

DISPATCHES

Monthly Magazine

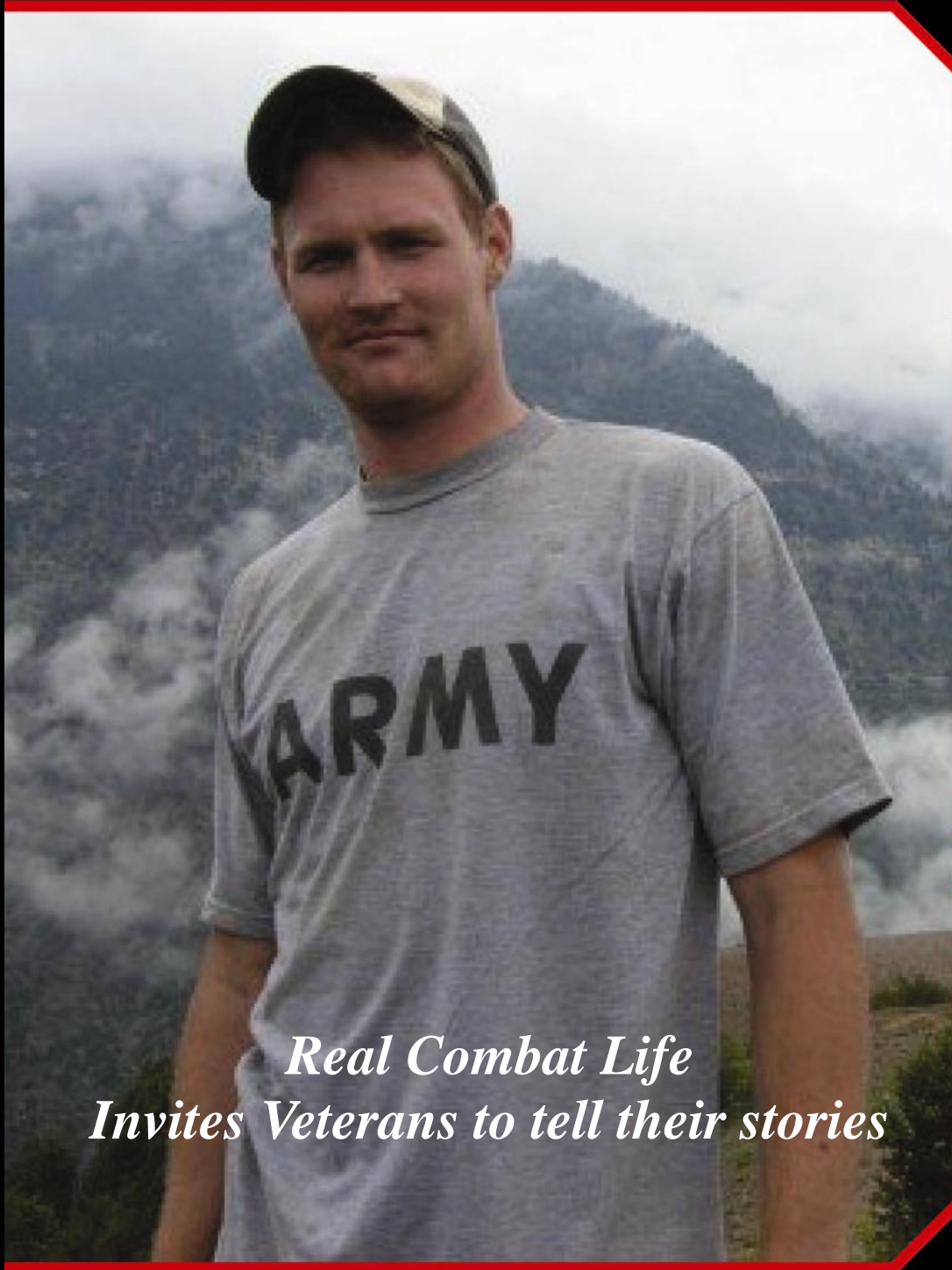
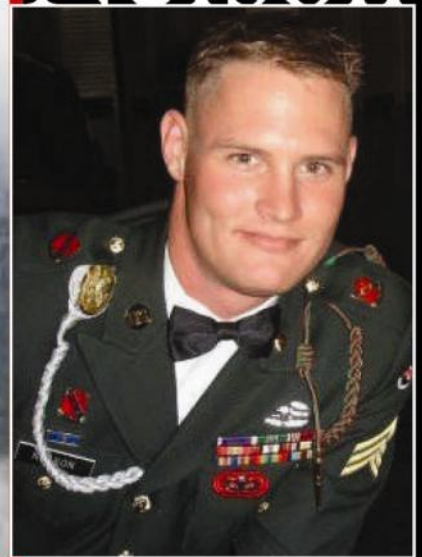
MILITARY
WRITERS
SOCIETY
OF AMERICA

NOVEMBER 2010

FEAR



Patrick Nelson

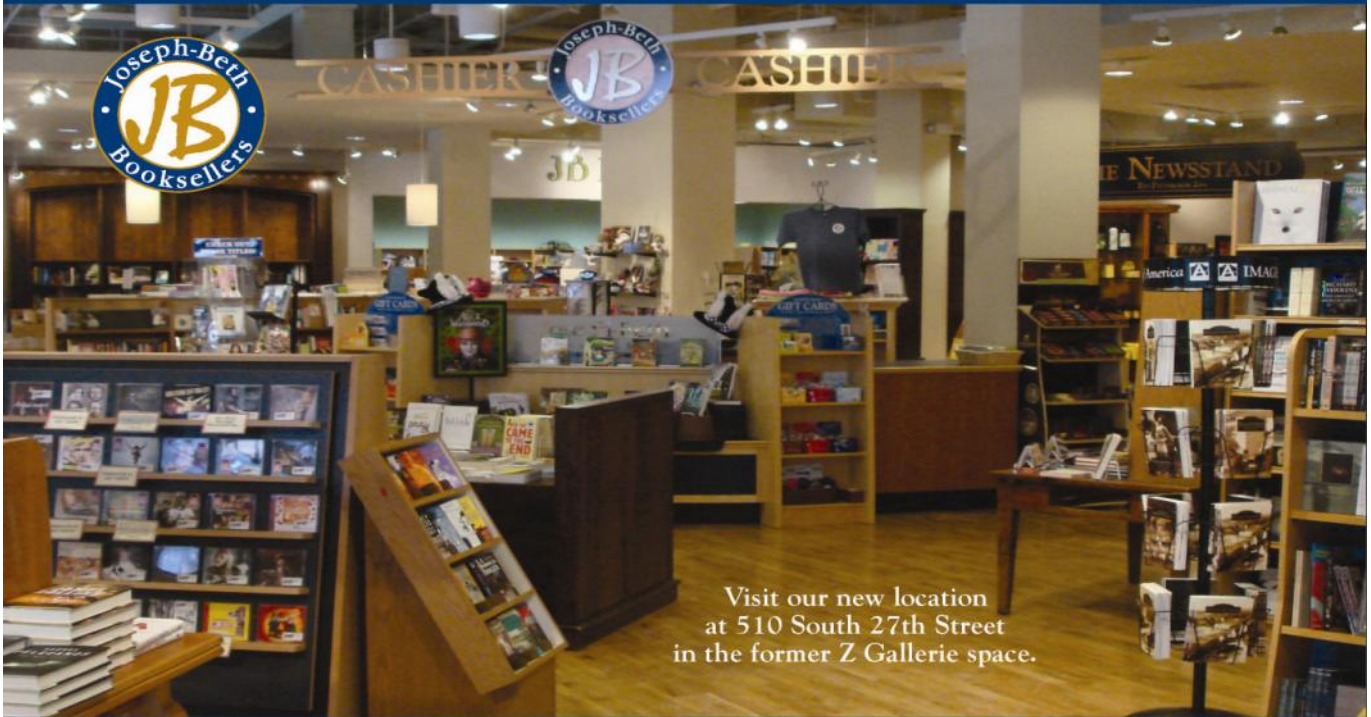


*Real Combat Life
Invites Veterans to tell their stories*

Inside This Issue

*NASA Technology
Veterans Day 2010
Founders Award 2010
William E. Mayers
Mystery Nominations
JoAnne Quinn-Smith*

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The William E. Mayer Prize for Literary and Artistic Excellence phrase for November is "Fear"

From the Editor...

Hi everyone,

It was wonderful to see you all. Our conference was the proverbial “emotional rollercoaster” for me. However, I’ve learned that there are no highs without lows—and so we deal with the problems, try not to repeat them, and move forward. Having said that, there are moments that I will treasure forever—such as the delight on our young actors’ faces when they met the authors of the books they were performing or the pleasure and closeness we all felt at the Open Mic. I loved spending what time I could with each of you...and vow next year that I will not lead any workshops so that I can spend more time with individual members. And of course, my favorite memory is the Banquet when we presented our awards to MWSA authors. It was a time of joy and fellowship.

Many thanks to those who stepped up to the plate to help when we were hit with last minute cancellations. In particular, I want to thank Tom Ruck, jim greenwald, Mike Mullins, Pat Avery, Marlyce Stockinger, Everett Avery, Bob Calvert, Dale Throneberry, Dwight Zimmerman, Richard Lowry, Buddy Cox, Nancy Bonar, Karen Scott, Marc Yablonka, Louis Intres, Del Staecker, Rob Ballister, Lee and Vista Boyland, Dixie Smith, Nancy Smith, Franque Coleman, and Charlayne Henry. Also, many thanks to my kids—Carmel and Nate Faulkner—and my husband, John. And finally to the unseen but much appreciated folks in security at the Wyndham.

Joyce Faulkner, President of MWSA



**Award-winners Dwight Zimmerman
and Donna McAleer**

This publication includes works of perspective, reflection, fiction, and poetry.

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Mike Mullins — Columnist
Pat Avery — Columnist
Bill McDonald — Columnist
Joyce Gilmour — Columnist
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MWSA Awards Banquet Emcee Tom Ruck and Award-winning author Bruce Gamble

Written by
award-winning,
South Carolina
Children's Author,
Mary Lee

A great gift for
children,
grandchildren,
Sunday school
classes,
classrooms, &
school libraries!

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William E. Mayer Inspiration Word for November
FEAR

Readers are raving about the exciting Jim West mystery/thriller series. West, a retired Special Agent who served twenty years with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, moved back to New Mexico to start what he hoped would be a peaceful, relaxing retirement. Forget that - as he's dragged into one murder investigation after another. Bob Doerr pens fast paced plots that make the books hard to put down! For in-depth reviews of his books check out the reviews in the MWSA website, or go to Bob's website, www.bobdoerr.com.

2010 Eric Hoffer Award Finalist

Bob's next Jim West adventure, *Loose Ends Kill*, will be released in November 2010.

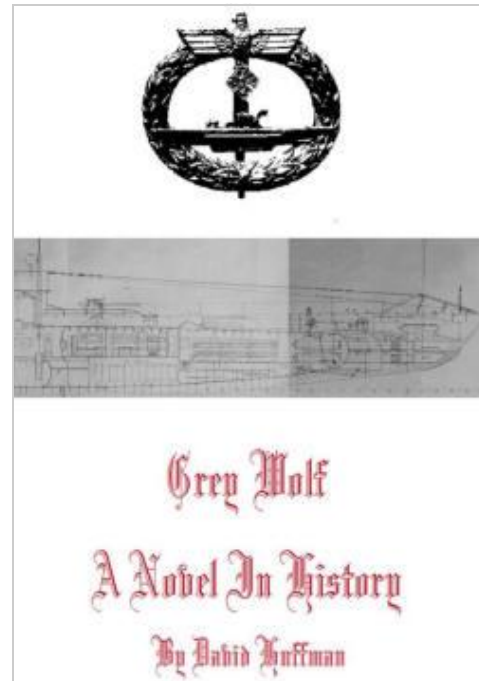
MWSA 2010 Medalist David Huffman

David Huffman is an avid student of aviation and military history. He is an airline pilot and has flown all over the globe. David is a Captain on the Boeing 757 airplane for an air-cargo company that contracts with one of the major worldwide package delivery companies and flies mainly out of Miami, Florida.

