

DISPATCHES

MILITARY
WRITERS
SOCIETY OF
AMERICA

Rescuing History One Story at a Time
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FALL 2022

AMBASSADORS
SUPPORTING
MWSA MISSION
PG 36

PANAMA CANAL
CRUISE
PG 26

BOOK AWARDS
PG 22



FROM THE EDITOR

Sandra Miller Linhart

ANOTHER DISPATCHING YEAR DOWN—
THE NEXT issue is Winter 2023. This year is streaming by faster than the next episode of your favorite *Netflix* series.

If you'd like to support *Dispatches*, please continue to send in your poems, pictures (both artistic and photographic), short stories, thoughts, etc. The deadline for submissions is going to be the 1st day of the month the issue is released. (1 January for 2023 Winter, which will be posted 15 Jan.)

If you do submit, please refrain from adding how a person died, etc. That personal health information (PHI) is covered under HIIPA and is a no-no for any kind of non-medical publication. If you are writing about yourself, fiction, history, or fictionalized history, of course that rule doesn't apply.

This publication is written for adults/veterans. There is no need to censor real emotion or trauma. We write to heal, not to placate. Having said that, if you prefer to PC your posts, please do so. We live in a free country so knock yourself out. Posts that are explicitly sexual or not family friendly may be edited for content, but the healing aspect of your submission will be honored.

In Joy & Enjoy

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FEATURE WRITER ~ JOYCE FAULKNER

FEATURE WRITER ~ VALERIE ORMOND

FEATURE WRITER ~ ALEXANDER BUSCHOR

FEATURE WRITER ~ NANCY PANKO

FEATURE WRITER ~ JOHN CATHCART

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bob Doerr

AS WE APPROACH THE HOLIDAY season, I hope all of you are doing fine and staying healthy. Our conference in New Orleans was a success, and I appreciated the opportunity to seeing so many of you once more and meeting some of you for the first time. Congratulations again to the book award winners.

For the most part, this year's activities are coming to a close, but we have a full calendar of events that each of you should consider for 2023.

First, we'll be having another conference in September. Start planning and saving for that now.

Second, we'll have a new book review/award season beginning in January.

Third, we are now open to submissions for our 2023 anthology.

Fourth, our 2023 Scholarship program is already accepting applications. The process is not difficult, and who can't use an extra \$1500.00 for college?

We have other plans/activities in development, so stay tuned. More information on all the topics mentioned above can be found on our website.

I'll be stepping down from the President's position at the end of the year. After



seven years on the Board and four as your president, it's time for me to step aside. It's been a true honor to be your President. MWSA is a good organization. While we should continue to strive to help our members become better and more successful writers, we should never lose sight of our main goal to help veterans and their families. It all goes back to why the organization was founded and why we became a non-profit. That information is also on our website. Take some time and read it.

Thanks again! – Bob Doerr



MEET MILITARY WRITERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA (MWSA) WRITER OF THE YEAR—ROBIN HUTTON

Valerie Ormond

MANY KNOW OF ROBIN HUTTON as the author of her New York Times bestseller *Sgt Reckless: America's War Horse*. She can now add to her list of impressive credentials her title as the 2022 MWSA Mike Mullins Memorial Writer of the Year (WOY). Robin has been an active member of MWSA since 2015 and has been a positive supporter of the organization. Some of Robin's contributions to MWSA over the years include:

- Contributed as a presenter in the MWSA Albuquerque Veterans Affairs (VA) workshop in-person in 2019
- Presented two MWSA online Zoom training sessions during in 2021 and 2022
- Provided a short story for MWSA's 2021 anthology and an article for MWSA *Dispatches*
- Promoted MWSA in social media with WOY Finalist announcement in 2021
- Recruited new members to join MWSA and promoted MWSA at public forums including the 2022 Animals in War & Peace Medal Ceremony at the U.S. Capitol and the Navy League's 2022 Sea-Air-Space Symposium
- Mentored at least one MWSA member in 2021 with her thoughtful manuscript

review resulting in a multiple award-winning novel



Awards presentation photo from MWSA Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA, Aug. 27, 2022. (Photo courtesy of Robin Hutton)

Robin's distinguished writing career began in 1979, working at Billy Jack Enterprises. The Billy Jack Productions, including four full-length motion pictures featured the reluctant hero, Billy Jack, a former U.S. Army Green Beret Vietnam War veteran. For thirty-five years, she had experience in every facet of the motion picture business of those Billy Jack Productions, starting in post-production, then becoming an editor, screenwriter, and finally a producer. During this time, she also co-wrote her first novel, *The 9 Indispensable Ingredients in Every Hit Film, TV show, Play and Novel*, with Billy Jack Enterprises' founder and business partner, Tom Laughlin.

Following her work with Billy Jack Enterprises, Robin set her sights on recognizing an American war hero—a Thoroughbred named Sgt. Reckless, a Marine mare serving during the Korean War. Seeing that Sgt. Reckless had disappeared from history, Robin decided to change that by writing a thoroughly researched full-length novel about her. That novel, *Sgt. Reckless: America's War Horse*, also launched a movement to recognize the horse across the country through a series of life-sized bronze sculptures to help educate the public of the horse's military service.



One of the five life-sized bronze monuments honoring Sgt. Reckless at the World Equestrian Center, Ocala, FL. (Photo courtesy of Robin Hutton)

Robin learned about additional animal war heroes while researching more ways to honor Sgt. Reckless. She decided she wanted to honor these animals in writing, too, and penned her next novel, *War Animals: The Unsung Heroes of World War II*.

Writing is one thing but getting the brave animals well-deserved recognition was

another. Currently, Robin is the President of Angels Without Wings, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation that spearheaded the development of the bronze sculptures mentioned above. Robin expanded her non-profit's charter to include an extraordinary effort to hold the very first Animals in War & Peace Medal of Bravery ceremony honoring eight animals that served the U.S. heroically from World War I to 2019. She garnered Congressional support for the event held at the U.S. Capitol and furthered the movement to officially honor nominated U.S. war animals through legislation. The next Animals in War and Peace Medal Ceremony was held in March 2022 and became the new model for future ceremonies. Robin not only captured the stories in the written descriptions of the animals' and their handlers' service in the ceremony programs and for the organizations' records but now also became multi-media productions.

Each of 2022's eight honorees were highlighted in short documentaries for the ceremony. Robin combined her screenplay writing, motion picture, and editorial skills to produce memorable stories of the animals' unique contributions to the country. These collected works will contribute to War Animals Productions, a new film/television production company to help tell the animals in service

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stories. The continued annual ceremony documentaries will also hopefully be included in a future animals of bravery museum – a long-term vision.



Robin Hutton following the announcement of her 2022 MWSA Writer of the Year striking an iconic "Billy Jack" pose. (Photo by MWSA member Joe Epley)

In addition to all this, Robin is currently working on two writing projects. First, she is creating a children's book on Sgt, Reckless told from the mare's point of view. Second, she is writing a book on all the Animals in War and Peace medalists and plans to develop Volume One including the first two rounds of medalists along with the 2023 recipients to be honored in March 2023.

Robin's distinguished contributions include the following:

- *Sgt Reckless: America's War Horse*
 - * 2014 *New York Times* Bestseller—Categorical September/October.

- * 2015 American Horse Publications Equine Book of the Year
- * 2015 Silver Medalist; Independent Publisher Book Award (IPPY)
- * 2016 Gold Medal; Military Writers Society of America.
- * 2016 EQUUS Film and Arts Festival WINNIE Award; Best Equine Book.
- * 2020 EQUUS Film and Arts Festival WINNIE Award Best Screenplay.
- * 2020 Selection—Commandant of the Marine Corps' Professional Reading List, Required reading selection for enlisted Marines.



MWSA's 2022 WOY is featured in the Guinness Book of Records 2023 for having America's First Animal Bravery Award; the entry includes photos of four of the Medal of Bravery recipients. (Image courtesy of Robin Hutton)
War Animals: The Unsung Heroes of World War II

- * 2019 Gold Medal; Military Writers Society of America.
- * 2020 Silver Medalist; Independent Publisher Book Award (IPPY).
- * 2020 EQUUS Film and Arts Festival WINNIE Award; War Horses.
- Robin Hutton:
 - * Three *Certificates of Appreciation* from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (2013, 2016, 2018)
 - * 2013: Award from the Department of Defense's Korean War 60th Anniversary Commemorative Committee for making the 60th celebration of the armistice such a special event for the veterans who served in that war
 - * 2014: Named "Patriotic Citizen of the Year" by The Military Order of the World Wars and The Military Order of the Purple Heart for her charitable work honoring veterans, specifically Sgt. Reckless.
 - * 2016: The Ambassador for Peace Medal from the South Korean Government.
 - * 2019: First recipient of *The Sgt. Reckless Award*, a new award presented by the National Cowgirl Museum & Hall of Fame in Fort Worth, TX for her work.
 - * Finalist for the 2021 Military Writers Society of America Mike Mullins Memorial Writer of the Year Award.
 - * 2022: **Certified Screenreader and Story Consultant** through the *Hollywood*

Gatekeepers' Screenreaders and Coaches & Consultants Programs.

