

# DISPATCHES

MILITARY  
WRITERS  
SOCIETY OF  
AMERICA

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



SPRING 2019



MWSA INTRODUCES  
NEW AMBASSADORS  
PROGRAM

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Pat McGrath Avery



IT'S FINALLY HERE—Spring, sunshine and warmer days! As I'm writing this, I hear birds chirping and see squirrels playing in the yard. Most of us have endured a long winter and these signs of spring are truly welcome.

Like nature, MWSA is constantly changing. Springtime displays new growth—and we are introducing new programs, reviewing more books, and growing our membership. Learn about it all in this issue.

Plans are underway for an innovative conference in September. We're joining forces with the South West Writers of Albuquerque to offer networking opportunities and stimulating sessions. Whatever your stage of development as an author, you'll find something new. You can register now on our website.

Read the diverse articles ranging from the Crimean War to the Scottish regiments of WWI and from the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair to comma usage, selling ideas to publishers, and writer's block.

Meet our member interviewees, Active Duty LTC Coley D. Tyler and Col (Ret) Mark Mayerstein as they introduce themselves and their books.

Most of all, I wish each of you a season of renewal and growth, in your personal lives and in your writing.



## Dispatches STAFF

Editor - Pat McGrath-Avery

Columnist - Bob Doerr

Feature Writer - John Cathcart

Feature Writer - Valerie Ormond

Feature Writer - RJ MacDonald

Feature Writer - Jim Tritten

Feature Writer - Dennis Maulsby

Feature Writer - Dwight J. Zimmerman

Photography - Pat McGrath-Avery

Layout & Design - Sandi Linhart

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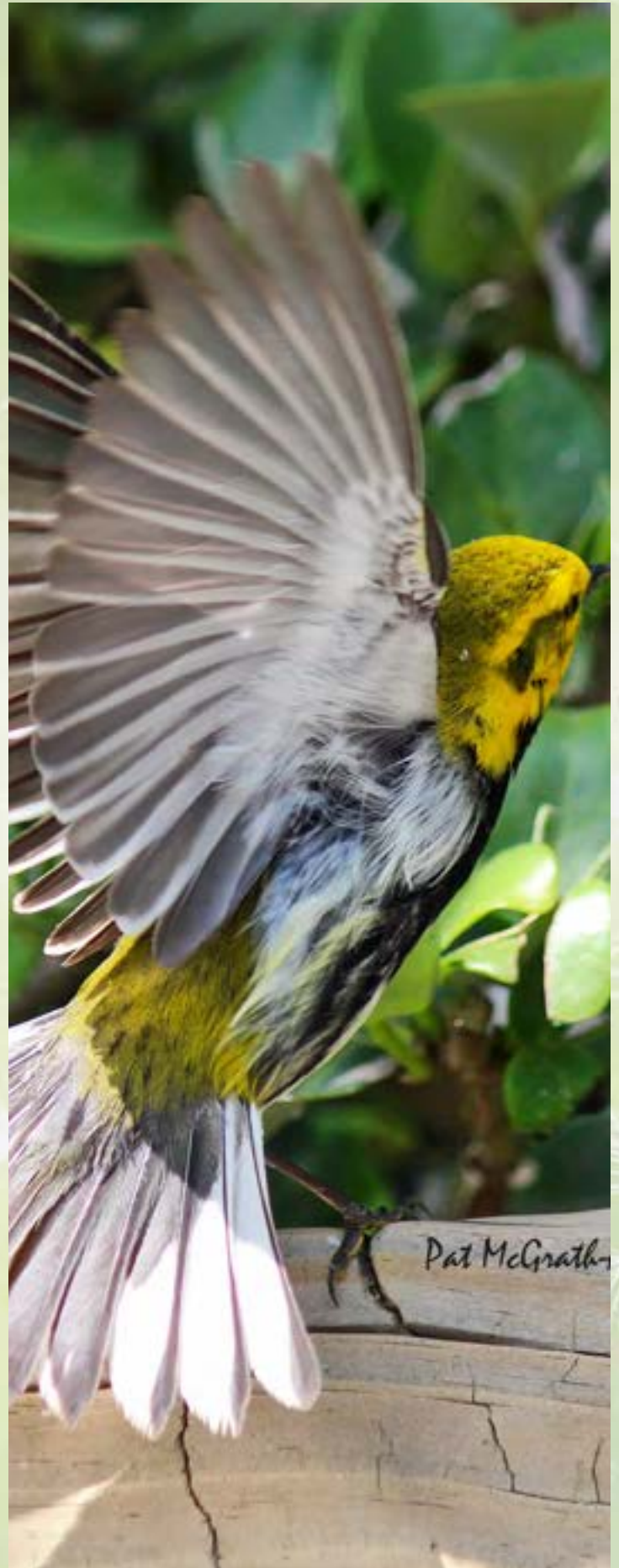
John Cathcart

Rob Ballister

Betsy Beard

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John Faulkner





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Bob Doerr*

WHILE MANY OF US have been inside trying to avoid the cold weather, MWSA has been making some excellent strides in 2019. We are in full swing working on the 2019 General Membership Conference, to be held in Albuquerque, NM, in September. I encourage all members to try to attend this conference as it is not only being held in an historic, fascinating city, but will also be held jointly with another local writing group, the South West Writers. This will be a great opportunity to network and hone your writing skills. Check our website for details and to register.

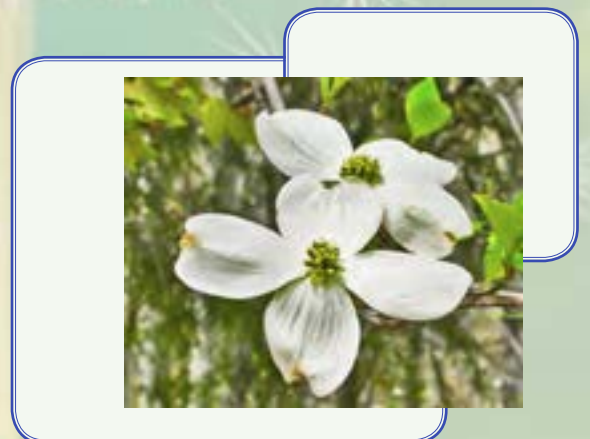
Our book review and awards program is running at full speed, and we are way ahead of last year's numbers of books being submitted and reviewed. My thanks go out to all the volunteer reviewers.

We are trying to enhance MWSA's value to its membership, but we need you to take some time and visit our webpage. Rummage through it and see if some of our new initiatives are of value to you. Our website also has links to our Facebook page and to our Goodreads page. John Cathcart has put a lot of effort into marketing our members books by getting them listed in Goodreads and elsewhere. Your participation can help, too.

We continue to try to grow membership as one way we can lower our dues, a high priority for us this year. If you know other veterans or their family members who write, or nonveterans who like to write about military history let them know about MWSA.

Finally, enjoy this edition of Dispatches. I have belonged to many different organizations of all types, and Dispatches is one of the best quarterly "newsletters" out there. The Dispatches staff would love your involvement. Write an article and get published!

Best of luck and keep writing—Bob Doerr





## MWSA NEW AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

*Valerie Ormond*

THE MWSA 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE in Charleston provoked new ideas including the inception of MWSA Ambassadors program. Up for official Board of Directors' approval in May, MWSA members have worked over the past six months to develop a formal program, and have worked with its first Ambassador, award-winning author Tom Beard, of Washington, to test and implement the program.

The MWSA Ambassadors program mission is for MWSA's qualified instructors to reach veterans, military, and families throughout the United States and assist them in sharing their important stories through a positive writing workshop venue at no cost to attendees. The program developers aim to achieve one of MWSA's organizational purposes per its Bylaws "to reach out to schools, military organizations, and veterans' groups and encourage an interest in writing..."