After graduating from Plymouth Salem High School in Plymouth, Michigan, he began his aviation career as a ramp marshaler in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He joined the United States Army in 1986 where he served as a mechanic on the AH-64A Apache helicopter. After his tour in the Army was over, he worked for an airship company based jointly in the UK and the US managing ground crew and ground handling blimps. In 1991 he left the blimp company to complete his pilot training at an aviation academy in Sanford, Florida. David started flying commercially in 1994, right back where it all started in Ypsilanti, Michigan, for the same airline he was at in 1985.

David has studied the history of Man's conflicts throughout the ages since he was a boy and has been especially focused in the areas of submarine warfare, aviation and space flight. His first book, *Grey Wolf A Novel In History*, was a quarterfinalist in the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award. The book is a fictionalized account of actual events and is based on the patrol of a German U-boat at the outset of World War Two. It was first released in December of 2009.

David Huffman was born in Orlando, FL, where he resides today with his wife Patti. He has a daughter, Sierra, son-in-law Alan, a US Marine, and a stepson, Jeffrey, an Iraq veteran as an Army Combat Medic.



US SOLDIER DEFIES DEATH AND GRAVITY WITH HELP FROM NASA TECHNOLOGY

By
Claudia Pemberton

We've all heard the adage that warns us how our lives can change drastically with every breath we take. On March 11, 2010, that proverb rang true for SGT Daman Warren. One moment, the US Army soldier was strapped in the seat of an HM 1114 Hummer en route to Kuwait on a routine mission—the next he was lying in a heap on the desert sand, his strong body battered and broken.



SGT Daman Warren

Scarcely escaping the blast of a roadside bomb, the Hummer in which Warren was riding overturned and rolled repeatedly before coming to rest on a sand barge. During one of the Hummer's tumultuous revolutions, Warren's body was ejected from the vehicle. No longer protected by the sturdy steel frame of the Hummer, Warren's vulnerable flesh and bones made repeated contact with the ground, leaving him temporarily unconscious. After regaining his awareness, but unable to move, the veteran soldier assessed his own injuries. From the unnaturally distorted position of his left leg, and the excruciating pain in his shoulder and ribs, he knew that his injuries were serious. In those moments of turmoil, uncertainty, and

agonizing pain, SGT Warren's primary thought was that he may never get to speak with his young daughters again. He knew that once the adrenaline stopped pumping his body might succumb to his injuries. He remembers asking someone to get him a phone so that he could talk with his girls for what he feared would be the last time.

Fortunately, that wasn't the case. SGT Warren survived the devastating accident that left him with a broken femur, a dislocated shoulder, a torn rotator cuff, and several fractured ribs. For three months, the formerly active, physically-fit soldier was unable to walk without assistance.

Accustomed to the typical soldier's lifestyle of pushing his body to the absolute limit of physical and emotional endurance, Warren was distraught by his weakened condition. As part of a special military program which permits active duty soldiers to return stateside to recover, Warren was sent back home. Doctors at Scott & White Trauma Center in Temple, Texas, inserted a steel rod in Warren's leg to stabilize his broken femur. Finally able to walk with the support of crutches, the determined soldier craved more. Warren set his sights on a full recovery—and after several months of intense therapy, he is now walking without so much as a cane.

The soldier attributes his successful recovery to the expert skills of his doctors, therapists, and a NASA-inspired piece of cosmic exercise equipment known as the AlterG Anti-Gravity treadmill. The futuristic piece of equipment is based on the invention of Dr. Robert Whalen, a former NASA scientist. It was developed for use by astronauts as a means to prevent muscle and bone deterioration while weightless in space.

Originally designed to create gravity, the re-designed AlterG *defies* gravity. It is produced and marketed by Dr. Whalen's son, Sean Whalen, a mechanical engineer from Stanford University.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6) **Pemberton**

Mr. Lars Barfod, CEO of the AlterG corporation explained the simplicity of the revolutionary AlterG. “It is a treadmill with one mode button that enables you to adjust your body weight freely when you’re walking or running on the treadmill. The way we do that is with air pressure.” So with the press of a button, the walkers can render themselves “weightless” down to 20% of their body weight. The brain adjusts quickly to the reduced weight, so the patient can then walk naturally on the treadmill with full range of motion, without resistance, and relatively without pain.



The innovative treadmill was awarded the 2010 Medical Design Excellence Award. Originally marketed to Track and Field athletes, the American-made AlterG quickly became popular with NBA teams as well. In 2008, the FDA approved the AlterG for medical application, and it is now being sold internationally in twenty-one countries. At this time, twenty-five military bases and hospitals in the US are utilizing the AlterG, including: Walter Reed Medical Center, Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Fort Benning, Camp Pendleton, Fort Drum, and Fort Bragg, to name a few.

If you would like to locate an AlterG in your area, you can do so by utilizing the zip code finder at: <http://www.alter-g.com>.

SGT Warren reports that he is recovering remarkably well, and is happy and positive. Still listed as an active duty Army soldier, Warren is

optimistic that he will be approved by the Military Medical Review Board to return to “work” very soon.

On a personal note, I find that soldiers, like SGT Warren, often refer to their service to our country as, “just doing their job.” I beg to differ with that. I find nothing more endearing than hearing one of our heroes reply to my heartfelt “Thank you for protecting us” with a “no thanks necessary Ma’am ... I’m just doing my job.” That humble response amazes me every time I hear it. I find what they do for us much more valiant than just a job. I think most Americans will agree that a soldier’s calling is a divine one, and I couldn’t be more thankful and proud.

What a blessing it is to live in a land where personal freedom is so selflessly defended, where men like Dr. Whalen and his son, Sean, have the ability to create wonderful inventions—in this particular instance, providing the unique and rewarding opportunity for the protected to come to the aid of the protector.

 A promotional graphic for the book 'Beyond Those Hills: An Officer and a Lady' by M.H.A. Menondji. The graphic includes a book cover on the right and a text box on the left with reviews and a synopsis.

"A compelling and fresh concept [by a] talented writer with a gift for description"

"A showcase of accelerated linguistic and cultural assimilation"
—*Samuel Maguire*

1935, in the wake of the Iran-Cunha scandal, during the rise of terrorism on the world scene, and at the pinnacle of the Cold War... *Beyond Those Hills: An Officer and a Lady* is M.H.A. Menondji's debut novel, an emotionally-charged and a meticulously documented depiction of three lives intertwined by love, death, lust and a sense of duty that transcends politicians' corruption. An entertaining tale of redemption woven into the private battles of a female warrior.

Meet the Characters and Read Excerpts at www.wholeslaurarmitage.com

M.H.A. MENONDJJI
BEYOND THOSE HILLS:
AN OFFICER AND A LADY
Private Battles of a Female Warrior

Franklin Evans

Author of

“Stand To...A Journey to Manhood”

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Real Combat Life

By
Patrick Nelson

The transition from soldier to civilian has been tough for me. I thought that I was prepared and ready to take the challenge head on. I was prepared in the sense that I knew what to expect but I did not know how to handle those situations. One of the hardest situations that I have faced is telling people what it was like “over there.”

I spent nearly seven years in the Army as a paratrooper in the historic 173rd Airborne Brigade. I completed 1 tour in Iraq and two tours in Afghanistan for a total of 39 months. On June 8, 2005, I was wounded by a 107 mm rocket attack on our small forward operating base near the Pakistani border. My physical wounds paled in comparison to the other soldiers that were wounded that day. I returned to duty two weeks later. However, we lost two of our brave brothers that day.

I started *Real Combat Life* (www.realcombatlife.com) shortly after I left the Army. I first used the site as a personal blog in order to get things off my chest. I soon opened the site up to my fellow veterans as I found it very therapeutic. I invested some of my own money to redesign the site and make it user friendly. As a college student on a fixed income, this really stretched me out.

I fortunately stumbled upon the Pepsi Refresh Project in January of this year and felt this was the opportunity that I was looking for. I submitted



my application for the \$25,000 grant. If you are not familiar with the Refresh Project, the public votes on different ideas throughout the month and the top ten win grants, except only two win \$25,000. We competed with many well-established organizations. Thanks to many great military supporters across the country, we won.

We have used the money to do another redesign of the site.

This redesign has made the site much more esthetically pleasing and easier to navigate. A veteran who wishes to share his story on the site just needs to click on the tab “Share Your Story” and submit the form to us. Every veteran who does share their story receives a free Real Combat Life t-shirt as a token of our appreciation. Eventually, we hope to provide more than just a free t-shirt to show our gratitude for the service and sacrifice of our veterans.

I have recruited five great volunteers across the country to help spread the word about *Real Combat Life* to let our veteran’s know who we are what we do. These volunteers have stepped up to help our troops and we are always looking for more great people across.

The heightened awareness of PTSD has led to several strides in the mental health treatment of

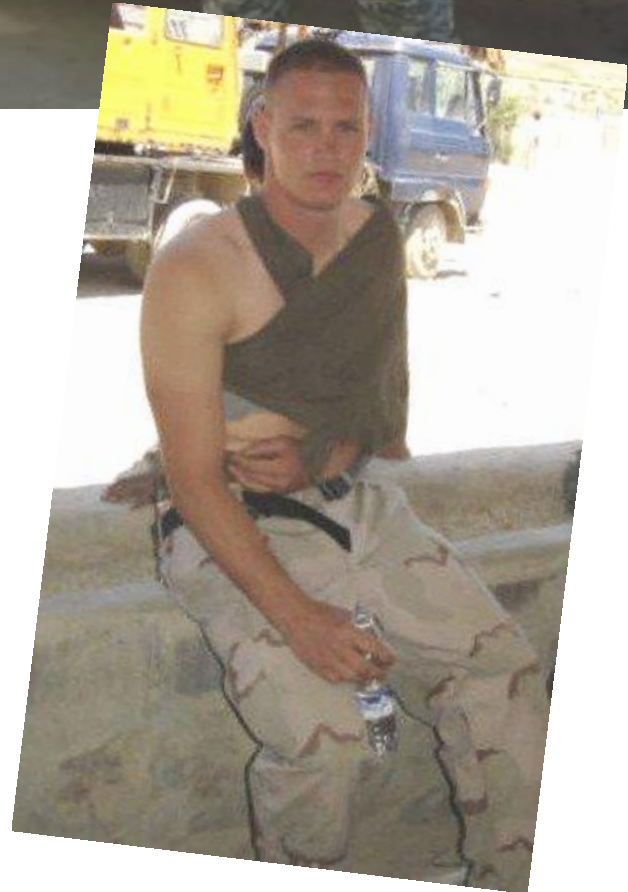
(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8) *Nelson*

our veterans, but it has not been enough. PTSD is nothing new and many veterans who returned from previous conflicts never had the resources that are currently available. I am not saying that writing is the cure all for those who are experiencing PTSD symptoms, but I am saying that it has proven to help many veterans better handle some of those symptoms.

