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SUMMER 2022



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MWSA 2022
CONFERENCE

FROM THE EDITOR

Sandra Miller Linhart

SUMMER IS FINALLY HERE.

We have much to look forward to in the following months. Book Awards. Officer Elections. Fall Conference. It'll be nice to get together again.

Thank you all for submitting to *Dispatches* magazine. I am grateful for your participation and input. This magazine would be nothing without you. So, again, "Thank You!"

Being this magazine's editor has been a pleasurable and interesting experience—piecing together your images, thoughts, poems, interviews, and stories. All are unique and as individual as you. Being an MWSA member has been an educational and rewarding adventure as well—to be privy to your histories and your futures.

As I transferred the book awards list Bob sent me, I marveled at how many stories, raw emotions, and lifetimes are preserved for future generations. I'm quite sure history will not be lost as so many of you are finally able to get your stories on paper. I am quite proud of you all.

Good luck to every one of the finalists, and a big shout-out to those of you not selected in the final round—it takes courage to submit your heart's work.

I applaud that courage.

DISPATCHES REGULARS

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FEATURE WRITER ~ GARY ZELINSKI

FEATURE WRITER ~ DENNIS MAULSBY

FEATURE WRITER ~ ROBERT LOFTHOUSE

FEATURE WRITER ~ JORGE TORRENTE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bob Doerr

I HOPE THIS HOT SUMMER weather is finding you in good health and fine spirits.

Another book review/awards cycle has ended and once again our reviewers analyzed nearly eighty books. A list of all the finalists can be found in this newsletter (pg 22), and I want to congratulate all of them. Becoming a finalist is a difficult thing to accomplish. I also want to thank all the reviewers who helped us make it through this season.

In the very near future, we will be voting to select MWSA's officers and Board members for the 2023&24 cycle. When you receive the notice to cast your votes, please do so. The more we participate in such things as elections, the more legitimacy the process has.

We intend to publish another anthology in 2023, and everyone will have the opportunity to submit. We received a lot of nice reviews for our 2021 anthology and based on popular demand will be trying to publish one every two years, if not more often.

Keep writing! – Bob Doerr



WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

Fiction by Dennis Maulsby

Uses of the Bayonet. In close combat, when friend and foe are too closely intermingled to permit the use of bullets or grenades, the bayonet is the primary weapon of the infantry soldier.

FM 23-25 War Department Basic Field Manual (1943)

*Ft. Benning bayonet instructor (1967):
“Fool! Never use a bayonet if you have a bullet!”*

KEN SAT ON THE PORCH listening to the crickets’ castanet. Down the street, someone raced a motorcycle engine making it pop and crack. The sounds and the cool breeze took him back into a reoccurring dream.

* * *

The night hours had been unsurpassed in blood and terror, Ken thought. The Chinese had sent two screaming, trumpet-blowing, human-wave attacks against their position. The second one had knocked out his machine guns. The enemy had managed to invade the trenches.

Fighting degenerated into hand-to-hand with rifle butts, knives, fists, and teeth—determining who lived and died. In the mayhem, the last radio was shot up, so no artillery could be called in and no calls for help. He had sent runners to battalion headquarters, but none had returned.



The battle reduced two full-strength companies to thirty survivors and this remnant down to one last load apiece for rifles and carbines. There was no water and no food, and medical supplies were nonexistent. He collected the survivors and shortened their lines into a smaller portion of the defenses. They couldn’t be everywhere.

At least it was cool. There had been no time to bury the dead. The bacteria in battle-butchered human meat had not started to decay and produce nose-choking odors. Bodies—whole, in halves, and in bits and pieces—lay scattered from the enemy’s start line all the way up the slope to the lip of the trench line. They were piled somewhat higher there—the ones killed

in the American positions tossed out front. It hadn't rained for days, but the first rays of the sun reflected off puddles of glistening red mud.

A bit of trivia popped up from his subconscious. In the Viking days, they had called such a sad place "a crows' feast." Ken jumped as his sergeant approached.

"Ken, you know what this means?"

Use of his first name, without a 'sir'—the hopelessness of the situation trumped the formality of rank. Ken and his remaining sergeant and friend connected on a strictly human level for the last time.

He responded, "Bill, it's been a short but interesting run. I'm glad to spend the last of it with you."

First sergeant Bill wiped his binocular lenses with a rag of olive-drab t-shirt and raised them to his eyes.

"They've got to be close to breaking. We've thrown them back twice with huge losses. If we still had artillery..."

Ken offered Bill a crumpled C-ration packet of *Lucky Strike* cigarettes and took a turn with the binoculars. "Well, at least we'll have daylight—dawn in five minutes. They'll be on us soon. I can see their officers getting them lined up. Oops! The tall fellow with the red star on his cap just shot a dissenter." Ken began to get excited. "Bill, the average Joe down there doesn't want to continue. They have to be just as afraid, dog-tired,



and short of ammo as we are. It's down to a question of will. Whichever side has the guts to throw one more punch wins."

A bleak smile formed on the sergeant's lips. He straightened and slipped back into Army discipline.

"What's the plan, sir?"

"First step: Who are the best shots we have left? During the Chinese attack, I want them to knock off officers, commissars, and anyone who tries to lead. Give them all the remaining ammo. Second step: at the right moment, we fix bayonets and charge. The sunrise will be in their eyes. They won't be able to tell how many we are or if we have been reinforced."

"It's scary as hell, but it just might work, sir. Humans fear naked steel more than anything." A crazy smile lit up his dirty bristle-whiskered face. "Fuck it! At the

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least, we go down as the last bayonet charge in the history of the U.S. Army.”

“Roust the men, first sergeant. Tell them the plan.”

Ken watched as the enemy kicked off the attack. Trumpets blew, and men shouted. A horde of Chinese soldiers dodged around shell holes and scabbled over windrows of bodies. Many raised hands as a fully exposed sun bored into their eyes.

Ken worked up some saliva, swallowed, and shouted, “Fix—bayonets!”

The snick of blades being locked on rifle barrels followed the *swizk* of knives coming out of sheathes.

“Sharpshooters, now!”

The bang of ten M-1 Garand’s followed in staccato concert. Ken watched the tall commissar’s head snap back. Several others fell. The mass of Chinese failed to notice they were leaderless and continued their ragged advance. Ken unholstered his GI .45 and cocked the hammer.

His sergeant nudged him and handed him a naked bayonet.

“For your left hand, sir.”

“You come last. Make sure the men all follow me.” Ken shouted, “Charge!” And blew his whistle.

Thirty American warriors went up and over, shouting, screaming, and making

rebel yells. The sun glinted off bayonet points.

The Americans cut like an arrowhead into the first row of the enemy, bayoneting and butt-stroking. Bodies tumbled, knocking Chinese soldiers in the following ranks off their feet.

Ken’s .45 silenced an enemy officer.

Exhausted from three uphill runs in blood and chaos, Chinese soldiers slowed. A few turned to run. The few became many. The enemy, fragile after their last disastrous charges, broke and ran.

Ken dropped to his knees and shook.

