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WINTER 2023

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WE, AS YOUR NEW BOARD of Directors wish to thank all those who participated in the election process.

Your new Board consists of: President - jim greenwald, Vice President - Valerie Ormond, Treasurer - Hugh Simpson, Secretary - Ruth Crocker, along with At-Large Directors: Kathy Rodgers, Neal Kusumoto, and Dane Zeller.

Congratulations to my fellow board members and their spirit of volunteerism, without which MWSA could not exist. We hope to build on the progress made under Bob Doerr and continue to grow our organization.

We are open to suggestions to improve MWSA, and even more open if a suggestion comes with a willingness to step forward to do some of the work. Each member's willingness to volunteer means as an organization we can offer and do more.

As members of MWSA we should feel and express our support to fellow members—not hard to do and not expensive. Buy member's books, attend a book signing (if nearby), offer to write a blurb for a fellow member's book.

The publishing world has and is changing. Adapting to those changes is important. Have an idea? Write a short piece for *Dispatches* to let the membership know what you found or do.

Volunteers are the fuel that makes the organization run and ultimately controls what it can do. We have members who step forward and review books—an important function of our organization and without which we would be unable to offer book reviews. We always have a need for more reviewers. Please consider volunteering some of your time and become a reviewer. Contact Betsy Beard and volunteer a small amount of your time to help your fellow members. The more reviewers, the more reviews that can be completed. One book or ten, take time to participate by being an active member of your organization.



Opportunities exist in a number of areas for folks to step forward and engage in the various efforts we presently engage in. Email the WYS workshop sub-committee chairperson if you are interested in presenting at the in-person event. Contact Valerie Ormond if you are interested in becoming an MWSA ambassador.

Our 2023 conference dates are September (15–17th) in New London, CT, at the Holiday Inn, 35 Governor Winthrop Blvd. This is an area with an enormous amount of history and presents an opportunity to those coming to immerse themselves in that history. This location should motivate all to come early and stay late, make it a learning and fun experience as well as a pleasant end to summer vacation. On the 14th, a WYS all-day event will take place at the Sub-Force Museum, and that evening a reception will be held in the hotel's Grand Ballroom.

New London will see the re-introduction of the "Buckaroo Auction." The more you do for MWSA, the richer you get in Buckaroos. Buckaroos have a shelf life, what you earn this cycle must be spent this cycle, as they do not accrue. What is earned from January 1, 2023, until our 2023 conference will expire at the end of the 2023 auction, at which time you will begin to accrue buckaroos until the week prior to the 2024 conference.

Jaime Navarro has volunteered to be our auctioneer and will be assisted by Randy Beard. You will be credited for buckaroos earned starting January 1, 2023. If you are an actively involved member but not coming

and wish to bid, email jimwritespoetry@gmail.com.

The agenda is nearing completion and will be online no later than February. It includes a few outside speakers you will not want to miss. *Open Mic* and the *Buckaroo Auction* will offer breaks and, of course, educational opportunities will take place. Something old, something new and always interesting.

When the conference information is posted online please be sure to sign up. Early-bird pricing will be open from day posted until April 30th.

MWSA still has a few areas of opportunity for members to fill:

- A. Someone to handle the online *Zoom* classes.
- B. Someone to keep track of completed book reviews and Book Swap posted reviews.
- C. Someone to act as the Buckaroo Banker for the auction.
- D. A couple of folks to fill registration desk slots.
- E. A couple of standby seminar presenters.
- F. Someone to put together the mentor program for the conference.

If interested, contact jimwritespoetry@gmail.com



From Joe's blog on June 13, 2022 ~ <https://namwarstory.com/blog-2/>

Life is a shipwreck, but we must not forget to sing in the lifeboats. ~Voltaire

WE ALL HAVE SOME ACTIVITIES we excell at; swimming has always been one of mine. My eyes were too crummy for baseball—I caught the ball like my glove had a hole in it. Too vertically challenged for basketball, fair-to-decent at football, I was too lazy to go out for it in high school, though I played on many sandlot teams and also on teams at various airbases during my time in the Air Force. And although I liked to scrap a bit, also too lazy to go out for wrestling, like my brother who excelled at it. (I had several amateur boxing matches as well.)



Lake Michigan; beautiful and cold.

But swimming filled my bill and I've always been a good at it. I grew up swimming in the turbulent, frigid waters of Lake Michigan, which no doubt accounts for some of my swimming acumen. In our old neighborhood, summers meant fishing and swimming in Lake Michigan and most of us honed our swimming skills during that time.

In Boy Scouts, I easily earned the “one mile swim” merit badge, and probably could have made two if I had to. I could also hold my breath underwater for a long time, having perfected that in the bathtub at a young age. Swimming class in high school was always my

favorite subject. (One of the few I didn't complain about.)

Later, while in the U.S. Air Force, I easily passed the elementary swim test required in basic training. While stationed at Grand Forks, Air Force base in North Dakota, we often swam at Turtle River State Park, while off duty. (During those few months of the year when North Dakota wasn't covered in ice.)



The ROKS protected much of our perimeter

But the real test of my swimming skills took place during my tour of duty in Vietnam. As allies of the U.S., South Korea provided some 55,000 troops

during the course of the long war, losing about ten percent as casualties. Tough, disciplined troopers, the “ROKs” as they were called, took on many roles during their time in Vietnam. After Nixon’s Vietnamization program came into play, members of the 173rd Airborne, who were protecting our perimeter at Phu Cat, were thrown into full combat units to replace other combat troops which had been sent home. As the Phu Cat Airbase came under heavier and heavier attack, along with the addition of Airmen Augmentees, (Auggie Doggies) the Republic of Korean Army Tiger Division assumed responsibility for protecting much of our base perimeter.



My cherished Tiger Division patch, given to me by my ROK brothers prior to my departing Vietnam.

I first came to be associated with those stalwart warriors through the practice of Tae kwon Do. I eventually became a yellow belt at the sport, but never approached the level of skill the ROKs accomplished. (Few did.) But I made some lasting friends among the Tigers, and corresponded with one for many years after the war. I still have some of his old letters.

As I came toward the end of my tour, I found myself responsible for the replenishment of supplies for the small

ROK compound on our Western perimeter. I actually bunked with them for most of my last month in country.



The ROK compound where I would spend most of my last month in-country.

