

DISPATCHES

MILITARY
WRITERS
SOCIETY OF
AMERICA

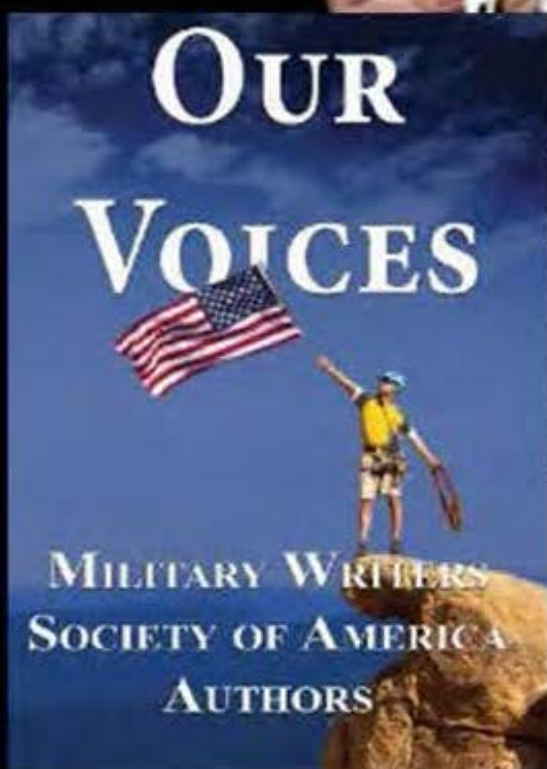
Rescuing History One Story at a Time

www.militarywriters.com



Winter 2014

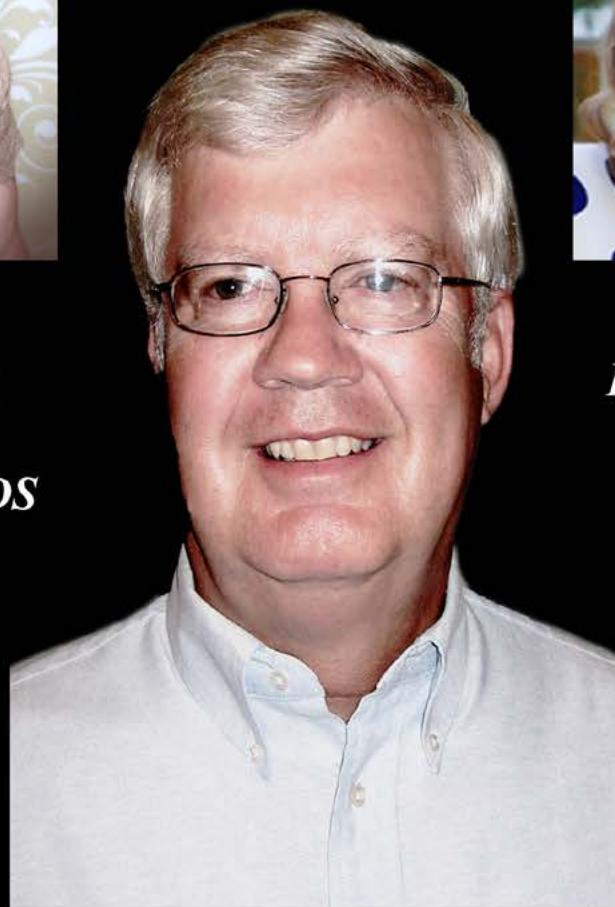
*AWARD
WINNERS
2013*



*Dayton VA Medical Center
Travel Writing for Fun and Profit
A Voice From Inside the Wire
Alzheimers (for Carol)
Treasure Hunters
The Movie Biz?*



**2013
PRESIDENT'S
AWARD
MARIA EDWARDS**



**2013
AUTHOR OF THE YEAR
BOB DOERR**

AAA 2013 AWARD

In the Shadow of a Badge
by Lillie Leonardi



**2013
FOUNDER'S AWARD
CATHRYN PRINCE**

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Did you accomplish your goals in 2013? Were there stories left untold or novels unfinished?

As writers we should enjoy a special affinity for the New Year and new beginnings. Most of us realize we could have done better. We end the year with ideas unexplored or characters undeveloped.

However, a New Year gives us the opportunity to start anew. Sure, we can make resolutions — to write more, to market ourselves better, to conquer that new technology, etc. That's an important aspect of a new beginning but, to me, the best feeling is an almost physical act of 'clearing the slate.'

I like the sense of closing one book and opening another. I like the clean blank page of another year. It gives me hope and renews my energy.

I have professional plans for 2014. I enjoy the planning and the thought process. It's more than just making resolutions. I feel invigorated and I can't wait to get started. I hope you feel the same.

Individually we can work to grow our creative energy and improve our writing. Together as MWSA members we can record more history, educate more readers and radiate positive vibes. Together we represent a strong voice for the military life and historical knowledge.

2014 — let's wipe the slate clean, build on our collective knowledge and skills, and create a body of work that showcases our growth and furthers our mission. We need your submissions for both Dispatches and our anthology.

Happy New Year!



Dayton Veteran enjoying MWSA books.

Staff

Editor
Pat McGrath Avery

Cartoonist
Chuck Bailey

Columnists
Dwight Zimmerman
Jim Greenwald
Steve Hathcock
Bob Doerr

Photographer
Pat McGrath Avery

Editor
Betsy Beard

Features
Don Helin
Becca Bryant
Karl Boyd
Jim Greenwald
Betsy Beard
Joyce Faulkner
Kathy Rowe
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PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

I know I'm preaching to the choir when I say that books from our members make perfect gifts for this time of year. I'm thrilled to announce that there's a new way for you to get that loved one on your list an MWSA member book — and in so doing help out another fine organization devoted to members and veterans.

As many of you know, *Veterans Radio Network* has been supporting MWSA, and vice versa, for a number of years through author interviews, and almost two years ago, by signing me on as the host of "At Ease."

I'm proud to announce that VRN has just launched the Veterans Radio Bookstore (veteransradiobookstore.com)! VRN has partnered with Amazon and its website features books by authors interviewed on *Veterans Radio Network*. That means a lot of our member books are on the site. It's a work in progress, so not all the books have been posted. Also, Dale Throneberry and Bob Gould of VRN are working on special low-cost promotional subscription plans for authors to help spotlight their book to boost sales.

By purchasing a book through *Veterans Radio Bookstore* you'll not only be getting a great book and help boost the member's book in Amazon's rankings, but you'll also be helping out VRN because a percentage of the sales will go to help fund Veterans Radio. Again, the website is: veteransradiobookstore.com.

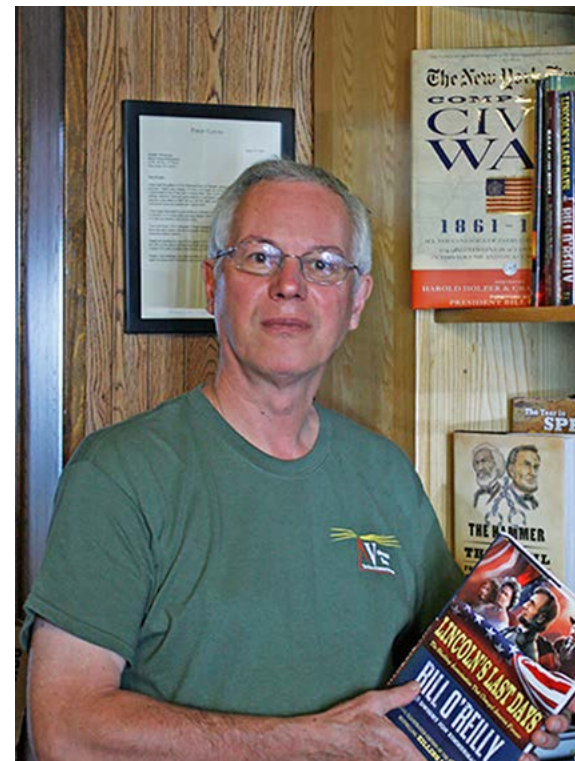
I like to remind members that one of the great intangibles of being a member of MWSA is our fellowship. Part of that is doing what we can to support member books, whether through positive reviews on websites or pass-along mentions of events. As many of you know, I write articles for the *Defense Media Network* website (www.defensemedianetwork.com). Periodically I send my editor a list of books I would like to review, making sure that there are some MWSA books on the list. I'm happy to say that in the latest short list green lighted by my editor is a book by one of our members. It's *Fire Base Illingworth An Epic True Story of Remarkable Courage Against Staggering Odds* by Philip Keith. It's the second volume in his Vietnam War trilogy. *Black Horse*

Riders, the first volume, received the MWSA 2013 Silver Medal in History. It's a spellbinding tale, and I'm going to enjoy writing that review.