* * *

Historical note: French, Turkish, and American troops made bayonet charges in Korea. On February 7, 1951, American Captain Lewis Millet led bayonet charges up Hill 180 near Pyeongtaek, South Korea, destroying enemy positions and winning the Medal of Honor.



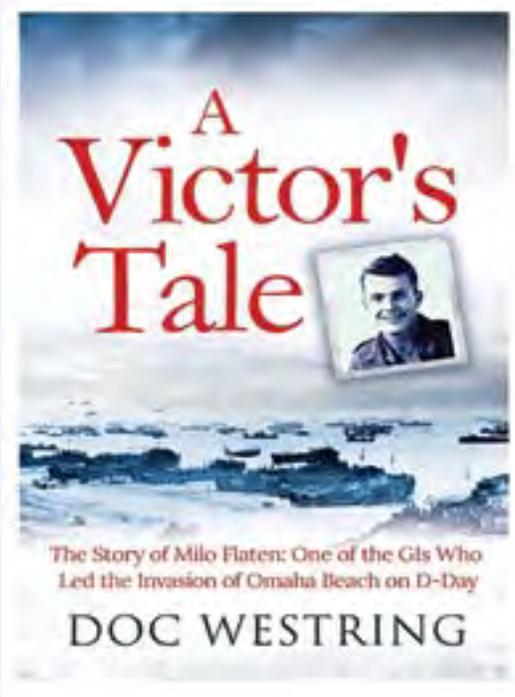
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dispatches@mwsa.co



A Victor's Tale by Doc Westring

Genre(s): Biography; History

Format(s): Kindle; Paperback

ISBN-13 : 979-8986367101



Follow Milo's path as he survived the invasion carnage, and continued to fight through Europe in some of the bitterest, bloodiest battles of World War II. After becoming a highly decorated and respected senior sergeant, he was gravely wounded in November 1944. He completely recovered, rejoined his division, and was in combat until Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945.

Walk with Milo and experience the insanity and terrible heartbreak that is war—and the relief, if not exuberance, that comes with victory and peace.

APOLLO 1

Gary Zelinski



The crew of Apollo 1: Gus Grissom, Ed White, and Roger Chaffee

What follows is the story of three brave servicemembers who died on what Abraham Lincoln called the “Altar of Freedom.” Gus, Ed, and Roger’s altar was 180 feet up, atop a Saturn 1 rocket in their Apollo 1 Command Module Capsule. The year was 1967.

IT WAS A ROUTINE TEST.

It was just like the thousands of other tests they had conducted. For this one, the command module and its three-man crew sat atop an unfueled Saturn rocket on Complex 34 at the Kennedy Space Center. It was late January, and their scheduled ride into space was less than a month away.

Command Pilot Virgil Ivan (Gus) Grissom was one of the seven in the first group of astronauts, the original ‘Mercury 7.’ His suborbital flight in 1961 made him

America’s second man in space. Upon landing in the ocean, the hatch to his Mercury capsule prematurely opened. He almost drowned, and his capsule sank. In 1965, Grissom went on to pilot the first manned Gemini mission. His Gemini 3 spacecraft was aptly named the ‘Molly Brown,’ named after the Broadway musical *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. Apollo 1 would be his third trip into space.



Mercury Astronaut Gus Grissom

Like command pilot Grissom, Apollo 1’s senior pilot, Ed White was a veteran of space flight. A member of the second group, ‘the Next Nine,’ Edward Higgins White II flew on Gemini 4 and was the first American to walk in space. White was so excited to be outside his Gemini capsule and walking in space that they had a hard time getting him to come back in.



Ed White. "I'm coming back in... and it's the saddest moment of my life."

Deeply religious, Ed White carried a small gold cross, a Saint Christopher's medal, and a Star of David into space. Having grown up as an Army brat, Ed moved a lot as a teenager. But, because of his family's frequent reassignments, he didn't have enough time in any one Congressional District to secure the endorsement needed for admission to West Point. So, as a young high school student, Ed White traveled to Washington D.C. and knocked on several representatives' doors until he convinced Congressman Ross Rizley from Oklahoma to give him one, thus securing his place at the Military Academy.

The third member of the Apollo 1 crew, LCDR Roger Chaffee had yet to venture into space. He was in NASA's third group of astronauts and a seasoned pilot and test pilot. Roger Bruce Chaffee graduated from Purdue University and attended the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio. After graduating from

Purdue, Chaffee was commissioned as an ensign in the United States Navy.



Roger Chaffee and his wife Martha with their children, Stephen, and Sheryl

In October 1962, Roger Chaffee was awarded an Air Medal for his actions flying reconnaissance missions during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Had he launched a month later as planned, he would have been the youngest person in space. A record he would have held for over fifty years.

Growing up, all three astronauts of Apollo 1 were Boy Scouts. Chaffee earned Eagle Scout. All three astronauts married their high school or college sweethearts. They excelled in math and science and were standouts in sports. Ed White missed qualifying for the 400-meter hurdles on the 1952 US Olympic team by less than half a second. In 1945, Gus Grissom enlisted in the Army Air Corps while still in high school. After West Point, Ed White was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the US Air Force and went on to pilot

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training. All three pursued advanced degrees and test pilot school to increase their chances of joining the astronaut program.



Circa 1967: Rocket Boys: Gary Hilton, me, and Brother Lowell

Ed White, Gus Grissom, and Roger Chaffee were born to be astronauts. As a five-year-old child, I watched Air Force Captain Gus Grissom become the second American in space. As a nine-year-old boy, I taped two lunch thermoses together and fixed a yardstick to the top. Now I had a hand maneuvering unit as good as Captain Ed White's when he became the first American to walk in space. Add an old football helmet and a barely used baseball glove, and I was ready for my own spacewalk. Standing on the curb, balanced on one foot, I gave a small hop, and I was free

from the capsule. Hissing noises were optional.

When you lost your baseball glove, and you did, you could blame it on Captain Jim McDivitt, your crew-mate, and the command pilot of Gemini 4. McDivitt lost an extra glove when they opened the hatch for the spacewalk. Who needs an extra glove anyway? Playing right field in Little League means having a glove is more for the show. Even the best players couldn't hit the ball into the outfield, let alone right field. Might as well be a space glove. I remember that as well.

But then I don't. I don't remember much after 1967 when I turned eleven. At least for a few years after anyway. Dreams were on hold because of the fire. Apollo was on hold. Ed White, Gus Grissom, and Roger Chaffee were dead.

It was a routine test.



It was supposed to be safe. The Saturn wasn't fueled. The three astronauts were strapped into their seats aboard their Apollo command module. The hatch was locked from the outside, and then they

started down the checklist. There was always a checklist. Pilots, test pilots, and astronauts have plenty of checklists. But the fire wasn't on the list. It started with a voltage surge and then an electrical short. The pure oxygen and positive pressure in the capsule fed the flames. By the time the ground crew could open the hatch, all three men were dead. Apollo 1 was gone, and the Apollo program was on hold. Also on hold were the dreams of every young boy in America.

