

# DISPATCHES

MILITARY  
WRITERS  
SOCIETY OF  
AMERICA

Rescuing History One Story at a Time  
[www.MWSAdispatches.com](http://www.MWSAdispatches.com)



FALL 2018

MIKE "MOON" MULLINS  
2018 MWSA WRITER OF THE YEAR  
1948 - 2017

DISPATCHES  
10TH LIGHTY BRIGADE

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Pat McGrath Avery

**EITHER THE HOLIDAYS** came early or we're simply late, but in either case, this issue of Dispatches is filled with information. For those who didn't make it to the Charleston conference, here's your opportunity to catch up on all the latest news and meet our award winners.

Congratulations to all those authors who produced superior books!

As a reviewer, I know that the process is a thorough evaluation of select criteria. If you received a medal, your book passed muster with the whole review team.

Save the date in your calendar for the 2019 conference in Albuquerque, NM. Read all about it on page 23. If you haven't been to New Mexico recently or ever, next fall is your chance to enjoy its unique beauty, improve your craft, and make new friends.

Regular contributors Joe Campolo, John Cathcart, Joe Epley, and Joyce Faulkner enlighten and entertain us once again. Take time to read a reprint of Adam TroxteLL's article, *Endless Stories of Bravery*.

Enjoy the photos of fall as winter descends upon us. Since I am in south Texas, you'll see no snow pictures from me. Anyone wishing to contribute winter photos (and even I admit that winter can be beautiful), please send them to me at [patavery@gmail.com](mailto:patavery@gmail.com).

With the winter issue, we'll pass the baton to Bob Doerr and the new leadership.

Thank you to Dwight Zimmerman and all of his team. We've grown into a cohesive organization that relishes new faces and are grateful for the dedication of long-time members.

I wish each of you a joy-filled holiday season and a 2019 filled with inspiration and accomplishment!



## STAFF

Editor - Pat McGrath-Avery  
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 Feature Writer - John Cathcart  
 Feature Writer - Joe Campolo Jr.  
 Feature Writer - Joyce Faulkner  
 Feature Writer - Jim Tritten  
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## MWSA LEADERSHIP

Founder/Board Member - William McDonald

President - Dwight Jon Zimmerman

Vice President - Bob Doerr

Secretary - Joe Epley

Treasurer - Vacant

### BOARD

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Valerie Ormond

Kathleen M. Rodgers

Jim Tritten

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Kathy Rodgers

Jack London

Don Helin

Joe Campolo Jr.

#### AWARDS DIRECTORS

John Cathcart

Rob Ballister

Betsy Beard

#### MEMBERSHIP

John Faulkner



## PRESIDENTS' MESSAGES

*Dwight Jon Zimmerman & Bob Doerr*

### DEAR MWSA MEMBERS,

This is a short note to let all of you know how honored I was to have been your president these past two years.

The organization has gone through many changes and I know that the future is in good hands under your newly elected president, Bob Doerr.

Many people have helped me in myriad ways—great and small—and to all of you, my heartfelt thanks. Your assistance, advice, friendships, and countless acts of kindness made my job worthwhile.

Thank you,

Dwight Jon Zimmerman

2017-2018 MWSA President

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### MWSA MEMBERS:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for electing me as your President of MWSA for the next two years.

I look forward to doing what I can to further enhance the value of MWSA for all its members.

Having just returned from the Membership Conference in Charleston, SC, I can definitely say that those who couldn't make it missed a good time.

I highly encourage everyone to try to come to next year's conference in September in Albuquerque, NM.

With the holidays rapidly approaching, I wish everyone a happy and healthy Holiday Season!

Thanks,

Bob Doerr,

President-elect, Military Writers Society of America

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**OUR INAUGURAL MIKE MULLINS** Memorial Writer of the Year for 2018 (awarded to Mike posthumously) was presented to his widow, Phyllis, and sons, Shane and Joel, during our awards banquet in Charleston, South Carolina in November.

Over time, MWSA’s special recognition awards have varied in content, intent, and number. In the recent past, we’ve given special recognition in the form of a *Writer of the Year*, *Founder’s Award*, and *President’s Award*. Although there was no *President’s Award* recipient for the 2018 season, we presented the recently-modified *Writer of the Year* and the *Founder’s Award* this year.

For the past decade or more, MWSA has honored one of its stand-out member/authors as its *Author of the Year*. If you peruse our website, you’ll find the names of these distinguished writers going all the way back to 2011.

The award has always recognized the recipient both for excellence in literature and a demonstrated, strong commitment to our organization. In December of last

year, your MWSA Board of Directors passed a resolution to rename this award in honor of long-time MWSA member, author, poet, veteran... and all-around good guy, Michael “Moon” Mullins.

Mike was a serious and dedicated writer—but those of us who knew him saw him as someone who never took himself too seriously. He always had a kind word of advice, an ear to lend, a joke to tell, or perhaps a prank to pull on some unsuspecting fellow MWSA member. We’ll all remember and cherish that ever-present smile and that distinctive twinkle in his eyes.

Although Mike’s no longer with us, his writing and the legacy of his involvement with this organization still echoes for all of us.

In recognition of his works of literature, and especially for his contributions to MWSA over the years, it is an honor and privilege for our organization to present the inaugural *Mike Mullins Memorial Writer of the Year Award* to Mike’s wife, Phyllis, and his entire family.

**THE MWSA AWARDS PROGRAM** is perhaps best-known for our award of Gold, Silver and Bronze medals for the top-scoring books submitted each year.

But each year, our Founder, Bill McDonald, also likes to single out an author for especially meritorious works of literature Or perhaps for his or her service to our country's military, its active duty members, or its veterans Or, frankly, for any reason he feels is appropriate.

Bill tends to highlight those authors and their works, which are not only clearly superior in a literary sense but personally impactful to him.

For this reason, we're never quite sure where Bill's gaze will settle each season.

This year, Bill zeroed in on one of those authors who has just been presented with one of our Gold medals for 2018. In Bill's opinion, this author's book clearly exemplifies a literary effort that is completely in sync with our MWSA mission and philosophy: a work that reflects credit upon the author, our nation's military, and this organization.

Due to ongoing health struggles, Bill was unable to join us at the awards banquet to present this award himself. On Bill McDonald's behalf, John Cathcart proudly presented the *2018 MWSA Founder's Award* to Rick St. John for his award-winning book, *Tiger Bravo's War*.

Congratulations, Rick St. John.





## INTRODUCING: 2019 MWSA BOARD



### President: Bob Doerr

**AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR** Bob Doerr has been a member of MWSA since 2010. He is MWSA's current Vice President.

Bob grew up in a military family, graduated from the Air Force Academy, and had a career of his own in the Air Force. His education credits include a Masters in International Relations from Creighton University. A full-time author with thirteen published books and a co-author in another, Bob was selected by the Military Writers Society of America as its *Author of the Year* for 2013. The Eric Hoffer Awards awarded Bob's book *No One Else to Kill* its 2013 first runner-up to the grand prize for commercial fiction.

Bob lives in Garden Ridge, Texas, with Leigh, his wife of 45 years, and Cinco, their ornery cat. During his term, Bob hopes to bring down some of the costs to MWSA members and expand MWSA's outreach programs.

### Vice President: George Jackson

**CAPTAIN GEORGE WILLIAM** Jackson (A.K.A. G. William Weatherly) grew up in Huntington, New York. After graduating (with honors) from the University of Wisconsin, he was commissioned an Ensign in June 1969. In the course of a 30-year career, he achieved exceptional credentials in nuclear power—being assigned to the pre-commissioning units of two submarines to oversee the testing of the nuclear engineering plants and training of the initial crews. He commanded three different submarines, USS Shark (SSN-591), USS Billfish (SSN-676), and PCU Rhode Island (SSBN740).

He is a member of the **Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers** (a global organization) and over a dozen other professional and veteran groups.

He lives in Southeastern Connecticut with his wife of over 40 years, Caren. With her help and a host of former sailors and friends, he began his writing career in 2008. He won the MWSA gold medal for fiction with his first novel, *Sheppard of the Argonne*, in 2016.

Awaiting



Photo



### Secretary: Joe Epley

**FOR THE PAST THREE** years, Joe served as secretary of the MWSA.

At the encouragement of others, he stands for one more term.

“We have accomplished a lot in the past three years. The bylaws have been updated and reflect better who we are. Minutes are accurately kept of all meetings. And, I coordinated the national conference in Charleston.

“I still have time to write, to tell the story of the Overmountain Men and Kings Mountain, to celebrate my 80th birthday, and to travel. I have served on various boards over the years and ran my own company before I retired, so I bring a wealth of management skills to the MWSA. With these skills, the Lord willing, and with support of the Board of Directors, I will be diligent in my duties to the MWSA and continue to help it reach its potential.”

### Treasurer: Hugh Simpson

**HUGH SIMPSON IS A RETIRED** LtCol USMCR and father of three. He and his wife own and operate a Law Firm and Title Insurance Business, and have for over twenty years, as well as several other Family and Real Estate Entities.

Hugh recently published his first book, *Borderline Decision*, and has recently turned over his second novel, *Caribbean Cabal*, to his editor.





## INTRODUCING: 2019 MEMBERS AT LARGE



Director-at-large: Jim Tritten

**JIM RETIRED AFTER A** forty-four year career with the Department of Defense, including duty as a carrier-based naval aviator. He holds advanced degrees from the University of Southern California and formerly served as a faculty member and National Security Affairs department chair at the Naval Postgraduate School. Dr. Tritten's publications have won him thirty-three writing awards, including the Alfred Thayer Mahan Award from the Navy League of the U.S. He has published six books and over three hundred chapters, short stories, essays, articles, and government technical reports. Jim was a frequent speaker at many military, arms control, and international conferences and has seen his work translated into Russian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. Jim is a current member of the board and is the coordinator for the 2019 conference to be jointly held with SouthWest Writers in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

### Larry Greenly

**ARMED WITH DEGREES** in physics/math, architecture, civil engineering, and chiropractic, Larry Greenly has led a multi-faceted life as a teacher, engineer, and doctor of chiropractic. His career as a freelance writer/editor of myriad non-fiction articles began over 30 years ago with a long-running medical column in professional journals. Along the way, Greenly garnered a number of writing awards and recognition, including the Parris Award.