In closing, I'd like everyone to pause for a moment to remember our men and women in uniform serving our country on distant soil, some also in harm's way. Thanks to the Internet and social media they're a lot more connected to loved ones back home than in years past. Still there's nothing that beats being home during the holidays.

May all of you have a great holiday season and a successful 2014!

Dwight Jon Zimmerman



Award-winning authors Ed Zellum and Mike Mullins



Beth Underwood and Joyce Gilmour



Richard Hetzell and Don Helin



NOV 04 2013

In Reply Refer To: 552/00

MWSA
Jim Greenwald
121 Second Street
New Paris, PA 15554

Dear Members:

On behalf of the Veterans, families, and staff of the Dayton VA Medical Center, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to you for your donation of books.

Your thoughtfulness reflects the concern that you feel for our Veterans and for the sacrifices they incurred while in service to our country.

Your contribution makes it possible for us to enhance the care we provide for our Nation's heroes, the Veteran patient.

Again, thank you for caring.

Sincerely,

Glenn A. Costie, FACHE
CEO / Medical Center Director

In accordance with VHA Directive 4721, we are required to state "The Department of Veterans Affairs" did not provide you, the donor, any goods or services in consideration in whole or part for your contribution.

TRAVEL WRITING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

By Don Helin

I happened into travel writing by accident. When I lived in Washington, I attended a course sponsored by *The Washington Post*. The course started me on my way.

Okay, what do I do?

The next time you visit Barnes and Noble or Books-a-Million, peruse the magazines. Pick the magazines that interest you and track the articles for three months. Observe the articles as well as the writing style. Send for the writer's guidelines.

Start local. Community newspapers and magazines are always looking for articles. The writer doesn't get paid much, but this is a way to build reputation.

Know yourself. My wife and I enjoy cross-county skiing, sea kayaking, and birding. Cross-Country Skiing magazine, Sea Kayaker and a legion of birding magazines are always on the lookout for interesting articles.

Find you own Niche. Become an authority. Maybe it's travel

with children, a mode of transportation such as no frills airlines (Jet Blue), a specific area of the world.

Develop you story. Thoroughly research your subject before you depart. Learn about the history, culture, and attractions. When you arrive, you can conduct interviews, obtain quality photographs, and, yep, have fun.

Local tourism offices can be helpful. In Pennsylvania, the Pocono Mountains Vacation Bureau has a mailing list to provide you highlights of upcoming events.

On site, be alert for unusual people to interview. They provide the color for your article. Help your readers see, smell, and feel the location — don't just parrot a travel brochure. Put yourself in the reader's place — what would you like to know?

Sidebars: You will need detailed information for sidebars such as hours of operation, directions, places to eat. Double check your facts.

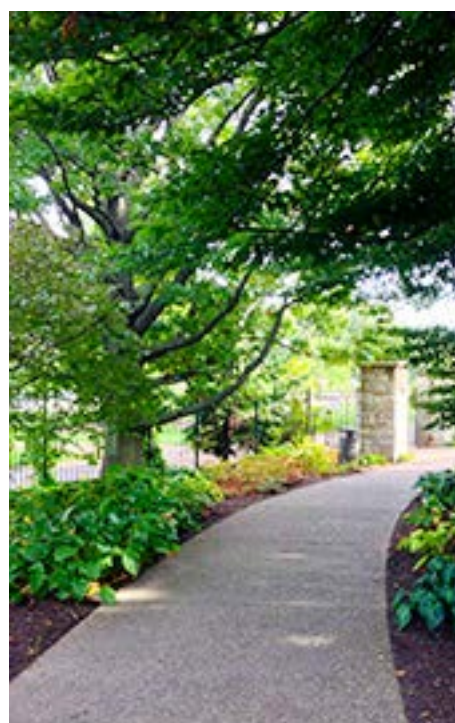
Crafting the story. Like any story it must have a beginning, middle, end.

★ **Beginning:** Grab the reader. Each hook promises the

Continue on Page 7



View of Pittsburgh from Phipps Conservatory



Path along fence at Phipps Conservatory

Continued from Page 6

readers will be entertained. If the beginning doesn't work, the editor won't go further.

★ **Middle:** Think of all the experiences on your trip, then choose a few (three or four) that illuminates the main point.

★ **End /Conclusion:** Bring the focus of your article to a satisfactory conclusion. Think of each stage as a series of building blocks. The beginning lays the foundation and the middle builds on that foundation. Each builds on what came before.

Bring your story to life.

★ **Characters.** Use your characters to illustrate the place and enliven the story. The more precise you can be in identifying details and placing them in the reader's mind, the more powerful your descriptions will be. If you are walking up a hill, hear the gravel under your feet, feel the breeze on your face.

★ **Find a Theme that will impress the editor.** I like to use what I call "stories around the water cooler." By this I mean, when travelers return, they usually pick one or two interesting things that happened to tell their friends. Stitch these vignettes together — your readers will enjoy them too.

★ **Be aware of lead times required by the editor — normally several months before publication.** Timing is critical for seasonal articles. There is not a huge demand for skiing articles in July or kayaking articles in December.

★ **Be alert to developing "roundup" articles.** One example might be "My Ten Favorite Bed and Breakfasts in the Northeast." How about "Romantic Places to spend Valentine's Day."

Getting published. Know your market.

A. Newspapers: Follow what they publish: Family travel, Adventure, Bare bones travel versus luxury. How are submissions presented. Show the editor you've done your homework. Analyze how much space is open to free lancers.

There are national newspapers (*Post*, *Times*, etc). All others buy local rights (exclusive within their circulation area — normally 100 miles). Timely and well written articles could go out to a dozen editors or more.

B. Magazines: Magazines normally have three sections:

★ **Front of the book:** Between table of contents and features. Snappy reports on hot hotels, spas, new galleries

★ **The Well or Middle:** 2500 – 4000 word feature articles with lavish photographs. (High profile articles that sell magazines each month).

★ **Back of the Book:** Promotions, classified, round up pieces.

The best way to break in is the Front of the Book. Establish a relationship with the editor. These are normally 150 - 300 word articles.

When you sell an article to magazines, you are generally selling first North American Rights. A writer can wait until the article is published, then change the slant and send to other magazines. Or: make reprints and sell, just give "first right" magazines credit.

Don Helin published his first thriller, "Thy Kingdom Come," in 2009. His second, "Devil's Den," has been selected as a Finalist in the Indie Book Awards. His next thriller, *Secret Assault* will be published in the Spring. Visit him at www.donhelin.com



A display of books arranged on a round table with a red cloth.



MWSA leadership at Dayton VA Medical Center

A VOICE FROM INSIDE THE WIRE WITH JUSTIN JORDON USAF MSG (RET.)

By Becca Bryan

There are many first person stories from outside of the wire by those who have been in combat positions fighting the war on terror. There are few from inside the wire. Justin Jordan, a United States Air Force Master Sergeant (Retired), who served for nearly 20 years, relates what it was like working inside the wire on domestic turf and overseas in his book *And Then I Cried*:

Stories from a Mortuary NCO. Like any good writer, the book is written in his voice and told without any suggestion of making it easy for the general public to read. There is no way to sugarcoat what he experienced as he took meticulous care of America's fallen heroes.

Nicknamed "Big Sarge" because of his height, Justin would swear he is just another guy who served his country to the best of his ability. Even when an airman died in a motorcycle accident and he spent hours trying to find the guy's camera. Even when he gets a call that a friend was killed crossing a road and he was sent to process the death as a part of his job. Certainly, these are the kind of situations which would throw anyone into the devastating roller coaster of symptoms of PTSD. His mortuary career and the sudden, unexpected death of a friend sent Justin through this hell. Yet, he fought it and got help for it.

There are many articles and stories about those who are trying to manage the symptoms of PTSD. Most are from combat veterans. The general public rarely hears anything about the invisible wound and how it affects those who served inside the wire. These troops have lived through their own hell and faced their own demons. The "saving grace" might be to transfer the images into words and write them down. This is what worked for Justin.