During that time, I bonded with Kim Jun Ki, a ROK soldier, who kept trying to marry me off to his sister, Jun Ja. She was pretty and sent me several letters. Flattered, but not interested in an arranged marriage, I tactfully declined. I also bonded with the ROK lieutenant, who was in charge of the small platoon size unit, Lieutenant Lee. As a “guest” of the compound the lieutenant had me in his small bunker corner each morning for updates. He spoke fluent English and Vietnamese, in addition to Korean. A devout Christian, he liked to discuss theology, an area of which I was lukewarm. But I did admire the man and enjoyed our many conversations. The lieutenant also insisted, that as a member of the compound, I go out on patrol with the unit. I did so several times, and fortunately came to no harm during the experience.

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Kim Junki and I corresponded for many years after the war

From early on during my time at the compound, we fished in the small river which ran close by. We used concussion grenades, (hillbilly fishing) which worked very well—not damaging the meat too much and bringing the stunned fish up to the surface. The fish were a type of trout, and no doubt, the freshest, if not tastiest food I ate in the Nam.

But the fun really started when the troops came down for a swim. The ROKs were a competitive bunch and raced each other for money. The first one to make it across the small river and back won. The ROKs used military payment certificates (MPC) as we did, so we shared a common currency. (They also hoarded greenbacks like we did.)

My swimming skills served me well during those events, and after a week or so I had relieved most of the ROKs of a tidy sum of cash. I felt somewhat guilty about it, but they insisted on racing, no matter how many times I beat them. This earned me my second nickname in the Nam; that of Motorboat. (My first Nam nickname was Tie Rod, and will be the subject of a future blog story.)

Things kept up like that until I left Vietnam, and the ROKs never harbored any ill will for my winnings. The lieutenant himself came down once or twice a day to catch a swim. He also insisted on racing me, and since Mother Campolo raised no fools, Lieutenant Lee was the one Korean soldier, I could never beat.

For more information on the ROKs and Joe's time with them, see his earlier blog article, *The ROKs: Republic of Korea Soldiers in Vietnam*.





MWSA NEWS BLAST

Bob Doerr

December 18, 2022

Happy Holidays

As I write this message, an Arctic cold front is racing down on us. It seems appropriate that the official start of winter is just a couple days away. Some of us may even get a white Christmas this year.

As one year comes to an end, another always begins, and I want to remind you that MWSA has a number of member benefits we encourage you to take advantage of in the new year.

First, we are accepting member submissions for our 2023 anthology. Submission guidelines have been sent on more than one occasion, but in summary, we're accepting stories, articles, poems, etc., with less than 3000 words. Submissions should be sent to anthology@mwsa.co -

Second, we are still accepting nominations for our annual scholarship program. This program is fairly new, but background information and instructions can be found on our website [Scholarship — Military Writers Society of America \(mwsadispatches.com\)](https://www.mwsadispatches.com). Who couldn't use an extra \$1500 to help pay for college?

Third, our annual book awards and review season opens up again in January. More information and guidance can be found at [Process & Procedures — Military Writers Society of America \(mwsadispatches.com\)](https://www.mwsadispatches.com).

I know most of us are busy preparing for the holidays, and we on the Board wish everyone a fantastic holiday season! Don't worry, none of the above need to be done before year's end; however, if you are interested in any of the above programs, it might be a good idea to annotate your calendars today to remind you to look into them in early January.

Have a great day and keep writing. -



Continued from Pt I, Fall 2022 Dispatches

IT IS DIFFICULT TO PINPOINT the origin of the ideological insurgency in South Korea; communism was prevalent in the region well prior to the formation of the Republic of Korea as an independent nation. A potential place to start is the guerrilla resistance to Japanese occupation.

From the start of Japanese presence on the peninsula in 1910, a harsh rule was employed on the Korean people. The native landowning elite, however, fared well under Japanese rule, since they frequently cooperated with their overlords in order to maintain property and power. The only real resistance to occupation came from peasants and landless farmers, who were, to some degree, aided by Chinese communists.¹

This exacerbated an already obvious class divide amongst the Korean people. In addition, the Japanese—like their European imperial counterparts—frequently employed the local population in the form of domestic police forces to quell resistance to their rule, which created an even more significant divide between Korean natives.

In the wake of Japan's defeat, the early class divide went virtually unchecked until American and Soviet forces were able to establish themselves in accordance with the agreement reached at Potsdam. However, once situated, the Soviets and Americans installed entirely separate Korean governments, both of which sought to exploit the class divide in their own way.

With the Korean Peninsula effectively split in two by 1947, with each side holding separate elections for its own government, the class and ideological divide was firmly entrenched. The southern government, known as the Republic of Korea (ROK), was a pro-West democratic republic under the rule of the elected official Singham Rhee.

Rhee governed the South Koreans with a heavy hand and was in harsh opposition to the ideology of communism and the northern govern-



¹ Bruce Cummings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Volume II, The Roaring Cataract, 1947-1950*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 185.

ment, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Several historians typically put the ROK on the 'right' side of the spectrum, while the DPRK is portrayed on the 'left'. Governing a largely impoverished population split along socio-economic lines, the Rhee regime experienced early difficulties with dissent, eventually culminating in insurgency and armed guerrilla warfare.

The most essential aspects to understand the insurgency on the Korean Peninsula are who the insurgents were, where they came from, and their intentions. The answers to these questions vary, depending on different points of view. For example, the Rhee regime frequently labeled any dissenting opinion as communist in order to silence their opposition.²

The U.S., who was relatively new to the idea of combating or even understanding communism, had a more difficult time answering the questions. That was partly due to what Bruce Cummings described as a historical absence of feudal living and oppressive overrule in American society in *The Origins of the Korean War*, leading Americans to believe themselves as a "people without ideology."³

The insurgents had an entirely and understandably different view. In fact, many probably did not even see themselves as an insurgency to begin with.

That issue highlights Peter Lowe's point in *The Origins of the Korean War, 2nd Edition* when he stated, "In no sense whatever was Korean communism a monolithic

movement; it was riddled with internal divisions"⁴

Cummings went on to sum up that broad spectrum of insurgents and would-be insurgents as 'Leftists'.⁵ In different regions of South Korea, and at different times, separate leftist groups would revolt for different reasons. As stated earlier, all of the factions were a threat to the Rhee regime, so all were treated accordingly.

When U.S. advisors to the Rhee government interviewed people labeled as insurgents by the ROK, they "found in conversations with Koreans that many had turned to the Left because they could not stomach pro-Japanese collaborators, not because they were communists."⁶

Hatred for Japanese rule ran deep in many Koreans, Northern or Southern, and any compliance with former Japanese rule, which had been exercised by the political elite firmly entrenched in the Rhee regime, was met with opposition.

Cummings continued to stress the relative isolation of South Korean leftists from the DPRK or any other communist affiliated group. He stated several pre-war conflicts, such as the Yosu Rebellion or the Cheju Uprising, were grassroots in nature, comprised of nearly all indigenous personnel acting on their own behalf.