She is most deserving of this recognition for her forty-four years of writing across genres and across platforms to include fiction, non-fiction, in print, motion pictures, and in digital media and for her continuing contributions to military writing and mentoring other writers.



INSURGENCY DURING THE KOREAN WAR—PT I

LCDR Alexander "Roadtrip" Buschor, USN

WHEN IT COMES TO COLD War era insurgency, the Vietnam conflict usually comes to mind. Countless books, research, and Hollywood portrayals have made the terms Viet Cong, VC, or “men in black pajamas” synonymous with the idea of insurgents. However, war in Southeast Asia was not the U. S. Army’s first interaction with unconventional forces during the Cold War. Though there is far less coverage of insurgency during the Korean War, the scale of the conflict, impact of the insurgents, and Army’s methods of combating it served as an eerie template to future issues with that dark art of war.

After World War II and the subsequent divide of the Korean peninsula, a communist insurgency began in South Korea with the intent of laying the foundations for a unified Korea under communist control. With significant United Nations support, a strong South Korean government was able to subdue the insurgency, which ultimately led to a North Korean invasion of the South and overall shift from insurgency to conventional warfare.

In the wake of the second world war, a series of hostilities began throughout the world—their root causes ranging from decolonization to newly asserted superpower influence. The Korean War was

one of those hostilities, but has several unique attributes that separate it from other Cold War conflicts. After two world wars, the governments, militaries, and citizens of nineteenth and early twentieth century empires were left depleted by the totality of global warfare. With their colonial overlords severely weakened, subject peoples sought to gain independence through various ideological means. Occasionally political routes were taken, but force was typically the most popular method. Though violent insurgencies were primarily comprised of indigenous personnel, external support was common.

As stated, there were various ideological motivations for independence, ranging from nationalism to communism. On the periphery of its newly established frontier, the Soviet Union sought to embed its ideology, communism, in various conflicts of decolonization in an effort to bring newly independent nations into its sphere of influence. This was accomplished by direct force, as seen in Czechoslovakia, or by more indirect methods, employed in the Vietnam War.¹

Although the outbreak of major hostilities on the Korean Peninsula was largely conventional, it was predicated by a sizable communist insurgency in the South.

¹ Jeremy Black, *War Since 1945*, (London: Reaktion Book, 2004), 58.

However, unlike other Cold War conflicts occurring at the time, the Korean War was not a war of decolonization. In *War Since 1945*, Jeremy Black emphasized that defining the war was difficult, but could be determined by examining the history of the North-South split.² In regards to the divide, Black stated, “..there was no historical foundation for this division.”³ The Korean people had been under Japanese occupation since 1910, which came to an abrupt end after the Empire of Japan was defeated by a predominantly U.S. force throughout the Asia-Pacific theater. In the final days of the war, the Soviet Union broke its non-aggression pact with Japan and declared war, with the intent on seizing territory previously occupied by the Japanese.⁴ At Potsdam, it was determined the Soviet Union would disarm all Japanese forces on the Korean Peninsula north of the 38th parallel, while U.S. forces would handle everything to the south. Though the entire peninsula had been a Japanese colony for decades, it was not the demise of Japan, but the influence of superpower agenda that wrought fresh hostilities in the region, thus excluding it from the realm of a purely decolonization conflict. Regardless of this fact, the ensuing quarrel harbored a significant communist insurgency similarly seen in other wars of decolonization.

Before origins, intent, and support of the insurgency can be understood, its context

within the differences of limited and total war is required. World War II, the conflict that ultimately caused the Korean War, was a total war unlike no other. Throughout European imperial history, wars had become increasingly grander in focus, primarily due to the general shift away from dynastic forms of government toward national forms of state.⁵ The growth of the scope of warfare came to the point of ending European monarchies during World War I, and threatening the existence of entire peoples and nations in World War II. Although insurgencies did exist throughout both world wars, they were often overshadowed by the totality of the global conflict under which they were fought.

With the formation of superpowers and advent of weapons of mass destruction in the post-World War II world, regional issues had the capacity to become global. That caused a shift back toward more limited forms of conflict in an effort to reduce the globally destructive capability of war.⁶

In *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy*, Robert Osgood defined limited war when he stated,

“A limited war is one in which the belligerents restrict the purpose for which they fight to concrete, well-defined

5. Peter Paret, ed. *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), 91.

6. Gian P. Gentile, *The Selective Use of History in the Development of American Counterinsurgency Doctrine* (Army History 72, Summer 2009), 21-33, 25.

2 Ibid., 32.

3 Ibid., 24.

4 Michael Carver, *War Since 1945*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 152.

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objectives that do not demand the utmost military effort of which the belligerents are capable and that can be accommodated in a negotiated settlement... The battle is confined to a local geographical area and directed against selected targets - primarily those of direct military importance... It permits their economic, social, and political patterns of existence to continue without serious disruption.”⁷

Defining the Korean conflict as a limited war was essential to understanding the effort in combating the communist insurgency before the North Korean invasion as well as during conventional hostilities. Osgood further elaborated on the definition of limited war when he stated, “The decisive limitation upon war is the limitation of the objectives of war.”⁸ That fact became essential in the post-World War II world, and frequently became a point of contention throughout the Korean war. A 1959 Rand Corporation study titled *Strategy in the Missile Age* by Bernard Brodie discussed the reemergence of limited war in the nuclear age,

“Today, limited war involving the major powers requires deliberate restraint by both sides upon gigantically powerful forces which are already mobilized, and at the same time relatively vulnerable at rest. This fact at once distinguishes modern limited war from the historic variety, and also suggests that it may not be easy to guarantee that limited wars stay limited.

The axiom that limited wars are wars fought for limited objectives now tends to be an inversion of the truth which is that we are willing to limit objectives in order to keep wars limited.”⁹

Though the limited scope of the Korean War had the dangerous potential of expanding into another global conflict, the insurgency persisted as a formidable nuisance, both before and throughout conventional hostilities.

To Be Continued ~ Part II in Winter 2023 Dispatches Magazine

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⁹ Bernard Brodie, *Project Rand: Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959), ix.



⁷ Robert Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

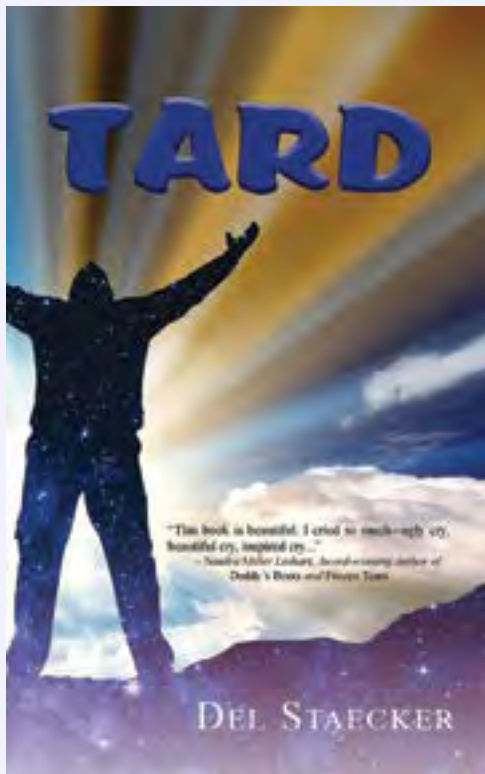
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dispatches@mwsa.co



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!

20 SECONDS

Gary Zelinski

TWENTY SECONDS. EVEN LESS. THAT'S all they had. The gunship was coming back around. They'd already eliminated two North Vietnamese mortar batteries, and now a third was firing into the Long Binh Post Army Base. In 1969, the attacks were more death from a thousand cuts than the overwhelming sweep from the Tet Offensive the year before.