The therapeutic aspects of writing are a major part of *Real Combat Life*, but another part is we strive to raise awareness to the public about the service and sacrifice of our veterans. A large majority of Americans will never know what is like to be in combat and receive their information via the main-stream media. This can be dangerous as the media tends to focus on the negative stories concerning our troops which can lead to serious misconceptions.

I invite to you visit *Real Combat Life* and share your story. We are always looking for new contributors and are not particular about how you share your story. We would also appreciate any help you may be able to offer as look forward to better serving our veterans.



Veterans Day, 2010

by
Bob Fournoy

I got choked up a while back, getting my annual check up at the VA hospital in Nashville. In the lobby were several young men, probably not more than 22 years old, who were missing one or more legs. There was also a beautiful young lady of the same age without an arm. She probably lost it in Iraq, or Afghanistan with the memory of her high school prom fresh in her mind. They were all looking for a ride home. The VA provides transportation for these wounded warriors, but they were clearly waiting. I took two of them to their homes in the Nashville metro area. I tried to ask meaningful questions about their service while struggling to keep my composure. They were both restrained, tired, and still somewhat dazed that such a thing had happened to them. They had all volunteered, of course, and were not bitter, just flat from a common desire—they wanted to go back. They felt that although the mission had been poorly conceived, their fellow soldiers needed them. There was an emptiness in them, because a meaningful thing had been taken away. Not their limbs, but their sense of purpose, their duty, and the comrades they no longer had.

So, on this Veterans Day, I am thinking that this one is more meaningful than in my day, when there was a draft, and every young man was expected to serve his country. Oh, you could get out of it in any number of ways, but most went, and served in a devastatingly long, poorly executed, unnecessary, sad war. Soldiers today are serving because they mostly want to. I do not detect the sense of loss, and abandonment of the Vietnam era in today's men and women in uniform. Even though invading Iraq was a terrible political decision and the fighting in Afghanistan does not reflect the original intent of going there, for these troopers it is about love and fellowship under the most trying of circumstances. This day is truly

one for them, because they donned the uniform for the simple reason that they chose to. We need to make sure that we take care of them forever.

Showing Up

**There were plenty of reasons not to go;
Government protest,
Fear,
Selfishness,
Social Conscience,
God, or
Religion (hardly connected).
Plenty of reasons not to go,
For some, and
That is ok now.**

**But, for many that went,
There was never a choice.
No decision to be made.
It never occurred to do anything, but
Show up.
To have done anything else,
Would not have felt right.
It would not feel right forever.**

“Vietnam is an ache in the heart of a generation, a chord playing in a minor key, constantly humming in our soul”



LT COL. Theodore Roosevelt and member of the 1st U.S. Volunteers atop San Juan Hill July 1898

Moon's Mutterings—Mike Mullins

It is mid-October and I am thinking about Veterans Day. Truth be known, I started thinking about it in Pittsburgh looking at our World War Two members. Each time I meet someone from that generation, I consider that meeting Veterans Day... whenever and wherever it occurs. It is not a day set aside by Congress. That illustrious body does not appreciate it like I do. That is not a political statement (there are a few there who may) but a statement of fact.

We had two eloquent, handsome, well-spoken representatives from that war speak to us in Pittsburgh. I meet many who are. I meet some who are not so able as well. Korean War vets are often the same generation, some separated in age by mere months. More than I knew served in both, albeit very late in WW II. They fall into both realms of ability as well. We are losing these wonderful American stewards at an alarming rate. Each Veterans Day, there are fewer to attend the parades and even fewer able to be part of the parade. I will salute them still when the floats are mirages made of memories.

Thank God for those who speak to us in the first person, for those who are members of MWSA. They share the beauty of their minds, spirits, and hearts. Let us not forget for a moment those who are not quite as able, either by chance or challenge. It may be that they need to be remembered even more.

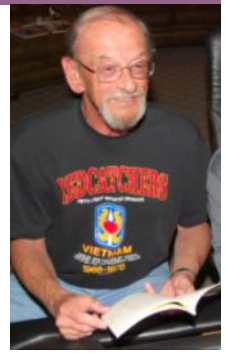
Walk into a VA facility and you may see a vet sitting on the edge of a bed or in a chair—half-clean, wobbly, with a vacant look in his eyes and think only of the pathetic hulk sitting there. You may see the same thing in any one of a thousand care facilities throughout our country. The goodness of your heart may cause you to volunteer to help. That is beautiful and a blessing.

You may wrap your arms around him and help him to his

feet, holding your breath against the stench of his camel's breath as he sighs into your face. You may wrinkle your nose against the smell of old age that simply will not wash off no matter how hard you rub. It is a smell that defies description, much like the smell of burned flesh after a napalm run. As you lift, the crunch of his old, arthritic joints is audible. A groan involuntarily escapes his lips as pain wracks him in spite of the myriad of drugs in his system and you want to cry because pain the last thing you want to cause. Nobody wants him in pain but some pain is impossible to medicate. Much of that is in the soul.

His hands are gnarled, the nails long and yellowed with age and dietary problems. His skin is crinkly like parchment, blotchy by the blood thinners he is forced to take—and often his oxygen lines are a jump rope that causes problems for you. Patience grows thin—no matter how good-hearted you are. Why did you take this on? You begin to forget who it is you are there helping. It is a pathetic creature, no longer a person who once laid his life on the line for his country.

It is easy to forget the old photos of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Army-Airmen, Seabees, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines, WACS, WAVES, nurses, and the others who served in our wars. It is easy to push aside the images of gunpowder-blackened faces wearing blood-spattered and torn fatigues, battle weary but alert, staring at a camera recording their pain for posterity. It is easy to forget the images taken from behind when warriors trudged into blasted trees and jungle while enemy fire rains down on them as a courageous photographer snaps the shot while exposed to the same risk.



These men are the bombers sitting on an old airfield leaning to one side on a collapsed landing gear, the turrets broken, with faded images of Betty Boop, and signs of missions completed on the fuselage, hoping that someone can restore their glory some day. They are the old ships with rusting rivets in naval bone yards or sunken offshore somewhere now to make new reefs for our oceans' ecosystem. They are the ancient tanks sagging on broken tracks in a weed-grown field stared at by younger eyes who question how they hell the fought in those old tin cans. They are the tiny subs in museums that leaked at every joint and creaked with every movement but fought a war nobody could see. They are old artillery pieces that sit on flattened tires with rusted barrels indicating miniscule projectile sizes which today's warriors would scoff at as light weaponry.

Those are the people you and I often help. They are the men, and sometimes women, we forget are veterans. We get lost in the moment. We see what they are now, not what they were then. They do not want to be what they have become. Often their memories are trapped. We are restoring their glory. They may not know it but we are. We are telling the stories.

I have met a few of each in their homes. Some are articulate. Some stumble for words or their recollections are mildly jumbled. They require our patience as they sift through the mental rubble. They range from Spic and Span clean to the Edge of Darkness, but to the man they did their duty. They are living history. They *are* the parades, the reason for the day. I see them in wheelchairs, on walkers, on canes, and with limps. They are us.

My generation is not far behind. Another Nam vet challenged me to write a poem about that very topic. I have not done it yet. There is another thing about which I am in denial. It is true. Somewhere this summer, I read that 364 Nam-era vets are dy-



ing every month. It is not something I have been able to confirm officially. Regardless, it is a fact that considering the beginning of that "conflict" we are not that many years behind the Korean War vets. At our last local reunion, I looked at the number of people with obvious maladies and was stunned. I laughed while there and told my son that he must find it hard to believe that we ever fought anything but diarrhea. If I do an honest evaluation of myself, guess what? I cannot walk in a parade.

I suppose that the Veterans Day Parade is about me too. It is about a whole new generation of warriors still defending what we stand for as well. It matters. Some day they will be helping some of us while we sit staring vacantly on the edge of that bed or chair. Some are already. After that, I pray to God somebody will be helping us.

And I pray fervently that there will still be a Veterans Day Parade. I pray that there will be people along the streets waving flags, saluting, some crying, remembering, appreciating, and applauding. George S. Patton is reported to have said something like, "Without soldiers there can be no glory in war." He is right. Without something real and right to believe in there is no reason to serve. As every veteran knows, we served our Flag and Country, but we fought for each other.

Every time I meet a veteran, it is Veterans Day for me. I don't have to say it. I just have to believe it and remember it. On that calendar day, however, I will say a special prayer of appreciation...to all of them... past, present, and future.



Uncommon Valor: The Medal of Honor and the Six Warriors Who earned it in Iraq and Afghanistan

Review by Bill McDonald

Authors Dwight Zimmerman and John Gresham have written not just a book—they have managed to capture a piece of American history. *Uncommon Valor* is destined to become a military classic. It should be required reading at all the military academies! It is not just an accounting of six men who won "The Medal Of Honor" but an unfolding of emotions, history and honor itself. In the last decade, I have never enjoyed a military book more than this one. It inspired, educated, and entertained me.

Zimmerman and Gresham have created something very special between the pages—it is so much more than just history and fact telling. It is at times, spellbinding, insightful, and informational.

This is a book that stands out from the rest. It is both my honor and pleasure to announce that "Uncommon Valor" is the winner of "The Military Writer's Society of America's" (MWSA) Founder's Award for 2010.

I personally endorse this book and recommend it to all Americans to read and not just those who like military or history books. WELL WRITTEN. WELL RESEARCHED! Most of all it is A MOVING AND LOVING PORTRAIT of six men who gave their lives in service to their country while fighting terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq.

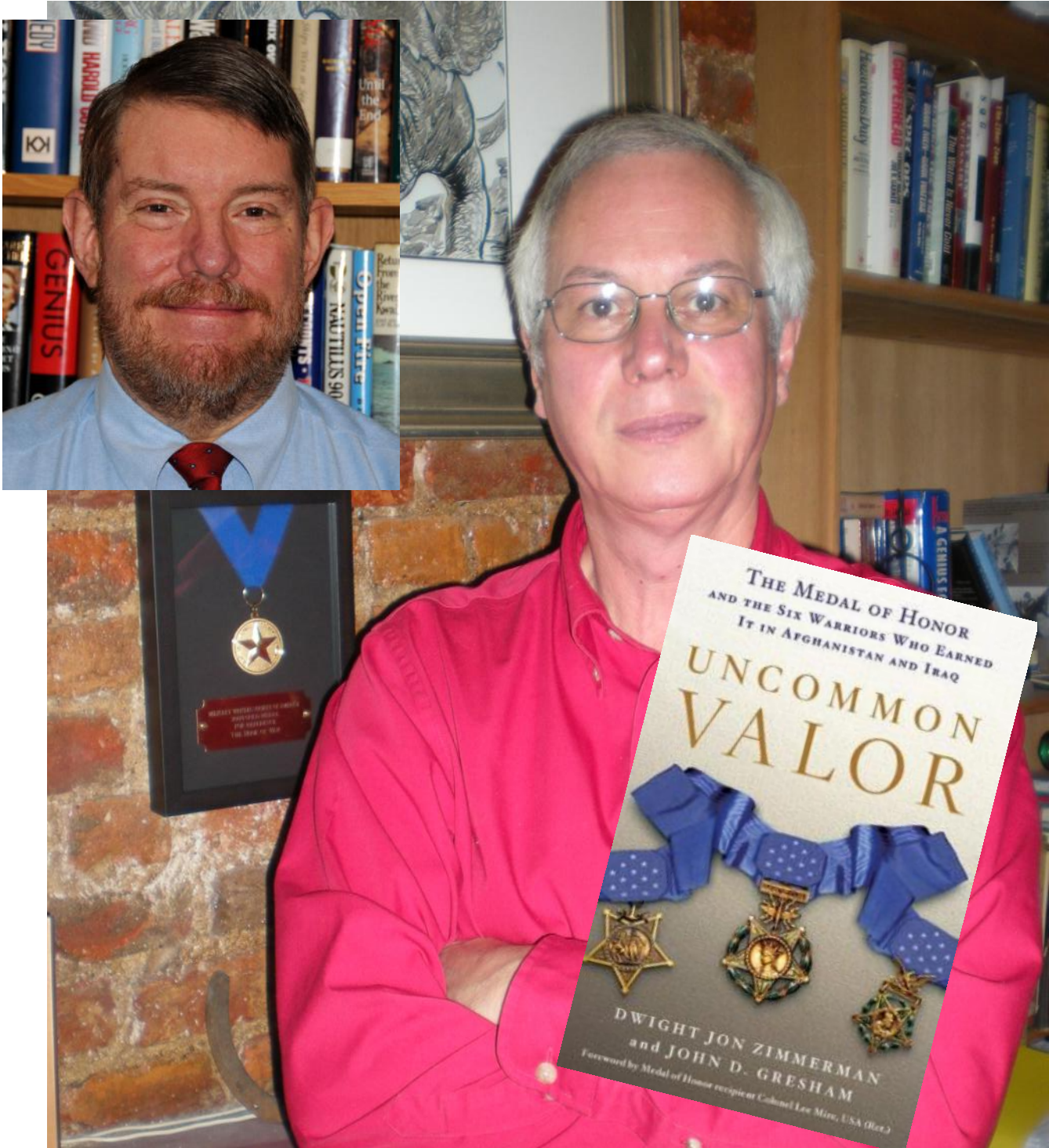
Introducing MWSA member, John D. Gresham