Although reasons for the Cheju Uprising varied, one of the overarching issues was

4 Lowe 9
5 Bruce Cummings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Volume II, The Roaring Cataract, 1947-1950*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 16.
6 Bruce Cummings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Volume II, The Roaring Cataract, 1947-1950*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 187.

2 Ibid., 241.
3 Ibid., 15.

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the holding of separate elections for the North and South.

As stated earlier, due to a lack of historical divide, most Korean people did not want to see the peninsula divided and chose to revolt instead. In addition, the heavy hand of the Rhee regime and police brutality, learned from the Japanese, only fueled the fire.⁷

Similar actions occurred in the Yosu Rebellion, which was sparked by members of the ROK Army who became upset over repeated counterinsurgency missions against their own people.

People's committees in Korea had been a significant governing body in rural Korean areas for decades, and any leftist tendency amongst people's committees was usually targeted by the Rhee regime. Cummings stated, "The causes for the rebellion ultimately return to 1945 and the frustrated politics of a region that had strong and lasting people's committees."⁸

One of the primary differences in the Yosu Rebellion, however, was the presence of DPRK involvement in the form of North Korean-trained Southerners who had been sent across the border,⁹ which would continually take on more significance as the problem of insurgency continued.

With strong U.S. backing, the Rhee regime was too strong for an internal uprising acting on its own to gain any real momentum. Several South Korean dissenters, ranging from leftists to

full-fledged communists, made their way to the DPRK for training and aide.

One such dissenter was Pak Hon-Yong, a South Korean communist who made his way north, ultimately setting up a training camp for other South Koreans with the objective of overthrowing Rhee.¹⁰

The DPRK also sent their own personnel south to subvert the Rhee regime's authority. In *Korean War Almanac*, Harry Summers noted, "Anti-government guerrilla bands, some sponsored by North Korea, had been a problem in the Republic of Korea (ROK) before the Korean War began, especially in southwestern Korea."¹¹ Proving North Korean "sponsorship" was often difficult for the ROK, especially since the ROK government and Rhee had frequently blamed any and all issues on the DPRK and communism in general. However, North Korean influence was still prevalent, especially in the rural and mountainous areas of South Korea.¹²

After the outbreak of full-scale armed conflict, author Michael Hickey noted U.S. Marines were able to detect Chinese guerrilla tactics—crafted by Mao Tse-Tung in his war against the Japanese—in combat against insurgents in the south.¹³

A key to understanding the communist insurgency in the South is understanding the role the DPRK played in unconventional hostilities south of the 38th parallel.

As we have seen, the North Korean government established safe havens and camps for South Korean defectors to

7 Ibid., 254.
8 Ibid., 261.
9 Ibid., 263.

10 Millet 30.
11 Harry G. Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, (NY: Facts on File, Inc., 1990), 132.
12 Michael Hickey, *The Korean War: The West Confronts Communism*, (NY: The Overlook Press, 1999), 75.
13 Ibid., 173.

train and return south with the intent of disrupting and overthrowing the Rhee government. The North had also sent some of its own men south to organize and equip guerrilla fighters for the same purposes.

Although those actions were hostile in nature towards the ROK, it is difficult to surmise the ultimate objective of the DPRK before they launched their conventional invasion. One school of thought at the time was that all war aims originated from Moscow.

The 1950s was the highpoint of America's second red scare, and all malintent typically pointed to the Soviet Union. Cummings disagreed when he referenced American diplomatic cables from the early 1950s,

*“To my knowledge, no one had ever demonstrated any level of Soviet involvement with the southern guerrillas... Infiltrating guerrillas were not trained by Soviet advisors. The North Koreans trained them, in a school for partisans and agents called the Kangdong hakwon, and South Korean historiography has predictably declared this to be the original focus of the conspiracy.”*¹⁴

That point divorces any ties between communist insurgents and the Soviet Union, and places the origin of dissenters from grassroots movements or the DPRK.

Cummings further elaborated on the intentions of the DPRK in sponsoring an insurgency,

“If... the northern guerrillas around Kim Il Sung wished to unify Korea, they could kill two birds with one stone by doing little to support the southern guerrilla struggle,



*while laying its failure at Pak Hon-yong's (a South Korean communist leader) door.”*¹⁵

Cummings made the point that the DPRK did not seek to focus all of its efforts on bringing down the ROK by way of sponsoring an insurgency, but continued to covertly support it in the hopes it would grow and do the bulk of the work on its own. If it failed, a lack of open support for the southern communist movement would allow the DPRK to politically save face while it continued to pursue its own plans for a conventional invasion.¹⁶

With a communist insurgency—home grown and DPRK sponsored—firmly entrenched in South Korea before conventional hostilities, the Rhee regime faced an uphill battle in eliminating resistance and consolidating authority.

The success of that task paid dividends after North Korea invaded and in rebuilding their nation after hostilities ended. Counter-insurgency has always been a difficult

¹⁵ Ibid., 284.

¹⁶ Ibid., 284.

¹⁴ Bruce Cummings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Volume II, The Roaring Cataract, 1947-1950*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 283.

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task in warfare, primarily due to its unconventional means.

*One of insurgencies' core tenants, its infusion with population, was explained by Mao Tse-Tung in his seminal work, On Guerrilla Warfare. "A primary feature of guerrilla operations is their dependence upon the people themselves to organize battalions and other units. As a result of this, organization depends largely upon local circumstances"*¹⁷

The mixing of "local circumstances" with the communist insurgency was a major focus of the Rhee regime.

One of the most necessary attributes to effectively combating the insurgency was strong leadership. Although Singham Rhee had an ill-tempered reputation, his strong leadership and political cunning aided the ROK in getting the support it needed to beat back resistance to its government.¹⁸

The support came in the form of American advisors to the ROK military. Although Rhee exerted leadership from the top, it was not at all times mirrored in lower echelons of leadership in his military.

With American Army advisement, particularly during the Yosu Rebellion, eradicating resistance became a much more streamlined task.

Rhee also employed social and cultural restrictions on his people to curtail the effectiveness of the insurgency. In the wake of the Yosu Rebellion, one of Rhee's methods of curtailing the spread of resistance was to place restrictions on the media—mainly newspapers. The Rhee regime disallowed the publication of any anti-American editorials in hopes of retaining a positive opinion for the support he was receiving from the U.S.¹⁹

The actual tactics employed by the ROK and the U.S. had certain differences, but overall, the general strategy followed other examples of counter-insurgency during the early Cold War—mainly separation of the population from the insurgency and isolating their geographical movement.