Over the past three decades, Greenly has edited and proofread many books for other writers. He has been a writing instructor and speaker for years at various organizations around the country. Greenly is a book judge for several writing organizations. He is an active member of MWSA, SouthWest Writers, and SCBWI.

His vast board experience includes three terms as president of the Albuquerque Press Club, a decade as a board member of NM Physicians of Chiropractic Medicine, and four terms as president of SouthWest Writers (with multiple terms of every position on SWW's board since 1992 except treasurer). Greenly has also been SWW's office manager since 2004, but he expects to retire soon to devote more time to writing and other writing-related activities.

Greenly wants to help MWSA grow and prosper in any way he can. He currently lives in New Mexico.





## Phil Keith

**PHIL KEITH HOLDS A** degree in history from Harvard. After graduating, Phil went into the Navy and served in Vietnam. He was awarded the Air Medal, the Purple Heart, the Presidential Unit Citation, and the Navy Commendation Medal.

Phil has authored three novels and five nonfiction books to date. His two Vietnam books are both from St. Martin's Press: *Blackhorse Riders* won the 2012 USA Book News award for Best Military Non-Fiction, was a finalist for the 2013 Colby Award, and earned a Silver Medal from Military Writers Society of America. His second Vietnam book, *Fire Base Illingworth*, was released in 2013. *Stay the Rising Sun* (Quarto Publishing, 2016), is an account of the crucial WW II Battle of the Coral Sea and the loss of the aircraft carrier *USS Lexington* in May, 1942. *Stay the Rising Sun* won a Bronze Medal from The Military Writers Society and was a finalist for the 2016 Morison Award for Naval Literature. Phil is currently working on

two new books: *Long Hank*, a biographic novel on General Henry W. "Long Hank" Lawton, and *Love and Glory*, the biography of Eugene Bullard, the first African-American fighter pilot (co-written with best-selling author Tom Clavin), under contract to HarperCollins.

Phil serves on the planning board for the Town of Southampton, writes an award-winning column for the Southampton Press, and is a member of VFW Post 5350, American Legion Post 924, the Disabled American Veterans, and Vietnam Veterans of America. He lives in Southampton with his partner Laura Lyons and son Pierce.

## John Cathcart

**A LIFETIME MEMBER,** John Cathcart has been involved with MWSA for over 10 years—initially as webmaster, and for the past two seasons as awards director.

Before joining MWSA, John served 20 years on active duty in the USAF as pilot and in various staff positions. After retiring from the Air Force at the rank of Lt Col, he flew 737s for American Airlines. While flying for American, he wrote his award-winning debut novel, *Delta 7*.

Now that he's retired, John would like to continue working with MWSA and ensuring that it remains relevant and useful to veteran writers and their families.





# 2018 MWSA BOOK AWARD WINNERS

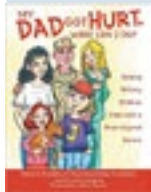
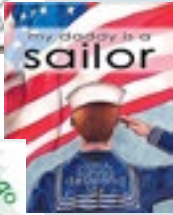
## **CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULT—PICTURE BOOK; SILVER**

*Eddie and Bingo : Destination Christmas* by Kathleen and Katherine Taylor

*My Dad Got Hurt. What Can I Do?* by Brunella Costagliola

*my daddy is a sailor* by Tahna Desmond Fox

*My Daddy Sleeps Everywhere* by Jesse Franklin



## **CHILDREN'S CHAPTER BOOK; GOLD**

*Jacqueline* by Jackie Minniti

## **COLLECTIONS—ANTHOLOGY; SILVER**

*Love, Sweet to Spicy* by the Corrales Writing Group

## **COLLECTIONS—RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL; SILVER**

*Holy in the Moment* by Ginger Harrington

## **HISTORICAL FICTION; BRONZE**

*Uncommon Bond* by John House

## **HISTORY; GOLD**

*The Shadow Tiger* by William C McDonald III & Barbara L. Evenson

*Tiger Bravo's War* by Rick St John

## **HISTORY; SILVER**

*Air Force One* by Nicholas Veronico ~ *Blades of Thunder* by W. Larry Dandridge

*Chopper Heroes* by William Peterson ~ *The Solomons Campaigns* by William L. McGee

## **HISTORY; BRONZE**

*Wonderful Flying Machines* by Barrett Beard

## **HORROR/FANTASY/SCI FI; SILVER**

*Tested* by Connie Cockrell

## **HOW TO/BUSINESS; SILVER**

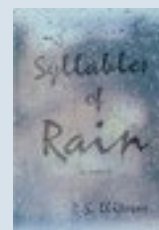
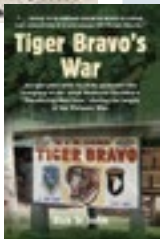
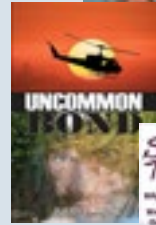
*Hal Moore on Leadership* by Harold G. Moore

## **LITERARY FICTION; GOLD**

*Syllables of Rain* by D.S. Lliteras

## **LITERARY FICTION; SILVER**

*The Perfection of Valor* by Bob Mustin



**LITERARY FICTION; BRONZE**

*Flowers from Afghanistan* by Suzy Parish

**MEMOIR/BIOGRAPHY; GOLD**

*Marcel's Letters* by Carolyn Porter

*Racing Back to Vietnam* by John Pendergrass

**MEMOIR/BIOGRAPHY; SILVER**

*Heroes to the End* by Jim Smith

**MEMOIR/BIOGRAPHY; BRONZE**

*Kanaga Diary* by Estelle Lauer

*Through Smoke-Teared Eyes* by Johnny F. Pugh

**MYSTERY/THRILLER; GOLD**

*Land of Wolves* by Tj Turner

*Soft Target* by John D Trudel

*The Consultant* by Tj O'Connor

**MYSTERY/THRILLER; SILVER**

*Homeland Burning* by Brinn Colenda

*Into a Dark Frontier* by John Mangan

*Sins of the Fathers* by Joseph Badal

**PICTORIAL/COFFEE TABLE; GOLD**

*Lighthouses of America* by Tom Beard

**POETRY—POETRY BOOK; GOLD**

*War in the Company of Medics* by John J. Candelaria

**POETRY—POETRY BOOK; BRONZE**

*Vietnam Voices* by Michael Lepore

**REFERENCE; SILVER**

*The Wicked Problem of Cultural Heritage and Conflict* by Christopher Herndon and Joris Kila

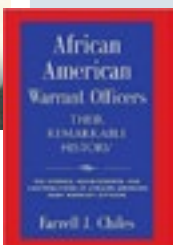
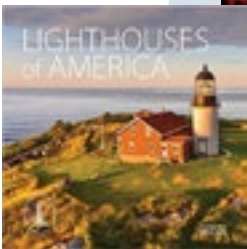
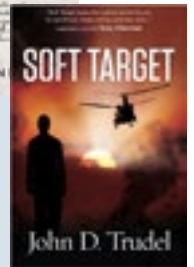
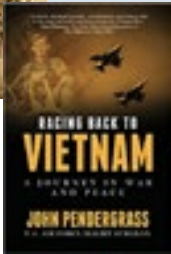
**REFERENCE; BRONZE**

*African American Warrant Officers* by Farrell Chiles

*Bradley vs. BMP* by Mike Guardia

**YOUNG ADULT (FICTION OR NON-FICTION); SILVER**

*Sebastian's Tale* by Dylan Weiss





## SUCCESS IN CHARLESTON

*Joe Epley*

**VETERANS DAY WEEKEND** set the theme for this year's 2018 Annual Conference of the Military Writers Society of America in the city that suffered occupation in two wars. The Joint Base Charleston Color Guard presented the colors, as a video of the combined Army and Navy Academies' Glee Clubs sang the Star Spangled Banner.

Navy Captain Keven Byrne welcomed the group to Charleston, S.C. with a briefing on the critical role Joint Base Charleston plays in America's defense. Byrne is the Deputy Commander of Joint Base Charleston which consists of the sprawling air base and Naval Weapons facility.



*Valerie Ormond conducts a writers' workshop at VA Hospital.*

A day before the kickoff of our conference, Valerie Ormond and Bob Doerr conducted a half-day, writers' workshop for patients at the nearby Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center. At one point during the workshop, Bob and Valerie invited the participants to join us during the conference. One did attend, volunteered to join our reviewer team, and seemed enthusiastic about encouraging other veterans to join our group.

The rest of the conference for MWSA members was devoted to research, editing, publishing, and medal winners telling about their books. Highlight of the meeting was the MWSA book awards ceremony and banquet.

In December of last year, the MWSA Board of Directors



*Bob Doerr...always busy.*

renamed the *Writer of the Year* award in honor of long-time MWSA member, author, poet, veteran, and all-around good guy, Michael "Moon" Mullins. He was a serious and dedicated writer known for his ever-present smile and that distinctive twinkle in his eyes.

Mike's body of work includes a wide variety of literary achievement. He authored efforts like: *POW/MIA*, *Vietnam in Verse: Poetry for Beer Drinkers*, *Out of the Mist: Memories of War*, and *The Drifter*



*Barbara Evenson conducts a class on editing.*

Awards chair, John Cathcart said in presenting the honor, "Although Mike's no longer with us, his writing and the legacy of his involvement with this organization still echoes for all of us. In recognition of his works of literature, and especially for his contributions to MWSA over the years, it is an honor and privilege for

me to present our inaugural *Mike Mullins Memorial Writer of the Year Award* to Mike’s widow, Phyllis, and his entire family.”



