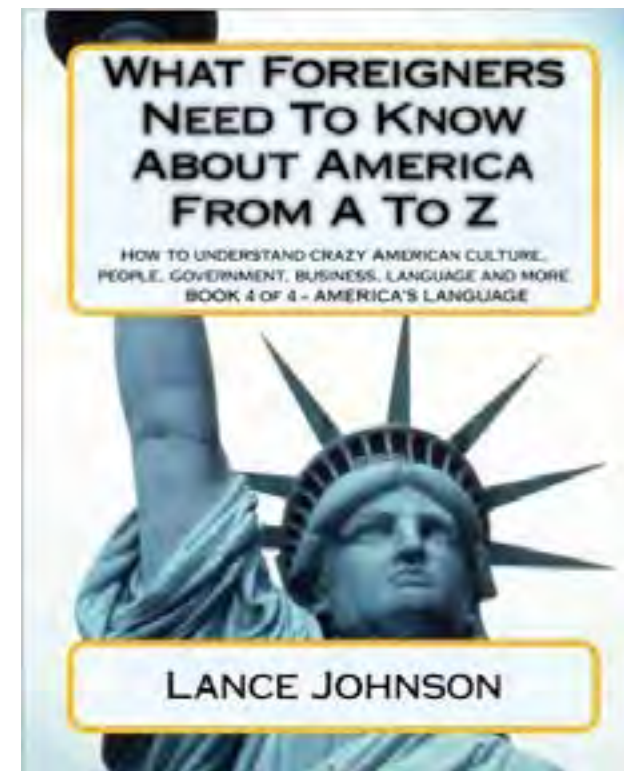
Marine Corps in Quantico, VA and "an engraved brick will be placed in Semper Fi Park adjacent to the Museum to honor play and playwright."



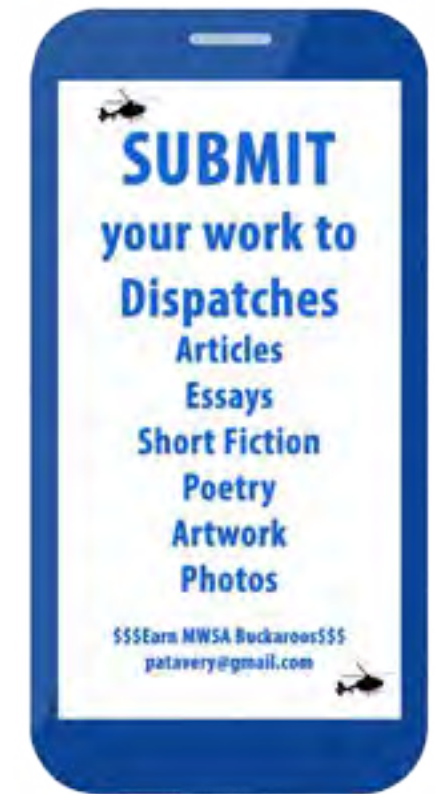
In this delightful ensemble play, an irascible judge in a rundown 1947 New York City courtroom sentences six people to perform community service in Central Park. It reminds theatergoers of *Miracle on 34th Street* with a dash of *It's a Wonderful Life* and a pinch of *How to Succeed in Business*. Actual 1940s radio commercials, music, and news broadcasts add to the colorful blending of Runyonesque humor, early Broadway nostalgia, the era's lingo and dress styles, and themes as pertinent today as they were in those emerging post-war years, including women's inequality and workplace discrimination, men's inept communication of feelings, father-son generational conflicts, retirement woes, and neglect of war veterans.

Lance Johnson has appeared in movies, stage plays (best actor nominations), national commercials and TV, including a lead American role

in a 28-part China TV production. He performed in Pacific Palisades Theatre's *The Best Man* by Gore Vidal in which the Palisadian-Post said, "Lance Johnson is outstanding as...ex-president Art Hockstader."



He is also the author of the award-winning endorsed by ambassadors from China to the US, and the US To China. It was also selected by American university hosts of Fulbright scholars as recommended reading and is now available in China in Simplified Chinese and the Ukraine in Ukrainian. The book is the result of his interest in travel and politics. He traveled or lived in 85 countries and 49 of the 50 states. His passport is fatter than a pocket-sized paperback book and his understanding of his own culture increased as he learned more about the cultures of others.