Under the leadership of Rhee, the ROK employed several COIN tactics learned by their former Japanese overlords. Due to decades of propaganda and indoctrination, the Japanese considered themselves superior to their Korean subjects, and treated them accordingly.

¹⁷ Tse-Tung, Mao. *On Guerrilla Warfare*. Translated and edited by Samuel B. Griffith. Quantico: U.S. Marine Corps FMFRP, 51.

¹⁸ Bruce Cummings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Volume II, The Roaring Cataract, 1947-1950*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 224.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 267.





When the ROK government replicated similar methods on its own people, the result was often unfavorably viewed, but ultimately still effective. In relation to separating the insurgents from the population, Cummings stated,

*“The method was premised on using climate, terrain, and unflinchingly brutal methods to separate the guerrillas from their peasant constituencies.”*²⁰

The idea of using climate and terrain in COIN strategy also yielded positive results. Unlike later COIN conflicts such as Vietnam, the insurgents in South Korea did not have a significant advantage in terrain usage. Although several rural and mountainous areas harbored large insurgent strongholds, the relative openness of South Korean terrain made pursuit of guerrilla fighters relatively easy.

When airpower became available in the form of U.S. advisement, tracking the movements and location of guerrillas was even more simplified, and had devastating results.

Climate was utilized to the advantage of the insurgents, but could be just as easily taken advantage of by ROK forces. Winters were harsh on the Korean Peninsula, and generally brought about a lull in guerrilla activity. If ROK forces were able to cut off or isolate insurgents to specific areas by the time winter came, they could ultimately prevent resupply to guerrilla fighters and starve them out during the winter.

Cummings summed up the COIN campaign prior to 1950 when he stated,

*“If the Rhee regime had one unqualified success, viewed through the American lens, it was the apparent defeat of the southern partisans by the Spring of 1950.”*²¹

However, those tactics were predicated on overwhelmingly superior material and manpower support, which was almost a guarantee to the ROK pre-1950.

After the conventional North Korean invasion commenced, the ability of the ROK to focus the bulk of their efforts in subduing the insurgency dramatically changed. Conflict on the peninsula took a sudden course change from guerrilla to conventional war. Although the DPRK’s military was superior to that of the ROK, the presence of a communist force in the South bolstered southern insurgents—which was previously thought to be almost completely eradicated and would continue to plague the ROK, even after the arrival of U.N. forces.

²¹ Ibid., 286.

²⁰ Ibid., 285.

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After the initial North Korean invasion swelled to its maximum extent, the arrival of large amounts of U.S. and U.N. forces within the Pusan perimeter and eventual landings at Inchon triggered a fast-moving DPRK retreat back northward.

In the wake of that retreat a resurgent insurgency was left behind, as well as a large number of North Korean troops who were either left behind or cut off by allied advances.^{22,23} U.S./U.N./ROK forces had to contend with that problem, in addition to the massive conventional war being fought. The introduction of Chinese forces exponentially exacerbated the problem.

To deal with simultaneously fighting multiple styles of warfare, U.S. and ROK forces agreed to dedicate entire divisions of troops to stay behind the front to fight the insurgency in the wake of advancing allied troops. That came in the form of Operation RATKILLER, which was composed largely of ROK forces under the command of ROK Lieutenant General Paik Suh Yup.

Although U.S. forces wanted to leave the problem of dealing with the local population in the hands of domestic authority, a practice replicated in other Cold War conflicts,²⁴ they too needed to divert their own forces—in the form of the U.S. 8th Army—to deal with the problem.

RATKILLER employed similar tactics utilized prior to the outbreak of full conventional war, but overwhelmingly superior forces yielded devastating results against the land and people who were already feeling the full effects of large-scale warfare. Estimates range as high as 19,000 insurgents killed or captured during dedicated COIN sweeps, which freed up forces to be recommitted to the conventional front lines.²⁵

A lack of DPRK public support for communist insurgency in the South initially proved to be politically beneficial. The DPRK could quietly aid southern resistance in the hopes that dissent would grow, ultimately bringing down the Rhee regime independently. If it failed, they could deny any involvement.

With plans of a conventional invasion already being formulated, not adequately aiding southern communists ultimately proved unwise for the DPRK, since a weak insurgency was more easily brushed off by U.S./ROK forces, freeing up the bulk of their military to fight the conventional war against the combined DPRK/PLA forces.

As the U.S. saw later in Vietnam, a more effective combined conventional/guerrilla war would prove to be difficult to combat simultaneously, ultimately prolonging that conflict, bringing on frustration and eventual defeat.

A more significant DPRK/PLA focus on insurgency and political dissent could have possibly yielded more positive results for their cause.

22 Harry G. Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, (NY: Facts on File, Inc., 1990), 132.

23 Walter G. Hermes, *United States Army in the Korean War: Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2005), 182.

24 Michael Carver, *War Since 1945*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 12.

25 Walter G. Hermes, *United States Army in the Korean War: Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2005), 183.

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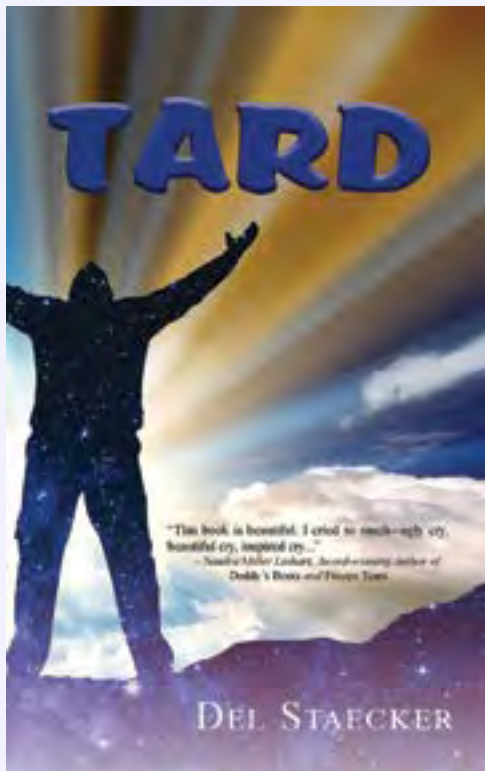
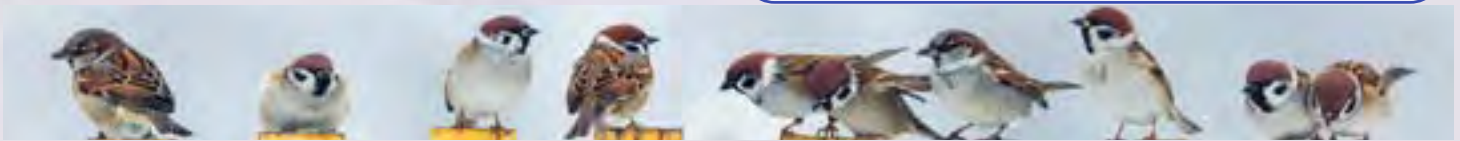
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TARD

by Del Staecker

Genre(s): Thriller/Suspense

Format(s): Kindle; Paperback

ISBN-13 : 978-1943267934



This is a novel whose hero journeys from Lancaster County, PA, to the cornfields of Iowa. It's about cruelty and sin and friendship and forgiveness, and it's about the power of storytelling. It's gritty and realistic but also mystical and philosophical, challenging the reader to look for the miraculous right here on earth, and often where you'd least expect to find it.