*Phyllis Mullins receives the inaugural Mike Mullins Writer of the Year Award for her late husband. Son looks on.*

words. The 2018 MWSA Book Award winners are listed on pages 12 & 13 of this magazine.



*Larry and Mrs. Dandridge who coordinated with the VA hospital.*

Receiving the Founder’s Award was Rick St. John, chosen by the founder of MWSA Bill McDonald. This year, Bill zeroed in on an author who was also presented with a Gold medal for 2018. In Bill’s opinion, St. John’s book, *Tiger Bravo’s War* clearly exemplifies a literary effort that is completely in sync with our MWSA mission and philosophy, “a work that reflects credit upon the author, our nation’s military, and this organization.”

Bob Doerr, the newly elected MWSA president called the conference, “one of the best yet, despite attendance being down. We learned a lot and had a good time.”



*Rick St. John, Founders award winner, talks about his book, Tiger Bravo’s War, which won a gold medal.*



*Medal winners who attended the Awards Banquet.*

All in all, there were 71 books submitted for awards. Thirty-eight passed the rigorous examination by the three MWSA reviewers who scored the work on content, style, visual appearance, and technical use of





A CONVERSATION WITH MWSA AUTHOR

ERNEST SNOWDEN

**ERNEST SNOWDEN IS A FORMER** naval aviator and production test pilot for tactical jet aircraft. After active duty, he continued in the naval reserve as an aeronautical engineering duty officer until his retirement in 2000. As a Navy civilian, he managed the budgeting and financial reporting for a multi-million dollar enterprise as the business manager for the Maintenance Policy Division of the Naval Air Systems Command, followed by a tour as staff assistant to the Deputy Director for Research and Engineering in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

He began work for a succession of private companies including Cessna Aircraft and General Electric before joining Northrop Grumman Corporation, where for thirty years he guided strategic planning and new

business capture for manned and unmanned naval aircraft programs.



**MWSA:** Why did you become an author in the first place?

**SNOWDEN:** Looking back over my working career, I’ve always gravitated to job assignments that allowed me to express my strong propensity for writing. In the Department of Defense, I authored testimony statements for department appointees appearing as witnesses in hearings before congress. In my marketing jobs, I would be the “go to” person for crafting white papers and position papers, as well as advertising copy for marketing campaigns. So, taking on a full-length book in genre that I’m familiar with seemed a natural outgrowth of my experience and inclination.

Growing up surrounded by naval aviation – my father and uncle were both carrier pilots – I believed I had a story to tell about their relationship and how they matured along with the profession. Despite more than a dozen years difference in their ages, they had a close fraternal bond and shared a love of flying the high performance fighter aircraft of their day, and the highest regard for their chosen work, the “tailhook” navy. I

also possessed a trove of memorabilia saved over the years by their mother and available in historical archives that had never been organized in a coherent way that was suitable for publication.

**MWSA:** When and why did you join MWSA?

**SNOWDEN:** I became aware of MWSA through an academy classmate and friend, George Galdorisi, who had been selected by MWSA for a Silver Medal in 2013 for Mystery writing. Once I took a closer look at MWSA, it seemed to offer a very deep repository of military-oriented writing that I could tap for research, and also for pure enjoyment. I joined at the beginning of the year and now look forward to the opportunity to mingle with like-minded authors at the annual conventions, though I am not able to make it to the 2018 convention.

**MWSA:** Why did you choose to work in this genre?

**SNOWDEN:** If one considers military history, specifically naval aviation history as the genre, I was drawn to it by my own life's work as a naval aviator, a naval aviation acquisition civilian for the navy, and as a senior marketing professional for a large aerospace company focused on new aircraft for the navy. For this first book, my intimate familiarity with the principle characters, and my ability to draw on my own practical experience as a naval aviator gave me the impetus to work in this genre. I have always believed that the writing conveys more authenticity when it comes out of personal experience..

**MWSA:** Will you briefly list your other books for us?

**SNOWDEN:** This book, [\*Winged Brothers\*](#), is my first work to be published, however, I am working with a co-author on a second book that will chronicle the history of the Global Hawk unmanned aircraft in the navy. The first draft manuscript will be submitted to my publisher in the fall.

**MWSA:** Tell us a little bit about this book.

**SNOWDEN:** *Winged Brothers* recounts the service exploits of two brothers through more than forty years of naval aviation history in both peace and war. They were deeply committed to each other and to advancing

their chosen profession, but due to the vast difference in their ages and the fourteen years between their respective academy graduations, they experienced carrier aviation from very different perspectives.

The older brother entered naval aviation in an era of open-cockpit biplanes when the navy's operations from aircraft carriers were still taking form, when Fleet Problems were still the primary means of determining aviation's warfighting utility and proving its merits to the fleet. He would build on those early lessons to assume a pivotal role in the war with Japan, leading first a squadron, then an air group to one of the most distinguished combat records of the Second World War. As his career arced to its wartime zenith, then began a slow decline after the war, the career of the younger brother began its ascendancy at a time of post-war retrenchment and self-examination for naval aviation.

The younger brother's story takes the reader through the transition from props to jets, inside the inter-service disputes at the start of the atomic age, from straight to angled flight decks, through the perils of flight testing high performance aircraft, and eventually to supersonic combat over the humid landscape of Vietnam. The younger brother returned from Vietnam to step into a contentious struggle inside the Washington beltway over the future of the Navy's next fighter, becoming a key player in wresting a brilliant Navy solution that would become the F-14 Tomcat.

For the entirety of their time in uniform, the one constant was a close fraternal bond that saw the older brother as mentor and the younger brother as devoted admirer and protégé, only to see those roles recede as the younger brother's achievements transcended those of the older brother. Through personal letters, official reports, first-hand accounts, and first-person interviews, their symbiotic relationship is revealed to the reader. Their motivations to follow long and committed service in naval aviation are explored and laid bare: Ernie was propelled by equal parts patriotism, longing for risk and adventure, and yearning to leave the family farm; Mac was driven by equal parts desire to serve,

*SNOWDEN ~ Continued on page 16*



*SNOWDEN~ Continued from page 15*

love of flying, and desire to emulate his older brother whom he lionized as father figure and role model.

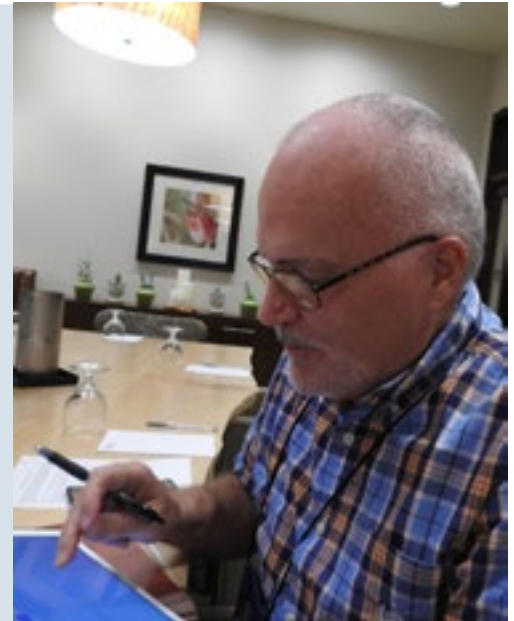
**MWSA:** What made you interested in writing a book on this particular topic?

**SNOWDEN:** This book presents a story that has not yet been told. The two Snowden brothers were well-known and highly regarded in their elite professional community of carrier-based fighter pilots, but nothing has ever been written that sums their vast experience and contribution to the trade. Their overlapping careers spanned more than forty years in, or associated with naval aviation. Each brother witnessed different influences on the growth of naval aviation in their respective eras. Throughout, the personal histories of two Snowden brothers is fixed in the larger context of naval aviation history that covers fully half of its first one hundred years of steady, uninterrupted advance in the sophistication and complexity of aircraft technology, operational training, and combat employment. I was interested in bringing this story forth in published book form to address a significant component of sea power by tracing the personal histories of two brothers, both naval officers and aviators. By placing their story in the larger context of naval aviation history, the reader follows their careers through fully half of its first one hundred years of steady, uninterrupted advance in the sophistication and complexity of aircraft technology, operational training, and combat employment. If there is a consistent theme, it is the enduring professionalism of not just these two brothers, but of an entire community of dedicated and high-achieving naval aviators that, by the close of its first one hundred years, had made naval aviation an emblem of national pride and purpose.

**MWSA:** What makes this particular book special to you?

**SNOWDEN:** First, it's a family story, one that I know well and hopefully have interpreted in a way that is compelling to not just the military history enthusiast, but to a broader readership. It's a family story made more immediate and authentic for the reader because

of my own long association with the topic of naval aviation history. And, finally, its an opportunity for me to extol the virtues of a category of military professionals: technical competence, esprit, courage, and devotion to duty.