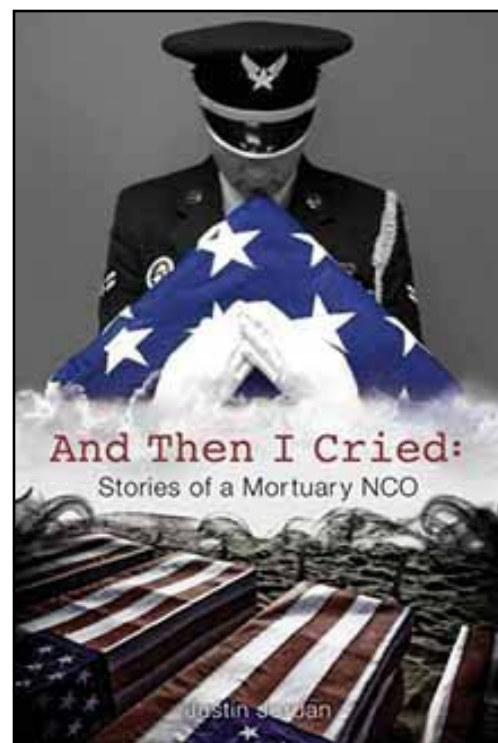
"Writing the book took me someplace out of head," Justin replied when asked how he managed his PTSD symptoms. That was the key for him. To get outside of his head. He was encouraged to write his story by friend Erik Shaw, veteran CEO and founder of Tactical 16. When asked about other books or articles from veterans who served inside the wire, Justin explained "People inside the wire need to write their stories because they are not being told. The medics — their story is not told."

Justin was fortunate to find the strong support he needed to get his story out from the people at Tactical 16, a veteran-focused publishing company that strives to work with military, police, firefighter and emergency service veterans to give them an opportunity to share their story and become published authors. "Justin is a true professional

who is able to take events and situations from his life and put them on paper in a way that makes us all feel what he goes through. That is a rare quality for a person and it has been our honor here at Tactical 16 helping him tell his story and educate an otherwise blind public to what life is really like for our veterans", said Eric Shaw of the author.

There are more than two million Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. A study by the RAND Corporation states that about 20% of them are affected by PTSD. As a country, we have been living and working with veterans from every war who have been diagnosed with PTSD. Yet, we seem to be a nation too afraid of them. "How do we (the general public) not fear veterans? How can we help them get through and (the public) understand their needs?" Justin asks.

Justin Jordan put his career in the Air Force and the ghosts that came with it on the table. He explains in his book how he faced the ghosts and found the courage to get help. Today, he drives an 18-wheel truck from Texas, where he lives, to wherever his next assignment takes him. Along the way, he is meeting other veterans and doing what he did best during his career in the military: taking care of his brothers with integrity and care.

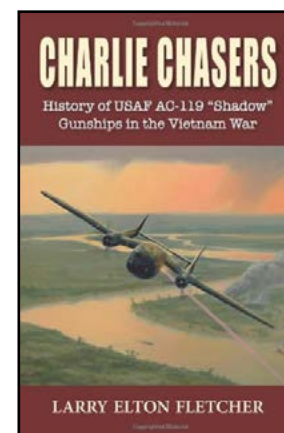


BOOKS AND AUTHORS OF THE MONTH

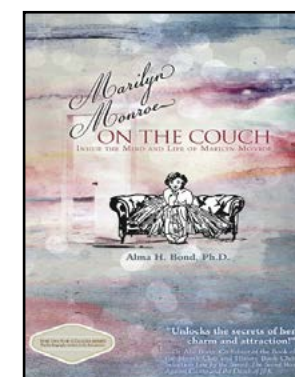
Author of the Month

Book of the Month

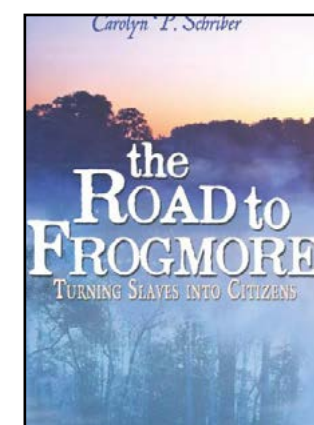
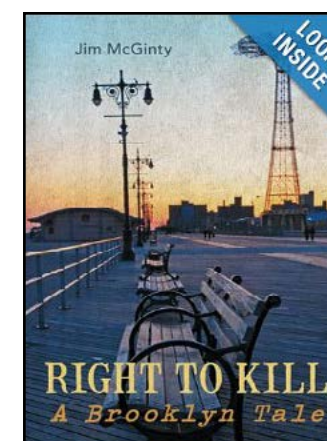
January

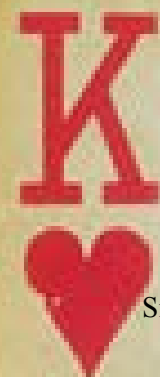


December



November





ALZHEIMER'S

For Carol:

You're here,
But you're not;
Although I see you 24 hours
Of each and every day,
I still miss you a lot,
Since your mind has gone astray.

Your body is in that chair,
Over there,
But your mind is out in space;
Somewhere...

And after 56 years together,
You know that I still care.

They say we've a Lord and a maker,
But I find it hard to comprehend,
Why murderers and rapists get pardoned,
But a good woman like you we can't mend.
It makes no sense, my dearest friend.

You wake in the middle of the night
With a bad dream you can't understand,
I hold you tight, lie and say it's all right,
Kiss your hair to ease your fright,
And rub your back with my hand.

You talk to others I can't see,
Your sisters and family,
But seldom me;
But, hush, that's all right,
I'm still here,
It's just me.

Once your lover, husband,
Companion and friend,
Now only your caretaker,
With a love that will never bend,
And with you until the bitter end.

Thank God before this happened,
We saw the world with all its charms,
Most every day.
Our nights were always so splendid,
You in my arms,
Dancing our cares away.

We travelled to so many cities,
In good weather and some rain,
(And there were some evenings,

When we didn't feel any pain),
Not knowing it was a pity,
We'd never sail smooth seas again.

We visited all seven continents,
Saw things we never thought we would
see,

Just us two; me and you,
But that was enough, always content,
Just being you and me.

Then a rare form of cancer,
Took away your sight,
But your tears still fall;
I hear you sometimes at night,
And I cry too, for us all;
Our kids and family,
But mostly you and me.

Now, on top of it all,
Alzheimer's decided to call.
At first you responded well,
And fought your way through
Your own personal hell.

But now I see you are slipping,
Just a little bit more each day,
As Alzheimer's keeps chipping
Away at your memory,
And trying to have its way.

There are some spells,
When the fog will vanish,
Like spooks after Halloween,
And your mind will seem so clear.
That's when you say, "I love you",
And often call me "Dear".

Though I try like hell
I just can't banish,
These mind-ghosts from the scene.
Lurking beneath the surface,
Remaining there unseen,
They fill your heart with dread.
God grant me absolution,
For wishing it was me instead.

I can't stand to see you suffer,
It tears at my very soul,



Thinking of what you've missed.
You still are so beautiful and lovely,
And have been mine to have and to
hold.

I have been and am blessed.

Sometimes you laugh,
Or maybe cry,
And I don't know why,
While secretly, there are times,
I wish you could quietly die,
Peacefully in your sleep.

I know to a stranger,
My prayer may sound callous,
Perhaps even self-serving and cheap,
But my love for you is not in question,
It has always run too deep.

You'd be done with your pain,
And hopefully born again,
Perhaps we would fly,
To that place in the sky,
And never really die.

This dreadful disease,
Never seems to ease.
Once you were never blue,
Now you're not pleased,
With anything that I do.

But I continue assisting,
Doing what I know how to do.
Sometimes you don't know me,
And think I'm just a man,
That takes good care of you.

I feed, bathe and dress you,
Brush your teeth and comb your hair,
Your smile says you like
What I'm doing,
While your mind doesn't seem to care.

It's off on another journey,
And I'm not invited along,
I hope it's a place,
To put a smile on your face,
Filled with laughter, love and a song.

Already knowing your fate,
All I can do is wait,
For that terrible date,

When I lose my soul mate,
And my heart.

My time will soon follow,
And I hope I can meet death
With silent dignity
The way I know you will do.
I'll be there by your side,
Just like always,
Me and you.