A fantasy-crime story that will lead you through and beyond cognitive dissonance and confirmation bias into a place where dreams come true.

From Underrated Reads (dedicated to discovering literary gems): *Tard is a unique novel and one of those literary gems that is hard to come by. A must-read!*

THE MILITARY WRITERS SOCIETY OF America (MWSA) is an organization of hundreds of writers, poets, and artists drawn together by a common bond of military service. One purpose of our Society is to review the written works of our members.

As this is our quiet quarter for book reviews, I have drawn the below from our winter reading list five years ago—with only two edits. Therefore, the following is our 2022/23 Winter Recommended Reading List:

Stump by Larry Allen Lindsey

Small as a Mustard Seed by Shelli Johnson

Don't Label Me by Sandra Miller Linhart

Vala's Bed by Joyce Faulkner

Hitler's Time Machine by Robert F. Dorr

Kissed by the Snow by Dennis Koller

Damned Yankee by Carolyn Schriber

The Life Steve McQueen by Dwight Zimmerman

Greed Can Kill by Bob Doerr

The Men Who Killed the Luftwaffe by Jay A. Stout

Yankee in Atlanta by Jocelyn Green

Murder is for the Birds by Pat McGrath Avery

A Call to Arms by William C. Hammond

The Man Called Brown Condor by Thomas E. Simmons

This quarter's list is shorter than most. However, just a few months ago we announced our book award winners for 2022. Between the list above and the list of current award winners, everyone should be able to find a few good books to get you through the cold months ahead. After all, what's better than sitting in a warm house, relaxing, and reading a good book, while the cold wind blows outside?

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Thank you.

2023 Season Kickoff January 15, 2023

MWSA ANNUAL BOOK SUBMISSION WINDOW WILL OPEN ON JANUARY 15. IF YOU PLAN ON SUBMITTING YOUR BOOK, PLEASE HAVE A LOOK AT OUR MAIN REVIEW AND AWARDS PAGE FOR DETAILS.

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I WAS UNACCUSTOMED TO CALLING general officers by their first name. Even if they told me to, and especially if I worked for them.

And he did. I tried to ensure I wouldn't have to. Besides, isn't every senior officer's first name "sir"? Even the female ones?

I didn't know Major General Nathan J. Lindsay much at all. I met him only twice. He was now coming to the end of his career while mine was just taking off. He had three master's degrees in engineering. I had a bachelor's in psychology. He was part of the Air Force's secret astronaut program. I had trouble landing a plane.

I wanted to understand a little about General Lindsay. So, I asked an old friend who'd worked for him directly. Colonel Kris Henley (ret) was one of a dozen full colonels who did the "do work" of the organization. Kris ran operations. The other colonels managed the individual satellite programs with small staffs of Air Force officers. Kris' officers flew the satellites and processed the intelligence. General Lindsay's other colonels had most of the money. Kris had most of the people.

What does a general officer do? I asked Kris. That's easy. Only two things. First, decide "what's next," which means which program or capability we need but can't yet imagine. More importantly, decide who's next. Decide which officer deserves a promotion or increased responsibility. Because of colonels like Kris, only the best officers moved up. I'd say that only the brightest officers were advanced, but somehow, I got into that group as well.

General Lindsay controlled billions of dollars as the Commander responsible for all the Air Force's secret spy satellite programs. His Air Force officers were an elite group. Each was specially selected. Each had one or often more engineering or science degrees.

Shirley Lindsay grew used to her husband being gone. His trips were often unexpected and never announced. As a result, she knew little of what he did. What she did know was simple. If Nate was traveling, so were many officers





22 Oct 89

Gary —→

Your record of performance has been superb for your entire career. At your current location, you have made a tough job look easy.

Keep it up — and let me help you find the right next job. Consider LA! I'd like to get you into a SPO.

Thanks for a great year.
Nate

who worked for him. According to Kris, Shirley knew the wives and families and tended to them as Nate tended to his officers. Because of Nate and Shirley, the organization was more a family than the military.

Nate began his career in 1959 when it seemed like every servicemember was being shipped to Vietnam. Nate stayed on

Continued on page 20

Continued from page 19

the high ground. Anyone can go to war, but a few visionaries needed to stay behind and focus on the new systems. Systems designed to do only two things, find the bad guys and save the lives of our guys. General Lindsay knew his work's importance even if Shirley and their children couldn't.

War is not an exact science. Things go wrong. If a surgeon makes a mistake, a patient can die. During a war, if a commander makes a mistake, many people can die. In every profession, better information leads to better decisions. General Lindsay lived his career ensuring commanders had the best information when it could do them the most good.

Major General Nathan J. Lindsay retired and passed away before the formation

of today's United States Space Force. He would be proud to know that many of the officers he mentored, groomed, and promoted now lead our nation's newest military branch. Nate grew today's leaders of the high ground. Military personnel in U.S. Space Force are called Guardians. A fitting title.

Today General Lindsay rests with the one thousand Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines who lost their lives serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. Nate is a Guardian of those heroes. I know he will continue to care for each of them as he did for me.

Major General Lindsay's gravesite is at the northeast end of Section 60. Almost three-fourths a mile from the visitors' center. Take a left out of the visitors' center on Eisenhower Drive. Turn left on Sergeant Alvin C. York Drive.





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You're welcome.