*John Cathcart*



*Karl Warner, a historian from the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, explains to the 2018 MWSA Annual Conference attendees how the USAHEC keeps detail records of conflicts dating back to the revolution and how writers can access information*



## WINGED BROTHERS

Naval Aviation as Lived by Ernest and Macon Snowden

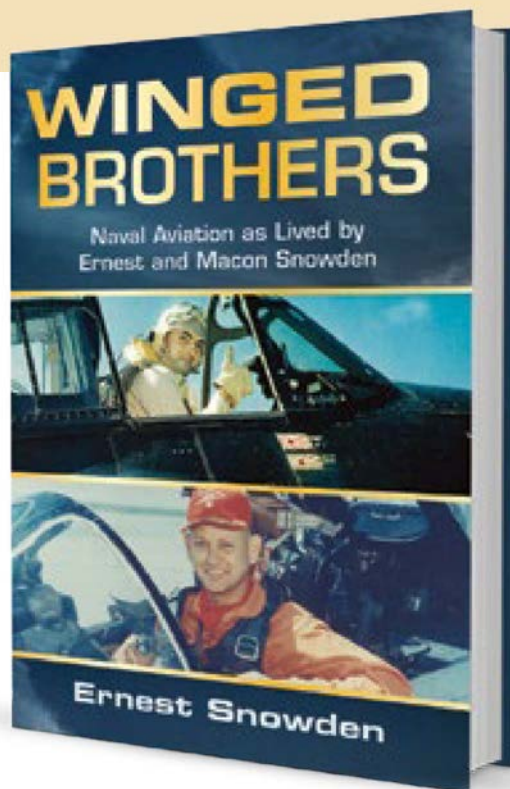
By Ernest Snowden

*Winged Brothers* recounts the service exploits of two brothers over more than forty years of naval aviation history in both peace and war. They were deeply committed to each other and to advancing their chosen profession, but due to the vast difference in their ages and the fourteen years between their respective graduations from the U.S. Naval Academy, they experienced carrier aviation from very different perspectives.


The older brother, Ernest, entered naval aviation in an era of open-cockpit biplanes when the Navy's operations from aircraft carriers were still taking form, when Fleet Problems were still the primary means of determining aviation's warfighting utility and proving its merits to the fleet. Macon's story guides the reader through the Navy's transition from piston-engine aircraft to jets.

For the entirety of their time in uniform, the one constant was a close fraternal bond that saw Ernest as mentor and Macon as devoted admirer and protégé, only to see those roles recede as the younger brother's achievements transcended those of the older brother. Through personal letters, official reports, first-hand accounts, and first-person interviews, their symbiotic relationship is revealed to the reader.

**ERNEST SNOWDEN** is the son of Macon Snowden and nephew of Ernest Snowden. The author is a 1970 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and a former naval aviator. After active duty, he continued in the Naval Reserve as an aeronautical engineering duty officer until his retirement in 2000. As a Navy civilian, he served as the business manager for the Maintenance Policy Division of the Naval Air Systems Command, followed by a tour as staff assistant to the Deputy Director for Research and Engineering in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He lives in McLean, Virginia.



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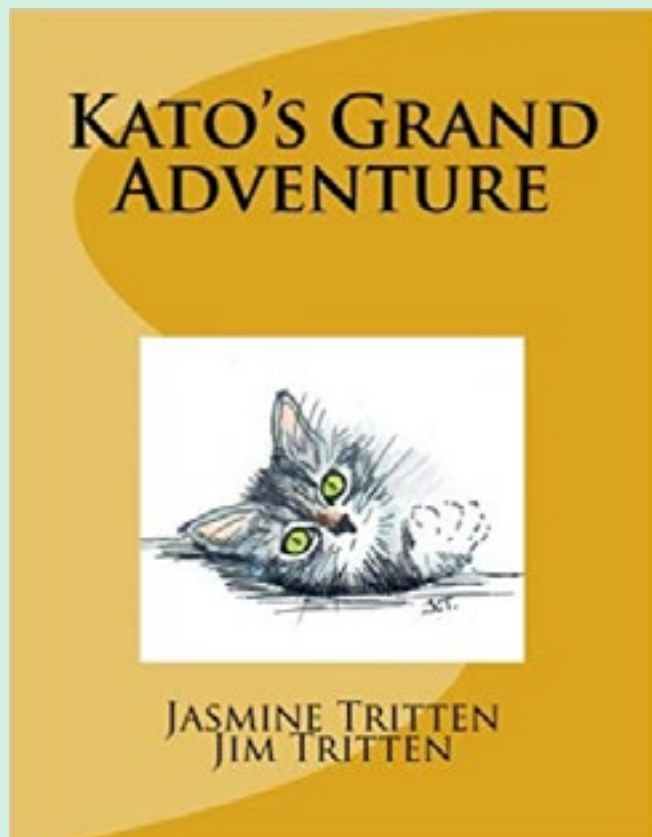
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*KATO'S GRAND ADVENTURE*, BY JASMINE AND JIM TRITTEN

ISBN-10: 172276922X

ISBN-13: 978-1722769222

**AN ADVENTURE STORY** written from the perspective of lost kitten. Kato is the cutest little gray/black striped young male cat with white paws and a rusty colored nose. He sets out to look for his missing sister. In the process he gets lost in the woods by a rushing stream.

With the help of a rabbit, then an owl, and finally a coyote, he overcomes many obstacles on his journey. Assisted by newfound friends, Kato is reunited with his sister and arrives safely at home.

*Kato's Grand Adventure* is a perfect book to be read-aloud to children and grandchildren at an early age. It can then be a first chapter book for anyone with a 4th or 5th grade reading level.

Original illustrations by Jasmine Tritten.

## NEW MEMBER RESOURCE DIRECTORY

**AS A SERVICE** to its members, MWSA has created new member resource directory page on our website.

*Click on image to go to our new Member Resources Directory page.*



The page is meant to provide information and contact details for organizations offering services to writers and veterans.

We encourage all MWSA members to offer (or recommend) services to other members—whether their own services or those of other private or governmental organizations. The page includes an easy-to-use online form to submit a new organization or company.

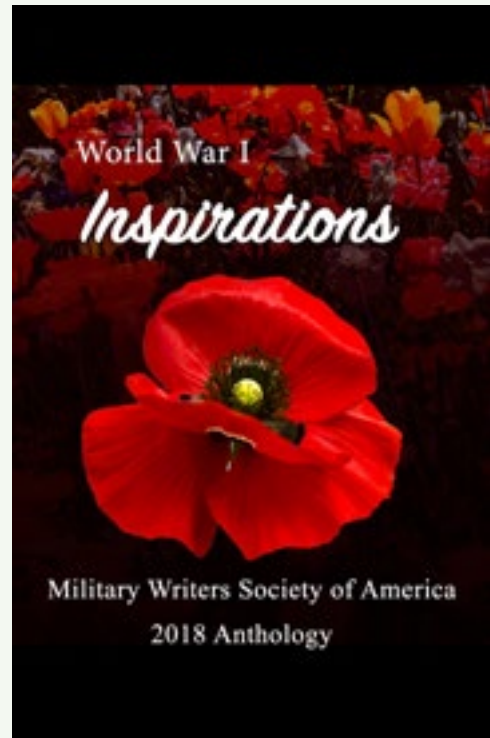
In order to list your own services, you must be an MWSA member in good standing.

MWSA is offering this page as a service to our members. We are not specifically endorsing any company or organization listed on that page.

<http://www.mwsadispatches.com/member-resource-directory>



## 2018 MWSA ANTHOLOGY



### WORLD WAR I INSPRIATIONS 2018 MWSA ANTHOLOGY

#### **Other MWSA Anthologies Available for Purchase:**

*Pulaski County, Missouri Inspirations*  
*2016 Anthology*

<HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/DP/194326743X>

*Gettysburg Inspirations 2016 Anthology*

<HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/DP/1943267340>

Two volumes of collections of short fiction, historical pieces, poetry, and songs written by members of the Military Writers Society of America.

Be sure to get your copies before they're gone.

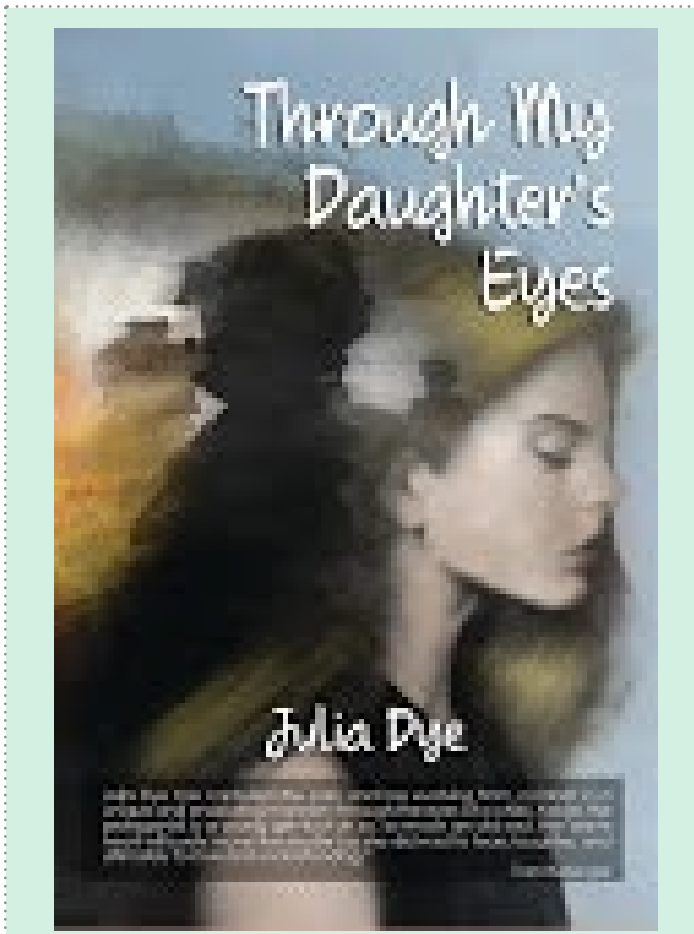


A CONVERSATION WITH MWSA AUTHOR

JULIA DYE

**JULIA DYE TELLS STORIES** because she loves to entertain and see a certain secret smile from her readers when she strikes a chord. Julia writes about anything in the human condition that interests her, but she has an affinity for stories with a military flavor. Dr. Dye works as the Vice President and CFO of Warriors, Inc., the entertainment business's premiere military advising company. She began with Warriors on the film *Starship Troopers*. Projects since then include *Rough Riders*, *Terminator 2:3D*, *Star Trek: The Adventure*, *Wag the Dog*, the *Medal of Honor* series for Electronic Arts, and was Weapons Master on *Alexander* with Oliver Stone. She served as Adjutant on the maxi-series *The Pacific* for HBO, and is currently directing a documentary about Marine Corps Combat Correspondents. Her book *Backbone: History, Traditions, and Leadership*

*Lessons of Marine Corps NCOs* has received critical acclaim and a gold medal from the Military Writers Society of America. She currently lives between Los Angeles, close to the entertainment business, and Lockhart, Texas, close to her heart.