John D. Gresham lives in Fairfax, VA. He is an author, researcher, game designer, photographer, and military commentator with numerous publishing, design, speaking, and television appearance credits in his portfolio. He was the primary researcher and partner to Tom Clancy on his best-selling series of nonfiction "guided tour" books about military units. These include *Submarine* (1993), *Armored Cav* (1994), *Fighter Wing* (1995), *Marine* (1996), *Airborne* (1997), *Carrier* (1999), and *Special Forces* (2001), all published by Berkley Books. He also is the award-winning co-designer of *Supermarina I* and *Supermarina II* (*Clash of Arms Games*, 1996 and 1997), naval wargames based upon Larry Bond's award-winning *Command at Sea* game system.

Gresham's book *DEFCON-2* (with Norman Polmar), is a new single-volume history of the Cuban Missile Crisis and was published by John Wiley & Sons in 2006. His latest book, *Beyond Hell and*

B a c k (2 0 0 7 , w i t h Dwight Jon Zimmerman), describes seven key US special operations missions. He is working on a pair of books, one on post-9/11 Medal of Honor recipients, and the other on the F-22A Raptor fighter. He has provided interviews, commentary, research, screenwriting, and production assistance for various documentary series produced for TLC and the History, Military, New York Times, Discovery, and National Geographic channels. His most recent book, *Uncommon Valor*, covering six Medal of Honor recipients and their deeds in Iraq and Afghanistan, co-authored with Dwight Jon Zimmerman, received the MWSA 2010 Founder's Award.

2010 FOUNDER'S AWARD



John D. Gresham and Dwight Zimmerman, Award-winning Authors of “Uncommon Valor”

The Lady Let Him Fly

Never once
did she bind his wings;
take away his boyhood
paper-airplane-dreams;
nor try to force him
down to earth
when it was the air and sky
that beckoned his worth.

Never once
did the lady
hold him back,
or trounce his joy
for an air-to-ground-attack;
nor weep like a spoiled child
when he ventured into the blue wild.

In the background she would wait
chasing away twinges
for her fighter pilot's fate.

With wings straight and unfurled
he and the titanium bird
lifted above the runway's end
seeking freedom on the wind.
And when he did not return
the lady waited proud and strong
knowing he'd been - "happy all along."

And when the aged hands of Father Time
called him home
beyond the sky,
the young flyer smiled
because the Lady Let Him Fly.

© Kathleen M. Rodgers, 1987 Alaska

Mystery Nominee Winners Announced at 2010 Awards Banquet & Launch of New MWSA Programs

At the 2010 Awards Banquet, Charlayne Henry announced the winners of the Mystery Nominations Program. These authors will see scenes from their books performed during the 2011 Conference in Pittsburgh, PA.

The winners are: *How Do You Mend This Purple Heart* by Terry Gould, *The Lady Gangster* by Del Staecker, *Sisters of Valor* by Rosalee Turner, *God Does Have a Sense of Humor* by Rob Ballister, and *The Sharon Rogers Band* by Pat Avery.

So often I hear from veterans and active military folks that they aren't understood, that their fellow Americans don't appreciate their efforts, that no one knows what they've done in defense of the country that we all love so much. Some fear that their service will be forgotten. Many complain that our young people aren't interested in history.

As the President of Military Writers Society of America, I've taken these concerns to heart and developed programs that introduce history represented by the experience and writings of the members of this organization to new audiences. For the 2010 Conference, we focused on three new opportunities.

The first was an outreach to the schools in the area. Volunteers came to Pittsburgh a day early and spent several hours at Bethel Park High School. We visited history, journalism, writing, social studies, and English classes—and hopefully introduced our work to students. As Charles Youngs, head of the English Department, said, "It's one thing to teach students about a subject. It's quite another for them to hear about the event from someone who was there." Although not all students will ask questions in front of their peers, those of you who participated may have touched



MWSA author Kathy Rodgers poses with Natalia Thomas, Carla Lovelace, Wali Jamal, and Elisha Boynes — the cast of *The Final Salute at the Kelly-Strayhorn*

the future in a meaningful way by spending time with these young people. Several of the volunteers were interviewed by the press. Articles and pictures appeared in local newspapers and magazines. Many thanks to Mike Anglely who worked with the school to set up a Wiki for us.

At the end of the day, we attended a meet and greet with the Principal, members of the School Board, teachers and students. Bob Calvert of "Talking with Heroes" interviewed participants and videos of those will be posted on YouTube soon.

Throughout the next year, teachers will assign students to write about the topics we discussed—and will send us the best two papers to be published in *Dispatches*. Next year, those who participated in the event will vote on the best papers and those students will receive medals at our awards banquet. We have also been asked to come back and spend time with students again. If you are inter-

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 17) **Faulkner**

ested in participating next year, please let me know.

The second new program introduced this year was a performance of scenes from MWSA books. The goal of this production was to introduce MWSA authors, their books, and their stories to new audiences—to those who participated in the play (cast, crew, lighting, video) and their families, to those who came to the theater for a night of fun, and to other MWSA members. For many of the young people involved in this endeavor, this was a new perspective. One of the most moving moments for me was when the cast and crew lined up to give me a hug—and each told me, “Thank you for this opportunity.” Many thanks to Marlyce Stockinger and Mike Mullins, our emcees, and to James Jellerson and Charlayne Henry whose voices thrilled us. Also, many thanks to everyone who came out in support of the effort.

Next year, we will have even more MWSA involvement through a committee to be chaired by Kathy Rodgers. She will work with Charlayne to help find additional actors, costumes, background information, and other items. She will also reach out to local schools, senior centers, veteran and business organizations, and the press. Anyone wanting to work with Kathy, contact MWSAPresident@gmail.com.

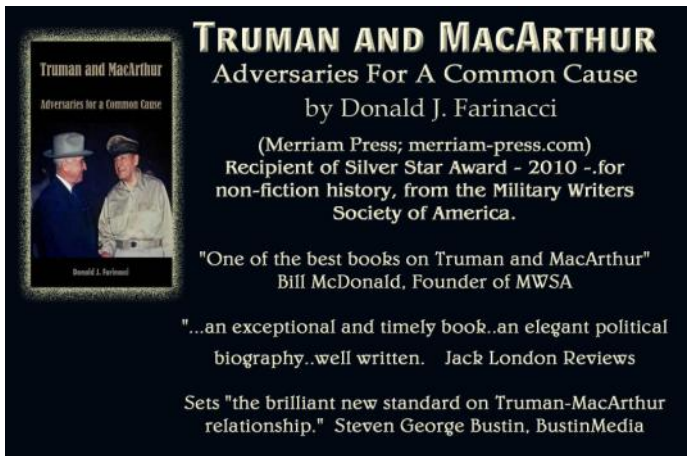
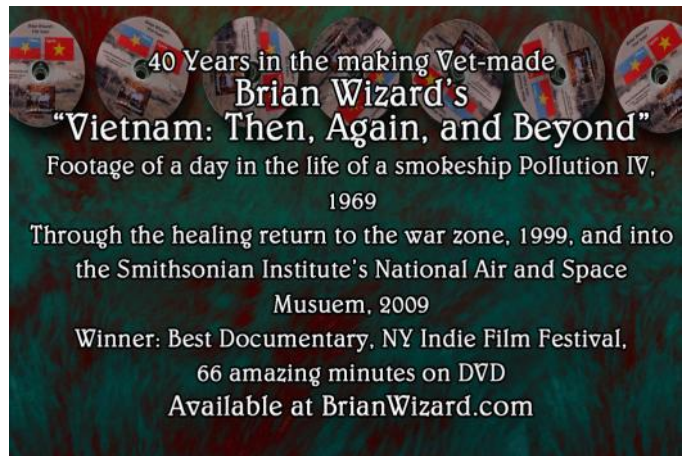
The third new program was Oral History Day which was monitored and recorded by “Our History Project” Director, Craig Anderson. The goal for this event, like the first two programs, was to introduce MWSA to the local community, to share

our stories, and to encourage folks to participate in MWSA events. Every thirty minutes, all day long, another member took the stage to talk about their life, their experiences, or something that they had been researching.

Next year, we will focus more on this activity—with a bigger room and fewer competing activities. There were stories told that we should all have heard.

One of my favorite events the last two years has been our Open Mic, hosted by MWSA Vice President Mike Mullins. We open it to the public, but the real moments that we all remember come from the interaction of MWSA members. Among others, Joe Lee informed us, Stephen Peterson made us smile, John Cathcart made us cry.

Each year, after the conference, we have more members willing to volunteer. This means that we have more resources which frees up officers and board members to work on other things. This year, we will create an expanded leadership group—by adding committees to help us with certain tasks. Dwight Zimmerman will chair the PR committee. He is actively looking for support so if you are interested in helping us get information out to the press, please contact him. As I mentioned before, Kathy Rodgers will chair a committee to help us grow, perfect, and support the play. We’ll also be working with Dale Throneberry to expand the Veterans Radio Network—first with a program segment, and then later, if it works out, with our own MWSA radio show.