By 1969, the base was under constant attack. The Army doubled its border fences and sent out night patrols. Long Binh Post was the major logistics base in South Vietnam. The plan was to get the thousands of soldiers out of Saigon and house them all, twenty or so miles to the northeast at Long Binh. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attacked relentlessly, but only at night. Every night.

Spooky 71 was the gunship on duty that night. The troops on the ground called her Puff the Magic Dragon. The ship's three 7.26MM miniguns could fire 6,000 rounds a minute. More than 21,000 rounds were on board. A burst from a minigun looked like "dragon's breath" and sent a rain of fire at the enemy. Spooky's guns had already silenced two enemy mortars as the pilot, Major Kenneth Carpenter, turned the plane around to quiet a third.

It was Airman 1st Class John Levitow's 180th mission. It was supposed to be his night off. He shouldn't have even been on that flight. But Ken needed a loadmaster. On February 24, 1969, It was A1C Levitow's job to grab a flare, set the timer, and hand it to the gunner. The gunner, standing in the open cargo door, would attach it to a ten-foot lanyard, holding the safety ring pin in one hand, and toss it out of the plane.

The Mark 24 magnesium flares onboard were almost 3ft long, each weighing twenty-seven pounds. There were sixty on board. A parachute kept the burning flare aloft for three minutes, lighting up the night sky. See the enemy, kill the enemy. Spooky 71 was looking for its third kill of the night. But, at 1,000 feet up, Spooky was an easy target.

Just as the aircraft banked to make its turn, a North Vietnamese 82MM mortar ripped a three-foot hole in the wing and peppered the fuselage with over 3,500 pieces of shrapnel. One of the gunners, Sergeant Fuzie, who was wounded in his back and neck, remembers seeing his three fellow Airmen, Baer, Owen, and Levitow, instantly go down. Sergeant Baer was



heavily bleeding. Later, Levitow would say he felt like he'd been hit by a 2x4.

It was Airman Owen who first realized they were in mortal danger.

"I had the lanyard on one flare hooked up, and my finger was through the safety pin ring. When we were hit, all three of us were thrown to the floor. The flare, my finger still through the safety pin ring, was knocked out of my hand. The safety pin was pulled, and the flare rolled on the aircraft floor, fully armed."

Major Carpenter fought to keep control. The plane went into a 30-degree bank. From the intercom, he learned that everyone in the back was injured. He also

learned that there was a live flare rolling on the deck.

Airman Levitow had over forty pieces of metal in his legs and back. First, Levitow came to the aid of a crewmember who was dangerously close to the open cargo door. Pulling him out of the doorway, he quickly looked for the flare. Nobody knew when the clock started. But, in ten seconds, a small explosion would deploy the parachute; in another ten, the magnesium would begin to burn at 4,000 degrees. The magnesium would burn through the metal floor and ignite the plane's fuel tanks. The explosion would kill the entire crew.

Nobody can explain why A1C Levitow did what he did next. Maybe the loss of blood clouded his thoughts. He reached for the flare, and he missed. He grabbed again, missed again. One last chance, he jumped forward, landing on the flare. He brought it to his chest. Now he could only crawl. So, he did. With his arms around the live flare, he crawled toward the open door. Making it to the cargo door, he pushed it out where it hit the prop wash and was pulled away from the airplane. In an instant, it exploded, setting the night sky ablaze.

With two critically wounded crewmembers and over 3,500 shrapnel holes in the wing and fuselage, it's a wonder Major Carpenter managed to make it back to Tan

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Son Nhut Air Base. Looking in the back of his aircraft, seeing the trail of blood, it wasn't hard to understand what happened. He would later say:

"I'll never know...I'll never know...how Levitow managed to reach the flare and throw it out. In my experience, I have never seen such a courageous act performed under such adverse conditions."

Years later, Airman 1st Class Levitow was asked why he did it. The only thing he could think of was *"temporary insanity."*

It took months for Airman Levitow to recover from his wounds. He went on to fly twenty more missions as a loadmaster in Vietnam. Lighting up the sky in support of Army troops on the ground.

Sergeant Levitow was honorably discharged from the Air Force in August 1969. His military awards included the Purple Heart, and the Air Medal, with one silver and two bronze oak leaf clusters.

On May 14, 1970, President Richard Nixon presented twelve Medals of Honor on a special Armed Forces holiday. Included were five members of the Army, three from the Navy, two Marines, one Air Force officer, and Airman 1st Class John L. Levitow, the lowest-ranking person to be awarded the Medal of Honor in the history of the Air Force.

John Levitow returned to the small town in Connecticut near where he was born. He worked for the State's Veterans Affairs Administration for the next twenty-two years.

He would have preferred a quieter life. But fame didn't leave John alone. Instead, he became an icon. Veterans' groups wanted him to speak, and so did civic groups from around the country. As did the Air Force. The Air Force wanted him back. Not to re-enlist but to motivate and teach.

Today, the John L. Levitow Award is presented to the top graduate in each of the Airman, NCO, and Senior NCO Academies. To be eligible for the award, you must graduate in the top 1% of your class. As important, if not more, you must be recommended by your classmates. It is the top award for each of the enlisted leadership schools.

I remember learning Sergeant Levitow's story when I made NCO in 1977. Today, every airman knows the story and legacy of Sergeant John L. Levitow.

During the last years of his life, John fought cancer with the same determination which won him our nation's highest award.

In 1998, he was inducted into the Airlift/Tanker Association Hall of Fame. In addition, a C-17 Globemaster II was named in his honor. The "Spirit of John L. Levitow." The aircraft now flies for

the 105th Airlift Wing of the New York National Guard.

On November 8, 2000, John Levitow passed away. He is survived by a son, John Jr., of Charlotte, N.C.; a daughter, Corrie Wilson, of Cromwell, Conn.; his mother, Marion Levitow, of South Windsor, Conn.; a sister, Mary-Lee Constantino, of East Hartford, Conn., and a grandson.



MEDAL OF HONOR

Citation

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Sgt. Levitow (then A1C), U.S. Air Force, distinguished himself by exceptional heroism while assigned as a loadmaster aboard an AC-47 aircraft flying a night mission in

support of Long Binh Army post. Sgt. Levitow's aircraft was struck by a hostile mortar round. The resulting explosion ripped a hole 2 feet in diameter through the wing, and fragments made over 3,500 holes in the fuselage. All occupants of the cargo compartment were wounded and helplessly slammed against the floor and fuselage. The explosion tore an activated flare from the grasp of a crewmember who had been launching flares to provide illumination for Army ground troops engaged in combat. Sgt. Levitow, though stunned by the concussion of the blast and suffering from over 40 fragment wounds in the back and legs, staggered to his feet and turned to assist the man nearest to him who had been knocked down and was bleeding heavily. As he was moving his wounded comrade forward and away from the opened cargo compartment door, he saw the smoking flare ahead of him in the aisle. Realizing the danger involved and completely disregarding his own wounds, Sgt. Levitow started toward the burning flare. The aircraft was partially out of control and the flare was rolling wildly from side to side. Sgt. Levitow struggled forward despite the loss of blood from his many wounds and the partial loss of feeling in his right leg. Unable to grasp the rolling flare with his hands, he threw himself bodily upon the burning flare. Hugging the deadly device to his body, he dragged himself back to the rear of the aircraft and hurled the flare through the open cargo door. At that instant the flare separated and ignited in the air, but clear

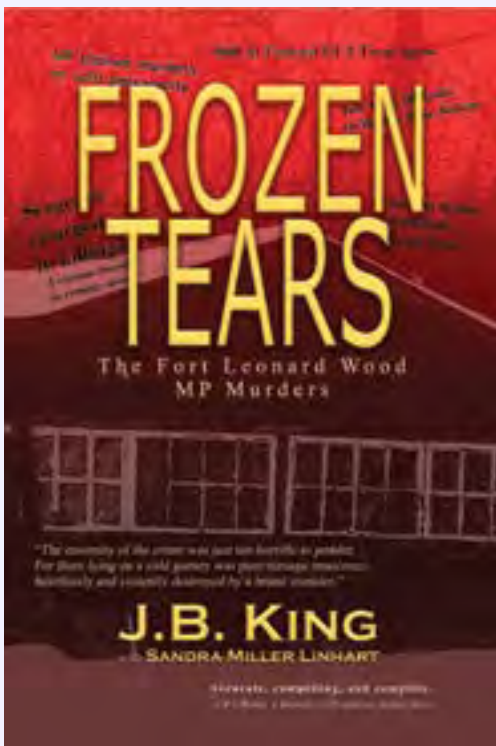
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of the aircraft. Sgt. Levitow, by his selfless and heroic actions, saved the aircraft and its entire crew from certain death and destruction. Sgt. Levitow's gallantry, his profound concern for his fellowmen, at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Air Force and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.