When you are gone,
And I'm left all alone,
I won't really be,
You'll always be here with me.
In my mind and my heart,
We'll never truly be apart.

Some will remember,
And some soon forget.
Who will mourn and love,
And think of you yet;
Every minute of every day?

Family?
Friends?
An old adversary?

Me!

Karl Boyd – Author and Storyteller



TREASURE HUNTERS, HEED MY ADVICE AND TAKE A HIKE!

By Steve Hathcock

For centuries smugglers, pirates and ruffians of all sorts have hidden their treasures under the sands of Padre Island. Sometimes they returned to recover their ill-gotten loot... and sometimes, for whatever reasons, they did not. But one man's loss can be another's gain, as illustrated in the following tales...

While vacationing on South Padre Island a few years back, a young man was walking along the beach near Access 5 when he noticed an odd-looking disk-shaped object washing in on the morning tide. Upon inspection, he realized the badly corroded piece of metal he was holding had writing on it. Rare coin expert Rod Bates (Rio Bravo Gallery next to the Public Library in Port Isabel) identified the young man's find as a Spanish 4-reale coin minted sometime between 1536-1572. Because the coin was in terrible shape its numismatic value is minimal. But here is where it gets interesting; the coin was found only a scant 20 or so-miles south of where three Spanish treasure ships foundered off Padre Island during a great storm that struck in 1554. It's not improbable to assume the coin came from one of the stricken galleons, which makes it a great historical find worth several hundred dollars in today's market.



Spanish 4-reale coin minted
sometime between 1536-1572

Duff's Thirty-third Texas Cavalry was on a scouting mission up Padre Island from Brownsville to Port Aransas sometime early in the Civil War. Near Corpus Christi a squad from

Company A, under command of Lt. Vinton, was detached to look for lost horses. The search took several hours and as a result they completed the task late in the day. Unable to overtake the regiment that day, the Confederates made camp in a live oak grove a few miles west of the head of Nueces Bay. A brisk norther blew in late that night with heavy winds and plummeting temperatures. No one in the party had blankets and the men had to make do with whatever shelter they could find. Ignacio Serna, of San Antonio, threw his saddle amongst the roots of the gnarled oaks and scooped loose soil out of a low spot where he curled up in for the night.

Wanting to catch up with regiment the next morning, Lt. Vinton ordered a daylight start. As Serna withdrew his saddle from the depression he heard a familiar clinking sound. The ground where he had recently rested his head was littered with shiny silver coins uncovered the previous night when he sought shelter from the weather. Serna had made his bed on a cache of Spanish silver dollars. Men forgot discipline as they jammed around the hole, anxious to gather their own coins. Sabers, knives and Sharps rifles were quickly converted to pick and ax as the men dug deeper under the tree. Within a short time, they gathered over 100 of the silver dollar-sized coins. 1808 was the latest date found.



1808 8 Real Silver Coin

Sadly, Lieutenant Vinton, the son of an army officer proved to be more of a soldier than a fortune hunter; disregarding the lure of treasure, Vinton ordered his men to fall-in. After



Confederate Wood Cut

Continued on Page 11

Continued from Page 10

about an hour of lambasting and threats, the men once again gathered into a cohesive if not a happy military group. More than one glum-faced man made mental notes of the surroundings before he turned his horse northward. One could only wonder at the remaining riches. No one among them knew when they would be able to return, but return is what they intended.

They were way too late though as it was learned that the owner of a ranch, situated about a half mile from the camp, heard of the find and by digging deeper unearthed a large cache of coins and other valuables.

Then there was the story of Mr. W.H. Wilson, quartermasters clerk at Brazos de Santiago, who was taking a stroll on Padre Island looking for shells (See *Daily Ranchero*, July, 1868) when he literally stumbled over an old iron box about four inches square that appeared ancient. Breaking it open, he discovered it contained diamonds, emeralds and rubies with a worth estimated at least \$100,000. Needless to say, Wilson instantly became the most popular man on the Rio Grande!

So there you have it folks, the best advice I can give for those looking for lost treasure is "Take a hike!"

email Steve Hathcock at steve@southpadretv.tv or visit <http://southpadretv.tv/> on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/South-Padre-Island-Texas/281464795204953>



Treasure hunter, historian, & author Steve Hathcock



Bill McDonald - Founder of MWSA



Dwight Zimmerman, President of MWSA and Betsy Beard, Vice President

2014 MWSA ANTHOLOGY: CALL FOR ENTRIES

By Betsy Beard

The MWSA is pleased to begin work on our 5th annual anthology. Each year the board selects a theme, the membership selects cover art, and we publish a book of articles, short stories, essays, illustrations, and photographs to showcase the amazing members of the Military Writers Society of America. In addition to member essays, the book contains the MWSA review and jacket design of each book nominated for an award in the current award cycle.

Each MWSA member is encouraged to send original work, not to exceed 1500 words (or the equivalent number of anthology pages in the case of poetry, illustrations, and photographs). The theme this year is ALL GAVE SOME and entries should reflect that theme. This is your opportunity to be heard and to further the MWSA's three part mission of writing for healing, preservation of history, or education of others. Share something about yourself, be published, and earn buckaroo bucks. The anthology is open to all who are members, so if you have been thinking about joining MWSA, now is the time to do it. Each participant will be awarded 1,000 buckaroo bucks to spend at the Buckaroo Auction during the MWSA annual conference in September.

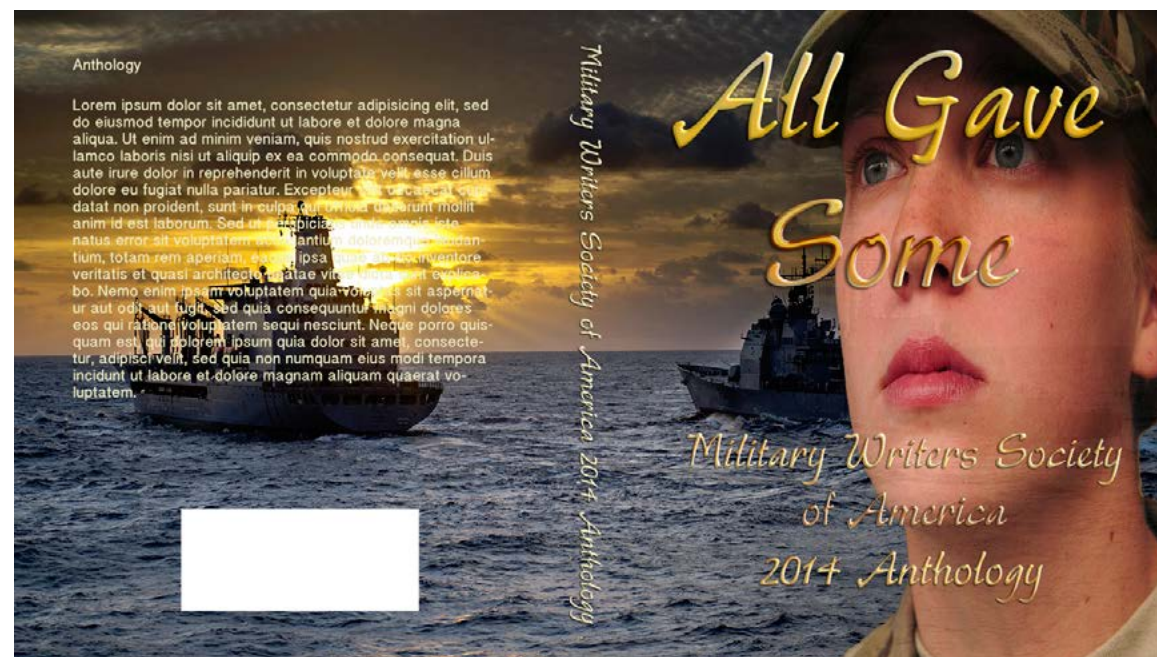
The MWSA anthology is a wonderful keepsake and is included in the registration fees for all members who attend the annual conference. Use it as a yearbook and get the signatures of your fellow MWSA members during the conference. Those who are not able to attend the conference can purchase the book after publication.

DEADLINE for submissions is June 15, 2014. Please send a high resolution jpeg head shot photograph and brief biography (250 words) to accompany your entry. Submissions are to be emailed to Betsy Beard at ebear@nc.rr.com. Don't wait until the last minute. Start writing now!