**MWSA:** Why did you become an author in the first place?

**DYE:** When I was young, I loved to read anything I could get my hands on. I was fortunate to come from a family of readers, and a huge variety of books were available to me, and no one said I shouldn't read something because of my age. I remember reading *I, Claudius* in grade school and being swept away. I didn't realize that book wasn't meant for children until I was in high school. Books are magic. Readers can see and experience things we could never do in real life. It starts for me the minute I open the cover. I get so involved I don't even notice that I'm turning the page. I wanted to create that kind of magic.

**MWSA:** When and why did you join MWSA?

**DYE:** I joined MWSA many years ago; I think it was in

2010, while I was writing *Backbone*. I wanted to be a part of a community of military writers, and I found the idea of a group of writers with similar goals and ideals very attractive.

**MWSA:** Why did you choose to work in this genre?

**DYE:** There's so much going on right now in the world of Young Adult fiction. All the old rules have been thrown out and almost any topic is fair game. And I wanted to feel back to the child I was, who read everything and wanted more...I wanted to provide something for that kid. And I wanted a chance to write from a young girl's perspective, to give insight to adults about what it's like to grow up in a military family, especially when a parent is deployed.

**MWSA:** Will you briefly list your other books for us?

**DYE:** *Backbone: History, Traditions, and Leadership Lessons of Marine Corps NCOs*: Noncommissioned officers stand as the backbone of the United States Marine Corps. In this insightful and thoroughly researched book, Julia Dye explores the cadre of noncommissioned officers that make up the Marine Corps' system of small-unit leadership. To help us better understand what makes these extraordinary men and women such effective leaders, Dye examines the 14 leadership traits embraced by every NCO. These qualities—including judgment, enthusiasm, determination, bearing, and unselfishness—are exemplified by men like Terry Anderson, the former Marine sergeant who spent nearly seven years as a hostage in Beirut, John Basilone, the hero of the Pacific, and many others. To assemble this extraordinary chronicle, Julia Dye interviewed Anderson and dozens of other Marines, mining a rich trove of historical and modern NCO heroes that comprise the Marine Corps' astonishing legacy, from its founding in 1775 to the present day. Gold medal winner from MWSA, 2014

I also co-wrote with my husband, Captain Dale Dye, the graphic novel *Code Word: Geronimo*: The leader of SEAL Team 6 uttered, "Geronimo," and the world let out a sigh of relief. The symbol of ultimate evil was no more. *Code Word: Geronimo* is the amazing, moment-by-moment story of the clandestine raid on

Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Bronze medal winner from MWSA, 2013

**MWSA:** Tell us a little bit about this book.

**DYE:** *Through My Daughter's Eyes* is a one-of-a-kind, much-needed look at what it means to come of age in a military family today. Our middle school heroine Abbie is wiser than her years—and most of the adults in her life, for that matter. Equal parts Flavia de Luce and Harriet the Spy, Abbie describes her life this way: "My best friend and fellow Army-brat Megan and I had a plan to get through Dessau Middle School (Go Diamondbacks!) by being just good enough to not get noticed and not so good we'd be picked out for any attention. And it worked—for a while.

*"Then my dad got deployed—again—and mom fell apart, leaving me in charge of my own life and, it seemed, everyone else's. When Dad came home after about a hundred-million years, he wasn't much help, either. I know war is terrible, but it's not like he talks to me about it, so how was I supposed to know what to do? He's not even the same dad that left.*

*"I turned to my grandpa for help, but in the end, I had to let go of being the glue that kept everything together. I had to learn to give my parents room to save themselves—and our family."*

**MWSA:** What made you interested in writing a book on this particular topic?

**DYE:** War shows human beings both at their very best and very worst. What war gives any given society, or social group, or economic structure, or religious base, or an individual, is an unequivocal stress-test. The true conviction behind the ideals and beliefs of a society is only revealed during and after the stress of something like war. That does not mean that war is a good or positive thing, just that it is a conduit for revealing elements of a society that are otherwise hidden to us.

*DYE ~ Continued on page 22*



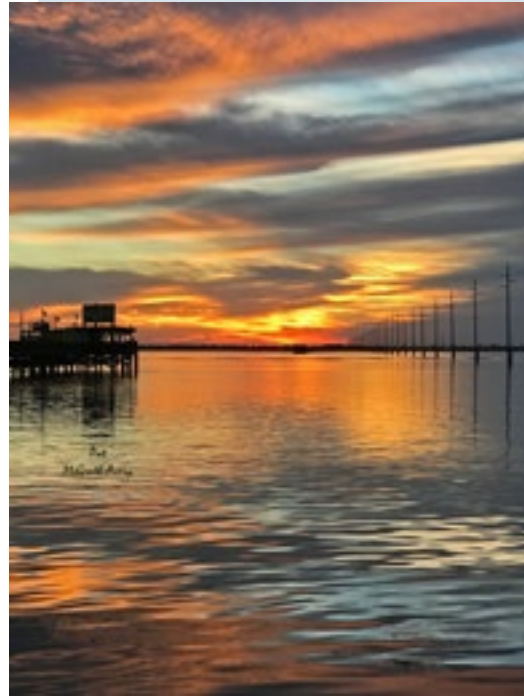
*DYE~ Continued from page 21*

It's a way to look beyond what a culture says it believes in to what that culture actually does.

**MWSA:** What makes this particular book special to you?

**DYE:** About 2 million American children have at least one parent serving in the military, and that number climbs exponentially when you add in other first-responder parents. And that doesn't include children of veterans, like me. Military children tend to be healthy, well-adjusted, culturally savvy members of our communities. They're citizens of the world.

Remember, these kids belong to other cultural groups, too, and are not just defined by the military. There's blended families, various religions, all of the possible kinds of families are also military families.



# 2019 JOINT WRITING CONFERENCE

*Jim Tritten*

**THE MILITARY WRITERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA (MWSA)** and SouthWest Writers (SWW) will co-host a joint writing conference at the Hotel Albuquerque, Albuquerque, New Mexico from Thursday, September 12th through Sunday, September 15th, 2019. Program details are still being developed but the concept will be to share the strengths of both organizations in a series of classes and workshops designed to help writers learn from specialists they would not normally encounter.

Albuquerque, New Mexico is known for the annual Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, chile [red or green is the state question], Native Americans living in close proximity, Breaking Bad, and its extraordinary Spanish culture. New Mexico is known officially as the “Land of Enchantment,” but locals refer to the state as the “Land of Entrapment”—many who come to visit stay.

Here are some links to what to do while in Albuquerque:

[https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g60933-Activities-Albuquerque\\_New\\_Mexico.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g60933-Activities-Albuquerque_New_Mexico.html)

<https://www.visitalbuquerque.org/things-to-do/>

<https://www.thecrazytourist.com/top-25-things-to-do-in-albuquerque-nm/>

MWSA is a nationwide association of some 279 authors, poets, and artists drawn together by the common bond of military service. Most of its members are active duty military, retirees, military veterans or their families. A few are lifelong civilians who've chosen to honor our military through their writings or their art. Others have only a tangential relationship to the military.

MWSA will take the lead on teaching a free, day-long writing class at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque on Thursday, September 12th, 2019.

SWW brings a wealth of expertise to the conference.

This would include memoir, southwest setting, mystery/thriller, poetry, short stories, romance, sci-fi, westerns, non-fiction, fantasy, action, history, humor, etc. SWW is devoted to helping both published and unpublished writers improve their craft and further their careers. SWW serves its 329 members and all writers of all skill levels in every fiction and nonfiction genre.

SWW knows a bit about MWSA. This year, nine SWW members were finalists in the annual published book contest and were awarded medals in Charleston, SC.

In the past, the MWSA director of education, Jack Woodville London spoke and taught classes at SWW. Similarly, members of SWW have spoken and taught classes at MWSA conferences. Jim Tritten, Larry Greenly, Jack London, Joe Badal, Brinn Colenda, Pat Walkow, John Candelaria, and Tom Neiman are all members of both organizations and have volunteered their services to develop a program that is sure to inspire everyone.

Next year's joint conference in Albuquerque will also include an awards ceremony where MWSA recognizes highly talented published authors. SWW is considering holding an awards ceremony at the conference. Writers interested in participating in the annual MWSA contest can do so by applying at <http://www.mwsadispatches.com> after the first of the year.

Anyone with specific recommendations for the program are welcome to contact the Conference Coordinator, Jim Tritten at [jimtritten@comcast.net](mailto:jimtritten@comcast.net). Of course, Jim welcomes hearing from anyone interested in helping at any level.





# TAKING OFF THE UNIFORM

*Jim Tritten*

**JASMINE AND I ENTERED** the medicine circle, arm-in-arm, from the east—the direction of the rising sun and the new day. Dusty, tan stones lined the sandy path to the center. The acrid tang of burning sage hung in the air.

We turned to the south and walked to the makeshift altar. We poured cool water from an earthen jug over each other's hands. The water dripped into a large, yellow and red basin. We dried our hands on thin cotton towels, smiled at one another, and turned around to face the center of the circle.