MWSA's veteran writing workshops over the past five years have helped veterans and their families share their stories. The success of these workshops at Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities encouraged MWSA to establish the MWSA Ambassadors program to reach more veterans through similar educational programs. The Ambassadors program extends MWSA's outreach across the country leveraging MWSA members' talent within their communities to achieve MWSA's missions of helping people write, providing education, and introducing people to the MWSA non-profit organization and the resources it provides.

The MWSA Ambassador qualifications include:

- ★ MWSA Member in good standing
- ★ Published author, writer, or poet
- ★ Completion of MWSA Ambassadors Training Program

The MWSA's Veterans Outreach page at [www.mwsadispatches/veterans-outreach/#programs.com](http://www.mwsadispatches/veterans-outreach/#programs.com) provides general workshop guidelines. In accordance with the MWSA Ethics Policy, Ambassadors' course content will not include politically, religiously, or racially biased or anti-U.S./U.S. military material.

MWSA leadership envisions the program to include VA workshops, outreach to veterans' organizations (ex. American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and others), and venues that achieve MWSA's mission and purpose.

Like any good military program, the Ambassadors program follows specific procedures.

1. Interested MWSA member contacts Ambassador Points of Contact (POCs) and receives Ambassadors' Kit with materials including checklist, sample agendas, sample presentations, etc.
2. The designated POC coordinates curriculum development with incoming Ambassador.
3. The incoming Ambassador completes the training program with the POC and is officially designated an MWSA Ambassador.



4. The new MWSA Ambassador informs POCs when scheduling programs (if feasible, a POC will attend.)

5. The MWSA Ambassador conducts events and provides a brief after action report via the template provided in the Ambassadors' Kit.

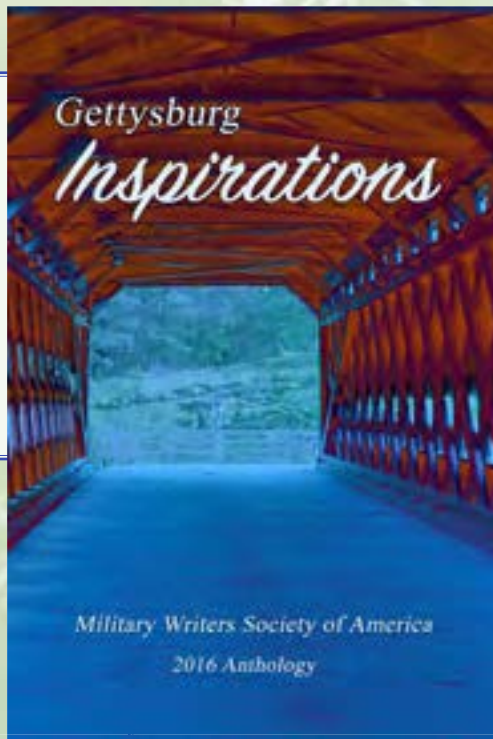
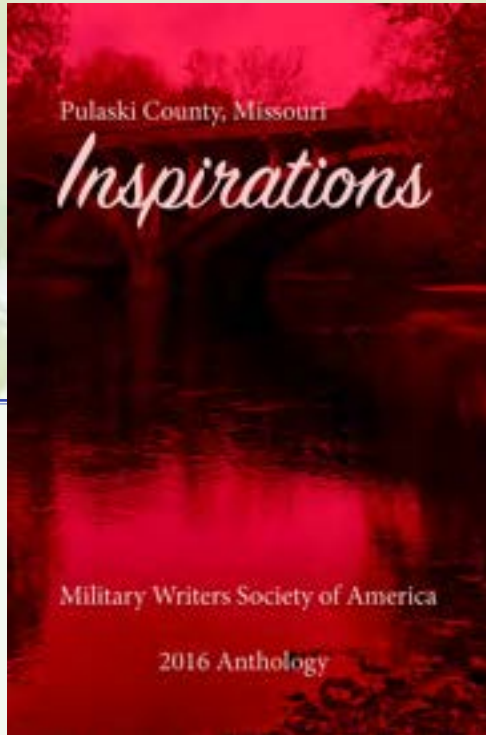
If interested in becoming an MWSA Ambassador, please contact one or both of the MWSA Ambassador POCs:

MWSA Director of Education, Jack W. London at [jack@jackwlondon.com](mailto:jack@jackwlondon.com)/512-656-7856

MWSA Chair of Outreach Committee, Valerie Ormond at [outreach@mwsa.co](mailto:outreach@mwsa.co)/443-994-5651



## 2016 MWSA ANTHOLOGIES



*Pulaski County, Missouri  
Inspirations  
2016 Anthology*

[HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/DP/194326743X](https://www.amazon.com/dp/194326743X)

*Gettysburg Inspirations 2016  
Anthology*

[HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/DP/1943267340](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.





## BALACLAVA

Dennis Maulsby

*The Crimean War (1853 to 1856) featured the allied countries of France, Britain, Turkey, and Sardinia fighting the Russians. The spark setting off the conflict revolved around the rights of Christian minorities in the Holy Land, then under Ottoman rule. The French supported the Catholic Church and the Russians the Greek Orthodox. This powerplay was only one instance marking the decline of the Ottoman Empire, with the Russians attempting to influence or snatch Turkish controlled lands and the French and British resisting. The initial battles of the war stalemated in the Balkans, allied forces invaded the Crimea and besieged Sevastopol. The most famous clash of the conflict involved the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, made famous by the poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson and Rudyard Kipling. Several movies produced in the late nineteen-thirties fictionalized the battle. More recent TV documentaries have attempted to accurately reconstruct a battle gone terribly wrong.*

\* \* \*

**RIDING HIS FAVORITE SORREL**, Kean took his usual morning jaunt along a narrow tree-lined lane. The primroses, poppies, and violets of the British spring were in full bloom. The cheery colorful morning made a stark contrast to his previous eight hours. It had been a bad night, full of nasty dreams, part factual and part mind-made. His lack of sleep and the movement of the horse as it increased speed from a trot to a gallop took him back into the reoccurring nightmare.

\* \* \*

Bright, hot Crimean sun brought out sweat to soak chests, backs, and armpits. Kean was still in the saddle, but on a chestnut mare. Man and animal stood two ranks back. Lines of cavalry in dark blue uniforms with white facings sat at

regulation distances to his front, sides, and rear.

A command came wafting back: "The Light Brigade will advance"

A bass voice shouted, "Prepare to advance at the walk."

Subordinate officers throughout the ranks repeated the preparatory command in chorus. The command to execute came, "Walk MARCH!"

With a jangle of tack, the lines of mounted men moved forward. Leather squeaked, metal saber chains rattled, the pennants atop the lances carried in the troopers' right hands rustled.

Kean glanced to his sides. His comrades kept pace, Charlie Foster on his left and David Williams on his right, knee to knee. Men and horses of various colors moved as one mass, hundreds of mounted men in long lines rank after rank.

A second command drifted back, "Prepare to trot."

Subordinates in the rear echoed the order. Horses and men anticipated the follow-up, "Trot MARCH!" They moved into the faster pace a fraction of a second before the final command.

The hair raised on the back of Kean's neck. There was no doubt now, he and his friends in the 17<sup>th</sup> Lancers would be in action shortly. Through the light dust kicked up by the forward ranks, Kean could see the mass of the brigade moving into a small valley. Puffs of smoke opened up on the side-ridges and the point where the hills came together at the end of the basin.

The command everyone, men and horses, expected came. "Brigade will prepare to charge."

The command of execution was drowned out by the arrival of cannon round shot. They were within a mile of the enemy's position and in gun

range. In odd lots, men and horses jerked sideways and smashed together in heaps and piles.

The trumpet blew the charge. Kean's horse leaped and stretched. Around him, the companion animals of his comrades did the same. Cavalry horses knew the trumpet commands better than the men and obeyed without guidance from their riders.