Also, vote for which cover design you'd like to see for this year's book. You can vote in the [form on page 14](#) or you can send an email to Joyce Faulkner at joycefaulkner@gmail.com with your choice. Deadline for this vote is April 15, 2014.

VOTE FOR COVER FOR 2014 MWSA ANTHOLOGY

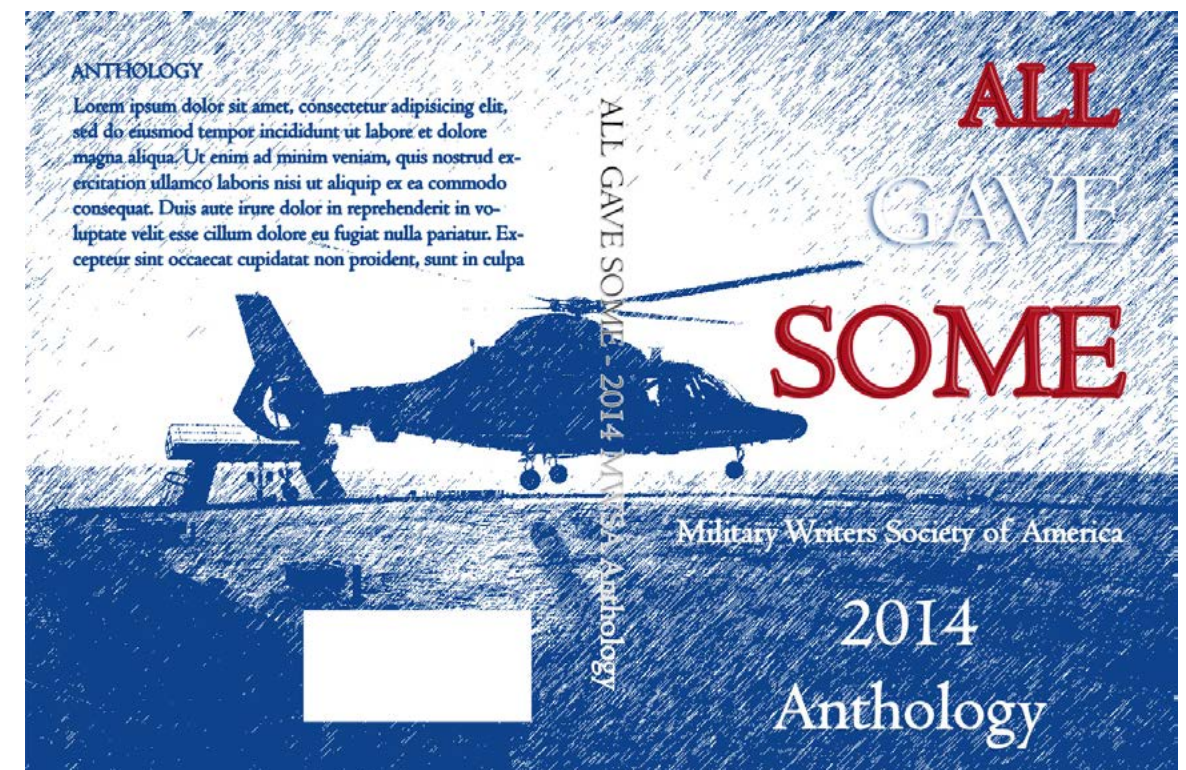
OPTION 1: SHIPS INTO SUNSET



OPTION 2: MILITARY FIREFIGHTERS



OPTION 3: MILITARY RESCUE UNIT



Option 4: PALLETS OF SUPPLIES FOR TROOPS



Vote for Anthology Cover by April 15, 2014:

Name:

Option 1 - Ships into Sunset

Option 2 - Military Firefighters

Option 3 - Military Rescue Unit

Option 4 - Pallets for Troops

Email:



Military Vehicle Preservation Association event on the Columbia River



Nancy Smith of Branson Stars & Flags talks with award-winning author Sandra Miller Linhart at Dayton Awards Ceremony.



Jamie Navarro chats with award-winning novelist and finalist for 2013 Author of the Year, Del Staecker.



Award-winning author Tom Young and his wife chat with Lead Reviewer Jim Greenwald.



Mike Angley, Author of the Year 2012, presents Bob Doerr, Author of the Year 2013, with his Award.



Phyllis Mullins enjoys the awards banquet in Dayton, OH.

TIPS & TRICKS - ALT TAGS

by *Joyce Faulkner*

Most publishers and indie authors realize the necessity of having both print copies and electronic versions of each title. Some people choose to go with the Kindle format exclusively because of Amazon's KDP marketing program. However, there are many other markets out there for devices like iPad, Kobo, Blio, Sony, and Nook. There are also dozens of apps for phones and computers. These options require the ePub format.

While not everyone gets involved in the technical nitty-gritty, there are a few things that authors should know about electronic books — from a storytelling point of view and for marketing reasons. The basic ePub format is essentially a web page inside an electronic “wrapper” that the devices and apps interpret and display to your reader. (The Kindle mobi is a subset of the ePub and works the same way.) That means that you have many more options for delivering content than with print formats. You can include photos, animations, audio, movies, interactive elements — like slide shows, maps, and quizzes — and you have a dazzling array of tools for cross-referencing, indexing, and glossaries.

So an ebook is a book, right? A way to read a novel with a machine that mimics a printed volume? What most of us forget is that audiences use these electronics in lots of ways. In this piece, I want to focus on how folks receive your content aurally. People listen to stories on buses and trains. They plug in while mowing the lawn or cooking. They listen at the gym or while jogging through the neighborhood. They listen because they can't see or because they are sick or because they can't hold a book or through earphones at night so as to not disturb their bed partners. They still want to love your work — and you want them to appreciate your efforts too.

In the past, those with visual problems were the main users of electronic reading devices. Aside from audio books — which are based on human performances, there were commercial voice synthesizers as far back as the TI-99 in the late 70s. However, it's not just the sightless who want to have books read to them now. Technology companies acknowledge this desire — Apple devices use Siri and/or the Voice Over functions, for example — and Kindles have included a robotic reader from early on.

There are many issues to making your work enjoyable to the listening audience — but one of the first things you can do is include alt-tags with your illustrations. An alt-tag is what the device reads to describe a photo. Authors should provide them to their designers/publishers in the metadata of their pictures and drawings. You can access metadata with a variety of software packages like iPhoto or Adobe Bridge. Digital cameras and phones have programs that allow you to store descriptive data too.

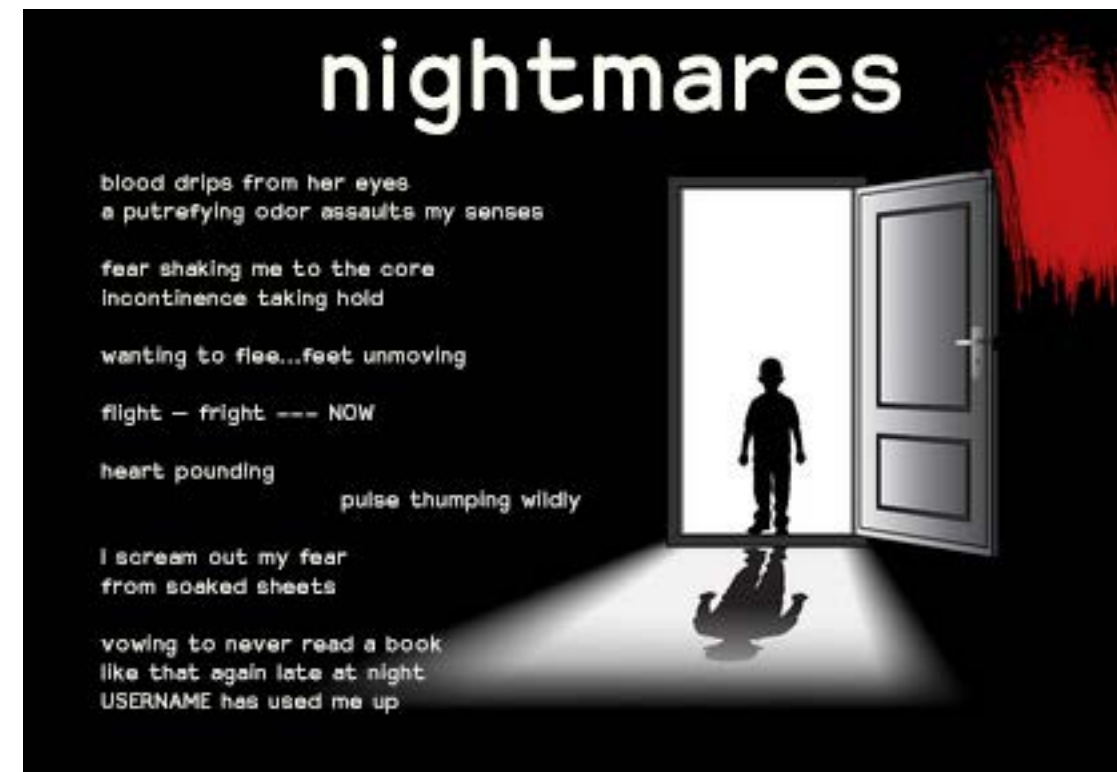
The camera automatically includes things like title, size, type, date, time, etc. You should add content-specific information — file name, captions, and alt-tags. Most professional software like Adobe InDesign will allow book designers to pick up this information easily.