*Award-winning Author Fr. Ron Camarda
&
Joyce Faulkner*



*Award-winning Authors Charles Grist
& Tom McGraham*



*Iwo Jima Veteran Tom McGraham
With Flag that has flown over
Mt. Suribachi*



*Award Winners Mike Mullins, Charlayne Henry,
&
jim greenwald*

Joanne Quinn-Smith — Pittsburgh Personality & MWSA Supporter

During the 2010 Conference, we were supported by a variety of publications, podcasts, radio and television shows who were interested in our mission and our stories. Many thanks to Craig Anderson (Our History Project), Joe Lee (On Patrol), Mike Pintek (KDKA News Radio), Paul Bruno (The History Czar), Bev Sninchak (Elemental Muse), Sandy Lawrence (Perceptive Marketing Hour), Kaitlynn Reity (Pittsburgh Post Gazette), Terri Johnson (The Almanac), Anjuelle Floyd (Book Talk, Creativity, & Family Matters), Shirley Douglas (The Shirley Douglas Show & PJ Talk), JoAnn Forrester (The Empress of Biz), Dale Throneberry (Veterans Radio Network), and Bob Calvert (GI Radio & Talking with Heroes) as well as many others around the country.

I'd also like to thank Joanne Quinn-Smith (Positively Pittsburgh Live) for interviewing our authors on both her radio and television shows, for attending MWSA events, and for her offer to help us promote our 2011 activities. Over the next few months, we will be introducing you to these wonderful folks so that you can share their shows and publications with your friends on Facebook and Twitter, mention them in your articles and blogs, and remember them when you have a new book or a line on a story that you think might interest them.

Joanne Quinn-Smith is the CEO of Dreamweaver Marketing Associates in Pittsburgh, PA, a full service marketing company specializing in Web 2.0 Gorilla Branding™. Known as the “Techno Granny” she offers her clients unique, creative and energetic marketing and management plans.

Marketing and consulting clients include individuals and entrepreneurs, non profit agencies and organizations, restaurants, small businesses with locations across the US and international organizations.

Lauded for her energetic and enthusiastic style of marketing, Ms. Quinn-Smith is frequently in demand as a speaker. She spoke in 2007, 2008 and 2009 at the NAWBO (National Association of Women Business Owners) Annual Convention in Atlanta Georgia, and Phoenix, Arizona and Chicago, Illinois and is a regular speaker on Social and New Media at the Pennsylvania Business Technology Conference. Joanne has won national acclaim and international fans for her four internet radio shows, four supplemental blogs, and an on line, multi media Community magazine.

In the professional sector, she has served on sev-



JoAnne Quinn-Smith

eral committees and boards including: Girls Going Places, NAWBO National Committees, and Women's Economic Development Outreach, WEDO. She has been an active board member of

(Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20)

NAWBO for many years and was the 2007-2008 President of the Greater Pittsburgh Chapter. She was also the chair of the Second Annual NAWBO Day at the Greater Pittsburgh Chapter.

Always on the cutting edge of social media, Joanne is the host of a weekly talkcast called *Techno Granny Show*™ which airs each Monday at 7am on Talkshoe. The talkcast helps entrepreneurs learn how to negotiate and make the most of today's technology. She is also the host of three other pod casts including *Positively Pittsburgh Live*™, *The Monday Morning Marketeer*™, and *Professionals with Impact*™. All Talkcasts are recorded live and can be found at:

www.positivelypittsburghlivemagazine.com.

Her current niche is *Web 2.0 Gorilla Branding Training*™ and *PositivelyPittsburghLiveMagazine.com* a multimedia resource for and about Pittsburgh. Website:

www.positivelypittsburghlivemagazine.com

which is also a syndicated Pittsburgh Internet Radio and TV network. Joanne Quinn-Smith has been designated nationally, 2009 Small Business Journalist of the Year by the US Small Business Administration for her advocacy and reporting on small business using social and New Media. Joanne is much in demand as a speaker, instructing businesses and organizations in internet branding and visibility. Joanne's internet radio shows have accumulated listeners internationally of over 200,000.



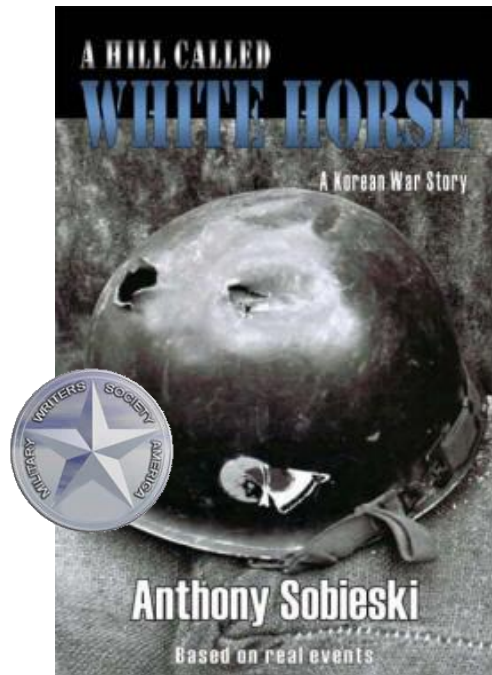
*2010 MWSA Award Winners, Pittsburgh, PA
Photo by Nancy Smith*

Introducing 2010 MWSA Silver Medalist, Tony Sobieski

Anthony (Tony) Sobieski is a Department of Defense civilian employee working for the USAF. He is the Information Security Manager for Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey, where he oversees all handling, storage and safeguarding practices of classified information for the base. Tony also still serves in the reserves as the Superintendent of Force Protection and Operations Division for Air Force Security Forces at the Pentagon. Tony was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which he still calls home. He enlisted in the Air Force Reserve in 1989, and in 1998, then TSgt Sobieski graduated from the prestigious Air Force Phoenix Raven School. Since becoming an Air Force Raven, Tony has deployed to over thirty-two different countries in the performance of his duties. He has served in Operations Desert Storm, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Tony is a recognized Korean War historian and published author, having published three books, 'FIRE MISSION!', 'FIRE FOR EFFECT!' and his latest work 'A HILL CALLED WHITE HORSE' about the use of artillery during the war. Tony is married to the former Miss Ann Grusdis, and they have one son, John.



Tony Sobieski



Open Source

A ship is hijacked.
Russia wants it back.
A simple question.
"What if...?"
The answer will affect
the balance of power
in the Middle East
and change the world...
FOREVER.



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The controversial new thriller by M. M. Frick.
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"Untitled"

There is a dragon in my soup today
 raising its fiery head. I see nothing yet to
 Take the edge off the senses. Where do I go, what do I do
 To release the concrete from my bones, the heaviness of it all?
 The gambling of the world for its soul and children leaves me somber
 Until I separate my flesh from my spirit and let it soar to
 The one who breathed me, and I ask for one more ounce of strength
 One more pint of courage, one more gallon of faith, one more reason of purpose
 To move through the fog, through the questions, through the day
 And once more, slay the dragon, toss the head to heaven,
 And drink my soup with ease.

By Deb Tainsh Oct/2010



*Award-winning author Kathleen Rodgers and Playwrite, Director,
 Producer Charlayne Henry*

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Cyndee Schaffer, Author of Molly's War at Joseph Beth Bookstore

William E. Mayer Inspiration Word for November
FEAR



2001 classic collection of short stories by former Army nurse Susan O'Neill, now in new expanded Serving House Books edition. Available on Amazon in paperback or Kindle, or on Barnes & Noble.com.



Anna Marie Gire — wip@fastmail.fm — www.womensindependentpress.com

William E. Mayer Prize for Literary & Artistic Excellence

For awhile, we have wanted to introduce programs that recognize writing that doesn't fall into our usual format—books. The addition of new opportunities is limited by our resources, not our ideas. However, Frank Evans, Founder's Award Winner for 2009 and author of *Stand To...A Journey to Manhood*, agreed to chair a judging committee and Bonnie Latino and Lee Kelley volunteered to serve as judges. As a result, it was with great excitement that we introduced the William E. Mayer Prize for Literary & Artistic Excellence at the beginning of 2010.

The late William E. Mayer was a renaissance man with talents in many areas. He was soldier, a doctor, a statesman, an author—and a member of MWSA. To encourage writers, artists, musicians, and photographers to spontaneously tackle new

short projects, we offer a word or phrase each month which is meant to stimulate the imagination and encourage our members to create. We accept written treatments including essays, poetry, short stories, lyrics, and drama. The only limitation is that it must be 1000 words or less excluding the title. We also accept artwork including sketches, paintings, digital art, and photography. Audio pieces must be submitted as mp3 files and last five minutes or less. Each month, the inspirational word or phrase is printed on the cover of *Dispatches* and appears several places inside the magazine. To enter, send your submission to MWSAPresident@gmail.com. It will be logged and numbered. The Committee judges the monthly entries blind. The monthly winners are finalists for the annual prize.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2010 William E. Mayer Award for Literary and Artistic Excellence.

- **Gold** — *“Gifts” by Carmen Stenholm*
- **Silver** — *“Living in a House Divided” by Kathy Rodgers*
- **Bronze** — *“A Special Delivery Package” by Robert Robeson.*

Upon hearing of their selections as winners, the writers said:

“Who could have imagined just a few months ago that my dream of writing would become so rewarding. Best of all was meeting all you wonderful members of MWSA this year. Words simply cannot express how grateful I am to all of you for your time and care. I will treasure the gift of gold for the William E. Mayer Award For Literary Excellence the rest of my life. You – I'll treasure forever. Carmen Stenholm”

“For once I am speechless! I'm thrilled that "Living in a House Divided" has won Silver in the first ever William E. Mayer Award For Literary Excellence. Congratulations to Carmen for winning the Gold and Robert for winning the Bronze. This is such an honor. My entry is actually an excerpt from the novel I'm working on, "Johnnie Come Lately. This award gives me motivation to finish my book. With a grateful heart, Kathleen (Kathy) Rodgers.”

“I work late at night, so was surprised and honored to find your message waiting for me when I logged on this morning. Special congratulations to Carmen and Kathleen, too. This was a very encouraging way to begin a new day. Best wishes, Robert B. Robeson ‘Dust Off 605’”

***Klinger: A Story of Honor and Hope* by Betsy Beard** **Reviewed by Claudia Pemberton**

Klinger: A Story of Honor and Hope is an enchanting children's book that is fashioned more from fact than fiction. The fact that Klinger is based on a real life Caisson Horse makes this tale even more magical.

From the time of his birth, Klinger believes that he is special. He dreams of becoming the speediest racehorse anyone has ever seen. But, even though he is tall and strong, Klinger isn't very fast. His trainer and owner decide that since he isn't as quick as the other horses, Klinger must be sent away. It breaks his little heart to be separated from his mother and father. Frightened and alone, he arrives at his new home at Fort Myer in Arlington, Virginia. The soldiers and the other horses are kind to Klinger as they patiently train him for his brand new and important duty as part of the elite Caisson escort team. Klinger feels honored to pull the wagon that carries fallen American soldiers. His sweet and gentle nature makes him perfect for the job of comforting the lost soldiers' families.

Ultimately, Klinger discovers that it's not speed that makes him special—it's his spirit.