Port of Brownsville Tour

Pat McGrath Avery



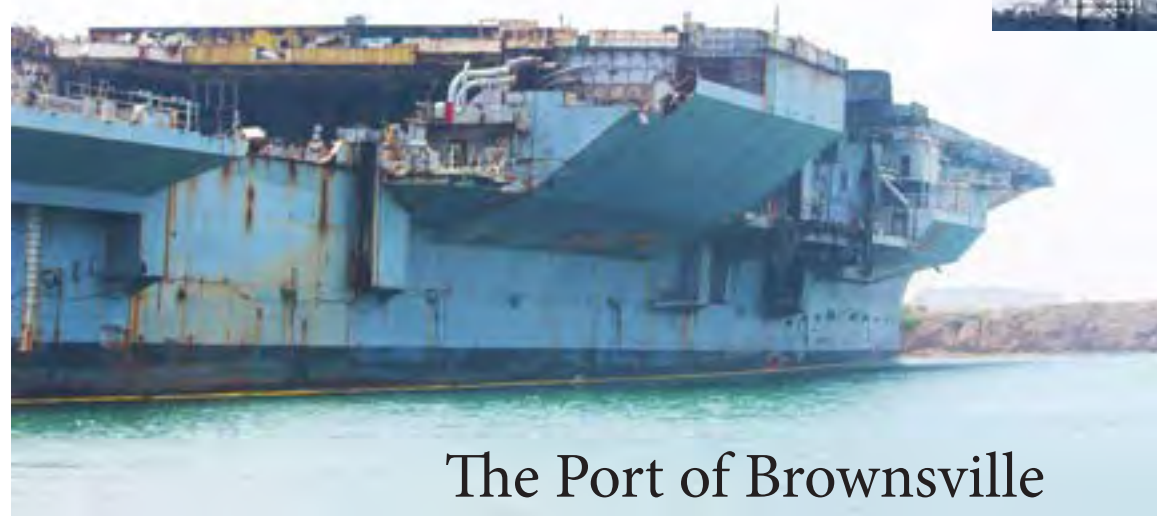
Shrimp Boat



USS Constitution during scrapping process



Drilling Platform



The Port of Brownsville

The Port of Brownsville in south Texas is known for its ship dismantling and offshore-drilling-rig construction and repair as well as its intermodal facilities. I recently took a boat tour through the port and thoroughly enjoyed a close-up view of its operations. I've viewed it from a nearby highway many times but the advantage of the tour was learning the names of the boats. I had taken a tour with Dolphin Docks several years ago but that was before the USS Forrestal was brought in.

The Port repairs and/or dismantles approximately 300 ships per year and predictions suggest that will double in the next few years. The intermodal port moves more than \$3 billion of goods per year. It is one of the top free-trade-zone ports in the country. It is the nation's largest land-owning public port authority with approximately 40,000 acres.

Transportation services include ocean-going vessels, barge service via the US Intracoastal and Inland Waterway System, rail service, all major US and Mexican truck lines, shipping via the M-10 Marine Highway, pipeline access to US and Mexican terminals and air freight service at the Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport.

Although shrimping is no longer the huge industry it was, the port is home to several hundred fishing boats. The shrimp basin is just to the north of the port facilities.

Once we traveled the 17-mile channel from the Gulf of Mexico at South Padre Island, we saw a number of ships at various stages of dismantling.

Three aircraft carriers are in process: the former USS Constellation, USS Ranger and the USS Saratoga. We saw a couple of destroyer tenders: the USS Yellowstone and the USS Shenandoah. We passed two vehicle -landing ships; the USS Comet and USS Meteor, both partially dismantled.

I watched the USS Forrestal arrive in February 2014. It has been completely dismantled and the scrap sold. The USS Saratoga, which arrived in September 2014, still rests in the water. The company that purchased it declared bankruptcy so all work stopped. The USS Constellation arrived in January 2015, and much of the dismantling has already taken place. The USS Ranger arrived in July 2015, and its dismantling is also in process.

The companies that purchase the ships generally pay a nominal sum but assume all costs of acquisition and dismantling.

Once we passed all the ships and turned around, the Breakaway Cruise crew served a dinner of fresh jumbo shrimp, sausage, potatoes and corn on the cob.