Our medicine man, David Singing Bear—a Marine Corps veteran of Cherokee descent—chanted while he waited for us with a Storm Cloud ceremonial blanket. He unfolded the sacred cloth—woven in red and black, grey and white—and raised it to the sky. He called on his gods to bless us as a couple and me as a returning service member.

Based on Native American rituals that welcome home warriors after battle, this ceremony was the culmination of an eight day retreat the National Veterans Healing & Wellness Center in Angel Fire, New Mexico.

David draped the woolen Storm Cloud over our heads and shoulders. Jasmine and I, who had been married then for 20 years, spoke to each other in total privacy. I thanked her for being there for me when I needed her most; when I was at the deepest depths of PTSD.

David resumed his chant and we emerged. He continued his song, and I felt lighter—as though a burden had been eased.

We walked back to the center of the circle and turned to the north, and there stood two colonels—one in Air Force blue and one in Army green. They stood at attention next to a sculpture of a rifle with bayonet in the ground; helmet on the stock.

I adjusted my frame, stood ramrod straight, felt my

heels click together, and raised my right arm. I executed a very crisp, very Navy salute. They slowly returned the salute and said, “Welcome home, Sailor.”

I remember dropping my arm, and not much else. My chest shuddered—eyes shut against the sting of tears—and I lost all sensation of sound, smell, or my feet touching the ground.

Jasmine took my elbow and led me back out through the center of the medicine circle, along the sandy path lined with stones.

The first thing I saw through the tears, and the first thing I could feel, was the rest of my fellow veterans and their spouses—my village, my community—clapping me on the back, hugging me with abandon, welcoming my return. I had taken off the uniform twenty-seven years earlier, but today I was finally home.

*Taking off the Uniform* won a Gold Medal in the 2018 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.



# Attention Members of MWSA:

We are offering another benefit to members of Military Writers Society of America. If you are launching a new book, send us the good news and we will introduce it to our MWSA audience. The first three submissions each quarter will receive a 1/3 page ad (\$100 value for non-members) in Dispatches. On submission, you will be told if your book will appear in the magazine. If you miss the magazine, you can request an announcement in the monthly email blast.

In addition, each issue of Dispatches will feature one two-page spread MWSA author interview which will include cover art, author headshot and bio. The interview will be limited to the first request each quarter.

Here are the rules:

- ✓ You must be a member in good standing of MWSA.
- ✓ Your book must be published, complete with an ISBN. We will not accept ARCs or manuscripts.
- ✓ Your date of publication must be no more than twelve months before requested date of ad in.
- ✓ Your book must comply with the rules specified by the Awards Program, i.e., no pornography, must be respectful of the government of the United States of America and the United States Military.

Here's how to submit:

- ✓ Submit your cover art (jpg), genre and subcategory, a summary, and where your book can be purchased.
- ✓ The quarter you would like your ad to appear in.
- ✓ If you would like a staff member to interview you for a full article about your book, please indicate that in your submission. Only one interview per issue, so first come first serve.
- ✓ Send to [sandstar62@gmail.com](mailto:sandstar62@gmail.com)

## Become an MWSA Reviewer

If you'd like to help out and become one of our MWSA reviewers, we'd love to have you join us!

All it takes is about 45 minutes to an hour of training via video conference—or over the phone.

***You'll get to read a wide variety of books.***

***Books are assigned on a volunteer basis—you pick what you read.***

***After submitting your review, the books are yours to keep.***

Reviewers evaluating a minimum number of books (exact number varies) will receive a small Amazon gift certificate acknowledging their contribution. The more books you review, the larger the certificate.

Most importantly, you can "pay it forward" by helping out a fellow MWSA author!

If you'd like to get more details or volunteer to help out, please use our [Contact Form](#)



## COOL MACHINES

*Joyce K. Faulkner*

“I WANT TO DRIVE THAT,” I said to my husband, Johnny as we drove through a plethora of orange barrels lining a new ramp off I-279 near our house.

“Drive what?” He was focused on something inside his head, I guess. There didn’t seem to be any way he could miss the huge piece of road equipment that looked like across between a T-Rex and a Sherman Tank.

“That!” I pointed.

He sighed. “You always did have a thing for heavy equipment.”

It’s true. I’ve always enjoyed exotic vehicles. We have a scrapbook full of pictures of me pretending to steer cruise ships, river barges, airboats, steam engines, and the like. I saunter up to the operator of the object of my desire and make friendly with him. (For some reason, it’s usually a him.) Eventually, I get him to show me how the machine works and that leads to ‘the question’.

Most of the time, the answer is “NO.”

In another life, I worked in a steel mill for a summer. I was intrigued with the Basic Oxygen Furnace. A cool old man named Foxy operated it. He could look at the flame and tell within ten degrees what the temperature was.

Every day, I’d go in to work, put on my white helmet and steel-toed boots, walk out to the pulpit and sidle up to Foxy

“Don’t give me that look,” he’d cackle.

“Aw, c’mon, Foxy. I can do it.”

“You get hurt, little girl, we ALL gonna bleed.”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah. Like the furnace is going to run amok if I put my hand on the controls.”

Foxy chuckled and went back to work.



I used to think that men refused me access to their very cool vehicles because they were afraid that I'd drive them into a wall. Now I think that they just don't want to share — like that boy who lived down the road from me who had a Karmann Ghia. That was a mega-cool car. I could see myself in it — making doughnuts in the field across the street from my house. However, he wouldn't let me anywhere near it unless I'd give him a tongue kiss. His car was a lot more attractive than he was — leading to a moral dilemma of gigantic proportions. In the end, I realized that we shared something important. We liked that car a lot more than we liked each other.

When I was in college, I dated an English professor — the kind who wore leather patches on the elbows of his tweed blazer, and sandals with white socks. He drove an Austin Healey 100. We spent hours haggling.

“C'mon, Angus. I know how to drive a stick.”

He was adamant. “Everything's on the opposite side of the car, what?”

“If you can do it, I can do it.”

“But I cut my teeth on 'er,” he said.

“What's that got to do with anything? It'll only take me a minute to adjust.”

“Not on my dime, dolly.”

“My name's Joyce.”

“Quite right.”

Angus and I never did see eye to eye on anything.

When I worked for the gas company, I cornered a scrawny fellow named Leon who was responsible for backing the drilling rig into place. I just about had Leon convinced that I could do it—when the big boss pulled up in his white SUV. He beeped his horn and gestured.

Leon gasped. “The boss man's gonna can me!”

“Nonsense. He just wants me out of the truck.”

I opened the door. The ground was many feet below me. I looked around for hand and toeholds—and started to climb down. Missing the second one from the bottom, I landed on my butt in the grass.

The boss rolled down his window. “Nice try, Joyce.”

I got up and dusted off my jeans. “Five more minutes and I'd have driven off with this thing.” It was bluster, of course. Someone would have noticed eventually—and come for me.

“You are persistent, I'll give you that much.” He rolled up the window and drove off.

“I bet you drove the rig in when you were a new hire,” I grumbled under my breath.

I looked up at Leon. He scooted back into the driver's seat and slammed the door.

“Coward!” I said with no conviction.

I don't know why I share the male fascination with big engines, wheels that are taller than me, gears that mesh perfectly. There's something divine in a perfect design.

When we were in Kenya, we visited Karen Blixen's coffee farm at the foot of the Ngong Hills, a short drive from Nairobi. The house looked like it did in the movie “Out of Africa.” The scenery around it made my heart pound with excitement. Or maybe that was the altitude. Who knows? All of that—as beautiful as it was—paled before a large piece of equipment of unknown utility parked at the edge of a wood facing a large meadow.

I wandered around it—touching the heavy painted metal, wondering who created it. I imagined some intense engineer with a sexy brain and a lover's passion for beauty. The machine gleamed in the sunshine. I put my forehead against it—and felt the soul of a man long dead—still alive in the inner workings of his creation, which had been rendered inanimate through disuse.

“What are you doing?” Johnny's voice was soft in my ear.

“Communing with the ghost of the guy who made this.”

“What's he saying?”

I stood up and sighed. “That I can't drive it.”

*Artwork by Kathy Gogolewski*

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## WELCOME TO THE MWSA ~ WHO WE ARE

*John Cathcart*

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

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

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

Thanks very much for being a part of the MWSA organization.

## SAVING HISTORY ONE STORY AT A TIME



*Many images found within this publication are available for purchase. For more information, contact [PatAvery@gmail.com](mailto:PatAvery@gmail.com)*

# ADD YOUR BOOK TO THE MWSA LIBRARY

*John Cathcart*

...from \$0.00

**THIS IS FOR SUBMITTING** your book to the MWSA library only.

- MWSA will **NOT** review your book, nor will it be considered for award using this option.
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- If you'd like to add additional book(s), please chose the "Extra Book" option (cost \$5.00 per book).
- MWSA will add your book as quickly as we can... but it may take some time (depending on webmaster workload).
- We are limiting submissions to 50 for each option to make sure we can handle the workload and get your book included on our website in a timely manner.
  - If an option is listed as "Sold Out," please check back later or contact the MWSA Awards Directors... we may be able to include your book once we've cleared any backlog.
- MWSA's online library will include your book for at least one calendar year after it's added and will remain online until and unless MWSA transitions to a new/different website.

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**MWSA DISPATCHES IS LOOKING FOR MEMBER SUBMISSIONS.**

We have many opportunities available for you as a member in good standing, from [Author Interviews](#) to Poetry submissions, to **Book Profiles** (three books—first come-first served—will be showcased in the Dispatches every quarter).

If you'd like to write a feature article or have further questions, please email me at [sandstar62@msn.com](mailto:sandstar62@msn.com) or Pat McGrath Avery at [PatAvery@gmail.com](mailto:PatAvery@gmail.com). Thanks.