Kean straightened his legs, hunched forward in the saddle, and lowered his lance, the pennant snapping at the faster speed. The saber sheathed at his left slapped against the horse's ribs with every lunge. He felt blood and exhilaration rise. His scream blended with those at his sides.

In the smoke, dust, and confusion, the battle necked down to Kean and his two friends, still charging knee to knee. A black round shadow of a thing, as big as a man's head, ricocheted off the ground and sailed over their heads.

A great invisible hand swept away the men and their mounts in the lead. Kean and his mates rode through a mist of blood. The dust cleared in front and gave the lancers an unobstructed view. They were three-quarters down the valley. The black snouts of cannon and gunners executing their clockwork reloading drill could be seen when the gray black powder smoke blew aside.

The enemy positions grew larger. Cannons belched. The men and horses to his right, including David jerked back, disappeared, as though they had reached the end of tied ropes at full speed. Something wrenched his *Czapka* hat off his head with such violence it tore off the cap line anchoring the Ulan-style cap to his uniform. Kean's ears rang.

He passed through the smoke, past a recoiling field gun, hair streaming behind him. His lance penetrated the sternum of a gunner holding an upraised cannon rammer. Kean's arm was pulled down and back down as the horse continued to advance, the lance slipped free. His horse slowed and turned. He stabbed another Russian soldier

in the neck. Two of the enemy pulled away his lance.

Without a command from his brain, his right hand gripped and pulled his saber. Only the final eight inches of the cutting edge were honed to full sharpness. The two-pound, thirty-three-inch blade gleamed in the sun. He parried a rifle with bayonet and slashed back with the distal portion of the blade as he had been taught. The man's head burst into blood. A huge flap of bloody scalp flopped over his face. He dropped, arms and legs as flaccid as a rag doll.

To his rear, gray-coated mobs of Russian infantry were running forward, encouraged by the flat of their officers' swords to form up in firing ranks. He heard Lord Cardigan order the retreat. Cavalry armed only with lance and saber could not stand up to organized infantry rifle fire.

He spotted Charlie, forehead streaming blood, afoot near one of the cannons. Kean kned his mount forward. Leaning up over the horse's chest, man and steed leaped over the tongue of a detached caisson. He shouted his comrade's name. Charlie wiped the blood out of his eyes and stepped forward. Kean threw away his blade, tightened his legs, leaned to his right, and swept his friend up over his saddle. They raced back into the valley toward their own lines.

The cannon fire began again. The riders moved slower—from fatigue and the need to dodge around or leap over clumps of dead and wounded from the original charge. Men and horses, like a film run backwards, once more received amputating charges of grapeshot, then, as the range increased iron round shot, grinding men and horses into a bloody battlefield stew of detached arms, legs, and torsos.

The smell struck him like a slap in the face. Kean's nose identified blood, the splattered porridge-like contents of viscera, sulfur smoke, human and animal sweat, all mixed with the

*Continued on page 8*



Continued from page 7

sour breath of stomach acid and the pepper of adrenaline.

\* \* \*

Kean blinked and tears ran down his cheeks. He remembered the aftermath. The butcher's bill for the Light Brigade that day had been immense: 118 men killed, 127 wounded and 60 taken prisoner, almost a 40% overall casualty rate. Three hundred of their horses were killed in the battle or put down after due to wounds. Of his 17<sup>th</sup> Lancers, only thirty-eight of one hundred forty-five answered roll call.

He remembered the British-allied French commander quoted as saying, "*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre. C'est de la folie.*" He had translated it for Charlie: "It is magnificent, but it is not war. It is madness."

Kean shook his head. He whispered to himself, "The puzzled Russian commanders could only conclude we were all drunk."

The charge, all the cannon-milled mash of blood and gore—both men and horses—due to a mistaken interpretation of orders.

## SALUTE TO VETERANS ON PARADE

By Richard Davidson

*I lost a friend the other day;*

*Won't see him anymore.*

*There were many other friends*

*That I had lost before.*

*Way back in the Forties*

*They signed up for a War,*

*And went to many places*

*Unknown to them before.*

*Those who made it back rejoiced*

*Family life would be in store.*

*Old age would let them finally tell*

*What happened in that War.*

*In recent years they marched again*

*Parading each July Four*

*Wearing uniforms that didn't fit,*

*Smelling of mothballs from the store.*

*First they marched.*

*Then they rode.*

*Now, they ride no more.*

*First they marched.*

*Then they rode.*

*Now, they ride no more.*



# From Writer to Author

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Joint Writing Conference  
September 13-15, 2019  
Hotel Albuquerque  
Albuquerque New Mexico



Truman Capote once commented, when asked his opinion of the work of Jack Kerouac—who never looks back after committing words to paper: “That’s not writing, that’s typing.”

Join us this September for the writing conference of the year, featuring sessions with master authors, editors, and teachers whose only goal will be to help you on your journey to become the author that you can be.

Included are presentations and panel discussions on such devices and conventions of creative writing as developing characters and conflicts, the elements of memoirs and biographies, planning and structuring of fiction and non-fiction books, honing your craft, and, the importance of editing.

The featured speakers include award-winning authors together with members just like you who will share their secrets from a life spent in the literary trenches. And... the Redline Coffee Cup: you will be given the opportunity to send a chapter of your work in progress for review by a published author who will in turn have a private one-on-one session with you.

The Military Writers Society of America’s conference is one of the most author-accessible events in the U.S. You will be able to meet and have in-depth conversations with award-winning published authors. Southwest Writers is renowned as one of the finest writing groups in the country, a collection of authors who help authors.

So, if you’re ready to take your work to the next level, to move from typist to writer to author, join us in Albuquerque this September.

For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/378767359543298/> or <https://www.mwsadispatches.com/events/2019/conference>. Register at <https://militarywriterssocietyofamerica.wildapricot.org/event-3264400>



## NEW MEMBER BENEFIT: BETA READER FORUM

*John Cathcart*

AS A NEW SERVICE to our members, MWSA announces our Beta Reader Forum. The idea is to easily expand our authors' pool of potential beta readers—an important part of our creative process for books nearing completion.

As with our review swap program, MWSA is only providing a venue to get authors and beta readers together. Once there, you might also agree to swap reviews once the book is published.

The page is available to members only (username and password required).

Here are the details (which are also posted at the top of the forum page):

- \* Paper copy: manuscript, proof, etc.
- \* Digital format: Word document, PDF, eBook format (.mobi, .epub)
- ★ How you'll collect feedback--i.e. via paper questionnaire, online form, email responses
- ★ When you'll collect feedback--i.e. your expectation on how long beta readers have to read and provide feedback.
- ★ Whether or not you'll be posting beta reader names into your book's acknowledgment section.
- \* MWSA recommends that authors acknowledge beta readers... and that they allow the readers to opt in or out!

### PURPOSE

- ★ Use this forum to line up beta readers for your book.
- ★ This is a member-to-member program, MWSA will not monitor any individual agreements made via this system.

