

DISPATCHES

MILITARY
WRITERS
SOCIETY OF
AMERICA

Rescuing History One Story at a Time

www.militarywriters.com

Winter 2015



*MWSA 2015 Conference will be September 24-27 at
the Holiday Inn & Suites Phoenix Airport North,
1515 North 44th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85008*

Letter from the editor

Although the 2014 Phoenix conference is now just a memory, we have months to prepare for September. The hotel accommodations and service were superb. Speakers shared their knowledge and members made the most of networking opportunities. If you didn't attend, why not put it on your calendar for this year? Phoenix is a destination filled with Native American history and wonders of the natural world.

Because all of our members are writers, and most of us researchers, we are implementing a section on travel writing. Check out the travel articles in this issue by Don Helin, Nancy Smith and me.

When you travel somewhere for research, you need information on hotels, restaurants and attractions in the area. To become a travel writer, you only need to include some of this information in your stories, blog posts or books.

Why should you? Travel writers gather unique opportunities. Let me give you an example. When writing *Murder Takes No Prisoners*, I needed to visit the old Missouri State Prison in Jefferson City, Missouri. I called the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) and with their help, I toured the prison and was given the opportunity to meet with the town historian. Not only did he share stories about the prison, he also shared the Civil War-era history of the area. In addition, I learned about other Jefferson City attractions, and I have to add, sampled some awesome ice cream at the well-loved Central Dairy.

Next time you travel, contact the local Convention & Visitors Bureau. Take advantage of their expertise and passion for their city. When we planned the Dayton conference, we worked with Lisa Willis from the Greene County CVB. She helped us every step of the way.

On another note, we need articles for *Dispatches*. Submissions are due one month before publication dates of January, April, July and at the Conference. Share your knowledge, experiences, stories and travels with your fellow members.

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Feature Articles

Nancy Smith
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Bob Doerr
Joyce Faulkner
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Joyce Faulkner

Earl Trimble is a Korean War veteran. He is one of three featured in my children's book, *Letters from Korea*. Each year, he works our booth at Branson Veterans Week and welcomes home each veteran who walks by. In October, he and his son, Larry, took the Honor Flight to Washington DC. Larry's article, *Two Cinnamon Sticks*, pays a beautiful tribute to the veterans on the flight.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy 2015, members!

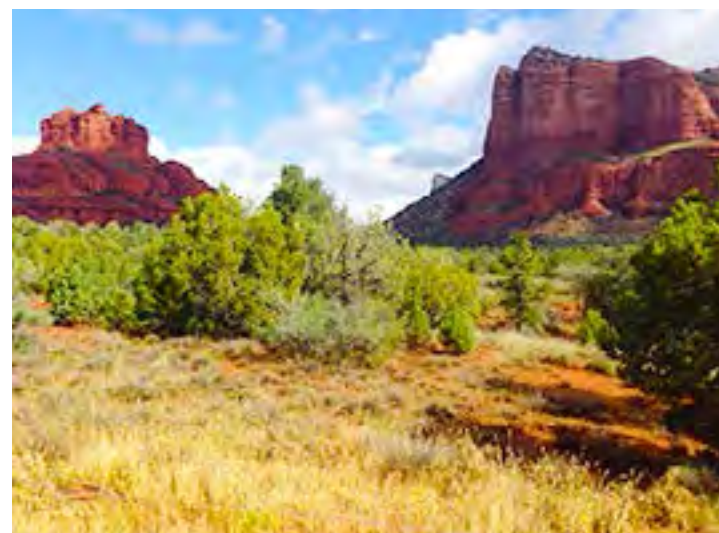
I'm proud to announce that Floyd Schriber and Bob Doerr have agreed to fill two vacancies in MWSA's board of directors. Floyd, retired Air Force, is the husband of award-winning author Carolyn Schriber and Bob, also retired Air Force, is 2013 MWSA Author of the Year. Complete biographies of them can be seen elsewhere in this issue.

Our 2015 conference is again going to be in Phoenix, and already we're starting to make program plans. Some exciting new ideas are being tossed around and we should be able to make some announcements in our next issue. Also, 2015 is an election year for MWSA officers and board members. Voting will be conducted at the Phoenix conference, so it's even more important that we have you there. Here is an opportunity for you to step forward and help the organization expand on its mission as a non-profit. Go onto our website, www.mwsadispatches.com, click on the membership label and then on the By-Laws and Guidelines/Definitions link to learn the details of what duties are associated with the different positions. People who wish to be candidates can email me at djonzimmerman@earthlink.net.

Hoping all of you have a happy and prosperous 2015!



Sedona, Arizona



MWSA Leadership

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William McDonald

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Dwight Jon Zimmerman

V. President
Betsy Beard

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Mike Mullins

Jim Greenwald

Bob Doerr

Floyd Schrieber

Consultant – Maria Edwards



Award-winning author Valerie Ormond welcomes attendees at the 2014 Military Writers Society of America Conference in Phoenix, Arizona.



MWSA Silver Medalist Ric Hunter, author of FIREHAMMER and his wife Jan.

IN THE RANKS...

"Whosoever commands the sea commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself."

SIR WALTER
RALEIGH,
MA'AM?



"COAST GUARD"

2014 C. Bailey

IN THE RANKS...

INTEGRITY...



THE "I" WORD



"AIR FORCE"

2014 C. Bailey

Bob Doerr's MWSA Recommended Reading List

Winter 2014 -2015

The Military Writers Society of America (MWSA) is an organization of over one thousand 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 our recent book reviews, and from a list of old favorites, we've selected the following as our 2014-2015 Winter Recommended Reading List:

24 Years And 40 Days – The Story of Army 1LT. Daniel Hyde by Glenda L. Hyde

Sand and Fire by Tom Young

The Man Called Brown Condor by Thomas Simmons

54 Poems for the Lord in 2 Days by Barbara Perkins-Brown

Chita Quest by Brinn Colenda

Hunting Jimmy Joe by David Michaelson

Windshift by Joyce Faulkner

Murder is for the Birds by Pat McGrath Avery

No One Else to Kill by Bob Doerr

Klinger a Story of Honor and Hope by Betsy Beard

Saga of the Sioux by Dwight Zimmerman

Football season is about over. School is out for the holidays, and the hectic race to see who can spend the most money during and after the holidays is gearing up. Oh, those alleged sales! Yes, and don't forget the holiday travel! So many ways to spend money. Don't worry, January will be here before we know it, and the annual cycle will spin up once again. Take my advice: go find a place to hide – a local coffee shop, the library, maybe the attic??? and read a book. That's right. Take your mind off your team not being in the Super Bowl, or that you just found out the great deal you got on that big screen TV before Christmas has just been beaten by those sneaky after Christmas sales! So settle back with your Kindle, Nook, iPad, or just an old fashioned book. One of those listed above would be a great place to start. More info about the books listed above and the authors can be found at www.mwsadispatches.com.



MWSA

Board members gather before book donation to Phoenix VA Hospital.

Bob Blakeney

712th Transportation Railway Operating Battalion

1953-1955

“I was there for two Christmases,” Bob Blakeney responded when I asked about his service in Korea.

Although he arrived at the war’s end, Bob witnessed the suffering of the South Korean people and the toll on the Allied soldiers.

Drafted in 1953, Bob took basic training at Fort Eustis, Virginia. Prior to that, he worked for the Santa Fe Railroad in San Francisco, California. Following basic, he spent ten weeks at a locomotive operator school. He was sent to Fort Lewis, Washington, where he shipped out to Yokohama, then on to Sasebo by train and finally to Pusan, South Korea.