THE CLOCK OF BEING

An Ode to Time

As I lie upon my bed in a quiet room

In the Centre of the great Clock of Being

Like a Greek or Norse Myth, I see four lands

In the Four Directions

*To The West where the sun sets lay the towering
Mountains of Memory, Mountains I saw in my
untroubled youth, their tops cloaked with snow
reflecting the light of an Alberta summers day.*

*A real land with Sarcee woman with hair black as a raven's wing in
the moonlight, where men once hunted buffalo with pony and bow.
Now left behind as the cares of the world absorb all that's right.*



*To the North as the hands of the clock
turn lies a land of mists cloaking trees
dusted with the most bitter of frosts, ruled
by the One-Eyed Lord of Wolves, the
Mists of Time where the Stars go to die.*

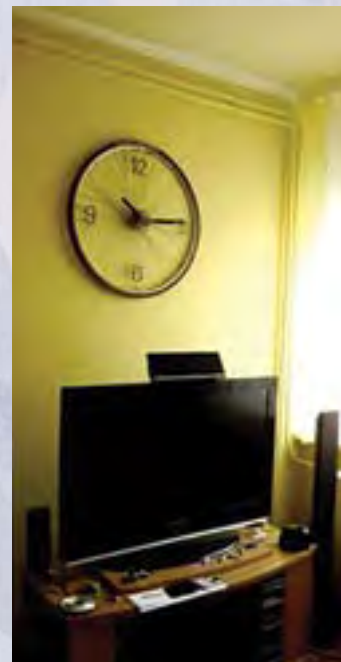
*To the East lies the land where Helios, god
of the Sun arises each day, his fire-maned
horses neigh and where light dappled-*

*haired girls giggle, the Golden Land, is it a place we can go? Someone
once tried but his wings were burned and down to ruin he fell.*

The Golden Land is like a mirage encouraging thirst.

*Last to the South, where the clocks hour is half done, lays a Sea, dark
in the Night, reflecting the Stars the millions of specks of light in their
near immortal dance, unaware
of mortal desires and hungers.*

*The Sea of Eternity where no
mortal mariner sails but Angels
fly over, where no one comes
except in their dreams.*



THE TRAGEDY OF KING EDGAR

IT WAS A SPRING DAY in the year of our Lord 512. In the court of the Saxon King Edgar, it was a day of rejoicing. King Edgar's son, Prince Baldr had returned to the Great Hall of the South Saxon King after his great victory over the North Saxons, and his Father King Edgar was most proud.

Prince Baldr and his war band arrived in the village outside the hall dressed in shining mail atop their mighty horses of war, Baldr the Valiant had made his father proud. Like some youthful god, Baldr rode upon his horse, the long raven hair of his mother's people flowed from under his great Helm.

King Edgar was a short red-faced man, his face pocked, his eyes squinty. He had in his youth been a swineherd, the son of the bastard son of the First Saxon King on the ancient Isle of Britannia. As a youth he had entered the service of Caelin his father's half-brother, Lord of the Saxon warriors who worshiped Wodan and Thunor, Lords of War.

In the Wars against the Other peoples, Edgar had risen through the ranks, becoming the King's advisor.

During those years from a far off northern land had come Tuonela the Shaman and Tanio the Mercenary, and Edgar had made friendship with the two. Then in one great battle against the Northern Saxons, King Caelin had been cut down. Soon after, his son was found poisoned. Edgar, last of the blood of the First Saxon King of



Britannia seized power. He had then built a great Alter to Wodan, and prayed one day he would enter Valhalla, Hall of the Greatest Warriors.

In the years that followed, he made war on the Welsh—the sad remnants of the once proud Roman Empire left in Britain—and had routed them. The Welsh made payment of tribute to the South Saxon King, and among the tribute was Princess Cornelia of the long black hair, from an ancient family who could trace their line all the way back to the great Roman Scipio Africanus.

Her father, a noble, was cousins with the Dragon King Balinor father of Myrddin,

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the Bard. Cornelia's mother was descended from the daughter of the ancient Rebel Prince of Ephraim Forest. She was, in fact, a treasure far greater than the gold and silver goblets—her dowry that came from some long lost temple.

But Edgar was too foolish to realize that. He had the goblets melted down into bars. He cared only for the easy wealth it would bring.

Princess Cornelia had arrived in the newly built Hall of King Edgar with two strange men from far-off lands, Peter the Priest from Rome, and Eli the Doctor from a city called Jerusalem.

She worshiped the Sheep God (as Edgar called him) Jesus. What need Edgar for Jesus when he had Wodan, Lord of Wolves?

Cornelia bore first a son, whom his father named Baldr, who grew as handsome as his father was ugly, and a daughter, Eurydice, named by her mother, who was a tall woman with long braided hair the colour of the setting sun.

Baldr was the greatest warrior in the land.

That night there was a great feast, and as Edgar sat upon his throne he thought on how mighty he had become.

The next morning his son came to Edgar. Baldr seemed ill, his face was feverish. The day after he was confined

to his bed. Then Eli the Doctor came to Edgar and said “He has a wasting illness, I must leave to gather special herbs to heal him,” and Eli left for the woods to the West.

The following day, Baldr's fever grew. Edgar called the Shaman, Tuonela and Tanio the Mercenary.

The year before. Tanio the Mercenary had accepted Cornelia's Jesus God as his own, and had said to the King, “I no longer believe might makes right,” and he hung up his sword forever.

Tuonela, however, was said to be able to assume the form of a raven or wolf. All day long Tuonela beat on his drum to call down spirits to heal Baldr.

That night Baldr called his father to him. “Father, I am dying. This night will be my last. I did not fall like a man in battle, so I will not see you in Valhalla.”



Edgar said “Valhalla be Damned! I would give up eternity in Valhalla if I could only have my son who I love more than all gold by my side.”

The next day Baldr died. The King sat on his throne in an empty hall. Peter the Priest came to him.

“I believe your son was a good man, and that the Lord has accepted him, but you, oh, Edgar, with all your false pride, your love of a god of death...perhaps it is right you suffer.”

That evening Eli returned, but it was too late. Edgar took an axe and went to the Altar of Wodan. In his rage he hewed it to pieces, and he wept, for his son was gone. The apple of his eye, the shining light. As beautiful as Edgar was ugly. As honorable as his father had been wicked and crafty to first seize the crown.

The next day Cornelia came to the door of the hall. Outside on horses were Edgar, Peter, and Eli, by Cornelia’s side was Tanio.

“We are leaving for Jerusalem,” said Edgar “This kingdom I leave behind for it is only a kingdom that will decay and become dust.”

He entrusted his family to Tanio. The kingdom passed into the hands of another Saxon Lord who is better known to history. What became of Edgar and his companions no history tells, but I like to believe that somewhere he found peace instead of war.

“So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto

me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.” *Daniel 8:17*

THE TAIL OF KING EDIE THE RAT WHO WAS VERY FAT

THERE ONCE WAS A RAT named King Edie,
With a belly as big as a bowl of Spaghetti,

He lived in a House with Creeper the Mouse, and folks round Downsville said they where happy.