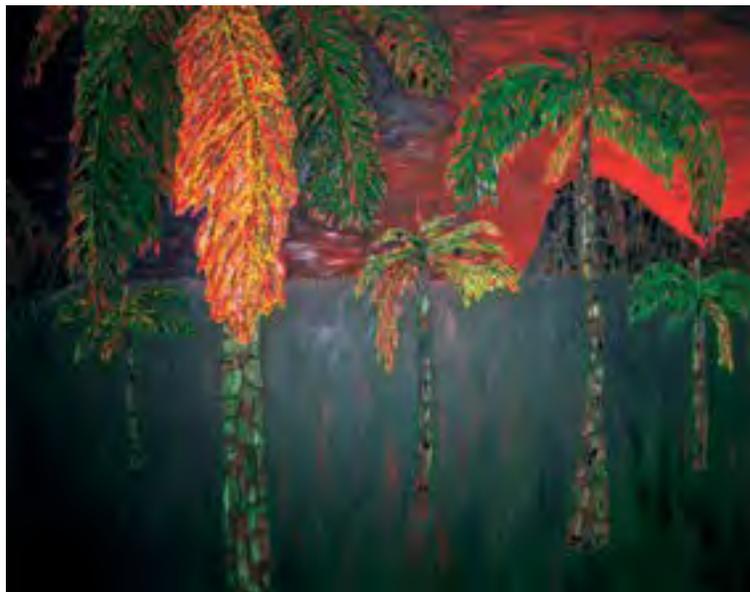
United States Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Edward White is buried at his alma mater in West Point. An Air Force Officer buried along the *Long Gray Line*. USAF Lieutenant Colonel Virgil (Gus) Grissom and US Navy Lieutenant Commander Roger Chaffee are buried next to each other at Arlington National

Cemetery. To visit their graves is a little over a mile walk from the visitors' center. Go past the Memorial Amphitheater and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The astronauts are buried in Section 23.

Astronauts and service members Lt. Col. Gus Grissom, Lt. Col. Ed White, and LCDR Roger Chaffee lost their lives in service to our country.



***UPROOTED* by Jorge Torrente**



MEET BETSY BEARD

Bob Doerr

IN MY FOURTH ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTING MWSA All Stars, I would like to introduce everyone to Betsy Beard. Betsy's been a member of MWSA for over a decade, and has been working behind the scenes ever since joining, making MWSA a better organization.

She has served on our Board of Directors, helped write our current by-laws, edited several of our anthologies and volunteered to review books for MWSA. She has helped plan and participated in past conferences.

Even more noteworthy, for the last few years she has managed both our Membership Program and the Book Review/Awards Program. Both of these are key to MWSA's successful operation.

Additionally, both of these are very time consuming. The fact that Betsy continues to carry this load is most admirable and very much appreciated.

She is a past President's Award recipient, and years ago the Board awarded her Lifetime Membership for all her (then) past contributions to MWSA.

If you see her at this year's conference in New Orleans, be sure to say hello and

thank her for her dedication to MWSA. She is indeed an MWSA All Star.

Betsy is a Gold Star parent.





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A Conversation with MWSA Member

JOSEPH R. TEDESCHI

Interview date: 31 March 2022

JOE TEDESCHI'S FIRST BOOK RECOUNTS how his 1966 combat tour in Vietnam was cut short by a violent airplane crash, chronicles this near-death experience, then leads to reflecting for fifty-five years on the ultimate question, "Why am I (still) here?"

Joe Tedeschi began his college education at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, before initiating his army career at West Point, graduating in 1957. Eventually earning his army-sponsored Master of Science degree in physics from Iowa State University (1963), he went on to fill army assignments in nuclear, biological, and chemical operations and materiel acquisition.

Upon retiring from military service as a regular army colonel, he worked fourteen years in the defense industry developing a counter-battery radar for three European nations. He then transitioned to a higher calling as he entered the deaconate program in his Catholic Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey, where he served for eighteen years, retiring in 2020.

MWSA: How long have you been associated with MWSA?

TEDESCHI: I recently joined MWSA in February 2022.



MWSA: What was your inspiration for your book *A Rock in the Clouds*?

TEDESCHI: My answer is best expressed in the beginning of my book. After establishing the fact that I was a survivor of a horrific airplane crash in Vietnam, I go on to explain my purpose and inspiration for writing this book.

MWSA: How long did it take you to write this book?

TEDESCHI: It all began in 1987, twenty-one years after the airplane crash when I wrote my first account of the crash as a vignette of my Vietnam experience to leave to my grandkids. My initial attempts were basically just descriptive of the

crash and the ensuing rescue based on the limited sources and materials available to me when I first put pen to paper. Since I was medevaced right after the crash in 1966, I knew very little about the details of the crash or the other people involved. Over time, I was given opportunities to speak and write about the crash. Those opportunities jogged my memory and the written account I started began to blossom into a more formal memoir. As I gathered information, the memoir evolved into much more than just a description of an airplane crash. It was becoming a very human story of the other people involved in the crash, and I realized I had a story to tell. The Covid lock-downs in 2020-21 gave me just the right opportunity to pull it all together and write my book.

MWSA: What type of reader audience do you seek?

TEDESCHI: Hopefully my book will appeal to a faith-based audience as well as all Vietnam era veterans and their families. Also, I'm hoping my book will be of interest to a wide realm of service academy graduates and their families as well.

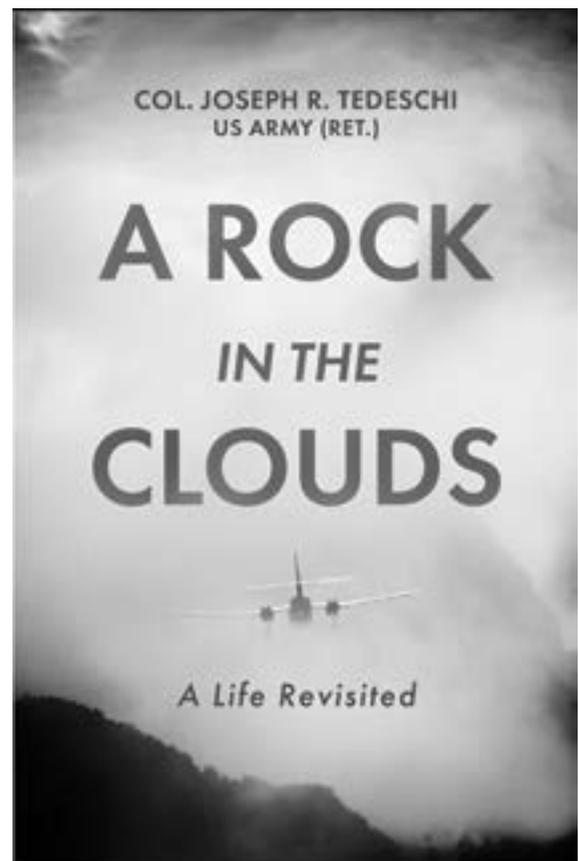
MWSA: What goals did you have in mind when you wrote this book?