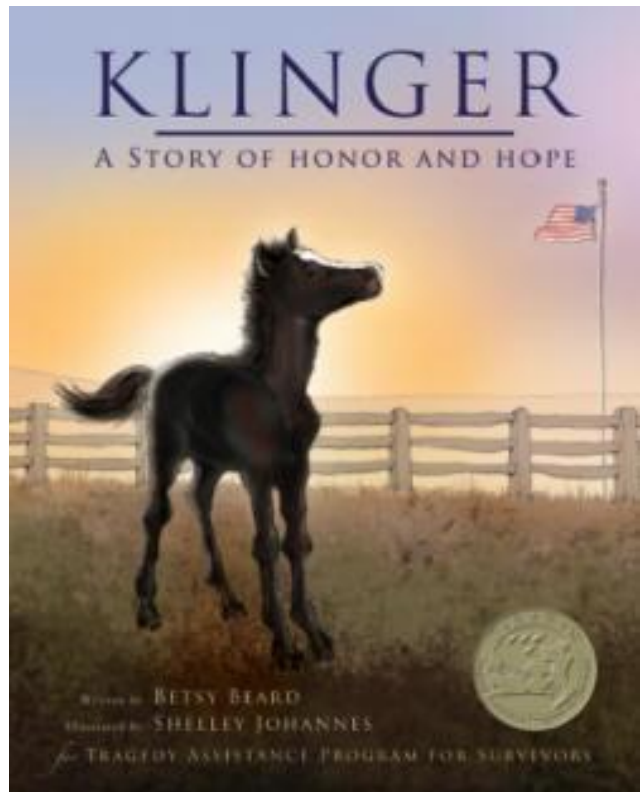
Beard's storytelling ability is mesmerizing for young and old alike. The illustrations will captivate the reader as the vibrant images bring the story to life. The artistry and depth of color in the artwork are incredible.

Much of Beard's narrative is based in reality, so her tale is as educational as it is entertaining. Many parallels and life lessons abound in this little book. Since all creatures great and small have an inherent desire to feel special, Klinger's journey to discover his specialness is both endearing and familiar. Hopefully, Klinger's quest will encourage the child listener to aspire—and the adult reader to inspire.

Klinger will steal your heart with its undeniable charm. I give it my highest recommendation. This quality hardback storybook (complete with dust jacket) makes it perfect for gift giving, and is guaranteed to delight Americans of all ages.



Author of the Month for October
Betsy Beard
Klinger: A Story of Honor and Hope



***Project: Dragonslayers* by K. Rowe** **Reviewed by jim greenwald**

Terrorism and discrimination rolled into one interesting and very tangled story! Ms. Rowe weaves the two seemingly unrelated subjects into an excellent story, filled with suspense that leaves the reader anxiously looking forward to turning the page.

The premise is an Air Force (female) Lt. Colonel who runs into problems with a Navy Rear Admiral in her efforts to start an elite Special Forces Unit. Between events with the Admiral, terrorists, gang members, ptsd and one's own personal demons the action and interaction will keep you in your seat. That issues of discrimination exist one should have no doubts, thankfully they are not prevalent in the armed forces, but that does not imply they do not exist as Tryggvesson's story unfolds within this story.

This book will interest males and females and all branches of the military as it will be easy to see the story as something that may have or could have in some way existed for each of them. Lots of toys (weapons) involved to grab the interest of action fans and an equal amount of human interest and interaction.

It is a long book, 578 pages, but one the reader will not put down until finished. For first-time author Rowe, this is an excellent effort—the first of a trilogy I know I will read.



October Book of the Month
***Project Dragonslayer* by K. Rowe**

***Sgt Rock: The Lost Battalion* By Billy Tucci**

Reviewed by Bob Doerr

Sgt Rock: The Lost Battalion is an outstanding, artistic rendition of the events surrounding the thrust of the 141st Infantry during the days immediately after D-Day. As the 141st penetrated deep into the Vosges Mountains, they soon found themselves cut off from the rest of the Allied Forces, surrounded and outnumbered by the German Army. For five days the 141st fought desperately to break loose while the stalled allied front tried repeatedly to reach them. Finally, on the sixth day, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team made up primarily of Japanese-American soldiers broke through the Nazi lines to link the Allies with the 141st. The author did a great job presenting the story and his excellent artistic talents delivered

page after page of superior illustrations. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and highly recommend it. If you enjoy reading about World War II battles or simply enjoy a good graphical novel, this book is for you.



Author of the Month: Billy Tucci
Author of
Sgt Rock: The Lost Battalion



***God + The Military Spouse* by Kathleen Cline** **Reviewed by Gail Chatfield**

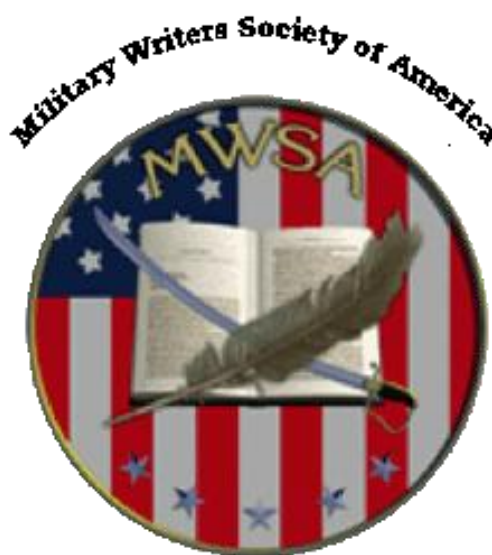
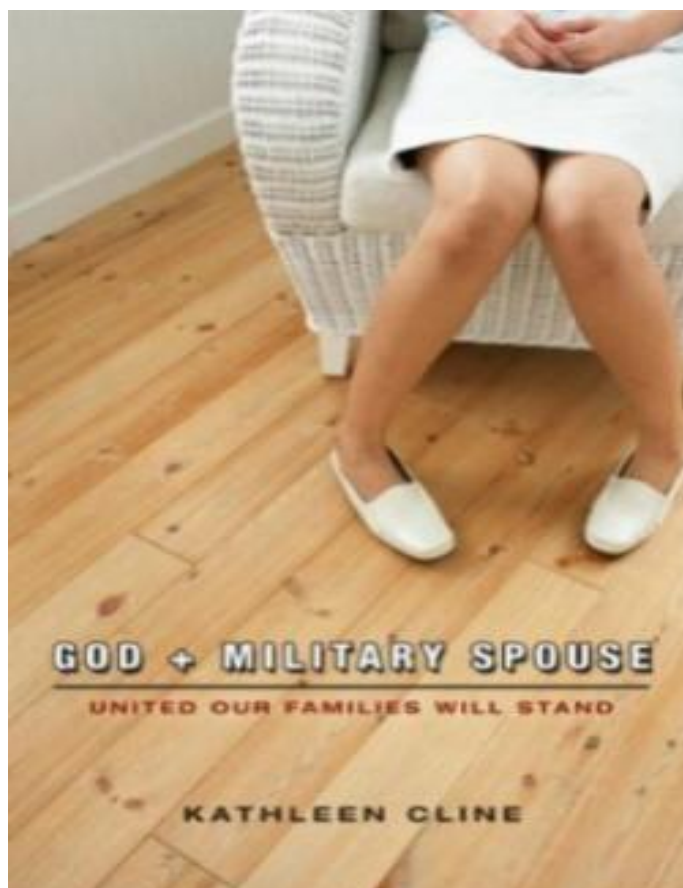
It used to be said that if the military wanted you to have a spouse, they would have issued you one. Thankfully times have changed and the military spouse is now an integral part of any service member's support team. But it's not always easy. Author Kathleen Cline has been married to a Navy man for 20 years and knows the stresses and difficulties of being a military wife. In this book, she shares her experiences and advice with a heartfelt Christian perspective. It is Cline's hope that military wives will form small prayer groups, develop strong Christian bonds, and support each other in what she calls the roller coaster of ups and downs in marriage.

Each chapter discusses different situations a military wife might experience and offers insight on how to get through those difficult times. Cline truly understands and wants to help those who are overwhelmed by the extreme stresses of deploy-

ments and the changes that happen in marriages with the subsequent return of their spouses.

I'm not a military spouse but, I found myself drawn to Cline's sincerity and insight in addressing issues important in any marriage, military or civilian. All marriages have their rough spots and it takes some personal fortitude and strength to keep focused on what is important. Cline, in a sense, has your back. As another helpful tool, several workbook style questions are asked at the end of each chapter to help readers confront and assess their own feelings. On the last pages of the book, Cline shares Bible verses to study that re helpful in addressing a particular issue.

I would recommend this book to any military spouse who wants to strengthen her marriage and herself through her Christian faith.



November Book of the Month:
God + Military Spouse
By
Kathleen Cline

CONNECTIONS

Joyce Gilmour, MWSA Book Reviewer & Editor

Unbelievable! Has it been a month since the MWSA conference? If you weren't able to attend, you missed making CONNECTIONS with some great people. Start socking some money away each week/month for travel plans to attend next year's conference in Pittsburgh. The MWSA Board is already at work taking reflections from this year's conference to make next year's event even better. They are a hard-working, dedicated group of people. Over the next few months, I will be sharing with you about some of the people who I had the good fortune of meeting during this conference...people who have impacted my life.

I'm going to begin with a trio of gentlemen, three of the authors of *Kings of the Green Jelly Moon*: Michael Mullins, James Jellerson, and jim greenwald. (Lloyd King, the fourth author was not able to attend the conference.) The title of the CD and forthcoming book is comprised of parts of each of their names...oh such creative guys! (Lloyd **King**, jim **greenwald**, James **Jellerson**, and Michael "**Moon**" Mullins. (And you can read *Vietnam in Verse* to learn about Michael's nickname. Very interesting!) They all are Vietnam Veterans.



Mike Mullins, James Jellerson, jim greenwald

It was great fun sitting around with a group of people and swapping stories with these guys after

conference hours. We all had a wonderful time. But the specific event I'd like to highlight here is the workshop they presented. The Poetry Corner took place at the Tin Front Cafè. I wasn't originally scheduled to attend that workshop (sorry, fellas!), but I had been asked to be part of an interview team that Bob Calvert (Talking With Heroes) was filming prior to the Poetry Corner. Due to the shuttle situation, I had the FORTUNE (as opposed to misfortune) of being able to stay for the Poetry Corner, and for that, I am so thankful.

These gentlemen handed out some of their poems and we each were able to read one to the group. I had the honor of reading one that Michael wrote for his wife about memories of special times spent with her. I thought to myself, "What a gift for a man to give to his wife...a lovely poem." It was a wonderful time of sharing. I think what amazed me was the answer to my question, "At what age do you think you began to write poetry?" I believe two out of three said they began writing poems in elementary school. Being a third grade teacher, this really made me think about how we handle writing and more specifically, poetry. It was interesting to learn that writing poetry has helped each of them work through some PTSD issues.

I was told that everyone has a story to tell... everyone has a poem within. Well, thanks to a fourth grade teacher, my writing life pretty much was shut down and from that point, I never felt like I could write. Michael, jim, and James convinced me that I needed to open myself up to what I have within me. If they believed in me, why couldn't I believe in myself? The experience of the Poetry Corner gave me a lot of food for thought.

Sitting at the airport on my way back to Wisconsin, I grabbed my new journal (a wonderful gift from MWSA discovered in my registration bag) and penned this poem. It scares me to share it here

(Continued on page 31)

(Continued from page 30) *Gilmour*

because it is a simple poem, but it does convey my thoughts after what I learned from three wise men: Michael, James, and jim.

Writer Within

They say it's within me.

But where?

They say to spill it all out.

But how?

They say I've got stories to tell.

But what?

They say to get started.

But when?

They say people want to hear.

But who?

They say it's important.

But why?

They say it's within me.

But where? *Deep within my soul.*

They say to spill it all out.

But how? *One word at a time.*

They say I've got stories to tell.

But what? *Life's many experiences and memories.*

They say to get started.

But when? *Upon waking to each new day.*

They say people want to hear.

But who? *Those who love me and beyond.*

They say it's important.

But why? *To prove to myself there's a writer within.*

Dedication:

This poem is dedicated to three new friends from Military Writers Society of America. These three Vietnam Vets and poets have encouraged me to find the writer within. This is a first attempt to join the world of poetry. I'm sure it is way too

structured for them, but what can I say? It's from my heart. And that is where they told me to begin. Thank you, James Jellerson, Mike Mullins, and jim greenwald. You three are very special guys who give so much to others. Thank you for all you do and the love that you spread. You all are amazing and are heroes to me. YOU are the "they" in this poem.