## ENDLESS STORIES OF BRAVERY

*Adam Troxtell, Transcript Staff Writer*

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LTC William A. Hamilton, US Army, accepts his induction into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame Saturday at the Embassy Suites. Hamilton said he was accepting this in honor of his late father.

Paxson Haws/ For The Transcript

**EVERY YEAR, SOME** of Oklahoma's greatest military achievements are gathered into one room in Norman.

Some of the soldiers whose service earned them commendation are there to be seen, to shake hands and enjoy the ceremony. Others are there only in thought, having passed away many years before or having given the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield.

The Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame enshrines them all into history, and preserves their stories for the ages. Saturday night, once again, they gathered at the Embassy Suites in Norman to induct 10 more soldiers.

They put them up there at the Embassy, from which the living inductees can either relax or explore the area until the banquet. Also, before lunch, each of the living inductees gets the chance to go in front of a camera and talk about their experience and what they got from it.

"This is a fantastic organization, and it works like a well-oiled machine," said Lt. Col. William Hamilton,

who received a Silver Star for Gallantry and Bronze Star for heroism in Vietnam. "We've been so well guided."

Recently, documentary filmmakers Shawnee Brittan and Joanna Champlin have been making the videos which are then uploaded to the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame inductee's webpage. And though they all include stories of valor and heroism, they range as much as the inductees' backgrounds and lives.

Hamilton is a Pauls Valley native who came to the University of Oklahoma and joined its ROTC program. He was halfway through law school at OU when his unit was called up, and eventually he found himself in Vietnam.

He was assigned to the 1st Calvary Division, looking to become a company commander in combat. He did not escape the fear that comes with touching down on a battlefield, but his ROTC roots put him in the right mindset.

"I was very scared, until one moment when I came off the ramp, saw what the situation was and all of my infantry training took over," Hamilton said.

His Silver Star came when he was part of a crew situation in a helicopter over an infantry company, supplying them with ammunition while surrounded. The craft was forced down six times due to enemy fire, and one last time he got called into action.

"During one of those times, the crew was shot so badly that I had to fly the helicopter," Hamilton said. "I'm not a trained army aviator. I had training as a fixed-wing pilot. One of our Charlie crews offered to teach me how to fly a Huey, which it wasn't all that difficult."

So Hamilton took the controls of the helicopter and flew the crew to safety. His Bronze Star Medal came from an instance when Hamilton spotted an incoming enemy force while assisting a South Vietnamese unit.



He relayed the information to an aircraft, which then informed the enemy's position to artillery for support.

Hamilton credits his time with OU ROTC for getting him through Vietnam and helping him excel in his military career.

"At OU ROTC, we had really skilled officers who were veterans of Korea," he said. "So, after four years, I had a good understanding of what an officer was supposed to do."

If getting a good early start has anything to do with it, inductee Capt. Phillip Boatner, from McAlester, has a lot of people beat. He entered the Army National Guard when he was just 15 years old.

"For the next three years, they kept asking me for my selective service number, and I just kept telling them I forgot to bring it," Boatner said. "The year that I joined, they didn't need my birth certificate."

He made his way up to Army Ranger school, and from there he was sent to Oakland, California to await orders. They were to keep everything packed and ready to go and go to a central location where a blackboard displayed the names of those to be deployed.

"So I packed everything up, went down and looked at the blackboard, and my name was on it," Boatner said.

As a captain he was assigned a company, with which he earned two Silver Stars for heroism and two Purple Hearts. One of his Silver Stars brought him face-to-face with the enemy.

"We get in there and all of the vegetation is cut down to about six inches off the ground," Boatner said. "State-side, I couldn't do a low-crawl without my butt sticking up about two-foot high. Over there, I could crawl like a snake and just slither around. So we slithered around there, and we got to what looked like a logging trailer."

He tried to call men across for support and to spot the enemy, but he couldn't get a response.

"You don't dare talk. You just motion," he said.

So he took out his gun and began crawling closer himself.

"I jumped in a hole and I was in there with three North Vietnamese Soldiers," Boatner said. "My rifle is short, so I took it and squeezed it, but I had it on safe. So I jumped back out, put it on automatic and sprayed in there."

His actions led to the company taking the bunker complex without losing or suffering an injury to a single soldier.

While the soldiers and their families are happy to get the recognition, it's sometimes harder for some to talk about their experiences. Col. John Carl Johnson, a Tennessee native who settled in Oklahoma after Vietnam, is admittedly a recluse these days.

His fellow soldier and friend Col. Paul Tiberi nominated Johnson for the Hall of Fame and encouraged him to take part in the documentary. He knows of Johnson's heroism personally.



"Colonel Johnson saved my life at the risk of his own, battling both direct fire and enemy barrages," Tiberi said. "He should have been court marshaled for risking his own life to save mine. But it's very painful for him

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[to talk about,] and I can understand why because it's painful for me. But he's one of the most heroic son of a guns I have ever known. And he was a fabulous leader, cool under crisis."

Tiberi was with Johnson when he advised an elite South Vietnamese regiment between 1971-72. Though elite, the regiment was in bad shape, with ill-discipline, desertion and heavy losses taking their toll.

Johnson, a West Point graduate and who spent time on the intelligence corps, said when he first arrived, the South Vietnamese commander, he discovered, had a drug problem. So he told his superiors who then replaced the officer with a man Johnson identified only as Col. Khan.

"He was a good tactician, a good strategist, knew his troops and knew how to treat them," Johnson said. "They respected him and he was well loved."

Johnson, Khan and their crew of officers turned the regiment around, practically eliminating the desertion rate and improving the morale. Johnson jokes, though, that Khan's attitude made him think he wanted to kill him.

"His favorite expression if there was ever a problem was he'd take his pistol out, raise it in the air and say

"We go now!" Johnson said. "That always scared me to death."

In 1977, Johnson said the North Vietnamese Army eventually ran down Khan's regiment and publicly executed him. It was at this point that he could hold back his tears no longer.

"It was a very intense period that I really can't talk about," Johnson said. "Too many bad memories.

"I'd just as soon forget it."

Though painful, Johnson, Tiberi and their group left the interview room seeming to understand how much of a milestone it was for him to even speak that much about it. It was important, Tiberi said, that people know how much of a hero Johnson is.

And that's the mission of the Military Hall of Fame; to remember stories like those of Muskogee's Corporal William Kelly Downing, who died as a Marine in Vietnam on May 3, 1967. He refused medical attention to keep defending his soldiers' position and halting an enemy advance, earning a Silver Star. When his body was located, it was surrounded by six dead enemy soldiers.

For the full list of 2018 honorees and to view past inductees and their videos, visit [Okmhf.org](http://Okmhf.org).

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## THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW YOU NEVER KNEW

*...about the MWSA Website.*

We list the types of correspondence members can anticipate receiving from MWSA here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/membership/> (3rd bullet under "New Members" section)

Archived, electronic copy of past email blasts (back to Nov 2017) can be found on our website here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/mwsa-news/>

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If you have any questions about navigating the MWSA website, please reach out to MWSA and we'll answer as best we can. Thank you.

# LAUGH & LEARN IN CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NY

*Pat McGrath-Avery*

A VISIT TO CHAUTAUQUA County in western New York offers fun for young and old. From Lake Erie and Chautauqua Lake to museums, shops, and festivals, it's a cornucopia of options.



We visited in early summer when crisp air, warm sunny days, and beautiful scenery beckoned. It met all my expectations for natural beauty, and I relished every moment.

Then two museums and a visit to the Chautauqua Institution took my visit to an unexpected level.



I had read about the Chautauqua Institution over the years, and wished I were closer to attend seminars and workshops. After spending a day exploring the grounds and visiting with people attending events, I've put it on

my bucket list.

The museums offered education and entertainment.



The Roger Tory Peterson Institute is filled with Peterson's incredible artwork ranging from paintings and photography to Life Magazine covers. I saw many of his field guides published over the years and even viewed an exhibit of extinct bird species.



Peterson was many things - a naturalist, an artist, an ornithologist, an environmentalist and an educator. If you've ever browsed a nature store, chances are you've seen a Peterson Guide. He brought birding and nature to national prominence through his guides and illustrations.

*LAUGH ~ Continued on page 34*



*LAUGH ~ Continued from page 33*

He received many awards throughout his career including the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

From there, I turned to comedy and nostalgia. Few American can claim they never saw a Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz television episode. Jamestown (in Chautauqua County) was Lucy's hometown. The museum offers a window into the lives of comedy's most famous couple. Visitors gain much more than a view of the past and early television history. Both Lucy and Desi were pioneers that changed the course of entertainment, comedy and home viewing.

When CBS first asked Lucy to bring her radio program to television, she agreed only if her real-life husband, Desi Arnaz, could play her television husband. CBS at first said no because of their mixed marriage – an American and a Cuban. Americans later proved it made no difference at all.

You can trace the history of the show, see re-creations of their studio apartments and learn about fellow cast

members. Everyone needs an occasional trip down memory lane!



Later during the summer, the museum opened the National Comedy Center, which offers a broad salute to comedy's history dating back to Charlie Chaplin. That is worth another trip to Chautauqua County.



# WOMEN OF WAR; WOMEN OF COURAGE

*Joe Campolo Jr*

**THIS ARTICLE TOUCHES** on the role that female warriors have played throughout history, culminating with the United States War in Vietnam, and a brief discussion on women in today's military. The article covers some of the more noted women of battle over the centuries and goes over some specific accounts of female fighters during the Vietnam War.

## Not Uncommon

Over time, men have typically bore the brunt of battle during periods of war; however many women over the ions have also stepped up (Or down, whatever the case may be) ...to fight for God, family and the homeland. The author acknowledges that female fighters were much more common than he and the average person may have been aware of, and rather than attempting to cover the formidable number of women of battle over the ions, several fighting women of distinction are highlighted here.