TEDESCHI: The story of surviving an airplane crash has potential to hold the interest of an audience of readers curious about what it's like to live through such an experience and survive. But I must

admit to a deeper goal I had in mind when I wrote the book. I wanted to share my spiritual message to a wide faith-based audience. I felt comfortable that the spiritual message I was trying to impart would be readily recognized and accepted by my family and friends garnered over a lifetime. But, there is such a wide range of spiritual faith and understanding in any potential reading audience, it became my hopeful goal to tell my story of faith both before and after the crash in such a way that it would be reasonable and understandable to a broader reader base.

Read the entire interview at:

www.MWSADispatches.com



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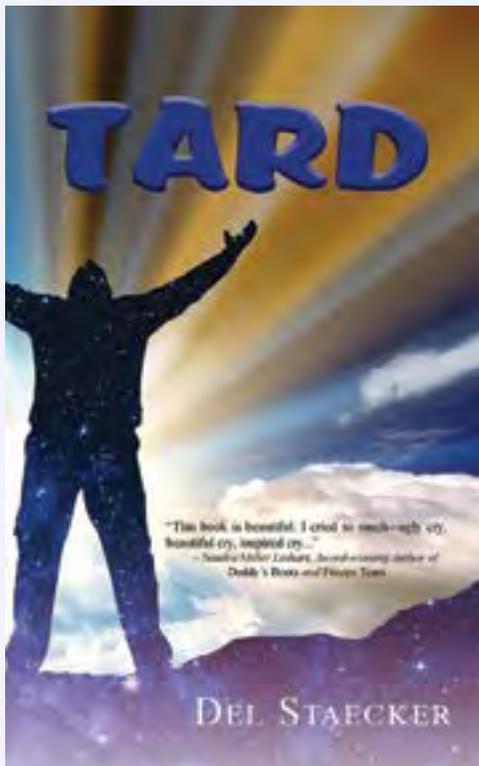
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TARD

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!

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VOLUNTEER IN SOME OTHER WAY AT THIS
YEAR'S CONFERENCE, PLEASE LET US KNOW.**

PAMELA OPAL LEE

Gary Zelinski



IT WAS THE MONDAY AFTER Easter Sunday when we finally got the chance to visit her grave. A Monday drive in the rush hour traffic of L.A. is not for the faint of heart. But, seeing her grave was on my mind. I had to complete the story I started seven years before. So off we went. My bride, Lillian and I were taking yet another drive to find yet another small sliver of America.

Forest Lawn Cemetery in Hollywood Hills is huge. We drove through the gates and just blindly followed the GPS. Unfortunately, we must have missed the information center. After a few miles, the road ended. We stopped at the parking lot of a large building.

The Court of Liberty houses statues of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. It also has the largest glass mosaic in the U.S., depicting twenty-five scenes of early America. The hall was

unfortunately under renovation, and there was no one around to give us directions.

Forest Lawn in Hollywood Hills was opened in 1952 and houses almost 120,000 graves. Altogether, there are eleven Forest Lawn Cemeteries in Southern California. If you're looking for a famous actor or actress, they're probably buried at Forest Lawn. Humphrey Bogart, Mary Pickford, Walt Disney, Clarke Gable, and other memorials dot the rolling green lawns. The grave we were looking for was none of the above. Neither fame nor fortune had befallen Pamela Opal Lee.

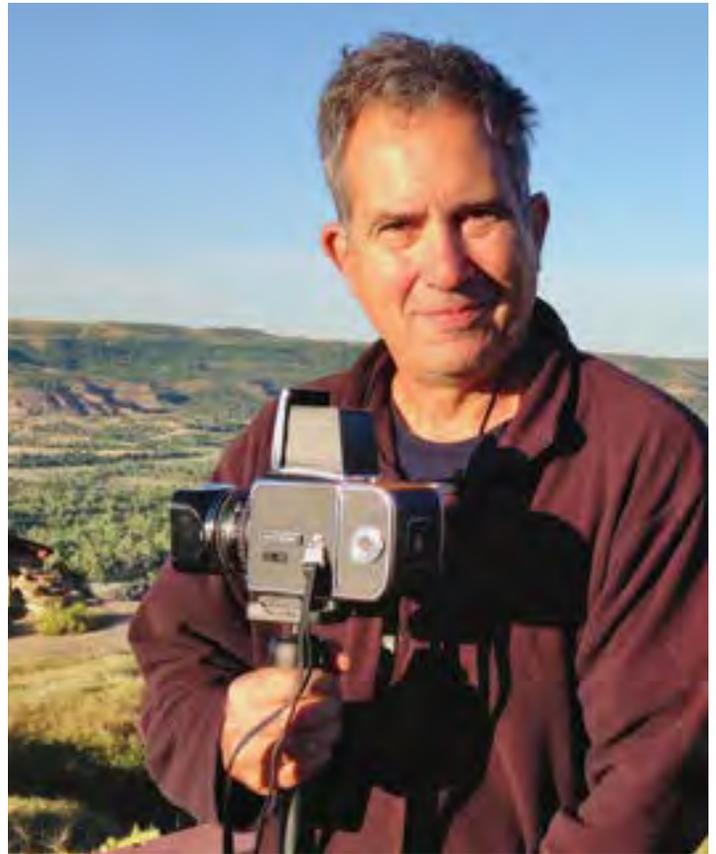
The rolling hills overlooking the movie studios were full of families and small children carrying flowers and mylar balloons. Easter Sunday was like one big picnic at the cemetery. A sea of flowers covered most of the graves. The graves at Forest Lawn were row upon row of metal markers in the ground, with no traditional headstones. From a distance, the hills covered in grass looked more like a city park than a cemetery. It was Monday, and the hundreds of families dotting the hillsides were just the remains of the crowds leftover from Easter Sunday.

Walking out of the Court of Liberty, I had no idea where to find Pamela or even who to ask. Finally, realizing we were lost, a

maintenance worker, Nathan took pity on me and showed us the section markers. The small, round concrete medallions were not much bigger than a U.S. Geological survey marker. You had to move the grass to see them. Nathan motioned for us to get back in the car and follow him. I guess whatever chores he had could wait. The dead learn to be patient.

Our GPS initially took us to the newer section where families were picnicking and tending flowers. We followed Nathan for two miles into the park's practically deserted older area. Only one or two families shared our hillside, littered with unattended graves. The section markers were hard to find and even harder to read. Nathan finally stopped his maintenance truck, and we walked down a grave-covered hill. Section 2793, Space 1. I would never have found her on my own.