“We had a different life than other soldiers,” Bob said. “Because we worked for the railroad running from Seoul to Taejon, we didn’t have reveille or inspections. We worked all hours and our mess hall was open 24/7.” The army had taken over the Korean National Railroad and soldiers worked side-by-side with South Korean civilians.

For six months, he hauled mostly freight. “The only time I was shot at, happened when two soldiers guarding our load of perishables rode on the engine to keep warm and accidentally shot into the engine.”

“The worst part of my job was hitting the South Korean pedestrians who walked the track. I remember the time we couldn’t avoid seven people in a tunnel. Another time, a lady and her baby appeared on the bridge and they had nowhere to go.”

Korean trains had no cabooses and the conductors were Korean.

“If we hauled food supplies, or coal, the Koreans would search the tracks to pick up anything that fell out. If we stopped, they’d try to climb on to get the food or coal. If we had tank cars with gas, they’d try to get it. We often saw their tents and

trenches up in the hills.” He said many of the families had been displaced by the war and their lives seemed difficult.



Bob Blakeney

He spent his last months hauling soldiers back and forth on R&R leave. The short runs, day after day, gave him plenty of time to observe the South Korean culture. He remembered temperatures down to -30. “And bodies – if someone died and had no family, there was no one to pick up the body,” Bob shook his head.

After returning home in 1955, Bob went back to work for the Santa Fe Railroad in California. When he retired after 42 years of service, he held the #1 seniority position. Bob’s years with the railroad took him from coal-burning and oil-burning steam engines through diesel and diesel-electric engines.

Bob now lives in Arkansas and is an active member of the Military Vehicle Preservation Association (MVPA).



Monte Smith, Bill McDonald (Founder), and Dwight Zimmerman (President) unload books collected by MWSA for patients at the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Facility



Board members at Phoenix VA Hospital.

L-R: Ron Camarda, Maria Edwards, Betsy Beard, Dwight Zimmerman, Joyce Faulkner, Bill McDonald, Jim Greenwald.

Plan a visit to Montezuma's Castle in Camp Verde, Arizona

By Pat McGrath Avery

Phoenix may be a major American city, but its proximity to age-old ruins is a delight to a history buff. In 1906, after the passage of the Antiquities Act, President Theodore Roosevelt declared the first four National Monuments. One of them, Montezuma's Castle, is only a 90-minute drive north of Phoenix.

Although misnamed (it had nothing to do with Montezuma and is not a castle), the 800-year-old cliff dwellings give visitors a glimpse into the lives of the Sinagua people, a Pre-Columbian culture. From approximately 1100 to 1425, the Sinagua built and inhabited the twenty-room complex ninety feet up the side of a mountain. According to our guide, it was home to the women and children. Believed to have been a matriarchal society, the cliff dwellings became a 300-year-long project to enhance and expand their home in the harsh desert environment. The men lived in lesser dwellings nearby.

Although the climate is desert, the mountain rests between the desert floor to the south, the Verde Valley and the red rocks of Sedona to the north.

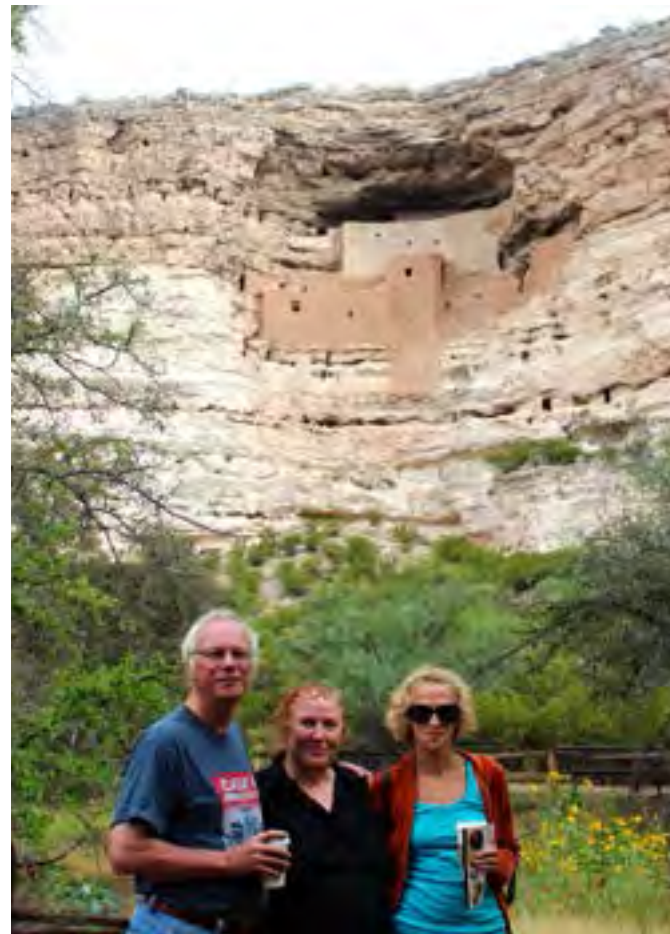
In the beginning, visitors could climb up the 90-foot cliff into and through the ruins. I'm sure they ogled the architectural marvel including the massive sycamore beams that had to be hauled in to support the ceilings. The Sinagua showed amazing design and engineering skills. What now looks like a monumental task must have looked nearly impossible a thousand years ago.

The view from the windows encompasses the lands they farmed and the nearby Beaver Creek, a tributary of the Verde River. Historians believe the Sinagua built in the side of the cliff due to the frequent flooding of the Verde River.

The National Park Service manages the park and offers guided tours or visitors can walk the 1/3-

mile, self-guided trail that winds past the cliff dwelling. For more information on the monument, visit:

<http://www.nps.gov/moca/historyculture/index.htm>



Montezuma's Castle

Dwight Zimmerman, Joyce Faulkner, Carmel Faulkner

Photo by Pat McGrath Avery

If you fly to the conference, there are multiple tour companies that offer visits to the monument, Sedona and the Grand Canyon. We booked our tour with Pink Jeep Tours. I'll write more about them next issue.



Memories of Bastogne

James Stevens

The rain started before dawn with a soft tapping on the slate-tiled roof. The tapping grew louder as the drops got bigger, a steel-gray shower that looked cold in the pale morning light. I pulled up the worn blankets to my chin and stared at the plaster ceiling. I was in the quiet small town of Bastogne, in the Ardennes Mountains in Belgium. What better weather for visiting a military museum.

Later, I sipped strong Belgian coffee and spread butter on fresh croissants in my cozy hotel dining room. The sidewalks were empty. Few cars passed the major intersection named Place McAuliffe, in honor of the World War II general who commanded the Army's 101st Airborne Division—the legendary Screaming Eagles.

In December of 1944, the Germans surrounded Bastogne in an unexpected offensive that came to be called The Battle of the Bulge. It was a last attempt to stop the advance of the Allied armies by seizing the port of Antwerp to the Northwest and cutting off main supply lines. It almost succeeded. The 101st stopped them and hung on in the dead of a bitter winter in the hills and fields circling the town. They refused to surrender, McAuliffe replying “Nuts!” to German demands.

I finished my coffee and croissants. Ten o'clock arrived and the rain paused as if on cue. I pulled on my rain coat and a cloth cap, tucked my hands into deep pockets and walked to the museum a few blocks away. The three-story brick building that now housed artifacts and exhibits had been a dining hall. It was completely quiet, empty, except for the young lady arranging tickets for visitors to buy.

She handed me my ticket and a small guide book listing the exhibits. She explained that I was on the main floor, with another floor above—and a special basement exhibit. She asked that I notify her when I was ready for the basement visit.