Sergeant John L. Levitow's grave is in section 66 of Arlington National Cemetery. From the visitor's center, take an immediate left on Eisenhower Drive. It's a little more than three-fourths of a mile. His grave is on the left.

The walk takes about seventeen minutes. When you get there, try and remember those 20 seconds. Remember Sergeant John L. Levitow.



FROZEN TEARS

by JB King

Genre(s): True Crime

Format(s): Kindle; Paperback , Hardback

ISBN-13 : 978-1943267705



On Jan. 13, 1977, an on-duty Military Police officer kidnapped four teenagers on a double date who were driving across the Ft. Leonard Wood military reservation. The MP arrested the two boys for an armed robbery which he said had just occurred off post and put them in the back seat of his patrol vehicle. He put one girl in the back seat between them and one girl up front with him. Then he just drove off with them.

“Frozen Tears: The Fort Leonard Wood MP Murders” is a first hand and extremely factual look at the criminal investigation which ultimately led to the conviction of the MP Officer Johnny Lee Thornton.



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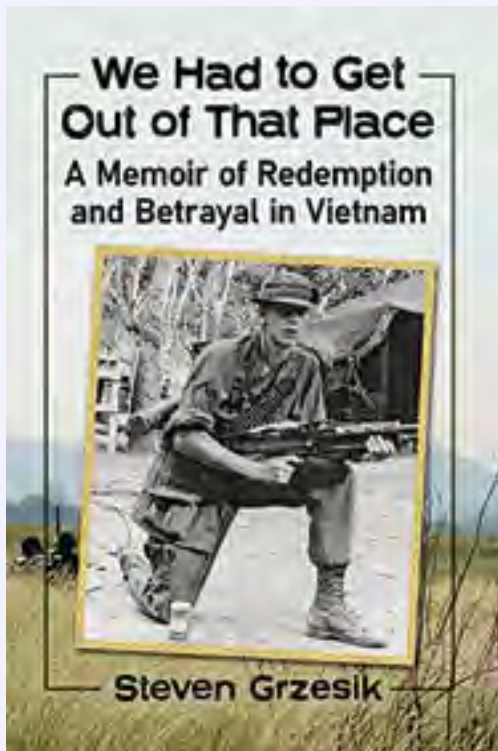
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WE HAD TO GET OUT OF THAT PLACE

by Steven Grzesik

Genre(s): Biography/History

Format(s): Kindle; Paperback

ISBN-13 : 978-1476690513



Steven Grzesik's counter-culture experience in Greenwich Village ended with a bad acid trip followed by a draft notice. The Vietnam War, then at its height, seemed doomed to failure by cynical politicians and a skeptical public, a prediction he weighed against his sense of duty to himself and to his country.

Through a variety of combat duties--with the infantry, the 36th Engineer Battalion, F Co. 75th Rangers and the 174th Assault Helicopter Co.--and several close calls with death, Grzesik's detailed memoir recounts his two tours in-country, where he hoped merely to survive with a semblance of heroism, yet ultimately redefined himself.

Reviews:

"Steven Grzesik has pulled back the curtain on service in the Vietnam War. It was a brutal time and Steve honestly offers his experiences as proof of this."—Major General Bradley Lott, United States Marine Corps (retired)

"Grzesik's gripping point of view places you squarely into his gritty, no-punches-pulled, journey of self-discovery. He takes you from the streets of New York City to the battlefields of Vietnam, and in doing so, reveals the insanity of that war, and the humanity of its soldiers."—David Sheppard, Commander, United States Coast Guard

"Grzesik captures the horrors of the Vietnam War. He details the fears of a young soldier being dropped into the unknown in Vietnam: a conflict no one could be prepared for. The account of his journey is riveting."—Kurt Browning, former Florida Secretary of State

About the Author:

Steven Grzesik served two tours of duty in Vietnam. He spent time in the infantry and the engineers on his first tour. On his second tour he volunteered for the original 75th Rangers, going on many long-range reconnaissance patrols. Afterwards, he flew as a door gunner in the largest air assault of the war: Operation Lam Son 719—the invasion of Laos. A writer for major newspapers and military periodicals, he lives in Seminole, Florida.

ANOTHER DAY THAT WILL LIVE IN INFAMY

Gary Zelinski

WE LIVE MOST OF OUR lives blanketed under bland, non-descript days and empty, uneventful nights. What did you do last Tuesday? Probably the same thing you did every Tuesday a hundred times before. Perhaps you remember Sundays as special. Sundays are for church or maybe sharing a meal with family and friends. I like Sundays. Sundays seem warmer than the rest of the week.

Sometimes, not often, maybe only once in a lifetime, a single day emerges and burns itself into our consciousness. Abraham Lincoln was shot on a Friday. Pearl Harbor was attacked on a Sunday. On another Sunday, April 14, 1935, the worst sandstorm in American history devastated the Midwest plains. 'The Dust Bowl' would last for four more years. Then, in 1963, on another Friday, John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

"YESTERDAY, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan." President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Most of America was just waking up. It was a beautiful Tuesday morning. Another beautiful September day when the first plane hit. Then the second hit.

Then the Pentagon was hit, and we were at war.

"I want you all to know that America today, America today is on bended knee, in prayer for the people whose lives were lost here, for the workers who work here, for the families who mourn. This nation stands with the good people of New York City and New Jersey and Connecticut as we mourn the loss of thousands of our citizens. . . I can hear you! I can hear you! The rest of the world hears you. . . And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon." President George W. Bush.

Beginning at 7:59 AM and over the next forty-three minutes, four separate commercial airliners from four different airports took off.

Beginning at 8:46 AM, and for the next seventy-seven minutes, those four commercial airliners were deliberately crashed. Two planes flew into the Twin Towers in New York City, one into the Pentagon, and one in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

If you were alive, you know what you were doing on Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001.

By 9:45 AM, the Vice President, later confirmed by the President, halted all air

traffic across the country. Every plane in the air was ordered to land at the nearest airport. International flights inbound for the U.S. were diverted to Canada or Mexico.

At 9:59 AM, Father Mychal Judge, chaplain to the FDNY, now stationed at an emergency command post in the lobby of the North Tower, was struck by falling debris from the collapsing South Tower. He died of blunt force trauma to the head. He's listed as victim number one.

By 10:00 AM, the passengers of hijacked United Flight 93, the fourth plane, realized they had little chance of survival. Receiving cell phone calls from families and friends, the passengers learned the fate of the first three planes. Their aircraft was now a guided missile—a bomb. With a flight attendant, the pilot, and the copilot dead, a few passengers tried to overtake the hijackers. The terrorist at the controls swung the plane violently left and right. The passengers used a cart to rush the cockpit door. The aircraft pitched into a steep dive just before they broke open the door. America had begun to fight back.

At 10:03 AM, Flight 93 crashed into the Pennsylvania countryside. All thirty-three passengers and seven crewmembers on board died instantly. The intended target was the U.S. Capital or the White House.

By 10:15 AM, fighter planes scrambled from New Jersey and Long Island with orders to shoot down any suspicious

aircraft that didn't respond to radio calls. The order included commercial airliners with U.S. citizens onboard.

On that sunny Tuesday, on what should've been a beautiful day in September—on that morning, thousands of firefighters from over seventy-five station houses throughout New York's five boroughs responded. Three-hundred-forty-three first responders rushed into the smoke and the collapsing towers, never to return. They rushed into the fire. They *rushed* into the fire!

Before the towers collapsed, there was no way down through the burning floors of dense choking smoke. Without any hope of rescue from the roof, as many as 200 people chose to jump. The people in the Twin Towers on the floors below where the planes hit, rushed down the escalators. Most made it out. Many had to pass the remains of those who had jumped.

In Washington D.C., flying low to avoid the series of high-rise buildings in Rosslyn, Virginia, was United Flight 77.

At 9:37 AM, Flight 77 crashed into the west side of the Pentagon. All fifty-three passengers and the six crewmembers died instantly. As the building's outer ring, the 'E-Ring,' collapsed, 125 Army, Navy, and civilian civil servants lost their lives.

I was sitting at my desk at the National Reconnaissance Office headquarters in

Continued on page 22

Continued from page 21

Chantilly, Virginia. Twenty or so miles to the west, I might have seen the plane on its final decent if I had looked out my window.