Pamela Opal Lee's twenty-year marriage was underscored with problems. Their romance began in a whirlwind. He had just finalized his divorce from a Hollywood glamor queen. It was 1951; Pamela Opal Lee was an airline stewardess. He was a budding actor. They would go on to have two sons. Terry Michael was born in 1952, and James Shannon was born in 1954. Her husband's acting career took off, but his gambling grew worse. With his income from acting, he raised and raced quarter horses. Together they owned a comfortable house in Van Nuys



and ranches in Arizona and Riverside, California

Pamela's husband became addicted to sleeping pills. His nightmares were so real that he took to sleeping with a loaded revolver. He ran around and sometimes wouldn't come home for days. He was arrested in Burbank for assault and battery. They say he fired a gun at someone, but somehow those charges were dropped. Her husband spoke candidly about the stress of combat. He was a champion for improving the care veterans received for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. He recognized his problems and tried to heal the best he could. He quit the sleeping pills cold turkey, and he never

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developed a dependency on alcohol. Whenever tobacco or whiskey advertisers approached him to market their products, he'd refuse. He knew that his status as a hero meant that he was a role model, and he tried to live up to it.

Bad investments and a mountain of debt had the IRS investigating him. He deserted her, but she never abandoned him. He was always her hero. Then in 1971, before the government could make a case against him, he died in a small plane crash in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in Virginia. She would live for thirty-nine more years. She never remarried.

After he died, his gambling debts ruined her, forcing her and their children to sell their home and move to a small apartment. She took a job greeting patients at the Sepulveda Veteran's Administration Hospital. She went on to have a thirty-five-year career working as a patient liaison. She worked for years to pay off his debts.

At the V.A., "every veteran is a hero and should be treated with respect," she'd say. She worked serving veterans until she retired in 2007. Known as the lady with the clipboard, she was often reprimanded for cutting the V.A.'s red tape. If she saw a veteran waiting too long, she'd march them directly into the doctor's office. These were her soldiers.

She was 'our angel,' they'd say. At one point in her career, some of the V.A.'s higher-up bureaucrats determined her job was excess and needed to be eliminated. A protest ensued, with hundreds of workers and friends demonstrating at the entrance to the hospital. After that, the V.A. managers changed their minds.

Nobody initially knew who her husband had been. She was just the friendly face who greeted them and guided them through the hospital maze. Then, when word got out about her husband, wounded vets cried and would rush to hug her—many just wanted to touch her.

"He was my hero," they'd say. "You're the hero," she replied.

Pamela Opal Lee grew to become a legend at the V.A. Her first few years were about her husband. Her last thirty were all about her. She was their angel.





On April 8, 2010, Pamela Opal Lee Archer Murphy died at her home in Canoga Park, California. She was eighty-six years old. Her husband, Major Audie Murphy, died thirty-six years earlier. He was the most decorated soldier of World War II. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and every other award for valor the United States could bestow. He was also awarded five more medals for valor from France and one from Belgium. Audie Murphy's grave is one of the most visited sites at Arlington National Cemetery. He was buried with full military honors. The Ambassador to the U.N., George H. Bush, Army Chief of Staff, General William Westmoreland, and hundreds of soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division attended his funeral.

Thirty-nine years later, Pamela Opal Lee Archer Murphy's funeral packed the chapel at Forest Lawn Cemetery. Hundreds of the veterans she had comforted over her thirty-five years at the V.A. came to say goodbye to their Angel. There were no flowers on her grave when we visited. Easter Sunday had come and gone.

On Memorial Day, soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Regiment, the Army's Old Guard, will place a small American flag at Audie Murphy's grave. The flag will be precisely one boot length away from his headstone.

On the last Monday in May, Lillian and I will return to the grave of Pamela Opal Lee Archer Murphy. I'll place a small American Flag and Lillian will bring some flowers.

Thank you for your service, Pamela Opal Lee.



MIDNIGHT LEMONS by Jorge Torrente



2022 BOOK AWARDS FINALISTS

MWSA Awards Team

Anthology

9/11 That Beautiful, Broken Day

17 American Authors

Creative Nonfiction

Just Another Day in Vietnam

Col (Ret) Keith M. Nightingale

The Girls Who Stepped Out of Line

Major General Mari K. Eder

Historical Fiction

A Gathering of Men

Rona Simmons

Captain of the Tides Gunner Morgan

Charles D. Morgan, Jacque Hillman

Edge Of Armageddon

Brad Graft

Into The Cauldron

Glenn Starkey

No Hero's Welcome

Jeffrey K. Walker

None of Us the Same

Jeffrey K. Walker

Please Write: A Novel

Janette Byron Stone

The Defiance of Reiko Murata

Allen Wittenborn

Truly Are the Free

Jeffrey K. Walker



Voices from the Civil War

George J. Bryjak

When Heroes Flew: The Shangri-la Raiders

H. W. "Buzz" Bernard

History

Key to Command

Michael Godbout

Maritime Unmanned

Ernest Snowden & Robert F. Wood Jr.

Pearl Harbor's Final Warning

Valarie J. Anderson

Rare Bird: Hispanic Military Pilots of the USA

Rudolph C. Villarreal

When the Beaches Trembled

Zach S. Morris

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

Colonel Kirk G. Warner, USAR (Ret.)

Horror/Fantasy/Sci-Fi

Into the Stars

James Rosone

How to/Business/Self Help

How to Deal with Damn Near Anything

John E. McGlothlin

Literary Fiction

Ahab: A Hockey Story

Brad Huestis

The Legend (A Kate Tyler Novel)

Nancy Wakeley

A Conversation with MWSA Member

DEL STAECCKER

Interview date: 1 May 2022

DEL STAECCKER IS AN AMERICAN writer of novels, novellas, short stories, and non-fiction in a number of genres, including suspense, crime, philosophical fiction, satire, and memoir. He has received numerous writing awards and is a Life Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (London) and Knight of Honor, Order of St. John (Malta). He was educated at The Citadel, Wheaton College, and The University of Puget Sound. He is a veteran, having served on active duty in the US Army 1972-1976.

MWSA: How long have you been associated with MWSA?

STAECCKER: I joined MWSA in 2009, immediately after my first non-fiction WWII book, *The Lady Gangster: A Sailor's Memoir* was published.

MWSA: What was the inspiration for your book, *TARD*?

STAECCKER: After six crime novels being published, I wanted to stretch the genre. *TARD* is a mix of fantasy, crime, philosophy, and theology. It is gritty, realistic, even cruel. But it is also filled with friendship, redeeming love, and the search for that *something* which is beyond all of us. The format includes changing points of view and can be best



described as a novella wrapped around several short stories—which are the work of the main character. Also, I wanted the primary characters to be very different from anything found in crime or mystery stories. *TARD*'s primary character, and namesake has Down Syndrome. The principal narrator is mentally disabled. I think I succeeded. *TARD* is different.

MWSA: *TARD* may well be a “touchy” title. Why did you select it?

STAECCKER: Right from the beginning I knew the title had to be *TARD*. There is no disrespect intended. Quite the opposite is obvious in the treatment of Matthias, the main character, as well as with Richard, the narrator. Several publishers passed

on *TARD* due to its name, but as I said, I wanted the book to be a stretch. The title, as well as the entire book, is meant to challenge perceptions.

MWSA: How has *TARD* been received?