### SUGGESTIONS

- ★ Provide a short paragraph describing your book
  - \* Include title, author, genre, expected publication date
  - \* Keep your initial posting short--you can always share more details once another MWSA member responds to your request
- ★ What format(s) you'll provide your beta readers



<https://www.mwsadispatches.com/mwsa-news/2019/4/new-member-benefit-beta-reader-forum>

# MWSA RECOMMENDED READING LIST SPRING 2019

By Bob Doerr

The Military Writers Society of America (MWSA) is an organization of hundreds of 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 a compilation of books by our members, we've selected the following as our 2019 Spring Recommended Reading List:

*A Distant Field: A Novel of World War I* by RJ MacDonald

*A Special Breed of Warrior* by Joseph Mujwit

*Borderline* by Joseph Badal

*Call Me No Hero* by R.A. Sheats

*Daddy Left with Mr. Army* by Chandelle Walker

*Dark Waters* by Chris Goff

*Deliberate Deception* by Joe Porrazzo

*Doppelganger: An American Spy in WWII France* by E Thomas Behr

*Hope in the Shadows of War* by Thomas Paul Reilly

*I Grew Up in War Housing* by Phillip Walkington

*In Plain Sight* by Sephira Allen

*Invisible Hero* by R.A. Sheats

*Kato's Grand Adventure* by Jasmine and Jim Tritten

*Red Sky* by Chris Goff

*The Court Martial of Corporal Nutting* by John Nutting

*The Motive* by Joseph Badal

*Wesselhoeft: Traded to the Enemy* by Adolf Wesselhoeft and Shirley Anderson Wesselhoeft

*Winged Brothers* by Ernest Snowden

The weather is finally getting a little better and most of us are venturing outdoors, but this shouldn't stop us from exercising our brains, and nine out of ten scientists claim that reading is an excellent way to keep our minds sharp. I know it's hard for many of us to give up social media, but I strongly recommend everyone spend at least one hour a day with a good book. Just think what great shape your brains will be in. Where might I find a great book to read, you might ask. How about starting with the list above?

More info about the books and authors in MWSA can be found at [www.mwsadispatches.com](http://www.mwsadispatches.com)



A Conversation with MWSA Member & Author

**COLEY D. TYLER**

**LTC COLEY D. TYLER** is an Active Duty US Army Officer and former member of the Second Battalion, Seventh Cavalry Regiment (2-7 CAV). He was the Battalion Fire Support Officer during the Second Battle of Fallujah.

LTC Tyler has served in many capacities during his service as an Artillery Officer in the First Cavalry Division, Physical Education Instructor at the United States Military Academy, Space Operations Officer in Korea, and Space Integration Officer to the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, GA.



He is married with four children.

**MWSA:** How did you find out about MWSA?

**CT:** Deeds Publishing as a primary publisher of military books recommended joining the organization for the benefits of a welcoming writing community, an honest review process, and help spreading the word about my book.

**MWSA:** What was your inspiration for your book ***Ghosts of Fallujah***?

**CT:** I was a participant in the Second Battle of Fallujah in Iraq 2004. I felt the historical significance of the battle, our unit (2nd Battalion, 7th US Cavalry), and connections with previous conflicts and leaders [World War II, Vietnam, and LTG (R) Hal Moore, etc.] was a story that deserved to be told. Writing ***Ghosts of Fallujah*** was also a cathartic process for me personally to help me deal with my time in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**MWSA:** How long did it take you to write ***Ghosts of Fallujah***?

**CT:** I started researching, outlining, and putting the ***Ghosts of Fallujah*** story together in 2009. It was finally published in 2018, so the process spanned almost a decade. The whole last year alone was for completing the Department of Defense review and approval process. Good things come to those who wait!

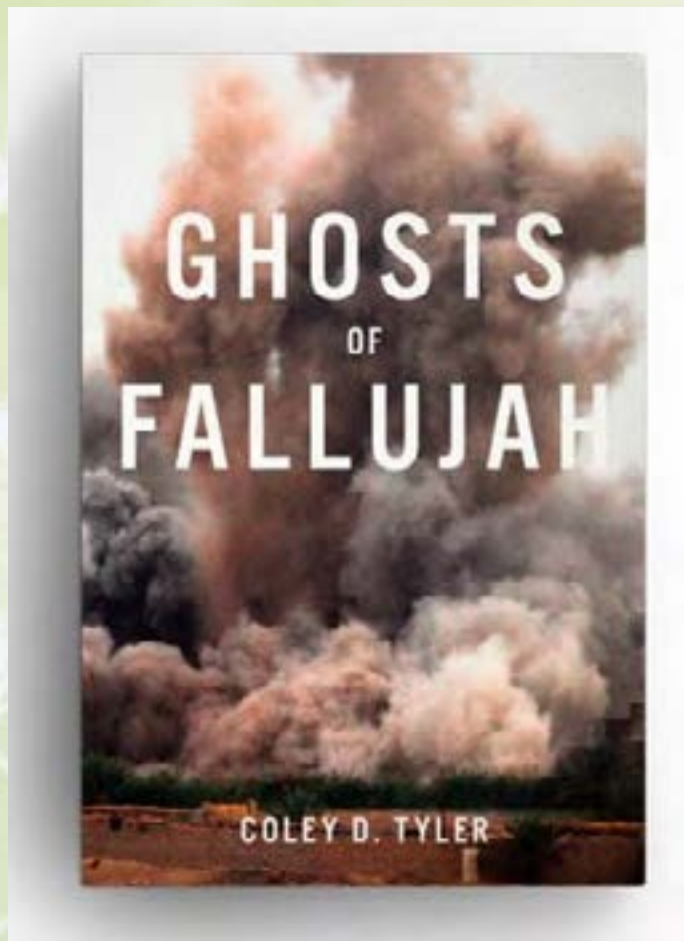
**MWSA:** What do you hope to accomplish with the publishing of ***Ghosts of Fallujah***?

**CT:** Very simply, to tell the story of some of the finest soldiers I have ever served with and to encourage other combat veterans to share their story also. It is also a legacy piece for my family. ***Ghosts of Fallujah*** puts into words thoughts and feelings I have a hard time sharing verbally in hopes I may be better understood.

**MWSA:** What advice would you give others contemplating writing a book?

**CT:** Go for it! Put your fears of rejection, someone not liking your work, or your ability to communicate in written form aside. I struggled with this kind of apprehension for many years, constantly trying to perfect what I had written. I finally took a leap of faith and only good things

have come from doing so. It is not an easy process and it does take perseverance to the utmost, but nothing worth doing is easy.



**CT:** The biggest criticism so far has been that there are details of the battle missing from my recount and this is true. *Ghosts of Fallujah* is my personal experience of the Second Battle of Fallujah, the intricate delicacies of destiny and fate in my life that brought me to that battlefield, and how it has impacted my life. I was not and could not be everywhere, but that was not my purpose for writing the book. Remember, I want others to fill in those holes with their personal experience. I think much more good will come from that for both the writer and the reader.



**MWSA:** What has been the number one criticism *Ghosts of Fallujah* has received to date and what would you say about that?

## THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW YOU NEVER KNEW

*...about the MWSA Website.*

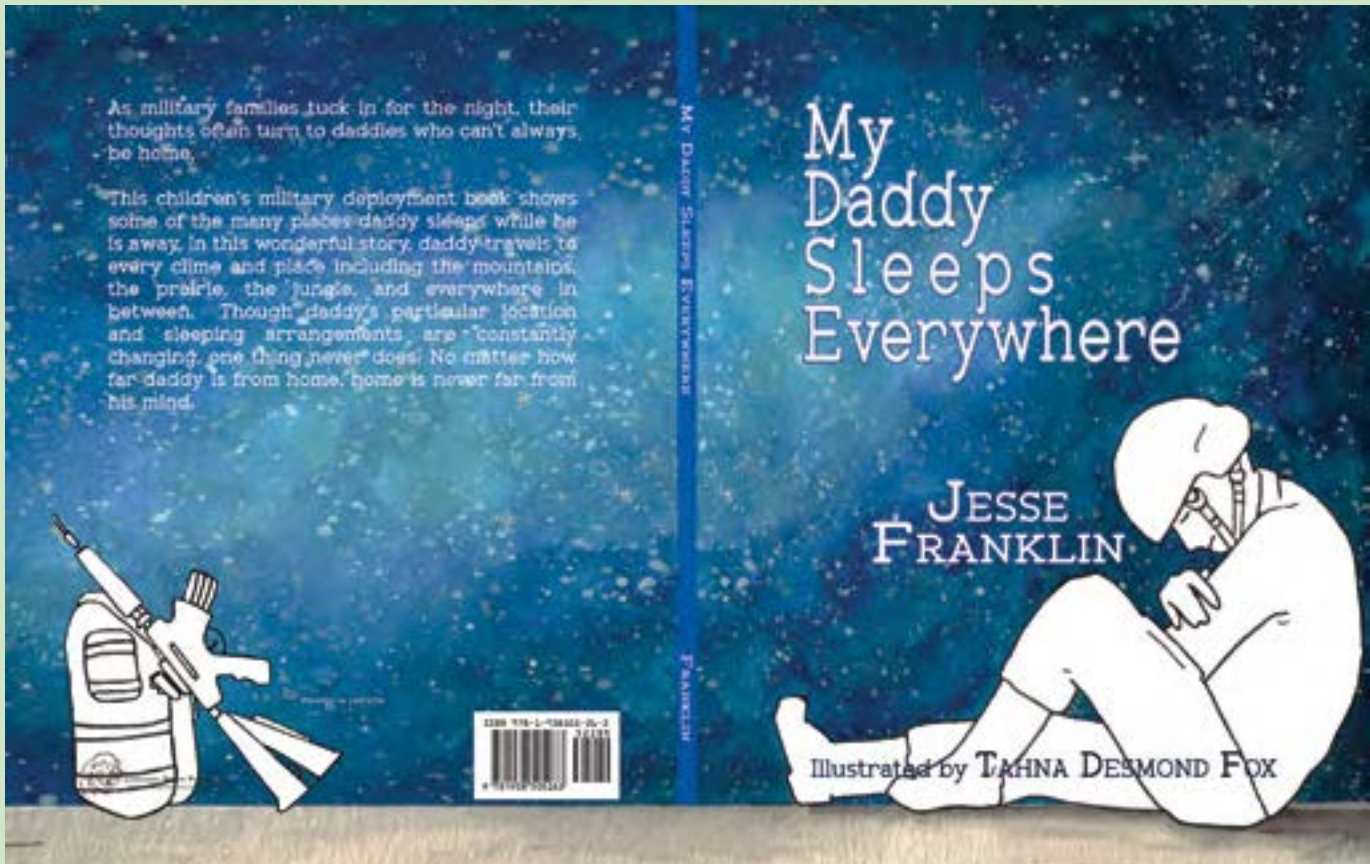
We list the types of correspondence members can anticipate receiving from MWSA here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/membership/> (3rd bullet under "New Members" section)

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

MWSA Blasts can be found here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/mwsa-news?tag=Blast>

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.





## 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



## 2019 REVIEW & AWARDS INFORMATION

*John Cathcart*

**THE 2019 REVIEW AND AWARD CONSIDERATION** window is now open. All MWSA authors may submit their books until June 15. The cost is \$40 per book.

The process details are listed on the website at <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/awards>. To submit your book via our online request form, you must be a member in good standing. Be sure to read the "Fine Print" page before submitting your book. If you wish to submit an eBook, read the appropriate directions.

Make sure you check your submission and provide a working link to a website where visitors can purchase your book. We use this link to find your book's cover, which we'll use for our website listing. You choose the review genre, which determines the scoring criteria our reviewers use to evaluate your book.

A list of the award winners for this past season has been available on our website for some time. Now, you'll also be able to learn more about each book and read our MWSA review for each one.



Also, if you have a book listed on our website, please be aware that we updated the website and some of the URLs (or link addresses) were inadvertently changed. If you've set up a link to your book on our site from some other website or location, you'll have to update your listing to reflect the change.

How do you do this?

*Go to our online library*

*Find the search block near the top of the page, and enter your book title or author name to find your book.*

*Once your book comes up, click on the title, which will bring you to your book's individual listing on our website*

*The new address will be visible in your browser's address block... that's the new address*

*Copy and paste the new address wherever needed*

*Sorry for any inconvenience this update caused our members!*

*If you have any questions, please contact our Awards Directors.*

Thank you, and we look forward to your submissions in 2019.

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MWSA **DISPATCHES** IS LOOKING for member submissions.

We've 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, which will be showcased in the *Dispatches* every quarter).

If you'd like to write a featured article, submit a book or you just have questions, please email [sandstar62@gmail.com](mailto:sandstar62@gmail.com).

Thanks for playing.

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## ST. LOUIS WORLD'S FAIR

*Pat McGrath-Avery*

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I attended a lecture by Robert Herman, a Jefferson City (MO) resident and St. Louis World's Fair expert. In 1986, Robert and his wife found a World's Fair artifact in their new home. Fascinated by the history of the piece, they began researching the fair and developed a decades-long love affair with the event and its memorabilia.

The fair, called the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. With nearly 20,000 visitors, the St. Louis Fair covered nearly two square miles and became a temporary home to the 20,000 exhibitionists and vendors. The fair opened on April 30, 1904, and closed on December 1.

Billed as the "University of Man," the fair brought together 50 countries, 44 states and the first Olympics ever held outside Europe. For most Americans, it was the first experience of world cultures. People came from around the world, brought their homes with them, and set up their country's exhibits. At the time the fair was planned, St. Louis boasted 600,000 residents and was the sixth largest city in the country.

Robert shared the stories of the edible ice cream cone and iced tea – both



*Robert Herman*

popularized at the fair. His slide show and presentation covered the history and organization of the fair, pictures and descriptions of many of the International exhibits and personalized stories from people he interviewed. One man told him that he attended the fair as a child and remembered his first ice cream cone. "The ice cream was a little bit soft, the waffle a little warm, and half of the whole thing ended up down the front of my shirt."

At the time, most homes had a single light bulb in each room. For the first time, they saw thousands of lights on the buildings at night. The Palace of Electricity showcased such inventions

as the x-ray machine, tape recorder and electric stove. Innovations viewed at the fair became the topic at family meals and social events for years to come.



Thirty railroad cars transported the observation wheel (what we know as the Ferris wheel) from the site of the Chicago World's Fair. The axle alone weighed seventy tons. It was destroyed at the end of the fair because of the prohibitive cost to move it.





## AMERICA'S GREAT WAR HIGHLANDERS

RJ MacDonald

*"Though our homes are far across the seas, our hearts and souls are Scottish..." Lt Col Guthrie, 1918*

**THE MORNINGS WERE COLD** in November 1917, so it's easy to imagine the scene—Her Majesty's Troopship *Canada* arrives at Liverpool docks, England. Soon lines of soldiers, burdened down with kits and rifles, are disembarking down the gangplanks. They form up into ranks, glad to be on dry land again, and with a nod from their commanding officer to the pipe major, the drone of bagpipes tuning up carries through the still air. Then, to the command of, "By the right, Quick March!" the men of the 236<sup>th</sup> MacLean Kilties of America march smartly away from the docks to the sound of their own pipes and drums. America's Great War Highlanders had arrived.



*WWI Recruiter Poster 1916*

Americans serving in the Canadian Forces were commonplace during WWI. Three battalions, the 97<sup>th</sup>, 211<sup>th</sup> and 213<sup>th</sup>, all designated 'American

Legion', had been raised and deployed to France. But the 236<sup>th</sup> Battalion was special- it wore kilts. It was the brainchild of a Canadian—Lieutenant Colonel Percy Guthrie. While lying wounded in France, he heard a Scottish battalion passing by, pipes and drums leading the way. At that moment he resolved to raise a battalion of Highlanders. On return home to Canada, he gained official support and in May 1916, the 236<sup>th</sup> New Brunswick Kilties (MacLean Highlanders) were raised. Needing men to fill its ranks, Guthrie's gaze quickly turned to New England following America's entry into the war. With a quick change of name and cap badges, the 236<sup>th</sup> Maclean Kilties of America appealed to Scots-Americans from Maine to Boston for recruits and within eleven days the Highland battalion had over-filled its ranks (*The MacLean Kilties* by Ian MacLean).