I thanked her and mentioned the sudden chill, a draft, as if a door was left open somewhere. She smiled and said it was a frequent, but unexplained

complaint. The rain resumed as I climbed the stairs.

At the top of the steps I stopped as two German soldiers faced me—their ragged uniforms smeared with blood, exhaustion on their faces. I walked around the glass cases, half expecting the figures to move. They didn't look like Supermen. I felt the cold again. A large room held uniforms: American, German, Belgian, French...all with flags of their countries. Samples of the toilettries they carried, the food they ate, and their personal letters and family photos were laid out. Again, glass cases depicted ordinary soldiers struggling to survive for one more day.



Next, a scene portraying a small café, in Bastogne, during the encirclement. Through a small picture window you could see a café owner, a soldier of the Belgian resistance, an American woman, a WAC, natives sipping coffee, all frozen in 1944. I leaned against the glass, expecting to hear their conversations. I took deep breaths and scanned the room for any movement. I was alone and feeling in a different world, somehow slipping into 1944, the rain overhead steady as a drumbeat. I rubbed my arms for warmth. I hurried to the stairs, desperate to see or hear another person.

One final display room and...it was a small room tucked away in a corner, under a small overhead lamp. Inside I saw two German officers studying

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maps, pointing to some feature as a working man, a peasant, stood in a facing doorway, a cloth cap like mine crumpled in his dirty hands. On one side of the terrified man was a German Policeman wearing his badge, a shiny gorget. On the other side was a man wearing a long leather coat, with a black fedora hiding his eyes. My mind screamed “Gestapo.” I hid behind the curve of the doorway, convinced the man had seen me and would be turning to me. I was trapped. I moved to the stairs and eased my way down.

I almost fell in my panic. The ticket taker had been joined by a friend and they smiled as I appeared. My heart was telling me to slow down.

“How is your heart? Any problems?” The ticket taker asked, startling me. How did she know?

“No problems. I am fine, just out of breath.”

“I ask because the basement exhibit is sometimes difficult for people to manage. You can leave anytime, but I ask that you try to remain in the room until the program ends. About 5 minutes. Do you want to try it?” she asked.

“Of course.” I couldn't stop myself from looking for the leather-coated agent. I glanced again at the guidebook.

“Behind a door you will find a bombing experience in a hiding shelter, together with a family.” It read. “You will hear, see and feel the loud sound they heard during wartime.”

I walked down the old stairs, entering a musty-smelling basement room with a few chairs and a bench. The door closed behind me as I moved to a chair. The light was dim, but I could see holes in the adjoining white brick wall. The light dimmed completely as a recording began. The voice explained it was Christmas Eve, December 1944, and Bastogne was expecting a quiet night. Sounds like a tank engine and aircraft motors started. The voice explained that the Germans would be dropping tons of bombs on the helpless civilians. The chair I sat on shook from a blast. A high-pitched tone of a falling bomb got louder and louder as it fell directly overhead. I looked to the floor for a place to hide. The sound of an exploding bomb went off, shaking me. I stood, peering through the wall holes. A Belgian family was huddled on the other side, parents holding

and shielding their children, helpless against the attack. I felt sweat on my legs as I made it to the door as the lights came up for the exit.

I left the room, shaking with emotion.

“Are you okay?” the lady asked. Her friend studied my reaction, a knowing smile on her placid face.

“Yes. It was scary, but I'm okay now.”

“What do you think?” the friend asked.

“Every school child in the world should see what happens during a war, what it is really like. It's not just the soldiers who suffer and die. Innocent civilians pay. It's tragic when we forget,” I said.

“That is why we build museums,” she said. “So we never forget the suffering, the horror and the terror we lived through 70 years ago.”

I glanced at her name tag. “Thank you, Annette. Time is forever frozen here.”

Outside the rain had cleared and the sun peeked through the low clouds. I shivered as I slid the flyer into my deep pocket. I adjusted my cap and stepped out of the hallway into the warmth. It was good to be back.



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Tips and Tricks: Plotting

by Joyce Faulkner

For a novelist, whether you start with a story idea or with a character, plotting is fundamental. Over the many years that I studied the art of writing, I searched for the perfect technique. I finally concluded that no one approach worked for every project or for where I found myself mentally at a given time. Also, as I began working with coauthors or ghosting someone else's story, I discovered that what worked inside my own head wasn't useful for teams. Now I use a variety of tools to stimulate ideas, explore options, add complexity—or simplify.

BRAINSTORMING

I use a white board or flip chart when I'm brainstorming a story. Even in solo projects, I sometimes include friends and/or a bottle of wine in the exercise. The goal is to relax and approach a project in the most enjoyable and creative mode possible. I use this technique either during the book definition phase or in the middle of a piece when I've encountered a structural problem.



I go from person to person and record as many ideas as possible until the group no longer has anything new to offer. During this exercise, I write each suggestion on the white board without comment or judgment. Then I evaluate what we've listed. Are there duplicates? Combine them. Suggestions that don't apply? Get rid of them. Finally, I determine which ideas are *not* workable. What's left gives me either a starting point or a turning point. If I'm just starting the book, I move to another plotting tool—like creating a short synopsis. If I'm midway through a troubled book, I rework existing copy with the new ideas in mind.

REFINING THE IDEA

In the earliest phase of planning a novel, I write three paragraphs describing the beginning, middle, and the end of the story. It's a habit I picked up my freshman year of college. The result is often a good test of the concept. I look at what I've written and ask myself some pertinent questions. Is the notion enough to carry a novel? A novella? A short story? Does it move me enough to spend many months (or years) developing it? Is the theme compelling enough to grab a new reader? Will this tale satisfy my existing audience?

If I do pursue the idea, these three paragraphs morph over time as I describe what I'm doing to others. If I change direction, I refine the passage to reflect it. Over time, it gets shorter and more to the point. Eventually, it becomes the "elevator pitch" that I use when I'm promoting my book. For example, when I tell a stranger about my novel, *USERNAME*, I say: "There is an aging serial killer who lures his victims through the Internet and an identity thief who finds her victims on-line and they target the same woman." This one sentence blurb evolved from my first three paragraph

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musings that I created in 1999. So did the whole book.

DOCUMENTING THE STORY LINE

Even if I haven't worked out the characters in detail, I sit down and write the story. Some people call this the "zero draft." It usually takes me a couple of months. Other authors tell me they can do it much faster—or slower. It depends on how committed you are to the idea and how quickly the story forms in your imagination. Inexperienced novelists sometimes consider this a completed book, however, it's important to think of it as a working document—a lump of clay. I view this first manuscript as a way to record my idea in depth. As I develop my characters, I might change my mind about the way the plot evolves. I might add scenes for one purpose or another—and what I wrote as exposition in the zero draft might be reworked as action or dialogue.

NOTE: For authors who write series or who work on many projects at the same time, the zero draft might be stored for future development.

CARVING A STORY OUT OF THE LUMP OF CLAY

Once you have the zero draft, it's time to develop the plot. There are many techniques and tools available to facilitate this job. Authors use the ones that work best for the way they work. Some of us use different techniques for different books. Some use various tools for different parts of the same novel. Others maintain they don't use any of these options. We are all different.

Outline/Reverse Outline - We all learned how to do outlines in school so the technique is familiar and easy. I use it on my zero draft when I'm figuring out "pace" and "reveal." It helps me identify inconsistencies in the plot or problems with sequencing. Have I provided the reader enough information to appreciate the "twist?" Does a heroine's behavior reflect things that have happened to her earlier in the book? I use a reverse outline to evaluate scenes that create suspense and to make sure that everything in the novel should be there. Example, if a clue is hidden behind a picture hanging over the fireplace, have I included at least two "meaningful" mentions of that picture

in scenes before the reveal?