As carefully as you choose your wording for the caption that visually enhances the meanings of your illustrations, you should put creative thought into alt-tag wording. If for example, your caption says, “Award-winning author Kathleen M. Rodgers at Dayton conference, 2013,” you *can* choose to have the device simply reread the caption. However, this is an opportunity to enrich your listening audience's visual experience. After all, you used an illustration in the first place to enhance comprehension for those reading your work. Perhaps a better alt-tag might be, “Photo of an attractive blonde woman wearing glasses and carrying a copy of the MWSA Conference Program.” The combination of caption and alt-tag should create at least the same image in the listener's head as the one your visual readers receive.



Award-winning author Kathy Rodgers

Don't punt this work to your designer. It's above her paygrade. Oh sure, she will do it for you if you don't provide the information — but this is your art. Make every version of your book live up to the format's potential.



jim greenwald

NOTE: Folks often say “think outside the box.” This is a poem and a review. Written as a book review, posted to amazon, it is, outside the box.



John Faulkner at Dayton Awards Banquet



John Denham of John Denham Productions

LEAD REVIEWER NOTES:

Plans are moving forward for the conference in Phoenix. Folks, this is the one you do not want to miss. Make your plans as early as possible. To keep up with what is planned simply go to the web site under conferences and click on "2014 Conference." That is where all conference information will be found. Repeat visits to that site are needed to stay current as we will add items and or change them as things firm up.

All available information is presently posted on the web site under "2014 Conference." If you have a question address it to me in an email, I do not check Facebook for questions. Send your questions to LeansToFar@aol.com. There are a few items that we have not firmed up yet and have left them off the web site for now. Seminar information to date is listed, though some descriptions may need added or adjusted. We still have slots open for potential seminars. Email me if you are interested in presenting one, provide a description and title, and it will be reviewed.

Auction Items – Please, make your donations early, the cut-off date for accepting them is August 15th.

Services and gift cards are two hot items and do not cost much to ship, better yet bring them with you to the conference and come early. A great way to increase your stash of buckaroos as you earn the value of the item + the difference between the value and the selling price. We are limiting the number of auction items to a maximum of 40.

VA Book Donations – We will once again be looking for donations of books to be provided to the Phoenix VA Facility. Check the web site out for specifics on when and how to mail your donations.

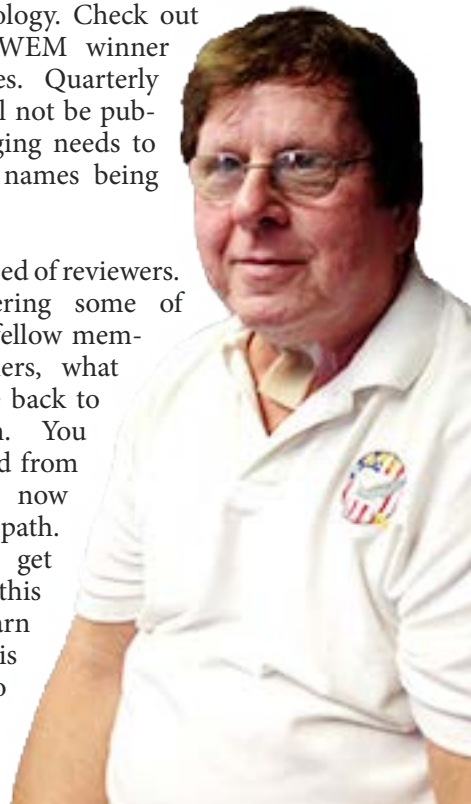
We are hoping to exceed last year's effort which was roughly 500 books. We thank each and every member that donated

and ask that you be as generous as possible this year.

Reviewers and Award Judges, the books you receive from authors are yours, but, if you wish, you may also donate those. All books written by the author earn \$1,000 in Buckaroos; new books of other authors earn \$500.00.

Check out the available information on the W.E.M. Contest and enter. Winners will be published in our next anthology. Quarterly winners will be published in Dispatches, the gold, silver, and bronze winners will be published in the anthology. Check out the first quarter WEM winner here in Dispatches. Quarterly winner's names will not be published as final judging needs to be made prior to names being announced.

We are forever in need of reviewers. Consider volunteering some of your time to help fellow members. Medal winners, what a great way to give back to your organization. You who have benefitted from the system can now help others on the path. Contact me and get started reviewing, this is something you earn buckaroos for. It is also a great way to improve your own writing, as reading is a great education.



MWSA Book Donations to the Dayon VA Medical Center



Buckaroo Auction

2013 AUTHOR OF THE YEAR BOB DOERR'S MWSA RECOMMENDED READING LIST



WINTER 2014

The Military Writers Society of America (MWSA) is an organization of over one thousand writers, poets, and artists drawn together by a common bond of military service. One purpose of our Society is to review the written works of our members. From our recent book reviews, we've selected the following as our 2014 Winter Recommended Reading List:

Backbone History, Traditions, and Leadership Lessons of Marine Corps NCO's by Julia Dye

All I Could Be: My Story as a Woman Warrior in Iraq by Miyoki Hikiji

The Warriors by Tom Young

The Road to Frogmore by Carolyn Schriber

A Praying Man by Harmon Snipes

Right to Kill by Jim McGinty

Fade to Black by Jeffrey Wilson

Where's Charlie by Tim Soyars

Endowed by Their Creator by Eunice Ray

Soldiering On by Christine Kriha Kastner

Bean Camp to Briar Patch by John N. Powers

Red Markers by Gary Willis

Marilyn Monroe on the Couch by Alma H. Bond

Firehammer by Ric Hunter

Can you believe that 2013 is almost over? Maybe when Al Gore invented the internet he speeded up time, too. Is speeded even a word? Oh well, even if time isn't flying by as fast for you, I know that sitting in a warm room reading a good book is a proven stress reliever – especially when the temperature outside is hovering around thirty-two degrees. So when someone's looking for you to do more chores, find a good place to hide and settle back with your Kindle, Nook, iPad, or just an old fashioned book. Take your mind off the next world crisis and select a book to read from the above list of superb books. More info about the books and the authors can be found at www.mwsadispatches.com

THE MOVIE BIZ — WHAT IS A PRODUCER?

Kathy Rowe

Some writers, but not all, dream of seeing their work on the silver screen. If you're interested in breaking into that business, it pays to get to know the people you might be working with. Here's an interview with a bonafide movie producer:

Daniel Noe, of Minority Pictures, LLC, has been in the business over 30 years. He's spent six of that running his own company and another 24 in various "ATL" and "BTL" positions (industry terms for budget: "Above The Line" refers to Producers, Director, and Lead talent. "Below The Line" refers to the various pre-production/production departments and post-production). Not only is he a producer, but a screenwriter as well.

KR: What was the reason you decided to get into film?

DN: It is something I have always wanted to do. I have not been involved my entire life, but when it is in you, it draws you in eventually.

KR: What is the main function of a producer?

DN: A broad question. Producers have varying capacities, but at the core, a producer is a person who affects results through action. My take is a producer is a facilitator by function, whether it involves finance, production, post-production, distribution, or in any area related to the project.

KR: What are the basic steps to making a movie?

DN: Write or buy a script, develop it into a marketable package, prepare for physical production, produce the product, assemble the product in post-production.

KR: Can you explain "packaging" a deal in regards to the writer's portion?