Many barbarian tribes before, during and after the Roman era employed female fighters not only on an as needed basis, but also as *modus operandi*; standard method of operation if you will. Viking women, for example, routinely wielded the sword, and took part in the raucous victory rituals as well. Women in Native American tribes fought on an as needed basis throughout their history.

## The Trojan Wars

The Trojan Wars, steeped in Greek mythology supposedly took place between 1260 – 1180 BC. The wars, as written, were waged between Greeks and Spartans including one fought over a woman, Helen; who had been spirited off by the Greeks. As legend goes; both the Greeks and Spartans employed female archers known as Amazons. These Amazons were originally from the Steppes of Central Asia and were extremely war like and ferocious. Although the Amazons wielded all weapons at their disposal, they were known for their exceptional prowess in archery. Whosoever employed these archers more effectively often won the battle at hand.



## The Trung Sisters of Vietnam

The Trung Sisters of Vietnam, 40 – 43 AD are credited with having driven the invading Chinese out of Vietnam. Emperor Wu of the Chinese Han Dynasty had annexed part of Vietnam in 111 BC. The Trung sisters grew up in a rural area to a family steeped in martial arts. No wall flowers, when the sisters came of age they studied the art of war and organized rebellion against the northern invaders.

Although initially successful, the Trung sisters and their army were defeated by a huge Chinese army in

*WOMEN ~ Continued on page 36*

*WOMEN ~ Continued from page 35*

43 AD and the sisters are said to have committed suicide by drowning themselves. Despite their defeat and deaths, the Trung sisters became an inspirational legacy which ultimately culminated in the permanent expulsion of the Chinese.

## Boudica



The once mighty Roman Empire ruled over Britain for almost five hundred years; Roman roads, fortresses and ruins are still in evidence to this day in Great Britain, but the Roman reign would not always be an easy one thanks in no small part to Boudica, The Warrior Queen. Records are unclear as to the year of Boudica's actual birth; however she died in 61 AD. Boudica was born into a royal family of the Iceni people of Britannia, though under Roman Rule. She was reported to have exhibited great intelligence at an early age, and despite being a woman, became an impressive leader of men.

Because of heavy taxation and abuse of the local citizenry, the Romans in Britain had become increasingly unpopular. While the Romans were waging war on the Druids in another part of Britannia, Boudica united her Iceni with another large tribe and with an estimated two hundred and thirty thousand warriors attacked the occupying Roman force. Boudica and her allies overwhelmed and slaughtered between sixty and seventy thousand Romans in a remarkably short period of time. The victory was short lived however, as the Roman leader Suetonius quickly regrouped Roman forces and despite being heavily outnumbered crushed the rebellious Britains, who were then themselves slaughtered like ants. Boudica was either killed in battle or took her own life; neither of which has ever been confirmed,

however her exploits live on in legend and folklore.

## The American War in Vietnam; 1963 – 1975

### FEMALE FIGHTERS OF NOTE DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

Over the course of the Vietnam War there were many Vietnamese women on both sides of the hostilities that fought bravely for their family, and their homeland. Here are just a few of them.

### Ho Thi Que



Had I known of Ho Thi Que, my dim outlook regarding the outcome of the war might have been different. Que, known as "The Tiger Lady" fought with the Black Tiger battalion of the South Vietnamese Army. Although she was assigned duty as a medic, her ferociousness in battle was legendary. Moreover, she would attack any South Vietnamese soldiers she found looting or abusing South Vietnamese civilians; an unfortunate practice by some in the Army of South Vietnam. Ho Thi Que wore a pair of .45 caliber pistols on each hip and a helmet painted with the head of a tiger. Tragically, Que was shot and killed by her husband after she attacked him with a knife over his affair with another woman.

### Nguyen Thi Hien

A North Vietnamese female fighter of note was Nguyen Thi Hien. Hien, at the age of 19, became the leader of a military squad in Yen Vuc, Ham Rong district (aka Dragon Jaw bridge), in Thanh Hoa province. Hien's comrades had to dig her out four times after her bunker was collapsed under explosive waves of U.S. B-52 bombs, and each time Hien lived on to rally anti-aircraft forces attempting to shoot down the huge aircraft.



Hien survived the war and still resides in Northern Vietnam.

## Apache

A Viet Cong cadre known as “Apache” became infamous during the Vietnam War. Apache, a platoon commander, sniper and interrogator, was notorious for torturing her victims who she either seduced or captured at gunpoint. She would torment her captives for hours, hideously mutilating them before they finally succumbed to death. Eventually, Apache was killed by U.S. Marine sniper, Carlos Hathcock; also known as “White Feather”. Hathcock, a legend in his own right, later reported that killing Apache was the most gratifying mission he had undertaken during his time in Vietnam.

## The Author’s Experience with a Female Fighter of the Vietnam War



On a personal note, one of the more memorable incidents from my time in Vietnam involved the fate of a young Vietcong woman who had been mortally wounded during a B-52 bombing raid near our base at Phu Cat.

American soldiers had found the woman, actually a girl of no more than fourteen or fifteen, as she lay dying amongst the rubble. They relayed her story to us when they arrived back at our base at Phu Cat, recalling how as a medic tried to comfort the girl she had put her arms around the man and asked him to hug her. As the medic complied with her wish the brave young girl spoke her last words; “I want to be held by a man before I die”.

A moving event for all who witnessed or heard of the

incident, it profoundly affected my feelings on the likely outcome of the war. For all the Vietnamese whom I had encountered during my time at the Phu Cat airbase, as well as those we interacted with out on the road; none had demonstrated any such passion regarding the war. As a matter of fact, many of the Vietnamese I came to know seemed fairly ambivalent about the progress of the war, and even somewhat dubious regarding which side they favored. And though many of them seemingly appreciated what America was trying to do on their behalf, I had the marked feeling that a significant number of them would also be happy if we were to leave the very next day.

My lifelong friend Jim Booth, a serious boxing aficionado, often said “Always bet on the hungry fighter; you’ll win most of your bets that way”. In my opinion, for whatever reason, the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) were “hungrier” than the Army of South Vietnam, the South Vietnamese government and those that supported them.

## The U.S. Military Today

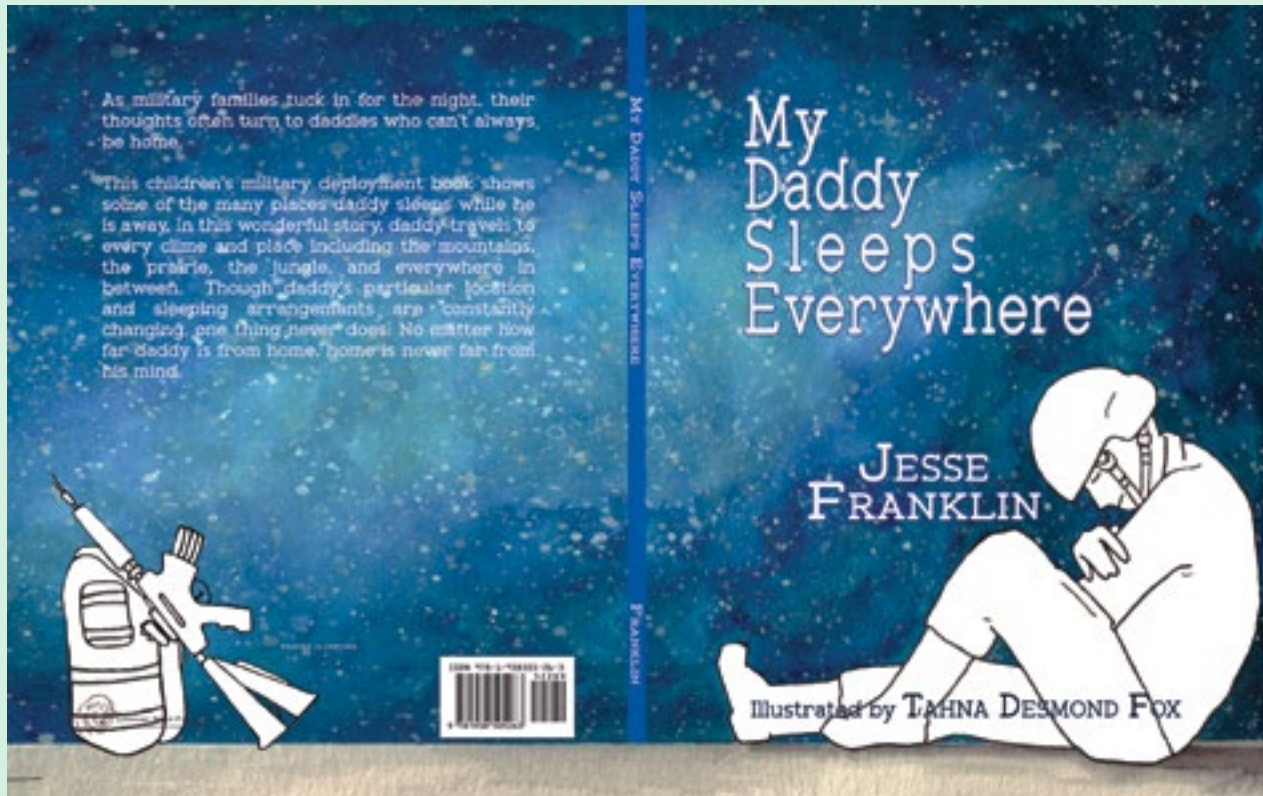


Since the first Gulf War back in the 1990’s, moving along to the current War in Afghanistan and Iraq; women in today’s military are increasingly taking on combat roles which have traditionally been handled by men. The women who have filled these positions have done an outstanding job; many sacrificing life and limb for their fellow soldiers and for their country. God bless them, and God bless America.

*From Joe's December 30, 2017 blog post <https://namwarstory.com>*

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