Many authors have used this technique. William Faulkner supposedly scrawled the outline of his Pulitzer-Prize winning story, *A Fable*, on his office walls. Here are some examples of outlines created by famous writers.



Sylvia Plath's outline of "The Bell Jar."
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2326630/Notes-diagrams-famous-authors-including-J-K-Rowling-Sylvia-Plath-planned-novels.html>



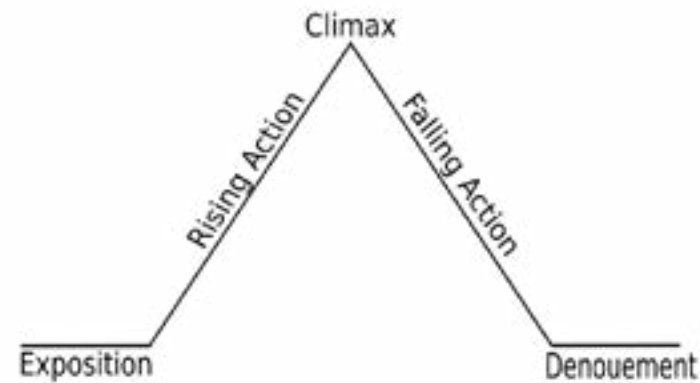
Jack Kerouac's approach was creative even in the planning stages.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2326630/Notes-diagrams-famous-authors-including-J-K-Rowling-Sylvia-Plath-planned-novels.html>

Turning Points - Anyone who has studied the art of writing will recognize Gustav Freytag's Pyramid. He separates a plot into six parts—exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement.

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While I don't always map these parts of my plots anymore, I keep them in mind when I'm writing. After all of these years, even in a short story, I find myself working the pyramid almost instinctively. I rearrange the traditional structure occasionally though.



Freytag's Pyramid

I do make a note of the turning points themselves though. These are places in a piece where the author makes decisions about what happens next—and what happens next can be many things. Although it may seem formulaic, these “causal changes” help move the story along and prevent a writer from lingering so long in one phase that audiences lose interest.

In plays and movies, turning points occur at precise places—the first at 10% into the show, the second at 25%, the third at 50%, the fourth at 75% and the fifth at 92-99%. In my younger years, I was dogmatic—and if I was writing a teleplay, I would have had to be. However, as a novelist, I found I could fiddle with the positioning of these inflections—to a point. More than once, I had a content editor point out that the story “dragged” and when I repositioned those points, that solved that negative reader “feeling.” It does depend on your genre and the specific audience. What works for a romance would not satisfy readers of action/adventure books.

Although turning points have been called many things over the years, the five turning points are: “Opportunity,” “An Imposed Change,” “The Point of No Return,” “A Setback,” and “The Climax.” (See further definitions here: www.storymastery.com/story/screenplay-structure-five-key-turning-points-successful-scripts/)

I lay these inflection points over my zero draft and adjust my story line to make things happen where they should. Depending on the planned length, I can allot the appropriate amount of time to each part of my book and create a rhythm that accommodates the attention span and expectations of audiences. Alternatively, I create a map or chart to help me visualize the rise and fall of the plot and that helps me identify the turning points.

Index Cards - Index cards are time-honored organization tools. In the olden days after I had my zero draft, I used real index cards—with a different color for the phases of Freytag's pyramid. I'd write a short description of the different scenes on each card—and mark the turning points with tape or a marker so I could see them at a glance. I'd also have different colored decks where I plotted the growth of my characters over the course of the story. Then I'd lay the decks out on the kitchen table—and rearrange and rethink. As the story developed, I'd add more scenes. I still do that today—either using iPad index card apps or in Scrivener. They are a great way to structure your options.



Example of using index cards to plot a novel.

Spreadsheets - Many authors use spreadsheets. I used Excel to outline *USERNAME*. You can see JK Rowling's handwritten spreadsheet for *Harry Potter* here:

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J.K. Rowling's Plotting Spreadsheet for Harry Potter
www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2326630/Notes-diagrams-famous-authors-including-J-K-Rowling-Sylvia-Plath-planned-novels.html



Joseph Heller's spreadsheet plot for "Catch-22"
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2326630/Notes-diagrams-famous-authors-including-J-K-Rowling-Sylvia-Plath-planned-novels.html>

Templates - As I mentioned earlier, scripts are developed from templates. All stories have been told before somewhere. For example, the story of star-crossed lovers from opposing tribes has been told many times over the centuries—from *Romeo and Juliette* to *West Side Story*. Mystery readers will tell you that they like a certain author because they fall in love with a character who isn't allowed much growth over the course of a series. Sherlock Holmes at the beginning of his career isn't all that different from Sherlock Holmes at the end. Romances follow strict plot outlines. Some authors embrace templates, others reject them as

“unimaginative.” The fact is audiences love old stories finding new life.

With the advent of the computer as a mainstream novel writing tool along with software like Scrivener, templates to help you structure your novel are appearing in the literature more often. Author Justin Swapp offers a variety of free templates on his website: justinswapp.com/free-scrivener-templates/

Visual Storyboards - Pictures have a big impact both for readers and authors. Hitchcock used detailed storyboards for each scene in his movies. I've used stick figure drawings, toy cars, model airplanes, and maps to help me visualize what I'm describing. I've also used photos to help me understand locations, people, objects, vehicles, and action. As a student, I'd tape them to a wall or pin them to a bulletin board. Now I put images into Scrivener's “Index Card” view. My new book, *Vala's Bed*, has many pictures of World War II-era Mannheim, Auschwitz, German cars, people, clothes, buildings, etc. I also have collected music and movie clips from that time.

You will find many examples of storyboarding on the Internet. Several sites offer blank forms that you can download, print, and use for sketching. There are also apps for storyboarding which allow you to create “cartoons” of a scene to help you visualize the action.

Plotting is fun. It's where we make our stories work. There are many new and traditional techniques out there—too many to list them all here. By nature, authors are creative—and often think spatially. We see our characters, feel their fear, understand their life circumstances—in context to an environment that we have created. Some people are so adept that they develop their books without external tools. Their processes are mental. Some of us grow into that state of mind with practice.

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On the way home from Phoenix

By Nancy Smith

While doing research for my new book on WWII, the Pacific, I read about the Navajo Code Talkers and their unbreakable code, which helped us win the war. Coming home from the Phoenix conference, I decided we should find out more by visiting the Navajo Code Talker Museum in Tuba City, Arizona.

Located about 220 miles north of Phoenix, traveling through beautiful country loaded with rock formations, we passed a sign that told us we were only 20 miles from the south rim of the Grand Canyon. Although this would have been a wonderful adventure, we decided to forge on to this Indian town.

We had picked up the September 18 *Navajo Times* from Window Rock, Arizona, and read a front page article “Code Talkers Lose Four.” All the original 29, who actually developed the code have already passed on; however, the rest are leaving this world quickly, as are many of the WWII veterans. The article talks about code talkers Guy Clauschee, Robert Walley Sr., David Jordan, and Wilford Buck who had died that past week, leaving only about 25-27 of this valiant group still living.

The story of the Code Talkers in WWII came about when Tokyo seemed to be able to break all the coded messages we were sending. Phillip Johnston, the son of a missionary to the Navajo Nation, and one of the few non-Navajo that could speak their language, was a veteran of WWI. Since Navajo is an unwritten language of extreme complexity and is only spoken in the Navajo lands of the American Southwest, he suggested the Navajo language might be an answer.