*Joyce Gilmour, jim greenwald
Photo by Nancy Smith*

The title "Kings of the Green Jelly Moon" is reflective of the innocence of childhood, back to the time when children believed the moon to be made of green cheese. Beliefs when confronted with reality soon turned to truth and so Nam changed an innocent generation as it became immersed in the truth of war and its realities.

*Kings of the Green Jelly Moon can be purchased through
www.cdbaby.com/cd/gjkm*



Kathy Rodgers presents Medals to Award-winning Children's Author, Sandra Miller Linhart

IN THE RANKS...

"I have not yet begun to fight!"



Captain
John Paul Jones!



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SISTERS of VALOR
A Novel
Rosalie T. Turner

Four service wives...
Four husbands serving
in Vietnam...

The story that gives
voice to the universal
emotions and situations
of every service family.

Endorsed by Mrs. Colin Powell, among others.
Winner of the MWSA Bronze Award.

Cypress
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**Award Winning
Clash-of-Civilizations Trilogy**

- *The Rings of Allah* (Silver Medal)
- *Behold, an Ashen Horse* (Gold Medal)
- *America Reborn*

After Islamic terrorists destroy five U.S. cities with nuclear devices, a strong leader emerges and leads the nation back from the abyss to the Founding Father's wisdom and the Constitution.

Three fast paced, realistic, political and military techno-thrillers by MWSA members Lee Boyland, a former U.S. Army officer, a weapons expert, and Vista Boyland. Visit their interesting web site for more information.

Print and Kindle versions available. Links to sellers at



www.LeeBoylandBooks.com

October/November Notes By jim greenwald



Well, the conference was fantastic. I hope each and every one of you who attended took full advantage of all that was available. It was great to see old and new faces. Were there glitches and issues, of course. Will it ever be perfect, no! It will however continue to grow and improve. Considering everything, Steelers and Pitt games and scheduled weddings, the Wyndham did a great job of providing us what we needed when no one else would or could.

For next year, we'd love to hear your ideas. Even more, we need you to volunteer your time and talents. The existing "staff" has more to do than the clock has minutes and please keep in your mind that we are all "volunteers." Please take time to email Joyce and have her place you on the assignment list for the year or just the conference. Speaking of volunteering, I need a Buckaroo Cashier and an Auctioneer for next year!

Next year in Pittsburgh, we are trying to avoid the Steelers sacking us again. What hotel we will use is yet to be determined. However, when we announce it, I recommend that you reserve your rooms fast as they will go even quicker than this year. Some of our problems this year came from members waiting until the last minute to make their reservations.

To make it easier for some of you, we will accept your Conference fees on a monthly basis—which will make it far easier than waiting until the last minute—for you and for us. If that interests you, contact me.

While unexpected cancellations and room changes are frustrating and we will have back up plans to address those things, it's important that you do your part. Next year, information will be available at the conference registration desk every day regarding any changes. Checking the schedule is a daily responsibility. You must have your tickets for events with you when you arrive at the various locations. Whether you are going to a seminar, luncheon, theater or banquet, if you can't produce your ticket, you may wind up paying twice or making a trip back up to your room. Tickets are our backup

for proof of actual services used/provided.

It is your responsibility to read *Dispatches*, the materials in your registration packet, and the notice boards at the conference. At the conference, MWSA Officers and Board members will be briefed on all aspects of the program so if you need clarifications, track one down so whatever the issue is can be cleared up and or dealt with promptly.

The auction was a great success and a ton of fun. It was an excellent way to wind down from the rush of all that went on. The bidding was interesting to say the least and our auctioneer, Buddy Cox, did an excellent job. He kept things moving and entertained us.

Your Buckaroo accounts (for those that donated items to the auction) have been updated to reflect the difference between the value and actual auction sale price of all donated items.

Buckaroo accounts are added up each year and when the registration packages were put together your Buckaroos were placed in your neck lanyard (or pouch if you prefer) and your account zeroed out, just like a checking account and no, we pay no interest. The quickest way to increase the value of your account is by donating to the auction the more desired the item the more reward for you. One example, an individual donated an item valued at \$300.00 and because of the auction sale price they now have \$9,700.00 extra Buckaroos in their account. If you didn't use your buckaroos, don't throw them away. They are good next year too.

Please feel free to begin donating items for next year's auction now. For those who experienced this for the first time you now have an excellent guide as to what you might donate, but do not limit yourselves to what we offered this year. Gift cards and electronics are excellent ideas.

(Continued on page 34)

(Continued from page 33) **greenwald**

To all the MWSA Book Reviewers, I need volunteer judges for the coming year's awards. I am hoping for at least sixteen volunteers to perform the judging, the more judges the lighter the workload. Send me an email ASAP stating your top three preferences (ex. Fiction, Nonfiction, etc.). I will make every effort to assign you to your choice. However due to workload, you should be aware that you could be assigned to another area.

Judging will be different than in years past. Judges will be assigned a number of books and will receive either copies of the books or electronic downloads. Two judges will be reviewing each book and scoring them. Judges will have ten days to complete their judging/scoring. Reviewer scores will no longer be provided as judges will have book in hand to judge. The new reviewer/judges handbook and spreadsheet will be emailed to each reviewer as soon as it is completed. You will have questions to answer and those answers provide the score, it will make the job much easier and less subjective.

If you did not attend the seminar on editing, and you should have, Joyce Gilmour with her able bodied assistant Kathy Rodgers made it interesting and fun. If you are writing now, talk to Joyce about editing. If she cannot take your project, perhaps she can point you in the direction you need to go. A book and a good book are separated by the editing process. For you folks who rely on Bill Gates, don't.

Awards

Not every winner attended and so we have some mailing to do. Rest assured you will receive your award and stickers to place on your books. **We do ask that you remit \$5.00 to MWSA to cover mailing costs.**

We have a limited quantity of Anthologies left and if you want a copy please forward a check to MWSA in the amount of \$25.00 to cover the costs.

To all the award winners, once more "Congratulations." We have an amazing talent pool in MWSA and we are in the process of grow-

ing the organization which makes being a member even more exciting.

If you did not receive your stickers please let me know. Each award winner is entitled to 100 stickers for their book. Extra stickers can be ordered from Joyce or me.

The Poetry Corner

This month, we are introducing the "Poetry Corner" to the *Dispatches* audience. Each month, we will print two-four poems from any member(s) wishing to share. Forward your poem to me at LeansToFar@aol.com. If you wish reader feedback, simply provide your email address at the bottom of your poem. Feedback may consist of praise, helpful hints or critique. The good and the bad help us grow. No feedback will be printed in *Dispatches*.

This is not a published or professional poet's corner but one for all to share. I am placing three of mine in the first "Poetry Corner." I am looking forward to all who wish to share.

to feel

a whiskey haze of sleep stills the anger and hate
harmless now – not then
loud silences enjoyed by connoisseurs of
abandoned violence
some feel life – others tremble at the edges
burn in its cauldron
their lives overflowing with fire and ice
just off the path of prayer
devoid of sunlight...feeling the fires of
unrelenting disappointments
wondering ~ in no hurry, if love and kindness
are buried deep below HATE?
tongue a weapon, words razor sharp
wielded in red eyed anger
intent on inflicting maximum pain
no thought given to 'breaking point or spirit'
so easy it would be to agree, to accept this reality
I am the tabula rasa of choice
sucked into a world of benign gloom
drinking the bitter tea of life, while bleeding end-
lessly

Continued from Page 34 *greenwald*

addicted

she speaks rapidly
this waterfall woman
they spew out of her
caffeine generated
drug – alcohol induced

it matters not the reason
the words flow
from her macro-micro moods
pronunciations abound
emotions strained...pureed

furniture needs dusting
musty smells mingle with others
I will not name them
read my lips
fed up I watched

if they were goose down
covered in blood
I would be no less sick
but watch I must
this scribbler of verse

lost in the nectar of her words
her life incomplete
hands trembling to rush to the end
feeding only on the filaments of need
she writes another verse

Addicted came about as a result of observing a woman on a

*treadmill who obviously was equally interested in exercise
and her writing.*

images faded

pictures exist of me but are unknown
stolen images held by a thief
having a future unknown

not certain I should be bothered
unsure why I should or should not care
I just know they are stolen bits of me

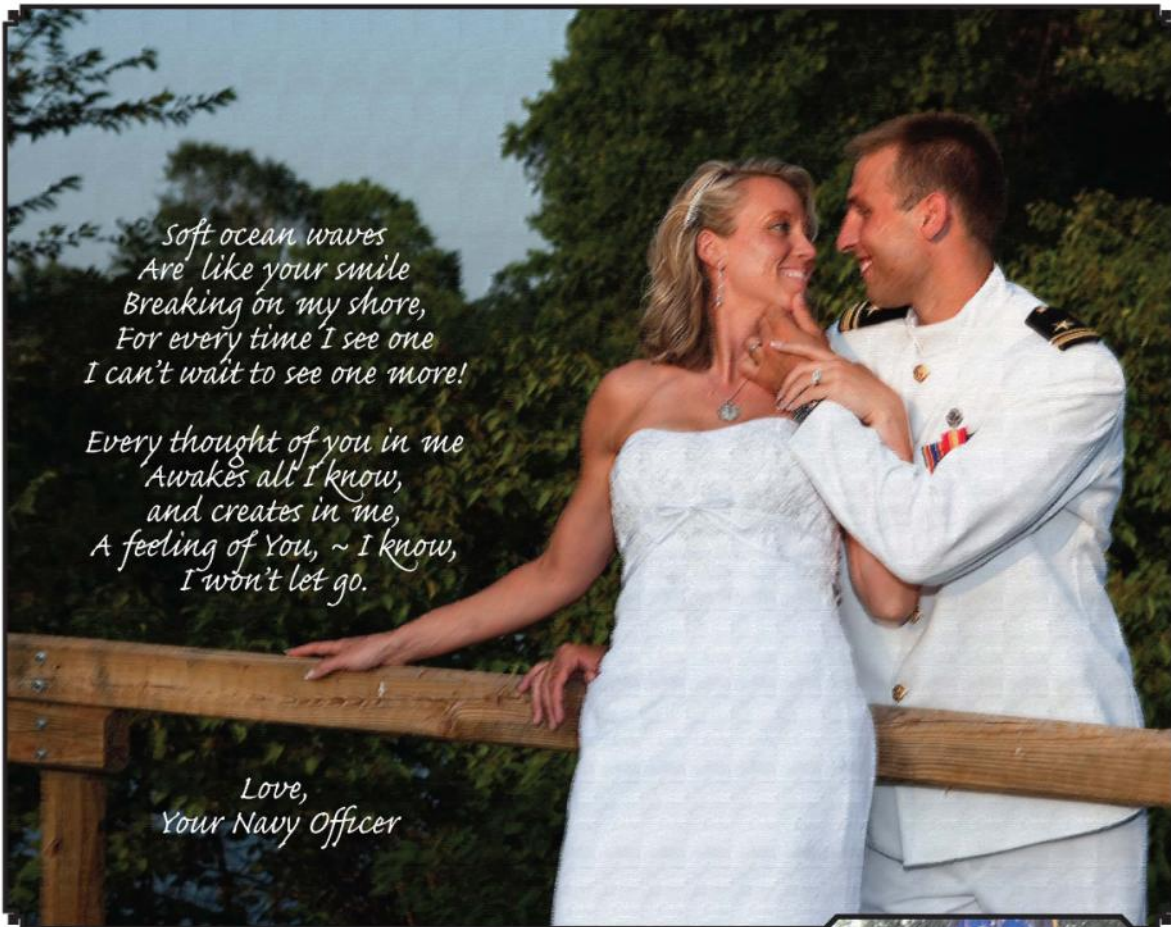
I would be candid to those who shot them
but frankly I do not care
why they hold onto bits of me

wondering at times if they can see
what I feel from the looks etched on prints
can they see a smile or suffering? I hate to pre-
sume

ragged and cold I stand in the snow
awaiting their passing in hopes my pictures will
fall
embroidered with dust arranging themselves for
me to see

perhaps a picture will speak of love
thaw me out and recycle me once more
lifting the blackness that surrounds my thoughts





*Soft ocean waves
Are like your smile
Breaking on my shore,
For every time I see one
I can't wait to see one more!*

*Every thought of you in me
Awakes all I know,
and creates in me,
A feeling of You, ~ I know,
I won't let go.*

*Love,
Your Navy Officer*

Introducing a unique series of original artwork by Kate Dunn of The Creative Cabin, an award-winning graphic designer and fine artist.