Having arrived in Great Britain, the battalion trained hard, under the expert eyes of its officers and non-commissioned officers—all veterans of the Western Front. In March 1918, they deployed to France. A cruel blow awaited them. Despite vehement protests, the battalion was effectively split into three to feed the constant



need for re-enforcements. The Canadians from New Brunswick were allowed to join the New Brunswick Regiment. The rest, including the Scots-Americans, were divided between the Royal Highlanders of Canada and the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, in which they would go on to fight in every major battle for the remainder of the war, suffering 553 casualties, (*Percy Guthrie and the MacLean Kilties* by Paul Belliveau).

In 2006 a memorial plaque to the 236th Maclean Kilties of America was unveiled at their old headquarters building in Fredericton, New Brunswick. A memorial to all Americans who fought in the Canadian Forces during WWI was dedicated in 1927 at Arlington National Cemetery; the pipes and drums of the 48th Highlanders of Canada played at the ceremony.

*RJ MacDonald served in both the US Marines and the Royal Air Force as a reservist and is a veteran of Iraq and Libya. Now living back in Scotland, he serves on a Royal National Lifeboat Institute volunteer lifeboat crew.*

*His debut novel, A Distant Field: A Novel of World War I, was released on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The first in a series, it follows Stuart and Ross McReynolds, Scots-Americans who survive the sinking of the Lusitania. Together with four Irishmen, a Canadian, and a young English officer, they join Scotland's Seaforth Highlanders and head towards the bloody battlefields of WWI.*

*For more details please visit [www.rjmacdonald.scot](http://www.rjmacdonald.scot) or [www.facebook.com/rjmacdonald.scot](https://www.facebook.com/rjmacdonald.scot).*





# Comma Wars

*To comma or not to comma, that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The missing semicolons and em dashes of outrageous run-ons,  
Or to take arms against a sea of commas  
And by opposing end them.*

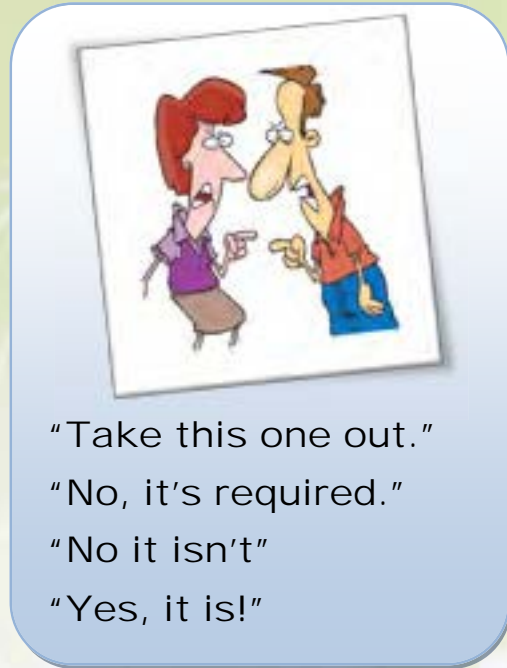
There's no question that when it comes to writing, my wife is my fiercest critic, editor-in-chief, and most steadfast supporter. For the past 40-plus years, we've agreed on almost every subject—except for commas. Rather than continue our never-ending skirmishes, I thought it was time to do a little research. After a bit of digging, we discovered that we were both right—and wrong.

Personally, when it comes to comma use, I had always subscribed to the *Theory of Supplementary Oxygen*. According to this theory, if you run out of breath and require supplemental oxygen at the end of a sentence, you're probably missing a comma or two. Although probably true, is this a useful theory? Will it keep any writer out of trouble on the Comma Wars battlefield?

Given my personal experience as MWSA Awards Director—and as a writer and occasional *Commakaze*—I thought we all might benefit from a refresher course.

Over the next couple of weeks, I'm going to offer a short series of excerpts from various Internet sources, outlining eight basic battlefield rules of engagement for the use of commas. Will this be a dull recitation of something we all slept through—I mean learned, during elementary and high school English classes? Maybe. But perhaps it's worth pointing out that one could say the same thing about the instructions that came with that new gas grill you bought at Home Depot. You ignore those boring instructions at your peril.

After finishing these articles, if you don't end up winning the Comma Wars, maybe you'll at least be able to arrange a ceasefire.



## **RULE 1. Use a comma to separate independent clauses**

Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction—such as: *and, but, yet, so, or, nor, for*—when it joins two complete thoughts or ideas (independent clauses).

## Examples

1. Betsy read the author's book, and then she filled out her MWSA scoring sheet.
2. Rob can apply the rules of grammar when writing his novel, or he can suffer the consequences when he doesn't.
3. Jack and Jill went up a hill, but they didn't come down together.

### **RULE 2. Use a comma after an introductory clause/phrase**

This comma informs your reader that you've finished the introductory phrase or clause, and you're getting around to the sentence's central theme.

## Examples

1. When Nancy got settled at her desk to read her email, her cat decided it was time to play.
2. After suffering through the book's early chapters, Jim discovered that the book included some worthwhile information.
3. Before she knew what was happening, Carolyn's cat jumped on the desk and spilled her tea all over the keyboard.

That's it for this battle in the ongoing Comma Wars. In our next campaign, we'll cover comma use...

- between all items in a series
- to set off nonrestrictive clauses (*is that when Santa isn't enforcing his naughty-and-nice list?*)

If you want to jump ahead or download a comma study guide for personal use, you can do an Internet search for "comma use." I've found the one offered by Indiana University East very helpful.

<https://www.iue.edu/hss/writingcenter/documents/Commas.pdf>

John Cathcart  
MWSA Awards Director





# THE TYRANNY OF THE BLANK PAGE

## AND HOW TO OVERCOME IT

*Dwight Jon Zimmerman*

**WRITERS ARE NOTORIOUS** for finding excuses *not* to write. With “Project A” needing to be written, suddenly that chaotic sock drawer with its hundred million socks that have been providing mismatched pairs for months must be organized—*right now!* Dammit! That’s to say nothing of the mold in the recesses of the refrigerator that must be cleaned, all that stuff in the garage organized and/or thrown out so a car can finally fit in where it belongs, the list goes on and on and includes interruptions from pets (who need to be fed, petted, and let outside and then inside) and family members who need to be killed for interrupting your writing (metaphorically killed, mind you). The reason for such dodges is what I years ago came to call: The Tyranny of the Blank Page.

There you are, sitting on your chair, hands on the keyboard, or pen in hand about to write on a note pad, and that damned blank rectangular shape stares at you with an arrogant challenge: Go ahead, *try* and put words on me! I dare you!

And thus begins the creative battle.

Bear with me, as I start with an anecdote about my first real experience with such a scenario. It was 1977, at the start of my professional writing career. My best friend, Dave Kraft, was already an established writer at Marvel Comics when he helped me break in at the company, where I began working in the production department, thanks to my skill as a graphic designer.

I was sharing his apartment and at a time when he was going through a rough patch with his writing. His wasn’t writer’s block so much as a writing slowdown. Writing for Marvel was (and probably still is) a two-stage operation. A writer would create a plot, the pencil artist would translate that plot into artwork, and the writer would get a copy

of the art and proceed to script captions and dialogue that would fit into the individual panels. There are other aspects involved, but that’s the most relevant for the purpose of this article.

Dave had no problem creating plots for his stories, but when it came time to write the script, even with the artwork at hand he unaccountably found it difficult to start writing the script. And it was frustrating him to no end because he was skilled enough so that shouldn’t be happening. As my whole reason for leaving our home state of North Dakota and coming to New York City was to work at Marvel and hopefully become a professional writer for the company, I proposed a solution. I would take his plot and the art pages and write a first draft of the script. He would then take what I had written and edit/revise accordingly. He agreed to try the process and handed me the plot and pencil art for *THE DEFENDERS* #56.