Lillian, my wife, wasn't so lucky. Looking up from her desk, on the thirteenth floor of one of the tallest buildings and closest to the Pentagon, in Crystal City, Virginia, she saw Flight 77 hit. First, the entire side of the building exploded, then a wall of fire, then a mushroom cloud billowed over the Pentagon. Our Pentagon. The headquarters of the largest, most powerful military in the history of the world. Or so we thought.

The sequence of events from that day escapes me. After twenty-plus years, just a few facts remain to haunt my memory. I remember calling her after the first plane hit the tower in New York. I watched it live on TV in our conference room, then the second plane crashed. A friend cried out. "That was planned. There'll be more."

I called from the only unsecured line around I could find. I supposed many folks were calling their spouses, children, and parents. Lillian's building was right in the potential flight path. Another plane was not an imaginary threat. I told her to leave immediately and get home.

"I can't."

For the next ten hours, I remember being mad. Really mad. What I didn't realize or appreciate were her responsibilities. She was the senior employee of her company in the building that day. Her boss and her boss's boss were at the Pentagon meeting with some admirals about the next upgrade to the Cruise Missile Program. She was left behind, working on the software they'd all be bragging about.



As I drove home, Jason called. He was in the first year of college and knew I'd be worried. Then Jennifer called. She was living in Los Angeles. They have always been good children. Mostly.

Seeing a commercial airliner crash into a building, the Pentagon no less, changes you. In an instant, Lillian transformed from an engineer into a fire marshal. All federal buildings in D.C. were ordered

to evacuate. Her building, a commercial high-rise, was an afterthought.

Moving methodically, slowly, and deliberately, she looked in every room from the fifteenth to the thirteenth floor, her company's entire workspace. Her words never wavered or changed. "Time to leave. You must leave now." When the employees in the simulation lab questioned her authority, her words were simple and direct. When a conference room full of naval officers, including captains and commanders, said they'd be staying, she turned off the power.

I didn't see her for ten hours. The traffic leaving D.C. was as bad as in one of those disaster movies. I was still mad. Perhaps I still am.

There is a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery to the one-hundred-eighty-four people who died at the Pentagon that Tuesday. One-hundred-twenty-five workers from the Pentagon, all fifty-three of Flight 77's passengers, and six crewmembers. The five sides of the memorial honor the five individuals whose remains could not be found. The Memorial includes each victim's name.

The 9/11 Pentagon Memorial Marker is in Section 64. It is a little over a mile walk. Take a left out of the visitors center on Eisenhower Dr. Take another left on Sergeant Alvin C. York Dr. and then a right on Marshall Dr. At Patton Circle,

take the first exit into Section 64. The Memorial overlooks the Pentagon. Flight 77 lasted eighty-seven minutes. The walk will take you less than twenty-five.



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Anthology

9/11 That Beautiful, Broken Day

17 American Authors

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Please Write: A Novel

Janette Byron Stone

The Girls Who Stepped Out of Line

Major General Mari K. Eder

The Defiance of Reiko Murata

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Rona Simmons

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Michael Godbout

*How to/Business/
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Maritime Unmanned



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How to Deal with Damn Near Anything



John E. McGlothlin

Pearl Harbor's Final Warning



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Literary Fiction

Rare Bird: Hispanic Military



Pilots of the USA

Rudolph C. Villarreal

Ahab: A Hockey Story



Brad Huestis

When the Beaches Trembled



Zach S. Morris

The Legend (A Kate Tyler Novel)



Nancy Wakeley

**Zone of Action: A JAG's Journey Inside
Operations Cobra II and Iraqi Freedom**



Colonel Kirk G. Warner, USAR (Ret.)

AWARDS continued on page 42

RED ENGINE PRESS PANAMA CANAL CRUISE

Joyce Faulkner

HI EVERYONE. OUR LITTLE PUBLISHING firm, Red Engine Press, is planning a fifteen-day “Storytellers” cruise of the Panama Canal from Fort Lauderdale, FL, to Los Angeles, CA, on the Emerald Princess. The date of sailing is January 22, 2024. I’d like to invite those of you who are interested in an event that will be fun, educational, creative, and hopefully will raise your personal profiles whether you are a publisher publicist, researcher, novelist, historian, artist, cartoonist, photographer, editor, publisher, book designer, bookstore owner, etc. Quilters and knitters write books, too. Art has

many forms. And no, you don’t have to be a Red Engine Press author to join us.

Note: since the more of us, the better the pricing for each of us, you are welcome to bring friends or family. And because having family or friends changes the experience for you, understand...it’s a big ship. Each of us is welcome to do our “own thing” at any time...and that includes family or friends who might want to participate in our storytelling activities. The idea is to have time together to learn from each other...and time to explore the ship and the various ports of call along our route.



Leading up to the cruise, we hope that everyone who is traveling with us and participating in our activities will begin posting to the Red Engine Press blog at: www.redenginepressusa.com/blog. You can post about your book, a place, an interesting character, an adventure, what you hope to get out of the cruise, etc. The goal here is to get you comfortable posting regularly and to introduce you to each other and our various audiences. It's also to get readers interested in us and our upcoming adventure. In the months until we sail, I suggest posting something short...and include video or pictures to illustrate. When we are sailing, hopefully you'll be posting to the blog several times a day...even on shore days. The goal is to create audiences before we go and share the experiences with those audiences we have built in the months and weeks and days leading up to the trip.

Throughout the cruise—especially sea days, we will have a private meeting room where we can share tips on writing, genres, blogs, cover design, art, editing, illustration, photography and anything else that...pardon the expression...floats your boat. We are not going to charge a fee for any of that programming, but we do hope each of us will share resources, expertise, and ideas with the larger group. As folks decide to join us, we'll ask them if they would like to showcase their special talents or if there is something they'd

like to learn from their fellow creatives sailing with us.

Here is a link to the particular cruise so you can get an idea of what we'll be seeing and doing ...on and off the ship.

<https://www.princess.com/search-cruise/details/?voyageCode=E403>

And here's a quick video:

<https://youtu.be/aBWE0d7VJd4>

While we are sailing, I'll be encouraging everyone to post to the Red Engine Press Blog—either videos of our adventures, or pix that you've taken of the ship or the Canal or the various ports of call, or stories about food or culture or the Canal itself or any of the tours you might choose to take. And I'll be encouraging you to share all those blog posts to other social media sites as well. I hope that by then, everyone will be comfortable with blogging on our site. The goal of course is to build interest for what we are doing as a group and acquire new audiences for our books, photography and art. Along the way, we'll learn from each other and have fun. Also, at the end of the cruise, Red Engine Press will publish an Anthology of articles, poetry, short stories, photos and artwork.

If you'd like to join us, let me know and I will get you in touch with our Princess Representative, Kerri Anne Boyle. If you decide to go, you'll be working through

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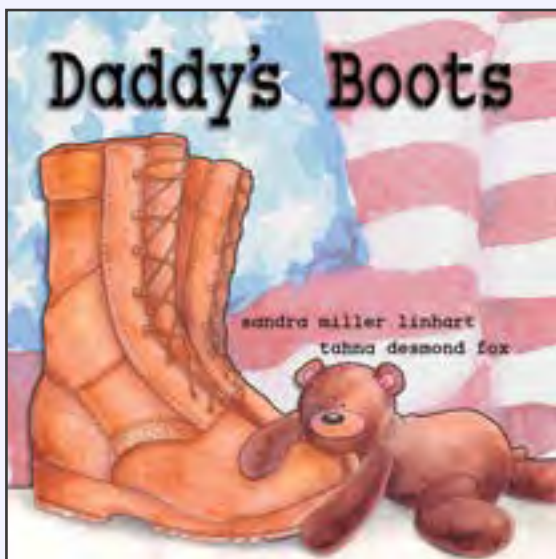
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her. Princess expects \$200 to hold a cabin for two. The total charges will depend on the kind of room you choose, of course. However, our rates will decline the more of us there are in the “group”. Kerri will also help us find rooms close to each other ...or not...depending on your preferences. Also, if you are traveling alone and would like to find a roommate, let me know and we’ll try to match you up with someone.

Just a note, my family and I will be traveling to Florida from Arkansas by train and back from LA by train as well. However, Princess has arrangements with airlines if that’s your preferred mode of travel. Kerri will help you with that too.