In May 1942, the first 29 Navajo were faced with the task of setting up and memorizing the actual written code. The language had no alphabet, so those recruits first had to create a dictionary and numerous words for the military terms, based on the Navajo language. All together about 420 Navajo Marines served as “code talkers.” Their

main job was to talk, transmitting information on troop movement, tactics, orders, and other vital communications over telephone or radio. The code was never broken by the Japanese



*Code Talker statue in Wesley Bolin Memorial Park
Phoenix, AZ*

When we arrived in Tuba City, the current museum was already closed, so we went to see what the Café and souvenir shop had to offer. Evidently, Pendleton has teamed-up with the Navajo Nation to provide beautiful wool products that tie into their culture—purses, blankets, computer and tablet covers, hats, and much more. The staff in the store were helpful in our quest. After a quick supper, we

Continued from Page 16

finished off the evening with free fry-bread with honey, provided by the motel.

The next morning, we finally got to visit the museum, which was nice but small. Displays and photos were well done. The museum, was stuffed with lots of code talker memorabilia. It was interesting and informative. The museum is connected with a general store and a nice gift shop. The only real problem was that I didn't get to visit with one of the remaining talkers. I did, however, buy a book written by Chester Nez, the last of the original group to die.



Dane and canine companion



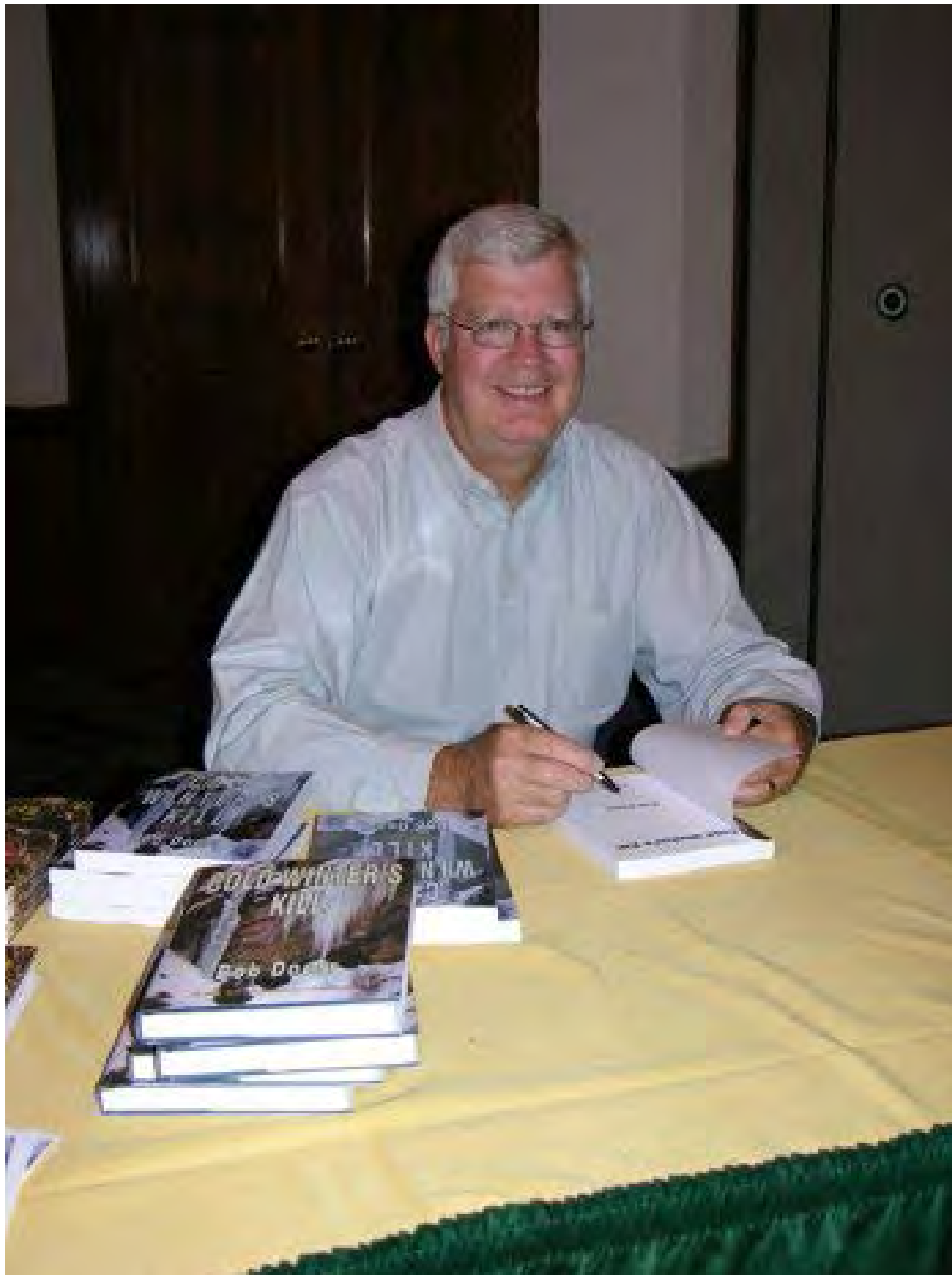
Partiers Kathy Rodgers, Kathleen Taylor, and Katherine Taylor

New MWSA Board Member Bob Doerr

Award-winning author Bob Doerr grew up in a military family, graduated from the Air Force Academy, and had a career of his own in the Air Force. Bob specialized in criminal investigations and counter-intelligence gaining significant insight into the worlds of crime, espionage and terrorism. His work brought him into close coordination with the security agencies of many different countries and filled his mind with the fascinating plots and characters found in his books today. His education credits include a Masters in International Relations from Creighton University.

A full-time author with eight published books, Bob was selected by the Military Writers Society of America as its Author of the Year for 2013. The Eric Hoffer Awards awarded *No One Else to Kill* its 2013 first runner up to the grand prize for commercial fiction. Two of his other books were finalists for the Eric Hoffer Award in earlier contests. *Loose Ends Kill* won the 2011 Silver medal for Fiction/mystery by the Military Writers Society of America. *Another Colorado Kill* received the same Silver medal in 2012 and the silver medal for general fiction at the Branson Stars and Flags national book contest in 2012.

Bob wrote two novellas, *The Enchanted Coin* and *The Rescue of Vincent*, with his granddaughter for middle grade readers. His most recent work, an international thriller titled *The Attack*, was released in May 2014. Bob lives in Garden Ridge, Texas, with Leigh, his wife of 41 years, and Cinco, their ornery cat. Aside from his role as 2013 Author of the Year, Bob has generously volunteered his time for MWSA for years—from conducting seminars at conferences to serving on several panels to taking a turn at the registration desk. Given his history with Military Writers Society of America, his rich background in the Air Force plus his talent as an author and his work ethic, Bob will bring experience, expertise and enthusiasm to his role on the board. Welcome, Bob!



Don Helin, Carolyn Schriber, and Bob Doerr

New MWSA Board Member Floyd Schriber



Floyd Schriber has been successful in several very different careers. He served in the U. S. Air Force for twenty-two years as an Air Weapons Controller for NORAD, was a commander of a radar site in Alaska, and served a tour in Vietnam. He retired from the Air Force as a lieutenant colonel. He also worked for over ten years as an executive recruiter for a national personnel consulting firm. He holds a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Colorado at Denver and has completed all course work and examinations toward a doctorate in that field.