Now Creeper the Mouse one summer’s day, left the house and crept through the door of a large pet store.

And what did he see to his own great glee were bags of kibble he’d like to nibble.

Next night, Edie the Rat who was very fat followed Creeper the Mouse out of the house just round the corner, past the car of the owner.

And into the store, they went looking for more kibble to nibble and water that dribbled.

Then King Edie saw to his great wonder and awe, the most pretty of rats in a cage next to the cats.

It was Miss Rat from Feed Batch 284 and as for her, you couldn’t ask for more.

Her whiskers were white. Oh, what a delight! And her fur was all sable. She ate crumbs from the table.

But it was sad...not because she was bad but next night, oh what a fright! If you didn’t knowa there was a boa at the store who ate

Continued on page 26



mice by the score, and so would go the last Rat from 284.

Now at night in the store just past *Costco* and more, there was a guard dog who ate like a hog. And people who passed started to jog, for boy, he was fierce to those who were nearest.

But Edie the Rat who was rather fat knew a lot about food and he thought to be rude.

Next night King Edie the Rat who was rather fat and Creeper the Mouse left the house.

They were on a mission to change Miss Rat's lonely condition for they did knowa the fate of the boa.

Now Creeper the Mouse could squeeze through the doors of the house and the door of the store. Who could ask for more?

Well, he crept into the Kibbelz and Bitz. Creeper was going to play a little trick. And the dog who ate like a hog came

to eat *Purina* stew but little he knew, of Jamaican hot peppers. The dog roared like a leopard and ran out of the store—that doggy will beg there no more.

Then King Edie the Rat who was rather quite fat showed he was noble, though he was shaped like an oval. And with all his might to Miss Rat's delight he smashed through the door of cage 284.

Then King Edie the Rat who is still to this day quite fat and Creeper the Mouse who can squeeze through the door of the house, they left the store with the pretty rat from cage 284.

And as for this story, if you're asking for more, know a rat can be noble though shaped like an oval and so can a mouse with a heart big as a house.

And if you didn't knowa, Miss Rat won't be lunch for a boa, and happily they all lived for Ever Mora.



8 December 1975

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

In March of 1974, while I was the Senior U. S. Military Representative in Vietnam, the Defense Attache and the Chief of the Defense Resource Support and Terminal Office, Mr. Robert Schwab came to see me in his capacity as Director of the Montagnard Development Foundation.

The purpose of his call was to learn if we had an interest in promoting self-help development projects among the Montagnards in the country's Central Highlands. Like so many problems then and now, we had the interest, but not the money.

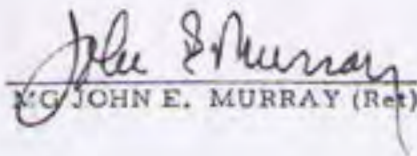
The sparcity of funds, going mainly for ammunition, fuel, spare parts and medical supplies, unfortunately did not permit using any of it on what was, let us say, a limb but not a heart-crucial need.

For some time I had wanted an in depth rice-root field report done on the living conditions of RVNAF personnel and their families. Bob Schwab's background, experience and knowledge of the Vietnamese language seemed particularly apt for such an undertaking.

I proposed that he work for me directly on this project, and asked him to serve. He accepted. And in the event it turned out ideally. In fact in my final report and briefing of the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Schlesinger and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I stressed his insights.

The initiative in Mr. Schwab's becoming affiliated with the Defense Attache Office was entirely my own. And I must say somewhat ruefully, reflecting on the Vietnam debacle, it is among the few actions of that sad era that I can point to, in which I was forensically successful.

Persuading Bob Schwab to detour his aims, to accomplish mine proved invaluable. Maybe we were fooled over these but not where Bob was. Too bad he couldn't have been everywhere.


M.C. JOHN E. MURRAY (Ret)

THE SADDEST PLACE IN AMERICA

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN WAS the longest in American history. We lost 2,352 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines in Afghanistan. We lost another 4,431 service members in Iraq. These numbers sound less than our recollections of wars in the past. In Vietnam, for example, we lost over 55,000. But inside these modest numbers hides some brutal truths.

Many service members who died in Afghanistan or Iraq were on their second, third, or fourth deployment. The other sad reality of today's wars is the number of troops who are wounded but come home. Medicine has come a long way. We've done an excellent job mending their bodies and sending them home. Large numbers of service members who, in the past would have died on the battlefield, get patched up and sent home. We've become experts at giving them new limbs, faces, and eyes. But for those who die, there's Arlington.

Today, over nine hundred Afghanistan or Iraq American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines are buried in Section 60.

This section feels different. It feels so much like the present than the past. Walking among the graves are photographs, memory stones, and flowers. Tons of flowers. Every day, maintenance workers in their ATVs remove piles of yesterday's flowers. The dumpsters are full of old flowers from Section 60. You walk among family members and comrades of the fallen.

In Arlington's other sections, you often see families stopping for a brief moment to pay tribute to a previous generation. Section 60 is about *right now*, today, our children's generation. Our sons or our daughters. Our brothers.

Families and friends arrive and just stay. There's no place else to go. The work of the churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques is now complete. There's always a new funeral in the works. Soon a new comrade will join the men and women laid to rest in Section 60.

Families and friends bring lawn chairs, food, an extra beer or two, and anything they can carry to remind them of their lost loved one. They sit, they lie down, they pray, and they talk. You can hear complete conversations. They show up when Arlington opens and don't leave until the security guards force them out at the end of the day.

Section 60 has been called the saddest acre in America.



It was springtime several years back when we visited. At the visitor's center, there's a kiosk where you can search for the name of someone interred. The night before, I'd done my homework. 2nd Lieutenant E. Christopher E. Loudon died in Iraq in 2006. He'd earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. I didn't know him, but I wanted to see Section 60, the place of so much pain.

At Arlington, you can get a car pass if you want to visit a particular grave. I suppose they limit the number of passes they hand out. But when we visited, we were fortunate. We drove into the cemetery about as slow as a car can go. It still felt too fast. As we drove, SILENCE AND RESPECT signs lined our route.

I forgot to tell Lillian I wasn't really looking for Lt. Loudon. He was just my excuse to get a pass and drive to Section 60. I wanted to see all their graves, see

the sight of so much sadness and walk among the fallen.

We parked. Lillian took the directions printed from the kiosk and followed the numbers. She was looking for the young lieutenant. As she looked for Chris' grave, I headed into Section 60's sea of brand-new headstones.

Other rows only bore plastic markers, too new for burial and a year or so before a headstone would be available to mark the grave. The workload is backed up in Section 60. The burials and headstones will happen but not soon enough.