It’s still early of course, but if you do want to come please give me a heads up even if you don’t yet want to commit. If you are experienced cruisers, I’m sure you know how cruises work. If you are brand new and want to talk, just email me questions at joycekfaulkner@gmail.com. For example, someone already wanted to know if he will need a passport. And the answer is yes.

Looking forward to chatting with you all about the things you’d like to do. Or answering questions. The Panama Canal has been on my bucket list for at least fifty years. I’m excited to finally have it in sight.



Daddy's Boots by Sandra Miller Linhart

Genre(s): Children's books

Format(s): Hardback, soft cover

ISBN-13 : 978-1938505195

This award-winning deployment book for kids is a favorite of all major military branches in military books and best deployment books for children.

It's Boot's task to take Daddy where he's needed, but it's Daddy's job to explain why. In only 37 pages, the author provides a valuable tool for caregivers to explain to service members' children why their daddy leaves, what he does, and how he helps others while he's away. As it would be impossible to explain every job, rank, and branch specific name for every object and service member, the author succeeds in covering the essentials in a generic and loving way. Sometimes it means leaving little ones behind wondering why.





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A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Sandra Miller Linhart

I'VE BEEN A MEMBER OF MWSA since 2009. It's been an interesting ride. I've volunteered countless hours/days/months/years as a reviewer/judge for some tremendous works. I've volunteered at the "front desk" at conferences, given talks, and facilitated panels. I've made forever friends and met some of my favorite people at MWSA gatherings. I've found mentors and like-minded peers. I've seen characters come and go. I've had the privilege of working with some of the best (officers and writers) as editor of *Dispatches*. It's been a ride, for sure.

In these thirteen years I've read numerous books from our members. There are two exceptional books I want to call out by name, and I pray the authors will be okay with my assessments.

The first book I reviewed which really rattled my existence because of its brutal honesty about PTSD and the subtle underlying effects it can have on everyday life, years after a homecoming was *I'd Walk With My Friends If I Could Find Them*, by Jesse Goolsby.

At the time of his submission to MWSA, his book had gained little to no notoriety. I devoured it. I think this was the first book to which I gave the highest marks. Unfortunately, the other two reviewers

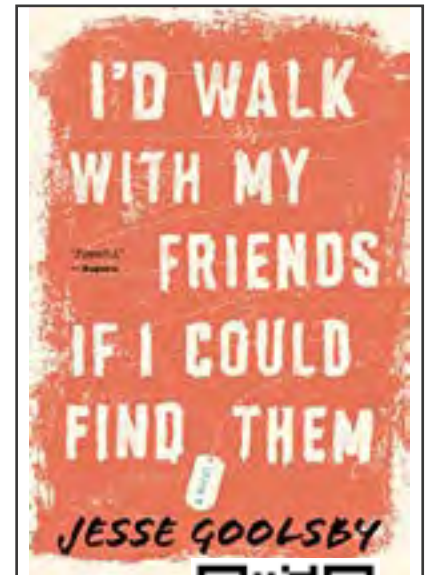
(apparently) didn't see the gem I thought was evident and panned it. The grammar, you see, wasn't "up to par" for a literary work in MWSA's coffers. Jesse received a bronze medal, which was nice ... I suppose. I do recall being disappointed in that.

"Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist." Pablo Picasso.

Jesse did just that. And fortunately others saw the beauty in his art.

From Amazon.com:

*Jesse Goolsby is an Air Force officer and the author of **Acceleration Hours** (University of Nevada Press) and **I'd Walk with My Friends If I Could Find Them** (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), winner of the Florida Book Award for Fiction and long-listed for the Flaherty-Duncan First Novel Prize. His fiction and essays have appeared widely, including *The Literary Review*, *EPOCH*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Narrative Magazine*, *Salon*, and *Pleiades*. He is the recipient of the Richard Bausch Short*



Story Prize, the John Gardner Memorial Award in Fiction, and fellowships from the Sewanee Writers' Conference and the Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences. His work has been listed as notable in both Best American Essays and Best American Short Stories, and selected for Best American Mystery Stories.

REVEALING CHARACTER STUDIES OF WAR-DAMAGED LIVES. VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Goolsby's debut novel may well stand as one of the best novels yet to come out of the war in Afghanistan, which seems a bit strange, since the war itself occupies a very small part of the narrative. Because character is king in this beautifully written work of fiction. Instead of a lengthy full-frontal look at the random violence of our continuing war (occupation?) in Afghanistan, we are given an intimate glimpse into the lives of three young men who were 'victimized' and deeply affected by it. ~ Timothy J. Bazzett

The second book I read (not as an MWSA reviewer but as a fellow author) and loved was Del Staecker's *TARD*.

The name might be off-putting to some of the more timid but I believe that's the point.

This is a tale of perseverance...well, let me share what others had to say:

A MAGICAL STORY OF REDEMPTION AND HOPE

*Del Staecker's **TARD** is a wonderful story of how a person can overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles to fully realize his/her life's potential. Set in*



Lancaster County, PA, the story is steeped in Amish and Mennonite traditions as well as the "mean streets" of Lancaster city itself. Through the story, one learns the heartache and hardships of being different, and how that difference can become an asset in one's life. The magical nature of the title character's relationship with his best friend from childhood is at the crux of the story, and conveys the power of redemption and hope in our lives. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The story is deceptively deep and one that can be read over and over to full understand its nuances. Loved it! ~ Lucy Robbins

A GREAT AND ENGAGING READ THAT NEVER LETS UP!

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

Continued on page 32

Continued from page 31

philosophical, challenging the reader to look for the miraculous right here on earth, and often where you'd least expect to find it. ~ Milton Hoyer

I was discouraged and saddened to see *TARD* had been removed from the award's program/process. If one reads the story and merely comes away with a disdain for its "sexual" content, I would question their capacity to understand its depth.

I truly don't understand the world today, with its fear-mongering, censorship, and changing rules.

As writers we're tasked with handling the hard subjects, giving voice to the unheard, and shining a light on injustices. We aren't supposed to back down from the inconveniences of true life, of unpleasant

crime, of pain and misery. Just because the truth offends someone, shouldn't make it taboo to expose it. Truth should never be off limits.

Our military members have more than likely experienced far worse than reading a slight—a name-calling slur or a hint of a sexual crime. Yes. It's offensive, and if the title made you cringe, it ought to have. That's the point.

But the magic between the covers that some refused to entertain, was another gem they are lesser for not having read.

All my life I've been told to not judge a book by its cover. I'm blessed to also not judge a book by its unconventionality—but instead embrace it. I've been rewarded for that. I'm eternally grateful for honest, brave authors who've changed my perception of my world.



MWSA NEWS BLAST

Bob Doerr

2023 Anthology Update

1. We will be opening our submission window on October 1, 2022. I know we sent out guidelines in our last "blast," but bear with me as I repeat many of them. We intend on titling this anthology "Snapshots." Our submission window will run to the end of February 2023, unless we receive so many submissions we need to close earlier.

A. Submissions should be sent as an email attachment and emailed to anthology@mwsa.co and submitted by an active member.

B. Submissions must be limited to less than 3000 words.

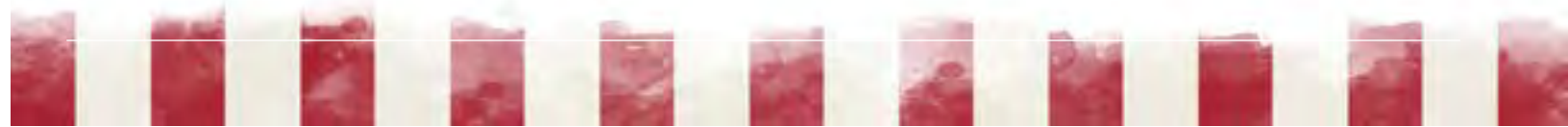
C. Submissions can be short stories, articles, essays, poetry, song lyrics, art work, etc., as long as they have a military related theme.

D. Please keep in mind we have several younger family members that enjoy reading the anthology so try to keep the profanity down.

E. Pictures/drawings can be included. In fact, we need everyone who submits something for inclusion in the anthology to include a short 150 word bio and a photo of themself.

F. Submissions need to be ready for publication. You are responsible for the editing of your submission.

2. All submissions have to be related in some way to the military and military life. In other words, we want this anthology to be as inclusive as possible with regards to the military experience, ranging from that of what veterans themselves experienced to experiences of veteran family members, and to civilian outsiders who have their perspective. All submissions must be respectful of all the military branches and of the people who served.