DN: The writer's sole concern is to present a marketable, "calling card" script. Don't be concerned with any numbers, with the exception of page counts. A writer can option, outright sell the IP, (Intellectual Property), and even deal memo (an agreement/contract), to do re-writes, if it is offered. Normally, the writer is paid off, given credit, and then another writing team is deal memo'd to do the re-writes.

KR: What is your best advice for getting noticed in the industry?

DN: Be your creative self, practice, practice, practice your discipline, respect the business model, develop lasting relationships (personal/business), and stay patient and passionate.

KR: If someone wants to adapt their novel to a screenplay, what are some resources they can use?

DN: Plenty of screenplay writing software programs out there, so anyone can cherry pick one to fit their immediate needs. I recommend Final Draft 8, or if one needs to go on the cheap, ask a friend with the program for the margins, headers, tab, and indentation numbers, then create a template with a word writing program that converts to pdf.

KR: If you were to tell an author one good piece of advice about screenwriting, what would it be?

DN: Get a copy of Lew Hunter's Screenwriting 434 (ISBN: 0-399-51838-X). Put your best foot forward!

KR: Should a writer get lucky enough to get a screenplay optioned, what can they expect?

DN: Another broad question. I will answer with a "newbie"

hypothesis. A new writer, if the script is in demand, should broker for the normal option rate and terms, broker a cheaper than WGA page count rate, and not even worry about a re-write contract. The idea is to get and keep the foot in the door.

KR: What are your feelings about SAG (Screen Actors Guild) and WGA (Writers Guild of America)?

DN: Necessary and engage them as a friend!

KR: And your feelings toward independent productions?

DN: Absolutely love them. Limitation is the enemy of art!

Nowadays there are increasing opportunities for authors to get their books made into movies. The internet, movies on demand, independent production companies, and large production companies are all looking for new ideas. If you are willing to put forth the effort, you can try and write the screenplay yourself. Otherwise, your job is to find a person in the industry that will champion your book and get it in front of producers and directors. It's not easy getting that champion, but once you do, always remember to be professional and meet any deadlines. Writers are a dime a dozen in Hollywood, your goal is to outshine the others and make a name for yourself. If you truly dream of seeing your book on the silver screen, it's time to get cracking and make it happen!

You can check out Daniel's blog on: <http://fortheindependentproducingmind.blogspot.com/>

And you can connect with him professionally:

http://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=33149120&trk=tab_pro



2013 MWSA AWARD WINNERS

HISTORICAL FICTION

GOLD MEDAL

CHOSIN FILE BY DALE DYE

DOG SOLDIER MOON BY MIKE MCKENDREE LONG III

WEDDED TO WAR BY JOCELYN GREEN

SILVER MEDAL

SOLO VIETNAM BY JEANETTE VAUGHAN

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY BY MARK BOWLIN

TULLYKILLANE, 1943 BY DAVID ANDREW WESTWOOD

PASS IN REVIEW HONOR BY BRIAN UTERMÄHLEN

BRONZE MEDAL

THE GIRL WHO SWAM TO ATLANTIS BY ELLE THORNTON

HAMFIST DOWN BY GEORGE NOLLY

THRILLER/MYSTERY

GOLD MEDAL

THE RENAGADES BY TOM YOUNG

SILVER MEDAL

TOM CLANCY PRESENTS: ACT OF VALOR BY GEORGE

GALDORISI, S. WEBER, D. COUCH

BRONZE MEDAL

THE RENDITION BY ALBERT ASHFORTH

2013 MWSA AWARD WINNERS (CONT'D)

SCI-FI/FANTASY/HORROR

GOLD MEDAL

THE DONORS BY JEFFREY WILSON

ROMANCE:

SILVER MEDAL

NAVY RULES BY GERI KROTOW

LITERARY FICTION

GOLD MEDAL

FLASHES OF WAR BY KATEY SCHULTZ

SILVER MEDAL

CIB – COMBAT INFANTRYMAN BADGE BY WILBUR (BILL)

RAMBOW

BRONZE MEDAL

A QUEST FOR SKYE BY JOHN ROTHDIENER

SHORT STORY COLLECTION

GOLD MEDAL

TYING UP WATER AND OTHER STORIES BY ROSS MACK-

ENZIE & MARK TODD

SILVER MEDAL

MY CORPS: SHORT STORIES AND REFLECTIONS BY

ZIVOJIN RACKOVITCH

2013 MWSA AWARD WINNERS (CONT'D)

HISTORY

GOLD MEDAL

GEORGE 3-7TH. MARINES BY JAMES NICHOLSON

SILVER MEDAL

THE BAD BOY BERT HALL BY BLAINE PARDOE

BLACKHORSE RIDERS BY PHILIP KEITH

MEMOIR

GOLD MEDAL

MY SPECIAL FORCE BY H.S. MEANS

SILVER MEDAL

THIRTY DAYS WITH MY FATHER BY CRISTAL PRESLEY

BRONZE MEDAL

LOVE AT FIRST FLIGHT BY CAPTAIN STEWART ORR AND FRAN ORR

BACK TO VIETNAM: TOURS OF THE HEART BY R. BRUCE LOGAN AND ELAINE HEART

SKETCHES OF A BLACK CAT BY RON AND HOWARD MINER

BIOGRAPHY

GOLD MEDAL

STILL HAVING FUN BY CANDACE GEORGE THOMPSON

LIFE ON A \$5 BET BY LINDA SWINK AND MAJ. GEN'L EDWARD J. MECHENBIER

SILVER MEDAL

MY TRUE COURSE BY SUZANNE SIMON DIETZ

2013 MWSA AWARD WINNERS (CONT'D)

BRONZE MEDAL

SILAS SOULE BY THOMAS BENSING

REFERENCE

GOLD MEDAL

ZARBUL MASALHA BY EDWARD ZELLEM

HOWTO-BUSINESS

BRONZE MEDAL

GET RICH IN A NICHE BY JEFFREY W. BENNETT

INSIDER'S GUIDE TO SECURITY CLEARANCES BY JEFFREY W. BENNETT

CREATIVE NON-FICTION

SILVER MEDAL

LETTERS TO LOGAN BY DEBRA BASTIAN

BRONZE MEDAL

THE NIGHT SKY: A JOURNEY FROM DACHAU TO DENVER AND BACK BY MARIA SUTTON

HUMOR

SILVER MEDAL

RAPSCALLION SUMMER BY DAVID MICHEALSON

SPIRITUAL/RELIGIOUS:

GOLD MEDAL

STORIES OF FAITH AND COURAGE FROM THE VIETNAM WAR BY LARKIN SPIVEY

STORIES OF FAITH AND COURAGE FROM THE HOME FRONT BY JOCELYN GREEN



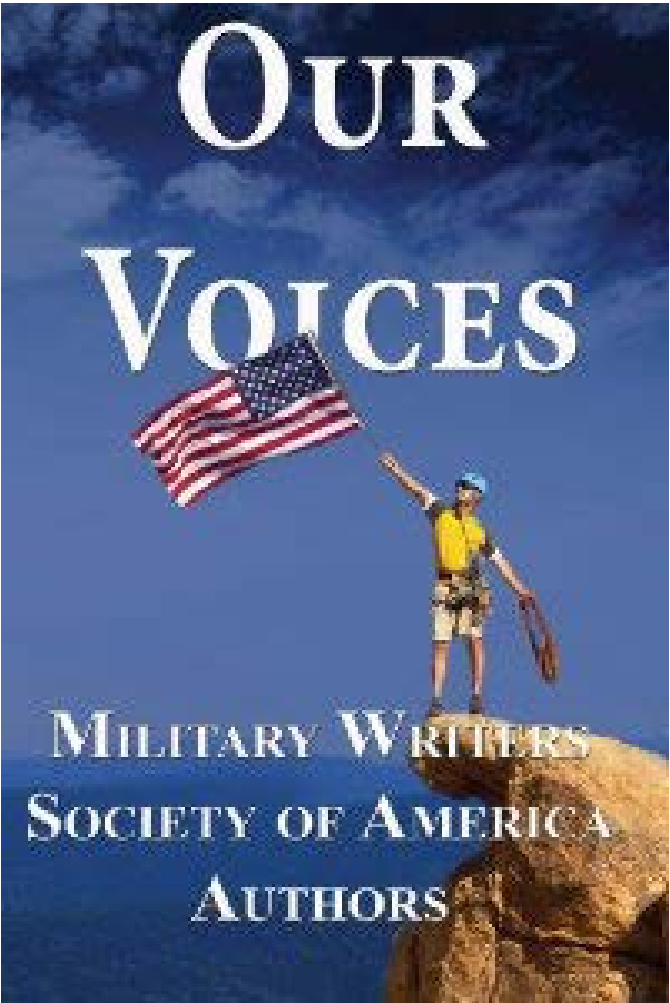
Ric Hunter, Bill McDonald, Richard Hetzell, Beth Underwood, Ed Zellum, John Denham



John Faulkner, Monte Smith, Randy Beard



Award-winning author Maria Sutton at Banquet in Dayton



2013 MWSA ANTHOLOGY

Military Writers Society of America 4th Annual Anthology includes book excerpts, poetry, essays, photography, artwork, and short fiction. MWSA members range from unpublished writers using the medium as a way of dealing with trauma to award-winning professional authors. This is a moving look at the war through the eyes of those most closely impacted by it. It is also a study of how it molded American history.