Floyd became a Lion in 1972 in Key West. Since then he has lived in many places; the only thing that has not changed has been his dedication to Lions International. His success as District Governor for all of Western Tennessee in 2003- 2004 illustrates his level of involvement. When he took office, the district had a shrinking membership of 1137 members. He took immediate action to strengthen and preserve a club that had already decided to give up its charter, added three new clubs, and increased membership by 130 new recruits. His district ended the Lions year as the winner of state membership awards for most new members in an existing club and most new women members.

In retirement, he has expanded his work with non-profit organizations. He is an active member of the Board of Directors of Mid-South Lions Sight and Hearing Service, a non-profit organization that brings Lions from four states together to provide free surgeries and treatment for those who cannot afford optometric or auditory care. In June 2004, he was elected fourth vice president of that organization and served as its president in 2008. During his years as an officer, he helped to revise the organization's charter and bylaws to help Mid-South operate more efficiently. In 2004-2009, he spearheaded the effort to invite the USA/Canada Leadership Forum to come to Tennessee and was instrumental in a successful bid to bring over 2800 Lions to Memphis for a four-day conference. He is currently working with LCI, Mid-South, and the Southern College of Optometry on

a pilot project in Shelby County to provide free eye exams and glasses for indigent adults in the greater Memphis area.

Wherever he happens to be, Floyd plays an active role. He served as first chairman of his local Homeowners Association (2005-2008). He volunteered at Germantown Methodist Hospital (2005-2010), accumulating over 500 hours of service. He also participated at local health fairs sponsored by Shelby County Health Department, Lewis Senior Center, and Hickory Hill Community Center. And after his success with the USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum, he continued to work with the Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Germantown Chamber of Commerce to increase awareness of how local service organizations benefit the community.

In May 2010, he served as vice chairman of the Tennessee/LCIF flood relief efforts. In conjunction with Second Harvest in Nashville and the Mid-South Food Bank in Memphis, he planned, coordinated, and implemented the delivery of 25,000 pounds of food and cleaning supplies to 16 food pantries in the west. Floyd joined the Military Writers Society of America in 2011 to support his wife, Carolyn Schriber, with her writing career. He now serves as her researcher and photographer and has attended all of our yearly conferences. He is also a member of local chapters of the Air Force Association and the Military Association of America.

Given MWSA's new status as a non-profit, Floyd's expertise will be a welcome asset to the board. As we transition to this new environment, we need new ideas and new input. Welcome, Floyd!

Two Cinnamon Sticks

Larry Trimble

This is the tale of two cinnamon sticks. Not toothpicks, but real cinnamon sticks. Now would be a good time to get one or two. Trust me on this one.

I recently took the Honor Flight of the Ozarks with my dad, Earl Trimble. This nationwide project sends veterans, free of charge, to their own war memorials in Washington DC. I did not want to have tears running down my cheeks in the presence of so many heroes. Herein lies the solution ... cinnamon sticks. I had used them once to quit smoking. If you bite down on them, it will keep your emotions in check, right? My thinking.

When we arrived, our first stop was the WWII memorial. When we stepped off the bus, a gentleman, dressed in appropriate attire, played the bagpipes. The solemn sound of the bagpipes brought out the first cinnamon stick. As I placed it between my teeth, it cracked. The taste—sweet and bitter—seemed fitting. I kept it there as we passed into the memorial. It had done its job.

The memorial was beautiful—a fountain in the middle, surrounded by columns with bronze wreaths, with a state name under each. A wall of bronze stars, totaling 4048, each representing 100 soldiers who gave their lives during the war. The bagpiper moved into the memorial and played the entire time, ending with *Amazing Grace* as we walked out. I removed the cinnamon stick and placed it in my pocket.

Next we visited the Korean War memorial. Most of the veterans on our trip served in this war. As I pushed my father's wheelchair down to the memorial, I found it hard to swallow. An 'electricity' flowed through the vets—memories of their friends, their brothers-in-arms, the ones who didn't make it back. The Forgotten War. They came home to no parades, only an expectation to settle into the day-to-day lives they left.

Along the right side, a granite wall held etchings of photographs, taken by a war photographer. Bring

out the cinnamon stick, and again it snapped. To the left, statues of men walking through the woods and bushes represented the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. Reminiscing with friends, reflecting on their lives shaped by this war, and shedding tears of remembrance, the vets paid tribute to their fallen friends.

Up to the Reflecting Pool. Between the Korean and Vietnam memorials, this took on a new meaning. Vietnam ... the war closest to me. This was one of the last three things I had on my bucket list—the one memorial I needed to see. Oh well, break out the cinnamon stick again. We stopped at the top to take pictures. Snap ... there goes the sweet and bitter taste again. Along the bottom of the Wall, letters, written by family members—hand written, on sheets of paper for the entire world to see.

A group of 18 to 20-year-old girls squatted at the Wall and read a letter. Each one, almost in precision, covered her mouth to hold back gasps as tears rolled down her cheeks. Perhaps a few more young people now understand the effect and harshness of war. An epiphany, that these names were more than just that.

Off to the Iwo Jima memorial. The size and detail of this monument was impressive! Next to Arlington. I was amazed at the size of the grounds. Cinnamon stick is back out and the familiar snap comes back. Sweet and bitter ... rolling terrain with markers that kept going and going. The driver told us that 20-25 fresh graves are dug each day. Let that sink in ... that's 7300-9125 heroes a year, remembered each day as tour buses and tourists drive these hallowed grounds. A fitting tribute to these men and women.

Up the hill to the Tomb of the Unknowns. The soldiers who guard this tomb captivated each person present. The precision and dedication they projected was absolutely amazing! Complete quiet and respect are demanded at this memorial—phones turned off and camera shutter noise off.

The last few pieces of my cinnamon sticks are stuck in my pocket. Headed home after a long, emotional day, we pulled into Springfield/Branson airport to the long overdue "welcome home" for these vets. Walking through the procession of people clapping and cheering, I noticed a young girl (probably four or five) as she stepped out of the crowd. I wished I had another cinnamon stick as she shook hands with a wheelchair-bound vet and thanked him for his service.

Alone, my hour-long drive home made me realize that the cinnamon sticks had done their job to

perfection. Teary-eyed a couple of times, but not a tear rolled down my cheeks. I walked into my home and started to unpack.

As I reached into my jeans pocket, I pulled out the pieces of broken cinnamon sticks. That's when the tears began. The sticks had performed their job to perfection. Although they came back broken and splintered, they made it back and still had a purpose ... much like our soldiers do. So tell me, how many pieces are your cinnamon sticks in now?