STAECKER: The reception has been tremendous. Readers love it, and *TARD* has yet to receive a negative review. The one I am most proud of is from *UNDERRATED READS*. The initial process of being reviewed by UR is selective. Once “in the mix,” the reviewers are encouraged to dump anything they are not impressed with. *TARD* was selected, reviewed, and received UR’s highest rating of “five bookmarks.” *TARD* was also honored by being named one of UR’s “Our Best.” The goal of *UNDERRATED READS* is “Discovering Literary Gems” and I am immensely grateful for their confidence and support for *TARD* by stating, “*TARD is a unique novel and one of those literary gems that is hard to come by. A must-read!*”

MWSA: What are you working on now?

STAECKER: Several years ago, I signed on with a publisher to do a crime trilogy set in Chicago’s Southside, where I grew up. Sadly, after the second work was completed, the publisher went belly up. I am currently completing the trilogy, and hope to see the three related works in print as a single volume. Again, the format is a bit of a stretch. *Tales from the Southside* is a trilogy comprised of a multitude of

short stories based upon a quirky police detective and an array of his equally unusual friends. All of the tales are based on actual cases and/or my personal experiences. This project is important to me as an author because it began as an effort to expand my writing skills. The short story which began the entire collection was penned in response to a call for first-person short stories intended to be published in an anthology sponsored by the International Association of Crime Writers. My effort was selected, but again the uncertainties of the publishing world canceled that project.

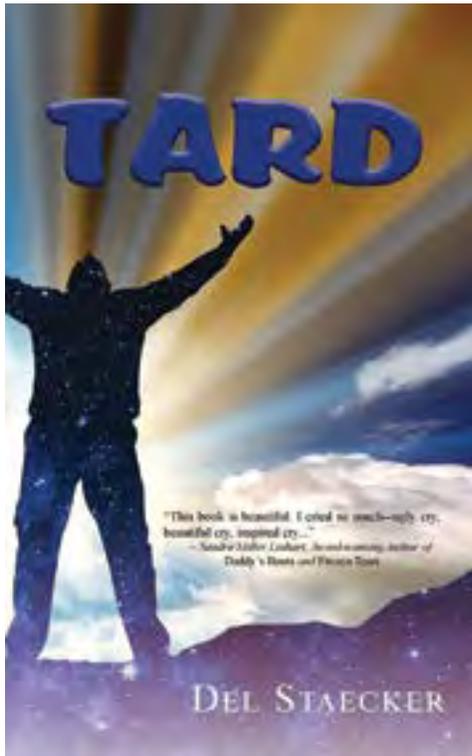
MWSA: What are you reading now?

STAECKER: I’m a believer that writers should be readers and I always have several books going. I have just finished C.S. Lewis’ *Till We Have Faces*, his last book, and his own favorite. It is extremely well written and, as is the case with Lewis, a work that delves into the most important issues of human existence. Also, I’ve regrettably finished *Monuments*, the latest *Willie Black* tale by Howard Owen. I cannot get enough of that series. If you want action, wit, and great observations on current life in America, you must read about the demise of journalism, all told by Willie as he solves some of the most engaging mysteries around.

MWSA: What advice would you share with other writers, especially new ones?

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STAECKER: First, write as much and as often as you can. In my opinion, it is the finest way to improve your skills. Second, read a wide array of formats and styles. Others have met and mastered the same obstacles you face. They are our mentors. Third, get into groups such as MWSA. Writing is a solitary life. Get outside yourself and mingle with other writers. You will be amazed at the world such organizations will open to you.

In 2012, I was selected to be a US Navy *Writer On Deck* through my association with MWSA. It was an amazing experience to be invited to tour several bases in the Mediterranean and share my experiences writing about WWII. Fellow MWSA

member Jack London was also selected, and I am certain he will echo my feelings.

I am also a member of IACW, the International Association of Crime Writers, and have been involved four times in selecting the Dashiell Hammett Prize recipient.

There is no excuse for being a lonely writer.



Would you like to place an advertisement in Dispatches?

Current rates:

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To get started, email info@mwsa.co for details.

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

Contact info@mwsa.co for questions or concerns.

Thank you.



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(MWSA) Workshop for veterans and military
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Registration required at ves4mwsa822@gmail.com. Hurry, limited slots
available! Registration includes complimentary lunch.

A Conversation with MWSA Member

XAVIER POE KANE

Interview date: 25 May 2022

NOT YET A BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, Xavier is a former door gunner on the International Space Station. When not making the galaxy safe for democracy, he writes whatever weirdness comes to mind. He currently lives in the woods with his wife, Morticia, in a state of mutual weirdness with their dogs, Chuck Norris and the three-legged Jabba the Hutt. Thanks to the GI Bill, he has a MFA in Popular Fiction Writing & Publishing from Emerson College.

He is currently working on his second publication, a collection of short stories tentatively titled: *Broken Hearts and Other Horrors*.

MWSA: How long have you been associated with MWSA?

KANE: I first joined MWSA in 2020; however due to some personal issues in 2021 and the Covid pandemic my membership was interrupted. I re-joined in 2022.

MWSA: What was your inspiration for your book *The Hidden Lives of Dick & Mary*?

KANE: I had these amazing characters who overshadowed the protagonist and antagonist in another project. I wanted to



explore them further and so I began a side project where I used them to explore the history and hauntings of the Air National Guard Station I retired out of. It's the oldest continuously active military installation west of the Mississippi and as such has many ghost stories.

I'm also intrigued by the UFO phenomenon and wanted to explore the question of "What if there really are aliens visiting Earth and studying humanity?"

MWSA: What are you working on now?

KANE: I'm working on a collection of interconnected short stories inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion*.

About two souls who find each other after the apocalypse. It's one of those stories that resonated with me.

I had all of these short stories centered around telling tales about lonely people who are searching for something that's missing in their lives. They're just told against the backdrop of various monsters and other paranormal things that go bump in the night.

These first two books are my way of learning the ropes of being an indie author both from the artistic and publishing perspectives. I get to demonstrate my range of what I can write so I'm not "typecast" into a specific subgenre of horror.

MWSA: Why did you choose to write in the horror genre?



KANE: I always imagined I'd be a sci-fi writer. While I grew-up reading Stephen King, I was much more of a *Star Wars* fan. Space operas really resonate with me. However, horror is more artistically and therapeutically satisfying. I can explore a character during the worst day of their lives as everything crumbles around them. In my own life I've found that those are the times a person's true self is revealed along with their strengths and weaknesses.

Artistically, I'm interested in the human condition and asking "what if" questions: What if ghosts are real? What if aliens are experimenting on us? What if civilization crumbled around us? This not only lets me explore the best and worst of specific characters; but as humanity as a whole.

Therapeutically, it helps me work through my own personal struggles. There is a lot of me reflected in some of my characters. Horror provides a release, a context which allows me to distance myself from trauma I've experienced and put myself in a fictional high-stakes environment to analyze things and explore life paths not taken.

MWSA: What have you learned publishing your first book?

KANE: I have learned several things:

1) Having a good editor is essential.

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2) Learn as much as you can and read about processes you're agreeing to—even if you're working with experts. They're people, too, and can make mistakes. At the end of the day, the indie author is the one approving proofs and paying the bills. The cost of any mistake will be on you.