If you visit South Padre Island, the 4-hour Port of Brownsville Tour is worth your time and money. Port tours are available from several different companies, some with food, some without.



TIPS AND TRICKS

The Art of Lying (Part One)

Joyce Faulkner

For purposes of writing – in all genres – lying is an art. It can make or break a piece and as a result make or break the writer. Ask James Frey who got into big trouble when his best-selling book *A Million Little Pieces* was marketed as a memoir but turned out to be less than factual in part. His later book marketed as a novel was also a bestseller but no one had a thing to say about those fabrications.

In non-fiction writing of any kind – from blogs to histories, the audience expects THE TRUTH – whatever that is. However the truth can be a wiggly demon that is hard to capture because truth and fact may not be the same thing. A “fact” is science, the “truth” philosophy as Indiana Jones pointed out to one of his classes. However to the average man or woman on the street, the two concepts are emotionally-charged and often thought to be the same thing. There are plenty of folks out there who have a political or moral mission to label inaccuracies as LIES.

The trouble is when it comes to writing, facts can be hard to confirm especially when you may not have access to first-hand knowledge. Even in memoirs, memories mix and merge as time passes. You might think your dad had a green Buick but it was really your Aunt Mary who had the green Buick and your dad had the orange Edsel. Your sources might get things mixed up too. If your Uncle Sal told you that your dad had the green Buick, that confirms what you think you remember. This happens a lot in military situations because of the chaos of the moment, what is actually recorded at the time, what is recorded later, what people in various locations remember, and what moral and emotional meanings people put to what they remember later in life. This kind of information stew makes historians a little queasy.

I have had a few experiences that have made me sympathetic to public figures whose statements are challenged by teams of fact checkers who villify them as liars if easily found records don't confirm.

All my life, my parents and grandparents told my sisters and me that we had Cherokee ancestors. We lived in Fort Smith, Arkansas right on the Oklahoma border – so the story seemed reasonable enough to us. I imagine their folks told them the same thing – and who could argue it? Since we all had features that could be construed as American Indian and since the stories passed down from generation to generation were not really confirmable, I accepted this ancestry and shared it with my children.

However, when I looked into our geneology, I could find no American Indian ancestors at all. As far as I could tell, we went straight back to England – with most direct ancestors coming to America in the 17th century. So I had my DNA tested. Zero American Indian. Did that make my family's stories LIES? I continued checking and in one branch, I finally DID find someone who was labeled “Cherokee Joe” and another who fought with the Cherokees during the American Civil War. Could it be after all? So I asked my sisters and cousins to get their DNA analysed on the theory that perhaps I just didn't get any of the Indian DNA – afterall, both of my parents had dark eyes and dark hair and I am fairest of the fair when it comes to hair, eyes and skintone. I have to be the recessive gene. Right? So my sisters and cousins DNA tests came back “no Indian.” Lots of other surprises, but no American Indian.

So we are back to square one. What is the story? Why did so many in our family identify as Indian? Did an ancestor live with the Chero-

kee? What were the circumstances of the ancestor who fought with the Cherokee at the Battle of Pea Ridge? This is where we are after three years of research.

Now imagine if you were writing about public figure Joyce Faulkner. All you would know is that Joyce Faulkner at some point claimed to be American Indian and a quick fact check shows that's not true. What do you do? The type of writing you are doing may require you to do different things.

Let's say you are a freelancer aiming to sell to a tabloid or you write a political blog. You have tight deadlines and limited funds for doing research. The tabloid has looser ethical guidelines than say Reuters and they pay for news that is racy and controversial. Or, if you are a blogger, you deal in opinion openly and assume that your audience knows this. In either of those cases, you probably could justify reporting this claim of Indian ancestry as false. You might even be able to brand Joyce Faulkner a liar. It might not be the whole story, but it is interesting and provocative and that's what your audience wants to read.

If you were writing for an established media outlet where traditional journalistic ethics are enforced, your article would need additional research or it would be rejected. However, if the tabloid article got lots of attention and outrage against Joyce Faulkner ran high, you might get a job or sell an article that explores the background of the outrage of the day. Factchecking for these publications has to be more rigorous than for a blog. There's more space to explain how Joyce Faulkner came to make this false claim because this audience wants to know “the whole story.”