I went to work, slaving over the script. I had grown up reading comics and in my teenage years had toyed with writing some amateur comic book adventures, but this was the “real thing.” When I had finished, I handed Dave my pride-and-joy pages and waited for his reaction.

It was quick—and brutal.

As he read it, he constantly shook his head negatively, wrote notes in the margins and between



the lines of my hand-written text, and made comments that began with “no” and included all manner of profanity. Oh, and he also used his pen to draw large “X’s” across the pages. Then, when he was done, he took that stack and, referring to it, rolled a blank sheet into his typewriter and began pounding away.

There I was, creative soul having been thrown into the editorial version of a woodchipper, looking morosely at his savaging of my pages and trying to make sense out of his notes all the while he was running one page after another through his typewriter as he was writing the story’s script. Of that first attempt at comic book script writing, nothing of mine survived.

But, guess what? My bright idea worked! Yes, my creative ego got trashed and burned, but the primary purpose of my bright idea was to get Dave over his hump and write (the secondary one being me gaining the skill to be a professional writer—and that first lesson was learned: don’t take it personal!), and by god, that’s what happened. This process turned out to be a great system for us and, after about a year of such collaboration, my skillset reached the level of a professional comic book writer.

The above anecdote is admittedly somewhat of a long way around the barn to get to the point of this article, but bear with me, I’m getting there.

Since then, I’ve gone on to write things ranging from coloring books (yes, coloring books) to calendars, children’s books, puzzle books, articles, young adult and adult histories and biographies, and all manner of other such projects. Why the variety? Well, for one thing, thanks to where I live, the New York City borough of Brooklyn, I’ve had more of an opportunity to do so than if I lived outside of the nation’s center for publishing. In other words, location helped. Arguably more importantly, I love to write. Truly, I find writing *fun*! The process—more so than the completion—of whatever project I am working on, is even now after all these years an exhilarating

experience. Am I nuts? Ask my wife.

Germane to the subject of this article, have I ever been stuck? Hell, yes! More times than I care to remember. But, obviously, I managed to find a way to overcome those writing blockages. And that now brings us to the “how to overcome” section of this little piece.

Whenever I hit a rough patch in my writing, I would try all kinds of things to get me back on track. Some worked, some didn’t. I shrugged and figured such is the nature of the creative process. But, over the years one constant in my efforts to overcome these hurdles in the writing process turned out to be music.

*Duh.*

Obviously I was aware that different types of music serve different purposes from meditation (ah, Gregorian chants) to rousing audiences (Souza march music, college fight songs!). But music of a kind that specifically addressed the need for concentrating for writing—of that I was ignorant; I simply played what I enjoyed and left it at that. Anecdotally I discovered that songs containing lyrics became a hindrance—I’d find myself listening to what the singers were saying rather than concentrating on what I needed to write. That meant finding instrumental music, or music like operas where the language spoken was foreign. Haphazardly I’d play various selections from various composers, with no intent other than to have something playing in the background. Over time I found myself gravitating toward certain composers when I was writing.

Eventually I did some checking out and discovered that experts determined that Mozart gets top marks for inspiring creative work. Other classical composers that got high marks were Chopin, Beethoven, Vivaldi, Pachelbel, Bach, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Handel, and Brahms. For many years Mozart was my go-to composer whenever I felt I needed an extra push, and especially if I

*Continued on page 26*



Continued from page 25

was up against a deadline.

Originally, I played records. This was followed by CDs. Then came the Internet, and thanks to YouTube, a whole new platform opened up. At first, I stuck with my standbys because of familiarity. But in scrolling through the classical music playlists, I noticed postings with thumbnail illustrations labeled with such things as “Brain Music” and variations to that effect along with such hashtags as #Study, #StudyMusic, and #BrainPower. One day about two years ago, I decided to give one of them a shot and double-clicked on one titled “**Brain Music: Focusing Music, Brain Food and Power, Concentration for Learning, Alpha Waves**” published by Relaxing Records ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYG0a7NOW\\_E&t=1949s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYG0a7NOW_E&t=1949s)). I double-clicked on the image once the window opened and began hearing some pleasant piano music with occasional saxophone accompaniment along with some other instruments. The album lasted almost 47 minutes. As this was background instrumental music, it was easy to consciously ignore so that I could concentrate on writing.

Now, there was no “parting of the Red Sea” revelation that day, nor on any other day that I played it. But what I did notice is that I enjoyed hearing this music as I worked, and that when I did play it, I found my writing to flow that much easier. Where I found it even more helpful was during those times when I needed to wrestle with a bothersome plot-point. The first time I did it was when I grabbed my laptop, a pen and notepad, laid down on the couch, clicked on the “Brain Music” link, closed my eyes and just let my mind go blank. Within a few minutes, I found myself thinking about that plot point and playing out various scenarios. A few minutes later I opened my eyes and began jotting down notes for a sequence of events that broke that logjam.

Since then, that link has been my constant companion whenever I do some writing. In fact, I’ve

played it so often, I’ve memorized its tune and mentally call it up whenever I am in locations where I don’t have access to a WiFi. I’ve not bothered to find out the whys and wherefores that make this sort of music work. I simply accepted it in the same way that I accept the fact that when I insert a key into the ignition switch of a car and turn it, the car starts. The details of how that small, inert piece of metal I carry in my pocket could activate an electric current that causes sparks to ignite a measured gasoline/air mix in an enclosed chamber and move a set of metal cylinders at a rapid enough pace to send kinetic energy through a connection of metal rods that cause a group of rubber wheels to turn and propel a couple tons of metal, plastic, glass, and rubber at speed was immaterial. All that was important was that the key could.

Sorry.

There are a variety of such mental concentration music sites listed on YouTube that can be listened to for free. As mentioned earlier, the genre is dominated with recordings of Mozart and other classical composers. In addition, there are some companies who specialize in music lists designed to aid in concentration. What follows are three of them with their websites:

★ RELAXING RECORDS <http://www.relaxingrecords.com>: My stand-by. When you go to the homepage of its website, you’ll be asked for your email address to receive a free music track, topics offered are Concentration, Relaxing, and Sleeping. Scroll down and you will see a variety of albums listed that you can purchase for download.

★ HALIDON MUSIC [https://www.halidon.it/music-c1-various\\_artists\\_\\_classical\\_music\\_for\\_studying\\_brain\\_power-g6035-d1.html](https://www.halidon.it/music-c1-various_artists__classical_music_for_studying_brain_power-g6035-d1.html): This is another site I enjoy. It’s based in Italy and offers an extensive playlist heavy on classical music, along with other genres. It has created specific playlists for studying and concentration.

★ BRAIN MUSIC [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCitoIFuZtVR5IVdcGEo\\_Elg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCitoIFuZtVR5IVdcGEo_Elg): This site features “Best of” playlists and has a nice “Sacred Music” section for those wanting to have some religious-themed inspirational music.

Once you go to YouTube and punch in the key words “Brain Music” or “Music for Concentration and Writing” you’ll find these and a lot of other selections to choose from. Have fun trying them out! The best thing about them is that not only will you find something that helps you write, you’ll be listening to some great music as well. It’s important to remember that you will not have an “Aha!” revelation the moment you start playing this music. Rather, its benefit will sneak up on you and only at some point down the line will you realize how the music has helped. Oh, and in case you’re wondering, yes, I wrote this while listening to Relaxing Records’ “Brain Music” album mentioned above.

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## BEHIND THE SCENES OF TOP GUN

Dwight Jon Zimmerman

### *50 Years of Naval Air Superiority*

ON MAY 7, 2019, Motorbooks released my latest book, *TOP GUN: 50 Years of Naval Air Superiority*. Like most of my previous books, it is heavily researched and rich with photos. Though its focus is on the Navy's fighting pilot training program, now officially called the United States Navy Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor program, but better known by its nickname "Top Gun," the book is also a survey history of the growth and cultural impact of military aviation from its start in World War I to present day. And it all began with someone else's idea—for a movie, specifically a sequel.