As we walked about, a dozen or so families paid their respects. A young mother held her two-year-old daughter. An older couple wandered, looking for their great-grandson. A Vietnam vet had camped at one of the graves and smoked a cigar. It

Continued on page 30

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wasn't his first visit, nor would it be his last.

Once Lillian realized I wasn't looking for Lt. Loudon's grave, she walked over to where I was standing.

"I thought we came to see Lt. Loudon?"

"I wanted to see them all."

"You could have told me. . ."

"Sorry."

"He's over there." She pointed.

"Look at this grave. Look how many stones."

"The Jewish have a custom of placing small stones. They are meant to be an enduring symbol of how the memory of someone is a lasting one. Flowers wither and fade, as does life."

"How do you know so much?"

An Asian couple was setting up chairs for a picnic lunch. They'd come to spend a Saturday. It turns out they come every Saturday.

They haven't missed a Saturday for over a year now.

"Are you from around here?" I asked.

"We live in Alexandria."

"We do, too. Whereabouts?"

"Right off Duke Street. How about you?"

"Further south. In Hayfield. Our son went to high school at Hayfield High. How about your son?"

"Edison."

"Did your son play football?" I asked.

"Why yes, he did. Our son lost his homecoming game to Hayfield,"

"Sorry about that. Do you mind? Can I sit? Would you tell me about your son?"

"Would you like a beer?"

"I'd love one."

Sadly, I can't remember the young soldier's name or the names of his mother or father. But I do remember the kind of beer we drank.

So, there I sat.

I made polite conversation with the mother and father of someone who lost their only son. Then, I sipped my Corona and enjoyed the mild spring weather.

Section 60 is about three-quarters of a mile from the visitor's center. If you're not visiting a loved one or friend, you really should walk.

Take your first left on Eisenhower Dr. and then a right on Sergeant Alvin York Drive. Lt. Loudon's grave is in the middle of Section 60, surrounded by his friends and comrades.





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OF AMERICA PRESENTS

THE WILLIAM "REV BILL" McDONALD

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Interview date: 10 October 2022

LIKE MANY OF HER GENERATION, Lynn Doxon knew her father served in the army during World War II, but he seldom talked about it. As she began to research genealogy and family stories she wanted to know more. What she learned led her to write her novel. Although it is a work of fiction, it generally follows her father's experience in the early years of the war. This, and the two books to follow, tell the story of many of that generation, now known as the *Greatest Generation*. After years of nonfiction writing, including books, newspaper and magazine articles, and scholarly publications, this is Lynn's first full-length novel—although she has several other works planned to follow this one.



Lynn lives in the midst of an urban food forest in Albuquerque, NM with her husband, her 98-year-old mother, the three youngest of her six children, and a large collection of animals.

MWSA: How did you find out about MWSA?

LYNN DOXON: I first learned of the MWSA when I joined the Southwest Writers Association in 2019. They were in the midst of a joint conference with the MWSA. Unfortunately, I joined just a few days too late to attend the conference. Had I been able to attend I am sure it would have shortened the learning curve involved in writing the book.

MWSA: What was your inspiration for *Ninety Day Wonder*?

DOXON: It is based on my father's experience in World War II. The timeline deviates somewhat from his actual experience because he spent much more time in the United States training AAA units before going to the Pacific, he was an antiaircraft artillery officer, he was very interested in the development of radar and at least part of the time he was Executive Officer of his battery. In reality, his assignments and even his battalion changed over time, but I did not include those changes in the novel because it could get confusing. In the novel, he meets Sarah Gale. Many

people have asked me if Sarah Gale is my mother. She is not. My parents did not meet until 1948.

MWSA: The book includes some realistic hallucinations Gene has. What is that all about?

DOXON: It is a way to get a bit more family history in the book without talking about the long history of military men in the family. I think Major General Arthur St. Clair is one of my more interesting ancestors and I have him appear in Gene's hallucinations. In each case, Gene learns something that is useful to him in his 1940s experience, and I get to highlight a bit of the Revolutionary war, too.

MWSA: What is a Ninety-Day Wonder?

DOXON: At the beginning of World War II, the US Army was much too small to fight a war on two fronts, let alone on the numerous islands of the Pacific. They quickly drafted large numbers of men and needed officers to lead them. They selected men, generally somewhat more mature and generally with a college education and sent them to a ninety-day training session, commissioning them as second lieutenants at the end of that training. These were the ninety-day wonders. Often experienced sergeants would be placed under these new, briefly trained lieutenants. In the best case, they worked together to effectively lead the troops. In the worst case, there was resentment and a lack of respect. As the series continues I try to show both sides.

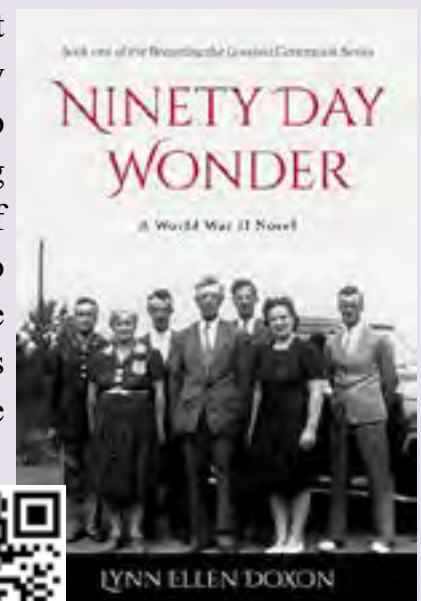
MWSA: You have mentioned a series. What do the next books cover?

DOXON: At this time I am working on the second book, which will cover Gene's experience of island hopping across the Pacific and fighting for control of different islands.

The final book in the series takes place in the Philippines and Japan as Gene becomes the commander of a company of MPs, repatriates POWs, and takes part in the occupation.

MWSA: What have you learned from writing this novel that you wish you had known when you started?

DOXON: I discovered it is much harder to write fiction than it is to write nonfiction. In my nonfiction and memoir books, I simply had to write what I knew. Fiction is about creating characters and a setting that will grab the reader's interest and weaving them into a story that pulls the reader along. On top of that, in historical fiction, you have to make the history as accurate as possible. I had to add points of conflict that did not really exist in my father's life, leave out things that would only be of interest to me or my family, and keep everything moving forward. Years of research went into the book, and the research continues as I write the second one.





WELCOME TO THE MWSA ~ WHO WE ARE

John Cathcart

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

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

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

THANKS VERY MUCH FOR BEING A PART OF YOUR MWSA ORGANIZATION.

SAVING HISTORY ONE STORY AT A TIME