Now if you were writing a biography of Joyce Faulkner, you have a higher responsibility to tell the whole story in context and that requires interviews with family and friends, documentation, perhaps an explanation of how such confusing information gets passed down in families, and perhaps a short paragraph on geneology in general.

There are exceptions in this case. While I personally have ethical objections to such exceptions, the world doesn't follow my point of view.

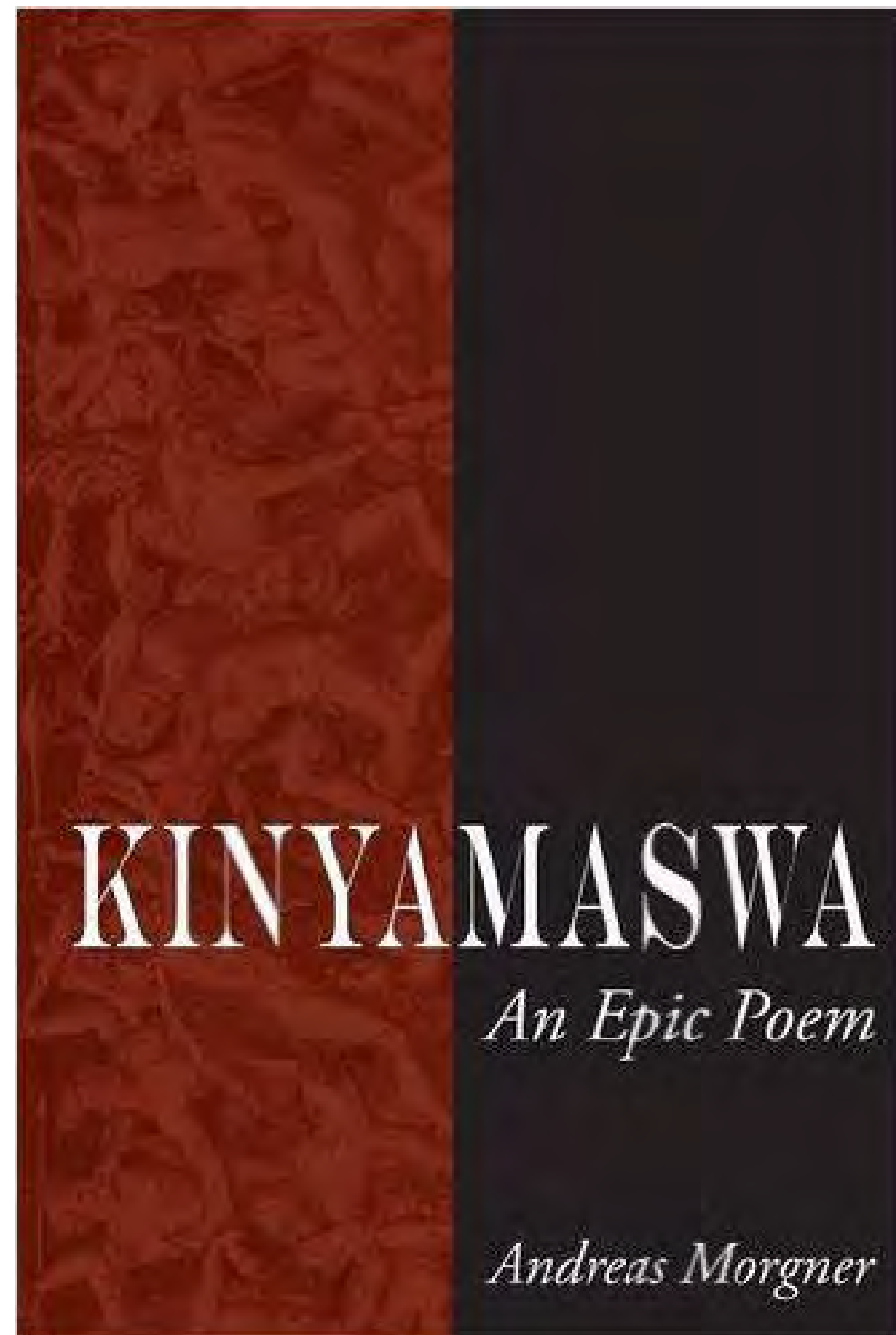
Say you are a freelancer and have been hired to write a “slam” biography by those who want Joyce Faulkner's public life to fail. While you still have to do the background research, you can write about only those aspects that further the “message.” You can use only those interview quotes that deingerate Joyce Faulkner and avoid explanations that provide context. You can use those anecdotes that show the “bad” qualities of your subjects and leave out or minimize those that show the “good.” Such a biography is factual but is it true? Regardless, you can sell such a piece for a price depending on the public interest in your subject. And of course, you can sell the same bio with the “positive” slant to another side.