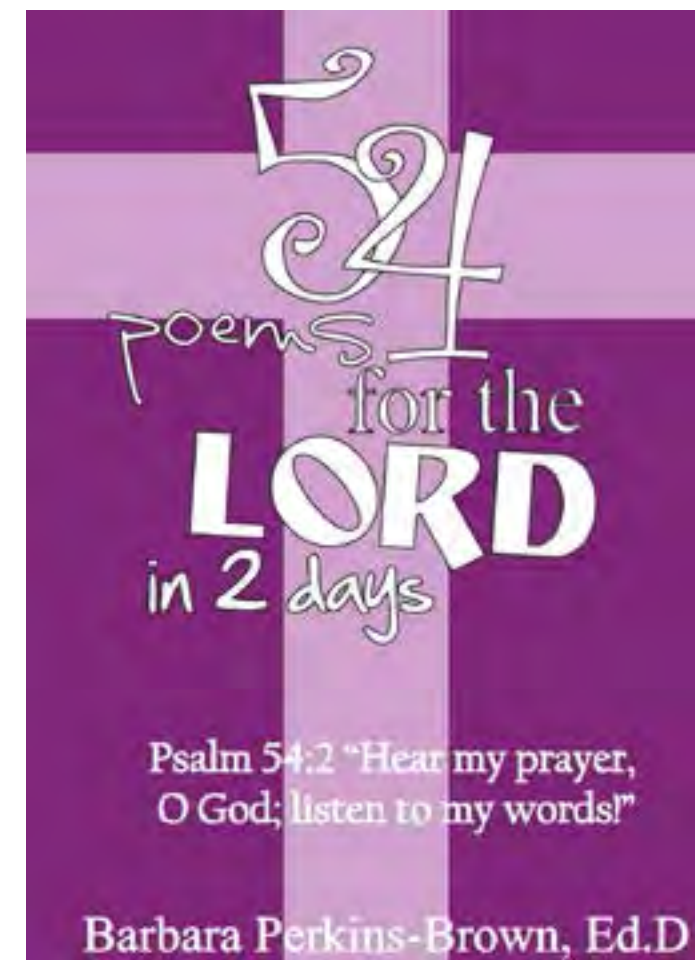
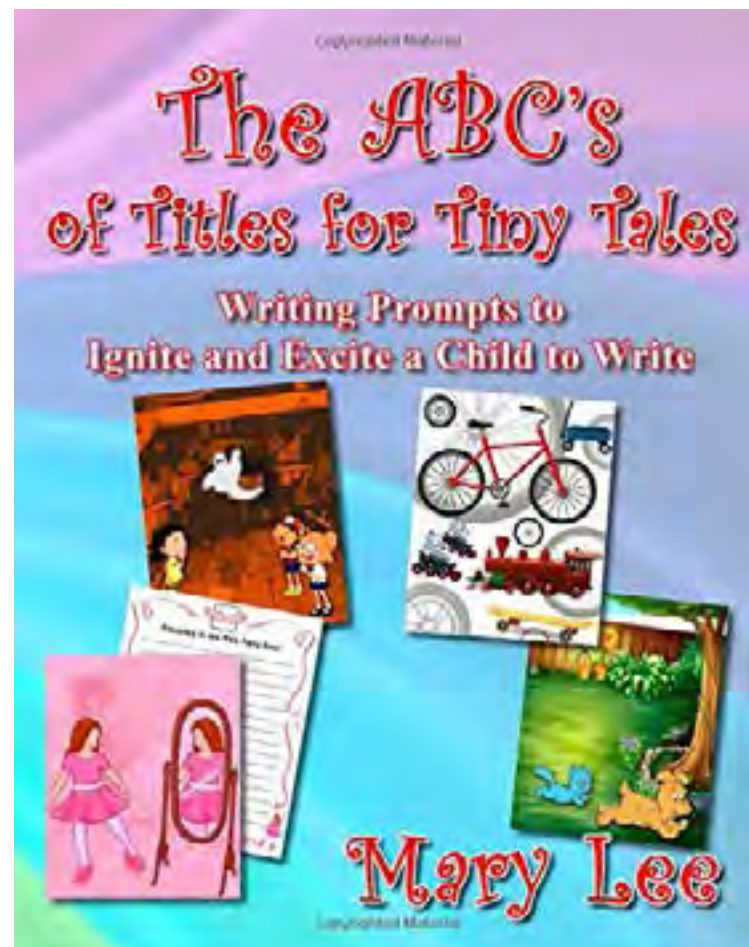
Korean War Memorial Wall

OCTOBER 2014

**AUTHOR
OF THE MONTH****MARY LEE**

*The ABC's of Titles
for Tiny Tales: Writing
Prompts to Ignite
and Excite a Child to
Write.*

Children



DECEMBER 2014

**AUTHOR
OF THE MONTH****BARBARA
PERKINS-BROWN**

*54 Poems for the Lord
in 2 Days*

Poetry



NOVEMBER 2014

**AUTHOR
OF THE MONTH****BRINN COLEND A***Chita Quest*

Mystery/Thriller

IN THE RANKS...

The business of a
naval officer
is one which above
all others, needs
daring and decision.

I CAN DO
THAT!



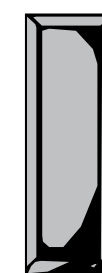
2014 c.bailey

"NAVY"

IN THE RANKS...

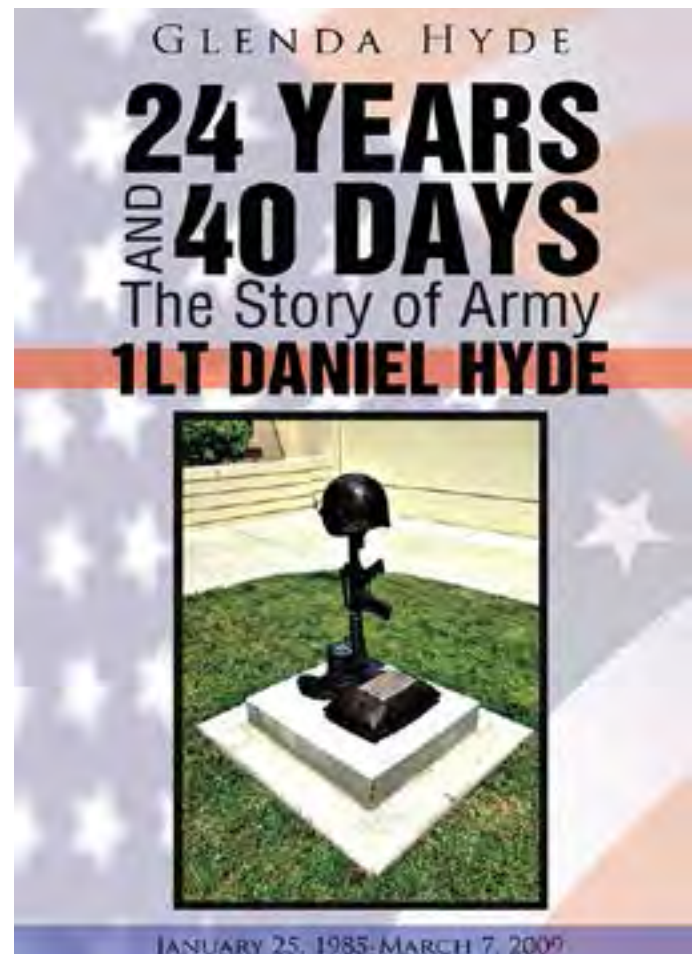
If at first you
don't succeed,
call in an air
strike.

HE'S
LEARNING.