THE LITTLE BOOK THAT COULD

Nancy Panko

IN THE SUMMER OF 2020, my writer's group, NC Scribes, began discussing putting together a collection of our personal experiences of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. We strove to be published in time for the twentieth anniversary of that fateful day.

September 11, 2001, is one of those "Where were you when you heard?" days. Seventeen authors labored over true stories, essays, and poems that reflected a wide variety of emotions, insights, and perspectives. We had hopes this little book would inform subsequent generations of the impact that event had on every day Americans.

Someone suggested we donate all online proceeds to a charity. We had no idea what our sales would be or if we'd make any money to donate. However, we chose a local group, Military Missions in Action (MMIA) to be the beneficiary of any profit.

<https://www.militarymissionsinaction.org/our-story>

MMIA was started by one dynamic man, Mike Dorman. Retired from the United States Coast Guard after twenty years of service, Mike thought about his fellow veterans injured while serving their country. He was aware of the high number

of vets with disabilities who needed to have their homes modified for them to independently live. Putting his thoughts into action, Mike formed Military Missions in Action in January 2008.

"I wanted to honor our fallen heroes and support our men and women currently serving in the armed forces," said Mike. "It doesn't matter whether they are young or old, rich or poor; it's our duty and responsibility to support those who sacrificed so much for our freedom."



In February of 2013, Mike Dorman received the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Barack Obama at the White House in Washington, DC. It was through Mike's work with an army of volunteers for Military Missions in Action that he was nominated.

I met Mike at one of my book signings in 2017. He picked up my book, *Guiding Missal*, gazed at the tattered American flag on the cover, and turned to me.

“Are you free around Veteran’s Day to do an event with me?”

I said, “Yes!”

That was the first of many Annual Golf Tournaments I did with and for Mike Dorman to benefit MMIA as their biggest fundraiser of the year.

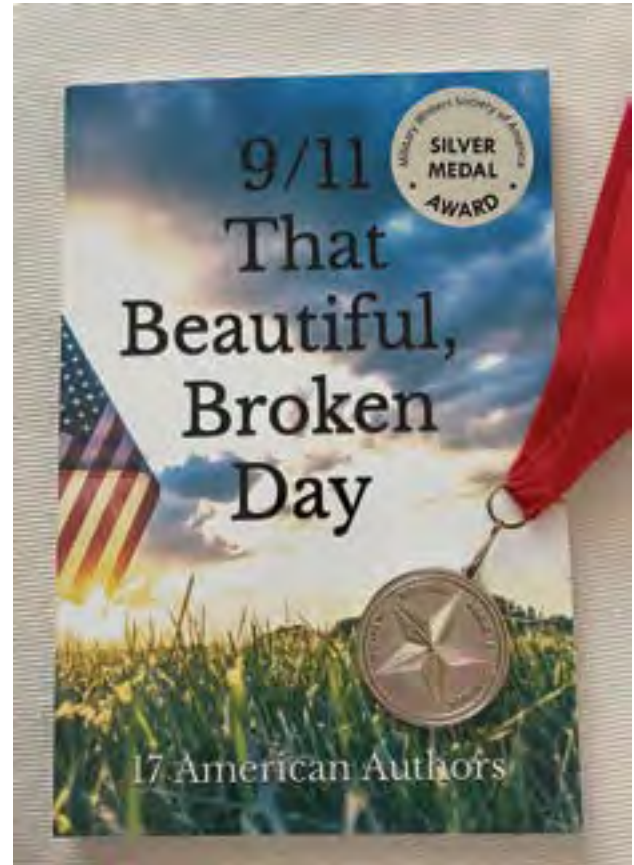
When NC Scribes embarked on the 9/11 anthology, I spoke to Mike about our plans to donate all online proceeds to MMIA. He became our biggest cheerleader and accepted three checks from us before he got sick. Unfortunately, Mike did not live to see the success of our little book.

Mike was taken from us last year in December. He leaves behind a legacy at MMIA with big shoes to fill.

In addition to his beautiful family, Mike is mourned and missed by thousands who worked with him and tens of thousands who benefited from his efforts to make their lives better.

On August 27, 2022, at the National Convention of the Military Writers Society of America, the NC Scribes’ book, *9/11 That Beautiful, Broken Day* won a silver medal in the anthology category. It was an emotional moment for me to represent NC Scribes in accepting this award, and I knew Mike Dorman was looking down

upon the festivities, beaming with pride. He told me he believed this little book could do big things.



AMBASSADORS SUPPORTING MWSA'S MISSION

Valerie Ormond

THE MWSA AMBASSADOR PROGRAM OFFICIALLY launched in 2019 with a mission to provide qualified instructors to reach veterans, military, and families throughout the United States and assist them in sharing their important stories through positive writing workshops at no cost to attendees. These regional workshops were envisioned as offshoots of the successful programs MWSA had run over previous years in conjunction with MWSA annual conferences.

Over the years, the Ambassador program morphed into Ambassadors supporting MWSA's mission of helping tell stories in a number of creative ways. Limitations of the pandemic may have limited our members' ability to support in-person workshops, but it didn't limit their outreach to both new and experienced storytellers. The program grew from one Ambassador in 2019 to nine in 2022 reaching coast to coast. Following are highlights of our Ambassadors activities (alphabetically) since the last update in *MWSA Dispatches*.

TOM BEARD. Tom came up with the idea of a regional Ambassador program at the MWSA 2018 Annual Conference in Charleston. Putting his money where his mouth is, he stepped up and volunteered

to be the first Ambassador, helping us navigate our way through setting up the program for others to follow. He established a training outline and proposal two years ago for the local VA community, meeting their approval, and then COVID happened, and the facility closed down to activities. Tom continues to judge books for MWSA and has most recently engaged with an MWSA member to share his extensive U.S. Coast Guard resources and expertise to assist her with her work in progress.

RUTH CROCKER. In Ruth's words:

My volunteer work over the past year has involved both survivors and veterans. I edit newsletters for two survivor groups, the National Newsletter of the Gold Star Wives of America, and West Point Wives of Deceased Classmates. In both newsletters I've taken the opportunity to describe the activities of MWSA.

I provided a class on nonfiction writing for the MWSA Zoom series orchestrated by Jack London, and three presentations on the craft of memoir writing in my local area. I also provide free consultations, mentoring and editing for veterans and survivors who are interested in publishing book length works.

My small, independent publishing company, Elm Grove Press, ultimately

*published one of these projects in 2021, **Combat and Campus: Writing Through War**, and the author has become a member of MWSA and was scheduled to teach a module on poetry during the WYS portion of the conference.*

I frequently receive emails and letters from veterans and survivors who have questions about writing and publishing and always take the opportunity to describe the benefits of membership in MWSA.

BOB DOERR. Bob has been a champion for the Ambassadors since the program's inception including securing a line item in the budget to fund local travel to and from programs and encouraging others to become engaged. Bob regularly mentors writers, assisted with the MWSA Zoom writing programs over the past two years, and filled in as presenter at the last minute for the 2022 *Write Your Story Workshop* at the VA Medical Center in New Orleans. Thank you, Bob!

STEVE DOHERTY. Steve provided the following:

I am working with a company that supports veterans and honors their service by creating non-fungible tokens or NFTs that can be bought and sold on our NFT website. Ninety percent of the profit from the sale of an NFT goes to provide income to the veteran or his family that submitted the photograph and service information. And a five percent residual is paid to the veteran on each resale.

The other option a veteran has is to donate the revenue to support the nonprofit corporations that partner with us. I believe this would be an opportunity for veterans associated with or referred by the MWSA to our veterans NFT project to donate the revenues to your nonprofit organization.

RAUL HERRERA. Raul, one of our 2022 additions to the Ambassador program and is quite active in the Houston area with a number of Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) including the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. Raul is looking to join forces with anyone in his area to conduct presentations together. He may be reached at raul@skunkalpha.com. Here is his report on activities:

I volunteered to be a MWSA Ambassador for the Houston area with the idea of 'paying it forward.'

My book journey has taken four decades. Along the way I had the benefit of being mentored by many Houston area writers / authors. As a member of the Houston Writers Guild, I moderated a critique group for many years. Unfortunately, COVID 19 sank that ship. A positive result of that crisis was that I had abundant free time to dedicate to finishing the book, which is tentatively scheduled for release early 2023.