On the opposite side of the coin, let's assume that you are a writer for a community that wants to “out” those who claim to be a member of that community? How much research do I need to do to confirm that someone has knowingly deceived the public and deserves a thrashing? In my case, would it be enough to label me a wannabe Cherokee for benefits due that group? What about those who claim a military record that can't be confirmed through the normal channels? How much additional time and expense is reasonable before making an accusation in writing?

It would seem too that this is is magnefied after the death of the indiviual who can no longer explain or give clues to the context. And this becomes a bigger problem the more years that pass. Say you are writing history about someone who lived 100 years ago. And you find documented claims and counterclaims of a crime. There's newspaper articles and interviews and all sorts of references. Are any of those things factual? How do cultural differences exacerbate the interpretation of data? Move back in time and it gets even dicier to know for sure. (Note a documentary called Benjamin Franklin's Bones. Or a TV Show called Ten Things You didn't know about Lincoln.)

As writers, we tell ourselves that we have a responsibility to tell THE TRUTH, but whose truth? Just think of the different ways that we all veiw a shared event depending on nationality, religion, political point of view, age, region, etc. (To be continued in Lying Part Two, Summer *Dispatches* 2016)

Best Book of the Spring Quarter



Kinyamaswa by Andreas Morgner is very different from other books submitted to MWSA this year. It features all the standard techniques of epic poetry – an heroic journey, tales of life and death, great tragedy, great triumphs. It is a surprisingly easy read – yet one that will break your heart and draw you back to read certain passages again and again. The story of Rwandan refugees in the DR Congo after the genocide in 1994, it combines history, philosophy, and the folk tales of a society destroyed by ethnic differences. Highly recommended!

MWSA Recommended Reading List – Spring 2016

The Military Writers Society of America (MWSA) is an organization of hundreds of writers, poets, and artists drawn together by a common bond of military service. One purpose of our Society is to review the written works of our members. From a compilation of book reviews, we've selected the following as our 2016 Spring Recommended Reading List:

Chita Quest by Brinn Colenda

Sheppard of the Argonne by G Wm Weatherly

Damned Yankee by Carolyn Schriber

Veterans in our Neighborhood by Valerie Pfundstein

Higher Ground by McKendree Long

The Liberators by Jerri McCloud

Meant to Be by Jessica James

The Stonegate Sword by James Fox

Never Forget by Heather Ashby

Hello Wigwam by L. John Lawrence

Kinyamaswa by Andreas Morgner

Stay the Rising Sun by Phil Keith

The Cards in the Deck by Robert Stanek

Mataluna by Edward Zellum

One Stick and a WACO by JM Taylor

Gravity by Beth Underwood

If your place is like mine, the improving weather is countered by the nefarious growth of weeds and grass. It's been a constant aggravation. I'm supposed to somehow kill the weeds, but encourage the grass to grow. My suggestions of using Astroturf or blacktopping the whole yard have fallen on deaf ears (and she claims I can't hear). When I succeed, I'm expected to go into a repetitious process of mowing the same grass I'm encouraged to grow. It's very time consuming and even results in sweat and sore muscles – two other things I try to avoid. I sometimes find myself telling my wife I have to run to the store, simply to find a place to park the car in the shade and read. I enjoy reading and hopefully you do, too. I strongly suggest you risk that unexplainable urge to work in the yard, remember grass and weeds have rights, too. Entertain yourself today with a book you haven't read before. Settle back with your Kindle, Nook, iPad, or an old fashioned book. If you do, the list above would be a great place to find a new book. More info about the books listed above and the authors can be found at www.mwsadispatches.com.



Barn in Pulaski County, Missouri

Pat McGrath Avery

***Womens Air Service Pilots
Museum
Sweetwater, Texas***

***The Navajo Museum, Li-
brary, and Visitors Center
Window Rock, Arizona***