3) Think about how you're going to market your book. Ebooks and Print on Demand (POD) have democratized the publishing business. There are some very skilled authors putting out high quality material. BUT, there are also a lot of talented amateurs who will crowd you out. It's essential to find away to your readers so they know you exist. I'm experimenting with book trailers and *YouTube* marketing. We'll see how that goes.

Beyond that, find your tribe(s). Thanks to the GI Bill I was able to get a MFA in Popular Fiction Writing and Publishing. There I was able to network with peers and found my editor and book designer. So that's one tribe—but I'm blessed by two tribes. I also have my veteran tribe. While we have our fun interservice rivalries, at the end of the day we are there for one another.

MWSA: Will you be attending the 2022 MWSA Convention?

KANE: Yes.



MWSA NEWS BLAST

Bob Doerr

IMPORTANT REMINDERS AND UPDATES:

* * *

This year, as we have in the past, we would like to have our members donate a book or two to the VA Med Center that will be hosting our next *Write Your Story* class. This year the class will be held just before the start of our conference at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Center in New Orleans. If you would like to donate a book, we have posted a donation form that we recommend you use when mailing your book(s):

<https://www.mwsadispatches.com/s/SELVHS-Form.pdf>

Please list MWSA in the organization affiliation section.

* * *



<https://www.facebook.com/MWSA.MembersPublic/videos>

In the following month, we will need to elect MWSA's Officers and Directors At-Large for the two-year period 2023 & 2024.

The nominating committee has identified the following candidates:

For the officer positions:

JIM GREENWALD—PRESIDENT

VALERIE ORMOND—VP

RUTH CROCKER—SECRETARY

HUGH SIMPSON—TREASURER

For the Directors At-Large:

KATHY RODGERS, NEAL KUSUMOTO,
JOAN RAMIREZ, ZITA BALLENGER
FLETCHER, NANCY ARBUTHNOT,
DAVID SNYDER, AND DANE ZELLER.

Members will only be able to vote for four of the seven directors-at-large nominees.

A ballot for voting will be made available in a couple weeks.

Thanks -

Bob Doerr, MWSA President



THE STALEMATE

Robert Lofthouse

Excerpt from Honor Through Sacrifice, copyright 2022

OPERATING IN DEFENSE OF MASAN, the 25th Infantry Division placed its 24th Infantry and 5th Infantry Regiments on Sobuk-san to defend the two peaks, P'il-bong and Hill 665, which later would become known as Battle Mountain. This action involved the struggle between United Nations Command (UN) and North Korean forces early in the war, from 15 August to 19 September, 1950, and became one of several large engagements fought simultaneously during the Battle of Pusan Perimeter.

The battle ended in a victory for the UN after large numbers of United States Army and Republic of Korea Army (ROK) troops were able to prevent a Korean People's Army (KPA) division from capturing the mountain area.

What followed was a month-long struggle with the KPA 6th Division in which Battle Mountain changed hands twenty times.

During the deadlock, neither side was able to secure a definitive victory in capturing the mountaintop, but US forces succeeded in their mission of preventing the KPA from advancing beyond Battle Mountain, paving the way for the KPA's eventual defeat and withdrawal.

Later and in conjunction with General MacArthur's surprise landing of X Corps at Inchon on 15 September, 1950, UN forces in the Pusan Perimeter went on the offensive.

In the 25th Division sector, strong enemy resistance on the mountain peaks of Subok-san delayed undertaking the offensive until 19 September, when the mountain peaks and ridges had been cleared by the 24th Infantry Regiment in the face of weakening but stubborn enemy resistance.

The cost of these battles became quite high, with officers and enlisted men falling to incapacitating combat wounds, resulting in death for some.

Army Lieutenant Gordon Lippman arrived on 10 September, to assume his role as Company A Platoon Leader, replacing his predecessor in the midst of these skirmishes. LT Lippman brought with him ample combat experience, almost 300 days fighting against the German Wehrmacht in Italy, Southern France, and in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge.

Once these Korean mountains were in friendly hands, the 25th Division went on the offensive again. An attack to the west on two lines of advance with motorized

task forces involved primarily the 24th Infantry Regiment.

The 24th was an all-black unit, led by white officers, and Gordon was assigned to become one of those officers in the heat of a running gun battle. Gordon became familiar with his men, and they with him, while under intense enemy fire.

Starting on 27 September and moving rapidly, that task force brushed aside North Korean delaying actions, rapidly seizing several South Korean towns, and managed to liberate close to 100 American prisoners of war. By 30 September, the 24th Infantry had reached and liberated the west coast port city of Kunsan.

On 29 October, 1950, almost two months after he was assigned to the 24th, Gordon was promoted to Company A Commanding Officer.

Company A was temporarily assigned the role as acting military governor of the city of Kunsan, which meant that the company effectively controlled the activities of the civilian population in that area. LT Lyle Rishell had been promoted to company Executive Officer under Lippman.

In Rishell's book *With a Black Platoon in Combat*, written more than a decade later, Rishell says of Lippman:

He was a fine officer, a strong leader, and we got along great right from the outset. I admired him tremendously, and the days I served under him were some of the best of my career. He was a hard, no-nonsense

officer, but he was fair and an inspiration for all of us in that place.



After linking up with X Corps, the Eighth Army had crossed the 38th Parallel into North Korea while the 25th Infantry Division remained in South Korea. The 24th Infantry Regiment and other elements of the 25th Division were given the mission of eliminating surviving fragments of North Korean units south and east of the city of Taejon. These stragglers had been bypassed by American forces and were threatening the American supply lines.

By early November, the 25th had successfully accomplished its mission of securing and stabilizing the area around Taejon and was moved north to Kaesong

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in the continuing mission of eliminating pockets of bypassed enemy units along the 38th Parallel.

Rishell offers a glimpse into the units' day - "We awoke with the sound of rain beating against the broken windows. What a hellish day for a move! The poor weather did not generate much enthusiasm, but we crawled from our mountain bags, pulled on our dirty clothes and boots, and went over to the mess tent for breakfast, gulping down a breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon, bread, jam, and coffee.

LT Lippman went over the day's details. The compound, which normally was hard and dry, had become a quagmire of gluey, soft clay. It caked on our boots to form lead weights, a miserable mess. Our orders were to move on the arrival of transportation, but the only vehicles coming available were three quarter-ton trucks.

We packed our gear, rolled up blankets and sleeping bags, and waited for transportation to the trains. We spent the night in bivouac at So-Jongni, and then most of the next day waiting for transport to our next stop. We then loaded onto rail cars for the train ride up north.

These were very unwelcoming box cars which we squeezed in to. It became apparent there was no plan to send us into reserve or back to Japan, which brought a solemn uneasiness over the men. The

NCOs oriented their men in preparation for fighting as soon as we would dismount.

The loading and waiting had not done much for the men's morale, but fortunately the day warmed a bit, and we began to get more comfortable. Along the way we saw hordes of refugees carry everything they owned on their backs, climbing on board the flat cars. The train moved on, and went through Suwon, then Seoul after dark. By daybreak, we reached Ilsan, north of Seoul near the 38th Parallel."