As part of my pre-launch PR plan, I have availed myself to civic and veteran organizations. Via the aid of a Power Point

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presentation, I share the Swift Boat/SKUNK ALPHA story. At every occasion and in addition to talking about my forthcoming book, I've taken the opportunity to share with the attendees what MWSA is all about. With your [Valerie's] assistance, I hand out a MWSA Write Your Story flyer. I solicit interest for this free program to active military, reserve, and veterans. A few of the organizations I've passed out MWSA flyers are: Rotary Club of Houston Veterans; Like-Minded Community; Warriors-Minded Community; Veterans Night at MKT Distillery; American Legion Post 164; and VFW 9182, Katy, Tx.

One major in-road I've established is with VFW Post 8790, Houston, Texas. RG Ruelas, Post Commander, has agreed to host the Write Your Story Seminar at their location. We've got a place....now we need attendees.

I continue to gather names and email addresses of those interested in MWSA and in a future MWSA Write Your Story Workshop. The organizations I mentioned above have been via networking. I have yet to take aggressive solicitation via in-person visits and, or via messages in their newsletters or posted flyers sent to the vast number of veteran organization around the Houston Metroplex. To that end, I'm gathering contact information for all these groups, noting when their meetings are held and seek invitation to present MWSA to the veterans.

Another area I am looking into right now is with the VA Public Affairs Office in Houston. I met Jason Kucera at the Rotary Club of Houston Veterans meeting I presented my Swift Boat Story and where I pitched the MWSA Write Your Story program. Jason was thrilled to learn about this program and agreed to help spread the word.

Another plus I have going my way when considering the seminar is that I have a number of Houston writers, authors, indie publishers, and PR consultants that, if I twisted their arm just right, I'm certain they'd offer their expertise and conduct these sessions.

Post seminar, I would like to establish a MWSA Writers Group. It's primary mission would be to encourage writers to continue their story by having weekly critique groups. Perhaps once a month we could have a guest speaker and then have a short critique session. Plans are fluid."

Jack London. First, I would like to give credit to Jack for starting the veterans Write Your Story program back in 2015 and growing it to what it is today. It is the basis for the Ambassador program, and we hope to continue to reach more people through these efforts. Everything needs a beginning. Now, from Jack's input to me:

During the past two years, since the pandemic, I have worked on -

1. Zoom classes for members. I have organized classes for MWSA members,

Military Writers Society of America Ambassadors, September 2022



MWSA Ambassadors represent regional support coast to coast; three new ambassadors have joined the ranks (in green) since the last update in MWSA Dispatches. (Image courtesy of Valerie Ormond)

beginning with the discovery that few members knew back then how to use Zoom, so I began with composing a fundamentals of Zoom PPS. I recruited speakers, such as you, Dane, to give classes, then worked with each speaker to compose a presentation to membership, to do dress rehearsals on Zoom, to provide critique and feedback on proposed outlines and presentations, and then to conduct the Zoom classes themselves. We did twelve of these with an average outreach of 25-30 students per class. As a direct result, I can identify about a half-dozen new MWSA members who joined after attending a Zoom as a guest or being invited by someone who did.

2. Zoom workshops. These are similar

but more intense and more work for the audience. I recruited three others plus myself to give 1-2 hour workshops on writing skills. As with the classes, I recruited the presenters, worked with them to refine the topic and the presentation, and dress rehearsed each program at least once. In addition, I helped develop a bibliography of readings that were germane to each workshop. Then I conducted the workshop. They averaged 20-25 participants and, as with the classes, was pleased to have a few writers join MWSA.

3. From the Zoom classes and workshops I recruited new presenters, some of whom I hope(d) would present at the WRITE YOUR

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STORY program in New Orleans and go on to take leadership in teaching classes in the future.

4. It would be absolutely wrong to not mention that Bob Doerr helped me on all of these, particularly in doing dress rehearsals and in helping administer during the Zooms themselves.

5. And, last, I composed a memo for Ambassadors and for MWSA on the fundamentals of producing a WYS program, the nature of the topics, the dos' and don't, that sort of thing."

VAL ORMOND. I manage the MWSA Ambassadors program and speak to new interested members, provide Ambassadors Kit materials, hold the training discussions, answer questions, and generate approval letters for those who would like to become Ambassadors. I assisted with the Write Your Story Workshop in New Orleans this year including marketing the event, presenting, supporting logistically, and following up with attendees. I presented an update on the Ambassadors program at the Annual Membership meeting at the conference.

Because my business name, VETERAN WRITING SERVICES, is highly searchable, I hear from veterans and military people regularly requesting writing advice. I provide writing consultations and always recommend joining MWSA because I do believe we have one of the most supportive

groups and many resources to help others. I also worked with a fellow member on an exciting new project.

TERESE SCHLACTER. Terese is one of our 2021 additions to the Ambassador program and lives in the great, but small, state of Maryland. We decided to collaborate on a project during last year's MWSA virtual conference. Terese brings a script and documentary writing dimension to our team which is something our workshop surveys have said is of interest to them. Terese has mentored veterans—helping them with their writing—and worked with a great deal of military, veterans, and families, as a producer for the former Pentagon Channel. She also authored the book, *RISE; A Warrior's Journey to Purpose and Peace*, the story of Col. Greg Gadson's serious war wounds and his inspirational journey forward. The book releases in the fall of 2023.

Terese spearheaded an effort to include a literary program at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, VA. Almost one year in the works, this program will launch in January 2023 as a six-session Write Your Story Workshop culminating with a public reading and a potential anthology of the written works developed during the program. Terese and I will present this program, and we look forward to sharing more about it in the future!

DANE ZELLER. Dane was brave enough to be the first presenter at the MWSA Zoom

presentations. Dane's specialty is humor, and we can all use more of that. He has stepped up to assist in future MWSA WRITE YOUR STORY workshops.

The MWSA's Veterans Outreach page at:

www.mwsadispatches/veterans-outreach/#programs.com provides a program description and general workshop

guidelines. I hope this update has given readers thoughts on ways that we can all help others tell their stories. For those interested in being an MWSA Ambassador or joining another Ambassador's regional team, please contact MWSA Chair of the Outreach Committee, Valerie Ormond, at outreach@mwsa.co.



Eddie Doherty, 1st Lieutenant, U.S. Army Air Corps

Eddie Doherty was B-24 Bomber Pilot with the 15th Air Force. He was assigned to the 451 Bomb Group, and 727th Bombardment Squadron, at Amendola / Castellucio, Italy. He flew 24 combat missions, was shot down four times, but repatriated each time.

Awards: Distinguished Flying Cross, Silver Star, Air Medal, European Theater Ribbon with five Battle Stars, European African Middle Eastern Service Medal, World War Two Victory Medal, and six Bronze Stars.

MWSA Ambassador Steve Doherty provided an example of a non-fungible token (NFT) that will be sold on the project's website he is working with when they launch in November. (Image courtesy of Steve Doherty)

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Memor/ Biography

A Hoot in Hell's Island

Col. Kirk Gibson Warner (USA, Ret.) and Robert D. Gibson

A Rock in the Clouds: A Life Revisited

Joseph R. Tedeschi

At First Light: A True World War II Story of a Hero, His Bravery, and an Amazing Horse

Walt Larimore and Mike Yorkey

Combat and Campus: Writing Through War

Annette Langlois Grunseth and Sgt. Peter R. Langlois

Combat Engineer

John Racoosin

Dead Men Flying, A Remembrance

Mike "Mule" Mullane

Ever Vigilant, Tales of the Vietnam War

Michael J. Hebert

Fighting Viet Cong in the Rung Sat

Bob Worthington

From Michigan to Mekong

James B. Hubbard, Jr.

Honor Through Sacrifice

Robert E. Lofthouse

Return to Saigon

Larry Duthie

Strike Hard and Expect No Mercy

Galen D. Peterson

Vietnam Saga; Exploits of a Combat Helicopter Pilot

Stan Corvin, Jr.

Warfighter

Colonel Jesse L. Johnson and Alex Holstein

Mystery/ Thriller

Monroe Doctrine - Volume One

James Rosone

Sapphire Pavilion



David E. Grogan

Is Your Dad a Pirate?



Tara McClary Reeves

The Carnevale Conspiracy



Joseph Badal

Poetry Book

The Chameleon



Ron McManus

Blue Rhapsodies: Poems of a Navy Life



Nancy Arbuthnot

The Hidden Key



David E. Grogan

Young Adult

The Pilate Scroll



M.B. Lewis

Believing In Horses Out West



Valerie Ormond

Touch the Dead



Elle Thornton

Uprooted: A Modern Odyssey



Allen Wittenborn

Picture Book

Blueberry Moose



Nancy Panko

*Open a book...
expand your world*



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