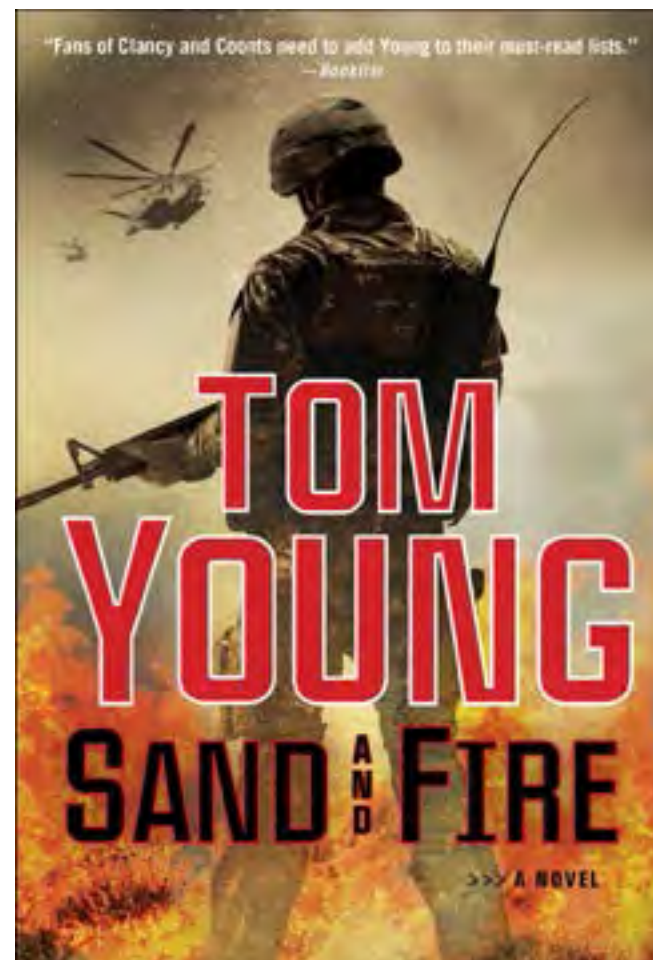
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"MARINES"



NOVEMBER 2014
BOOK
OF THE MONTH
24 YEARS AND
40 DAYS
 THE STORY OF ARMY 1LT
 DANIEL HYDE
Glenda L. Hyde
 Inspirational

DECEMBER 2014
BOOK
OF THE MONTH
SAND AND FIRE
Thomas Young
 Mystery/Thriller



*Podcaster and author, Joanne Quinn-Smith,
 the Technogranny*



Founder of MWSA, Bill McDonald



MARKET YOURSELF THROUGH TRAVEL WRITING

By Don Helin



*Gold Medalist Richard McMahon
with Dwight Zimmerman*



*Mike Guardia receives a Medal
from Dwight Zimmerman*



*Winners of the Joint MWSA/Phoenix Police Department Writing Awards
L-R: Anelyse Regulbrugge, Dwight Zimmerman, Kate Howard
Not in attendance, Socorro Nieves*

I happened into travel writing quite by accident. When I lived in Washington D.C., I saw an advertisement about a travel writing program to be sponsored by *The Washington Post*. I thought, why not travel and get paid for it so I enrolled?

I spent almost five years as a travel writer doing articles for newspapers as well as magazines. Then, I got the bug to write fiction. My first thriller came out in 2009, the second in 2012. I'm getting ready to launch my third so marketing is a big focus for me.

Three years ago at a mystery conference, I happened to sit on a panel next to the editor of our community newspaper. I told him I thought it would be fun to write articles for his paper. He agreed and we developed the idea for a writers column.

I have found that things change, and you've got to be ready to change with them. My editor friend sold the paper to another party, so I made an opportunity to meet with the new editor. At the meeting, he expressed an interest in me writing travel articles for the paper. Here was a chance to make a little extra money, but more importantly have an opportunity to market myself and my novels to his readers.

Writing for a newspaper has a number of benefits. First of all, I insert a blurb about myself and my books at the end of each of my articles for the information of the readers.

Second, during the research phase for my various stories I have a chance to meet new people who might one day be interested in my book. For example, when I joined a group on LinkedIn, I did an article on that group for the paper. This helped me meet members and get to know them.

Third is the possibility of finding new locations for book signings. For example, I did an article on a Celtic Festival in our local area. Part of my second novel, *Devil's Den*, takes place in Ireland. I asked the festival coordinator about doing a book

signing and she agreed. I met many new people and sold a number of books.

Donald Maass, one of the top agents in New York, said something at a conference that's stuck with me. "It's not only about selling books, but building a community." As people have gotten to know me through my newspaper articles, I've made new friends who have read my books and liked them. Hopefully they will tell their friends. Remember, a time-tested way to spread information about your work is word of mouth.

I believe it's best to start local. In the beginning, I tracked the articles in our local paper for about three months, observing the types of articles as well as the styles of the various writers. Don't forget to see if there are writers' guidelines to help you in your orientation. Community newspapers and local magazines are always looking for articles. The writer doesn't get paid much, but this is a great way to build your reputation.

It can be helpful to develop a theme for your editor. Mine is country living. My wife and I live in a rural area outside of Harrisburg. For the December edition of "The Burg", I wrote a story highlighting places where people who live in the city can travel to find "old time" holiday experiences. In February, I'll be doing an article on special places you can take your love for Valentines day outside of the city.

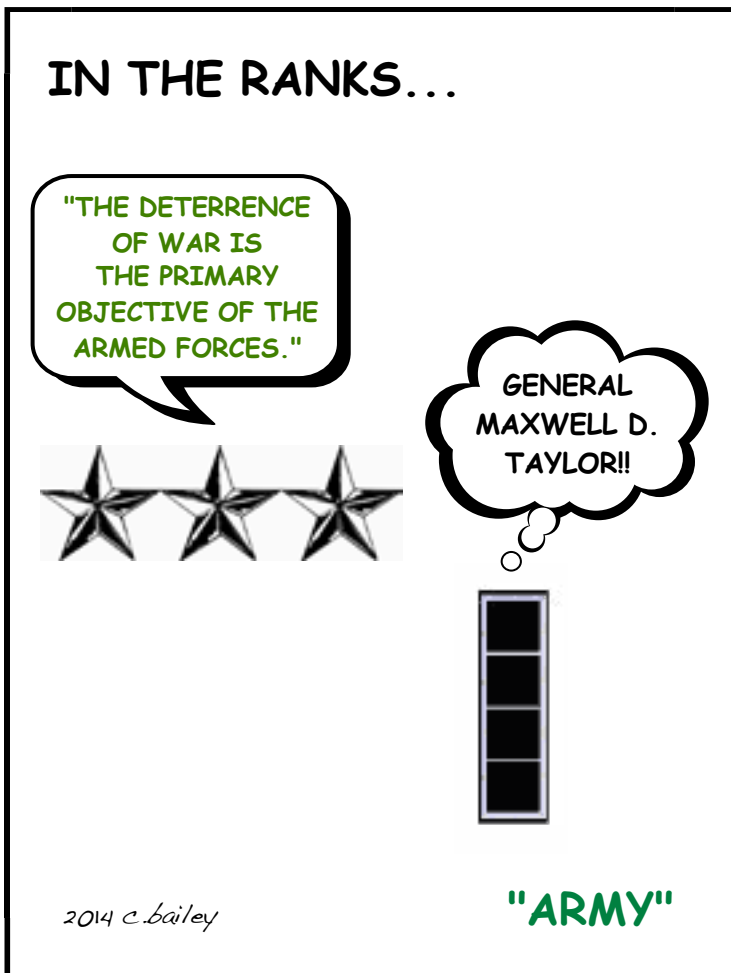
Like any article, research your subject before you begin. Learn about the history, culture, and attractions. When you arrive at your destination, you can conduct interviews, obtain quality photographs, then relax and have fun.

It's very important to be aware of lead times required by your editor. If you promise an article by a certain date, make sure you meet that date. And timing is critical for seasonal articles. There is not a huge demand for skiing articles in July or kayaking articles in December.

Continued on page 30

So, give it a try. Travel writing is a fun way to begin your writing career. But remember, once you've sold that first novel, it's an even better way to market yourself and build readership for your novels.

Don Helin published his first thriller, *Thy Kingdom Come*, in 2009. His second, *Devil's Den*, has been selected as a finalist in the Indie Book Awards. His latest thriller, *Secret Assault*, was published this fall. He writes articles for "The Burg," a community newspaper in Harrisburg. Visit him at www.donhelin.com





Bill McDonald honors members of Phoenix Band, CTS, with the 2014 Founder's Award.