Task Force Lippman, composed of Company A with attachments from the I&R platoon, one section each of heavy mortars, 81mm mortars, machine guns, and 75mm recoilless rifles, proceeded to the town of Yonchon above the 38th Parallel and then secured the town against any invaders attempting to seize it.



The composition of Task Force Lippman and order of march into what became known as the Iron Triangle was 1st Platoon in the lead with the 3rd Platoon, ROK Platoon, and 2nd Platoon following.

The Command Group teams would follow fourth. The 4.2mm, 81mm mortar teams would bring up the rear. At 0530, the task force was to enter town. At 0545, all unit commands checked radios. As soon as possible they were to notify WO Costello by message when the town was reasonably secure.

Firefights ensued, lives were lost, and trucks destroyed in an enemy ambush. The fighting got more intense, and Japan became a distant memory.

Company A had launched a coordinated attack on Yonchon with elements of the 17th ROK Regiment and 800 South Korean policemen. Striking in the early morning after a preliminary thirty-minute mortar barrage, we captured the town in less than three hours. Thirteen North Korean soldiers were captured. Later in the day the I&R Platoon was ambushed as the enemy knocked out the lead and rear vehicles of the convoy, igniting several on fire.

Members of the patrol leapt from their vehicles to defend themselves as the enemy charged, inflicting heavy casualties. It was not the first ambush to hit, and it would not be the last. North Koreans continued to use this form of attack frequently in the days ahead and UN forces took heavy casualties as they pushed on with their mission.

Americans moved north of the 38th Parallel deep into enemy territory on

19 November near Anju. Taking the offensive, the 25th Division quickly ran into stiff resistance and was thrown onto the defensive as massive Chinese Communist forces attacked and penetrated the 8th Army right flank. This opened up the right which was held by the 24th Infantry Regiment. The Chinese hit the right flank of the 2nd Battalion, inflicting heavy casualties and with enemy troops moving to their rear, the 24th Infantry along with the rest of the 25th Division, began a series of delaying actions while backpedaling down the peninsula.

Of the many men throughout the 25th Infantry Division to distinguish themselves in these battles, LT Lippman is only one. For his leadership under fire, a first Silver Star was awarded. The unit reached Kaesong on 8 December and then moved south of the Imjin River by 14 December. Continuing Chinese pressure forced the 8th Army to withdraw further south to the 37th Parallel near Osan by 3 January, 1951.

On 25 January, the 25th Division found itself in a United Nations counteroffensive reaching the Han River twenty-five days later. On 7 March, the 24th Infantry Regiment conducted a well-executed assault crossing of the Han as other elements of the 25th Division drove north to beat back Communist forces.

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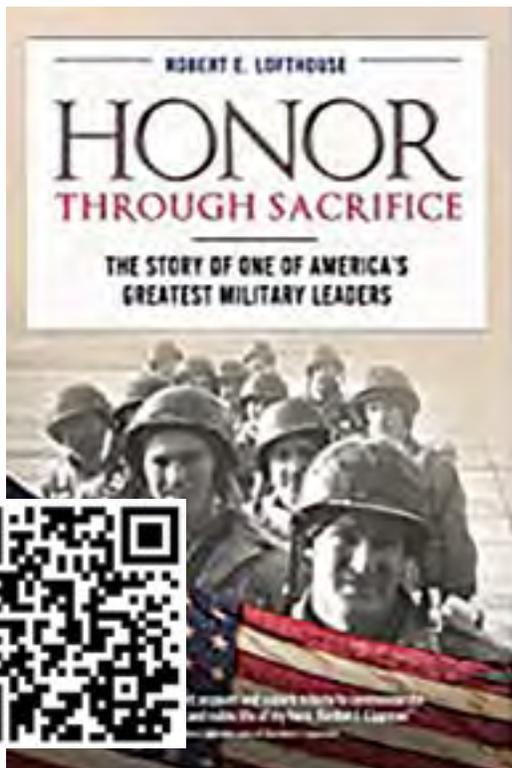
Reaching and holding a line just south of the city of Chorwon by the end of March, UN forces were pushing north again. After crossing the Hantan River on 11 April, at about 0430, the 1st Battalion attacked a steep ridgeline defended by heavily dug-in Chinese forces. Americans took the initiative to attack without the normal preparatory artillery barrage that would have signaled imminent assault. By using this approach, the 24th surprised the Chinese and found them very disorganized but the entrenched enemy was able to repulse the attack.

It was during this action that President Truman took the bold step of relieving General Douglas MacArthur from all his

commands. Replacing him with General Matthew Bunker Ridgway, Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet was dispatched with haste to take command of the 8th Army and attached forces. Van Fleet arrived and assumed command three days later on 14 April. With the opinionated and defiant MacArthur out of the way, President Truman was free to pursue a less aggressive military strategy that resulted in the stalemate we see now seventy- two years later. Once again, political expediency triumphed over military strategy, resulting in greater loss of life and less-than-ideal results.

Six months later on 1 October, 1951, in conjunction with the US Army decision to end segregation, the 24th Infantry Regiment was inactivated after six Korean War campaigns and eighty-two years of continuous service to the United States Army. These brave soldiers were then dispersed to and absorbed into other units. Deuce-Four was the last of the four original Buffalo Soldier units to see combat.

While in Korea, the 24th racked up an impressive record. In a little more than a year, these gallant men earned 2 Medals of Honor (MOH), 23 Distinguished Service Crosses (DSC), 261 Silver Stars (SS), 537 Bronze Stars (BS) and 4,887 Purple Hearts (PH) for bravery in the face of a daunting, fanatical, and determined enemy force.



The Korean stand-off continues to this day at the 38th Parallel, where it all began. There is no Armistice, only a long- held cease-fire.

They fought, absorbed wounds and too many died for a stalemate. Was it worth it? Is it over? Keep their memories alive!



Larger than life with the cousins



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Robert E. Lofthouse is a Marine Corps veteran who has managed projects as an IT professional for four decades, both nationally and internationally, while serving the business planning and delivery needs of enterprise IT projects for the nonprofit, commercial business, and government sectors. *Honor Through Sacrifice*, published by Köehler Books, is his first publication in book form. You can find the book on his website at:

<https://www.holdthelinepress.com>.

*Roses are red,
Daisies are not,
Summer is here,
In case you forgot...*



FINALISTS Continued from page 23

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

The Carnevale Conspiracy

Joseph Badal

The Chameleon

Ron McManus

The Hidden Key

David E. Grogan

The Pilate Scroll

M.B. Lewis

Touch the Dead

Elle Thornton

Uprooted: A Modern Odyssey

Allen Wittenborn

Picture Book

Blueberry Moose

Nancy Panko

Is Your Dad a Pirate?

Tara McClary Reeves

Poetry Book

Blue Rhapsodies: Poems of a Navy Life

Nancy Arbuthnot

Young Adult

Believing In Horses Out West

Valerie Ormond





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