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The "Photo Paint" Process

Kate Dunn's beautiful images are multi-media in nature, and her technique demands raw talent as well as a multiplicity of advanced technical skills. She begins by using her trained eye to capture exciting original images using a state-of-the-art digital camera. Next, she transfers the image to her computer, where she uses a combination of software packages to artistically enhance the images. Finally, she produces an original print on the finest quality Strathmore acid-free cotton fiber paper, or Canvas. The result is a stunning original piece of art, some of which are sold in numbered series and others of which are available as originals only.

Commissioned Pieces

While Dunn typically uses her own photography for her work, she will accept commissions using your own treasured family photographs or photograph a subject of your choosing. Also available are originally designed Invitations, Holiday Cards, Announcements, etc all personalized with your images.



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The Founder's Thoughts — Bill McDonald

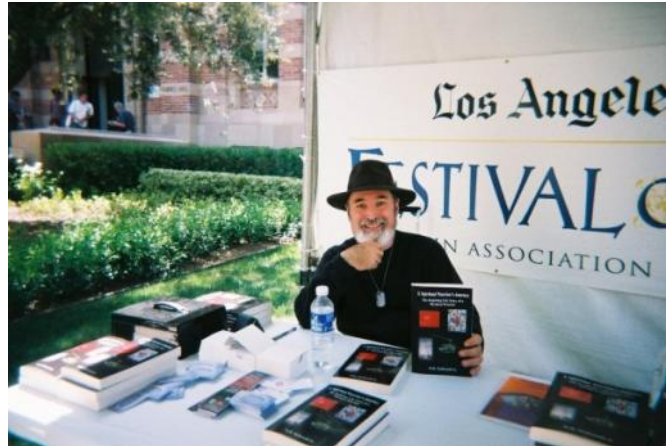
About Face

There are certain crossroads in life that mark where we are in our journey. Most recently, I had the opportunity to experience something that few would volunteer to undergo—having most of my nose and right eyelids cut off and then reconstructed. It was not the most fun I have ever had but it was not the end of the world either.

Yes, it was uncomfortable and at times there was uncertainty about what I would look like when I finally healed. But it has truly been an amazing process both emotionally and spiritually. I feel like I am a much better person for having surrendered to it and for having accepted it. I have never felt better inside myself as I do today as I write this column. I feel fully connected to the world around me and I am enjoying each and every moment. I have no regrets nor do I feel like a victim. I am at peace with what went on and have never complained to anyone about having to go through all that I have had to do this year.

Some people look at me and wonder how I can tell them that this truly is the best year of my life. Most of my friends know that I began the year with a broken shoulder that mysteriously healed. They also know that I had five (5) major heart attacks at the end of May. They have heard the story of having another heart attack on the operating table when they had just finished fixing my three totally blocked arteries. They know that I was told that all of those heart attacks should have killed me—they should have all been fatal. They also know about the brutal and drastic facial surgeries I had at the end of August for cancer. So, how could I be telling people that this was the best year of my life? Simply for the reason that few people understand—that it is not what happens to us but it is our attitude and acceptance and how we react to life situations that are the key to inner peace.

I have never felt so much love from others through all their prayers and fellowship. I have also grown so much closer to my family and friends. More



importantly, I have felt the presence of the divine in my life. I know that we are all loved beyond any measure we could ever imagine. I know as well that we are not the physical body but the soul that dwells within.

I have recovered physically well beyond any expectations of my doctors. I am still alive and a vital part of my family and community. I may be functioning at a slightly slower speed—but I am still upright and still filled with unfulfilled dreams and goals in life.

There were many things that happened to me this year that I am unsure that people could fully accept or understand. A part of me knows that I will risk inviting ridicule, or judgments, for sharing some of the mystical and divine spiritual experiences I had overcoming physical adversity this year. I have felt the grace of God directly in my life many times but this year was something very special. Perhaps, only when we are tested to the greatest levels are we able to open up that door that allows us to see light of the angels.

I am grateful for this year and give heartfelt thanks for everything that has happened to me—both the so-called “good” and “bad” stuff. It has all made me who I am today and I would not trade any of it away for anything.

Thanks for your prayers, love and friendship.

November, 2010 by Dwight Zimmerman

I need to begin my column with some heartfelt thank yous. First go to the MWSA book awards judges. It was a huge honor to receive at this year's conference a gold medal for *The Vietnam War: A Graphic History* and a bronze medal for *Tecumseh: Shooting Star of the Shawnee*. And, my co-author John D. Gresham and I were stunned when we were notified that we had won the 2010 Founder's Award for *Uncommon Valor*. We can only, and humbly, say thank you to MWSA founder Rev. Bill McDonald for awarding us MWSA's highest honor.

One of the many great things about the MWSA conferences is getting to meet new members and get a look at their books. And, it's also a lot of fun—as you can see from the photo of me in my 90-year-old French linen nightshirt (It's *not* a dress, Nancy and Joyce!) with one of our banquet guests, talk show host Shirley Douglas. One of the new members I had the pleasure of meeting was Donna McAleer, who won a gold medal for her biographical anthology, *Porcelain on Steel: Women of West Point's Long Gray Line*. A West Point graduate herself (class of 1987), Donna's book tells the stories of fourteen female graduates from West Point, beginning with two members from the first graduating class with women (1980) up to a member from the class of 2007. It recounts events during their years at West Point and significant events during their years in service and afterwards. It's an honest and straightforward account in which we learn both the good and bad things that happened to them. I began reading it during the conference and before I knew it, at conference's end, I was halfway through it. I enjoyed her fine work so much that I wanted to interview her for my column. What follows are some highlights from that interview.

What was your selection process in choosing the women who appeared in Porcelain on Steel?

When I came up with the concept in 2004, there were about 2,500 women graduates. I sent a query to them and about 150 people responded. Also, there were women I specifically sought out be-



***Dwight Zimmerman & Shirley Douglas,
Host of PJ Talk, www.PCTV21.org***

cause I knew of their story. I was looking for a breadth of experiences at West Point, in the Army, and post-Army life. From those 150 responders, we worked down the selection to a manageable number that could be converted into chapters. About half of the people I specifically sought out appeared in the book.

The group in your book is quite diverse economically, racially, and in sexual orientation. How much of this was deliberate, and how much just fell into place?

Frankly, a lot of it fell into place. I wasn't quite seeking the economic diversity that ultimately came across. But, in that respect, I'm not surprised. West Point is really representative of the country—we have cadets from all fifty states. They come from all walks of life.

Racially, it was a little more challenging. There were some people I sought out, but they didn't have the time to participate.

Sexual orientation—the bottom line is that there are gay and lesbian soldiers serving in our military who are serving with courage, distinction, and dedication—and are performing just like their heterosexual counterparts. I wanted to point out that these women developed a foundation for facing all kinds of obstacles and adversity, and how they handled it.

You also didn't shy away from the topic of sexual harassment.

My goal in the book was not to write an exposé or some investigative journalism piece. There are some people, men and women, who experienced some pretty traumatic things at the academy, and such things have happened at all the military academies. That's somebody else's book to write. But, sexual harassment is a part of our society, our culture, and our day-to-day life. I don't think shying away from the topic and denying it exists is beneficial, or representative of history.

Which story moved you the most?

Each moved me in a very different way because of how these women approached their challenges. To pick one or two is really difficult.

How long did it take you to find a publisher?

About two-and-a-half to three years.

What was your reaction when you heard *Porcelain on Steel* won a gold medal?

I was shocked! When Joyce sent the email out that my book was nominated, and then that morning on Veterans Radio when Mike Mullins read the list, I'm listening to the awards and it gets down to the military nonfiction category and he's reading the names for bronze medal, then silver medal, and then I hear my name for the gold medal—it was a WOW moment. To write a book, and have your first book win an award from a significant and prestigious organization is really quite humbling.

Porcelain on Steel: Women of West Point's Long Gray Line is available at bookstores and through Amazon and Barnesandnoble.com.

Donna continues to tell the stories of women graduates in Honored Role, a blog series. For more information visit Donna's website:

www.porcelainonsteel.com.



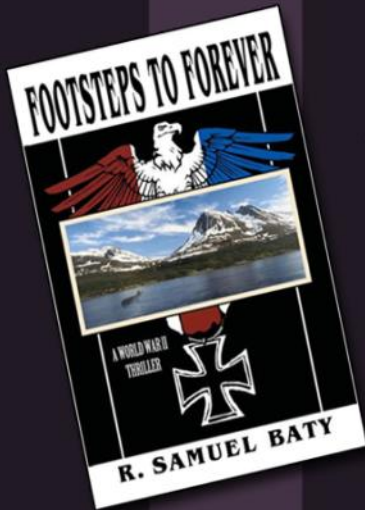
Donna McAleer, Award-winning author of "Porcelain on Steel"

One final note: starting next month, I'm going to be including a monthly calendar of events of what our members are doing. We've got a lot of members doing a lot of things and I've been asked to be the go-to guy to gather up all that information and disseminate it. This calendar of events will be appearing both in *Dispatches* and in various online news and publicity sites. So, whether it's an announcement of a new book deal, a new book launch, book signings, or any other event you're proud of or think the membership should know, email me at: www.djonzim@gmail.com, and I'll make sure it gets posted!

See you next month!

FOOTSTEPS TO FOREVER

by R. Samuel Baty
A World War II Historical Thriller



Footsteps to Forever is a riveting World War II historical thriller. Like Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Wouk's *The Winds of War*, *Footsteps* is a story filled with suspense, romance, and danger. It is 1941, and the devastating attack at Pearl Harbor thrusts the United States into the war. Two uniquely qualified American lieutenants, a young man and beautiful nurse, are sent by President Roosevelt to Norway. Their mission is to rescue a renowned atomic physicist from behind German lines. Chased by the enemy, hampered by the physicist's deteriorating health, impacted by a blossoming romance, and faced with harsh winter conditions, the two young Americans and their allies struggle to avoid disaster. An epic battle occurs, and survivors – enemies as well as friends – are destined to meet again, some shockingly, as the explosive action of *Footsteps* expands to include the failed raid at Dieppe, the Russian Front, the Normandy D-Day invasion, and ferocious air battles in the Pacific

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William E. Mayer Inspiration Word for November

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