If you want a copy of the MWSA 2013 Anthology, contact Betsy Beard at eabeard@nc.rr.com. It is also available on Amazon.



Pat Avery discussing industry status of children's books



Tom Rodgers, Mike Mullins, Bill McDonald, Sandra Linhart, & John Denham



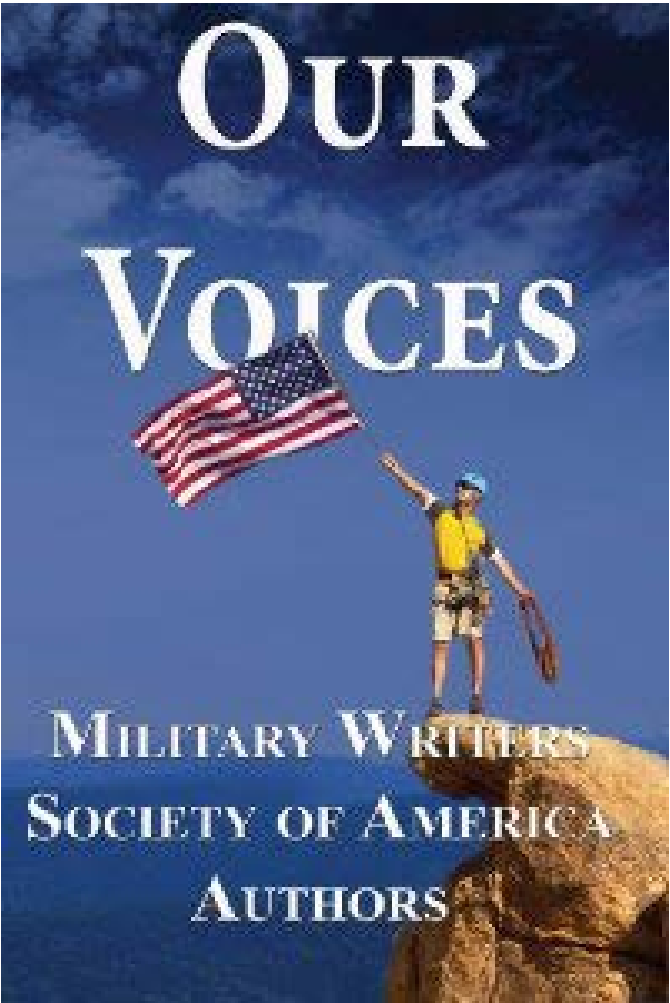
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Pat Avery discussing industry status of children's books



Tom Rodgers, Mike Mullins, Bill McDonald, Sandra Linhart, & John Denham

THE MILITARY VEHICLE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

Writers and history lovers, if you don't know about the MVPA, you should. The Military Vehicle Preservation Association (www.mvpa.org) is dedicated to keeping history alive through the restoration of old military vehicles.

I first met MVPA members during the 2006 Branson Veterans Day parade. A group from the Arkansas chapter brought vehicles to the parade and I had the honor of arranging for Billy Templeton and some other veterans to ride.

Evelyn Harless from Arkansas invited Billy (a Bataan Death March survivor), Joyce Faulkner and me to attend the organization's national convention in Little Rock the following summer. Chapter members continue to bring vehicles to the parade in Branson every year. They've provided rides for the Sunchon Tunnel survivors, Tuskegee airmen, Pearl Harbor survivors, Korean War and Vietnam veterans and others.

What started as one event turned into the beginning of many friendships and a great source of historical information. Since then, I've hosted a booth at three more of their national conventions and each time I've met people who love and appreciate history.

Last summer, the Oregon chapter hosted the convention in Portland. Jim Alexander, a member of the Oregon chapter, is a good friend and a great photographer. He has supplied us with many photos over the years since we met in Branson. He works with Steve Preston in the restoration of vehicles and military equipment. Jim loves the work and the privilege of showing people the finished products. Steve is building his own museum of military history and Jim took pride in showing us around.

A ride down the Columbia River in an authentically restored DUKW treated a good number of convention attendees (we filled seven vehicles) to a memorable experience. The DUKW, a 2 1/2 -ton amphibious truck that carried supplies from ships to their land destinations, proved to be the most efficient method of delivering supplies during WWII. Needless to say, our soldiers didn't travel in luxury when they boarded DUKWs and other vehicles.

Like many conventions, each year the MVPA event is held in a different city and side trips encourage attendees to visit places of military and historical interest.

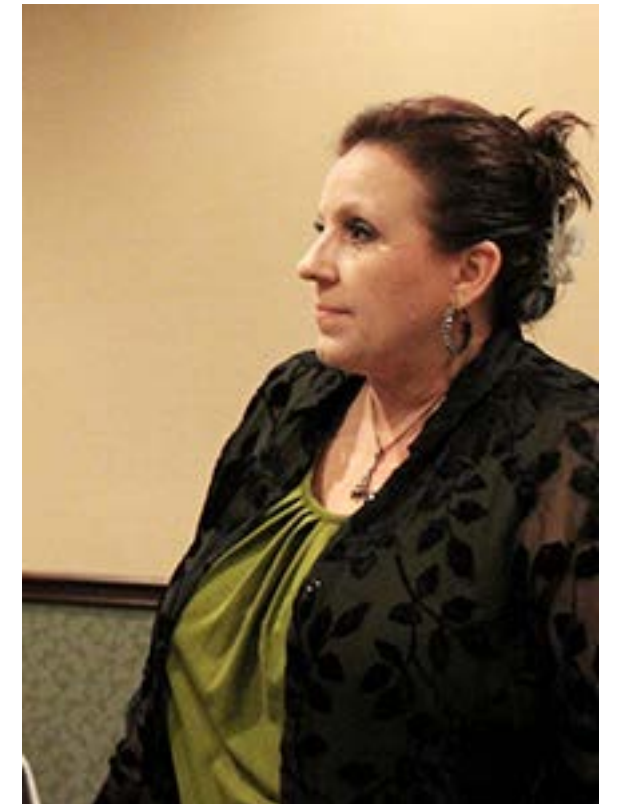
For writers, the group can be a good reference source. Members love to talk history and showcase their equipment. They know their stuff. One year MWSA member Paul Bruno attended the MVPA convention just to meet a member who restored Bantam jeeps.

Are military conventions such as the MVPA good places to sell books? Some years have been strong and others ordinary. We do sell books, meet experts and make new contacts. I think it's a win-win for any author.

Louisville, Kentucky will host the 2014 convention in June. We have had MWSA booths in the past and it might be worth considering if enough members are interested in sharing time and booth space.

MVPA is one of many military conventions and reunions that draw members with stories, knowledge and experiences that need to be recorded.

It can be a gold mine.



Award-winning author Jeanette Baird Vaughn



WESTERN ANTIQUE AEROPLANE AND AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM

At the Portland convention, Jim Alexander took me to the WAAAM (Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum) in Hood River, Oregon. This unique museum displays still-flying planes and still-driving antique vehicles. If you want to know something about an antique plane, it's a good place to visit. The vast collection of early planes amazed me. I never realized so many limited editions of planes were manufactured.

On the second Saturday of the month, the hangars are opened and volunteers fly the planes and drive the cars. Both a Fly-in and a Model A event take place every September. Several times a year, the museum holds a Model T driving school. Check out <http://www.waaamuseum.org> for more information about this educational collection and the events they sponsor.



Steve Preston's Military Collection