It was early fall 2017. Motorbooks was scheduled to release my biography *THE LIFE STEVE McQUEEN* in December of that year. It was my second book for the publisher (the first, interestingly enough, was a graphic biography of McQueen) and I was brainstorming ideas for a new book to pitch to the company.

Obviously, it helps to have a relationship with a publisher. But that's still no guarantee of a sale. Publishers are many things, but one thing they are *not* is altruistic. If a publisher's marketing department decides it can't sell an author's project, no matter how much an editor may like it, the project is DOA.

*THE LIFE STEVE McQUEEN* was the launch title for Motorbooks' *THE LIFE . . .* series, so I focused on ideas that would fit into that concept. As its name suggests, titles published by Motorbooks have themes related in one way or another to engines.

I scanned the books in my library hoping one would inspire an idea, but nothing leaped out. Later, while scrolling through in one of the internet news sites I regularly visit, I saw a notice

that Paramount Pictures had green-lit a sequel to the 1986 "*Top Gun*" movie and that the sequel would also star Tom Cruise, the lead actor in the original "*Top Gun*" movie.

I remember watching the movie and recalled that it was a big hit. I did some quick research to refresh my memory. I knew a book about the sequel itself was out of the question (it had not yet gotten the name "*Top Gun: Maverick*"). That would mean buying the license to do so, and take considerably more money than what I had in my bank account—even if I took out a second mortgage (which would cause my wife to commit justifiable homicide). *But* there was nothing prohibiting me from writing a history about the Navy's fighter pilot training program and include in it chapters on "*Top Gun*" and its sequel since they were very much part of the program's history. The publisher could piggyback on the publicity of the movie and the movie studio would benefit from the additional marketing awareness provided by the book (and if you believe the last part of that sentence, I just *happen* to have the deed to a bridge in Brooklyn that I'm willing to give you a steal of a deal on). All I had to do was find a publisher. Quick. This was now October 2017 and the announced release date for the as-yet unnamed sequel was around Memorial Day 2019.

I fired an email to the publisher at Motorbooks, alerted him about the sequel, included a link, and gave what's known in the industry as a "high concept" pitch (just a couple of sentences) to gauge his interest. If he wasn't interested, little time was lost. If he was interested, then I'd prepare a formal proposal. By the way, this is something you *only* do with someone in the industry you know and trust—while stories and books can be copyrighted, ideas cannot. They can, and have been stolen (it's happened to me).

He liked my idea. So, I drew up a formal proposal, *THE LIFE TOP GUN*, which was maybe six pages long. He liked that, condensed it to two pages which he presented at the regularly scheduled acquisitions meeting on November 1. Then I waited. While waiting can be nerve-wracking, waiting is actually a good sign. Unless you're in the ionosphere of a Tom Clancy or a W.E.B. Griffin, fast decisions are always negative. In mid-December, I got from Motorbooks my Christmas gift. *THE LIFE TOP GUN* had been shot down. Reason for rejection was that it was felt to be too military; they wanted the series to have a broader cultural interest. So, I did what any self-respecting (read: desperate) freelance writer needing work does in situations like this: I panicked.

Nah. What actually happened was that the publisher and I had a phone conversation and decided to re-present it as a stand-alone project. I reworked the proposal accordingly, he resubmitted it. And, again I waited. On January 18, 2018, I got from him an email saying the project was a "go." Release date: July 2019 timed to follow the release date of the movie. Now make no mistake, the reason the project scored the second time was not because I am such a brilliant writer (though thank you if you think I am). It was because of the blockbuster movie sequel. Publicity for it would have a ripple effect to help drive sales of the book.

If you look again at the above dates, you might get the impression that I had plenty of time to write the book—about a year. But that was an illusion. The marketing, editing, designing, and printing of books by traditional publishers involve long lead times, and in one critical respect I was already late. Motorbooks' marketing department's meeting with buyers was imminent. They needed a blad—a sample of the book—to show buyers. It was off to the races, and in two weeks I had written and submitted the photo package of the first two chapters (which covered the first "Top Gun" movie and origin of the Navy's fighter pilot program) to Motorbooks.

Having done that, I got down to the business of writing and obtaining images for the rest of the book. While I was working on the various history chapters, I would regularly check the internet for news updates about the movie sequel. When I found something, I'd print it out and set it aside as that chapter was going to be the last one written to take advantage of the most up-to-date information prior to going to press. It was sometime in the summer of 2018 during one of those periodic searches that I saw news about the sequel that inspired panic. The studio had rescheduled the release date of "*Top Gun: Maverick*" (it had by now gotten a name) to June 26, 2020—a full year after the original date!

This was big and I immediately fired off an email to my publisher along with the link, asking him what he wanted to do in light of this new situation? He thanked me for it and said he'd get back to me in a few days. When he did, he told me to continue work. They were going to stick to the original release date; my book wasn't about the movie per se, so the impact wasn't as drastic as it otherwise would be. They would simply time the release of the trade paperback edition (which usually is released a year after the hardcover edition) to coincide with the movie. The silver lining in this was that by rescheduling the movie, the studio further removed the book's connection to it, giving the studio less grounds for complaint in the unlikely event my book appeared on its radar.

I wrote my text, acquired my photos, gave them captions, and then sent everything off to Motorbooks' offices in Minneapolis the end of August 2018, and waited. Just after Thanksgiving 2018, I got a digital copy of the design to review. I have been very lucky with the designs of my books and the designer for this one did a wonderful job as well. The book has sixteen chapters. Included in this article is a selection of pages to give you an idea of the scope of topics covered.

A word about the photos and where I got them.

*Continued on page 32*





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# 6 THE ORIGINAL TOPGUN

shown: Captain Eddie Rickenbacker stands beside his fighter. On the background is the trophy of the 94th Aero Squadron, better known as the "Bird in the Ring" squadron.

shown: French fighter ace René Fonck was the top Allied ace in World War I, with seventy-five confirmed victories. When asked about his combat success, he replied, "I put my bullets into the target as if I placed them there by hand."



9-14-1919  
35.1%  
©2000AP

World War I was the first conflict in which pilots duelled in aerial combat. It saw the debut of the term "ace" to describe a pilot who scored a minimum of five aerial victories (more on that in chapter 10). Any count of aces in the war for any war in which aces were recognized is at best an estimate, because it wasn't always possible to determine who downed an enemy plane, to sort out overlapping claims (often resulting in shared "half" credits), or to confirm if a plane was just damaged or shot down. According to a US Air War College study, there were a total of 1,305 aces in World War I from twelve countries. Here are some stories of the exceptional knights of the air from the Great War:

## FRENCH ACES

René Fonck was France's top ace in World War I, with a confirmed seventy-five victories (and another sixty-seven listed as "probable"—a word that appears often in any discussion of aces). He was also the top Allied ace, or "ace of aces," in both World Wars I and II.

Fonck was such a deadly shooter that he often needed no more than a single burst of five rounds from his machine gun to down an enemy airplane. After the war, he wrote his autobiography, became a member of the French parliament,

and, in 1926, attempted to make a solo transatlantic flight. Setting off from France for North America (a more difficult feat than the other direction, as he was flying into the wind), his landing gear collapsed during takeoff, ending his attempt before it began. Seven months later, in May 1927, Charles Lindbergh became the first to successfully make a transatlantic flight, from New York City to Paris.

## GREAT BRITAIN AND THE COMMONWEALTH ACES

Great Britain didn't honor aces to the extent that its allies or Germany did. Its government and military believed that doing so would slight the heroism of pilots flying other types of aircraft. Still, Britain and the Commonwealth (in this case Canada, South Africa, and Australia) did produce a number of aces lauded as heroes by their countrymen.

William "Billy" Bishop, with seventy-two victories, was Canada's top ace in World War I. When war broke out, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Army. A crack shot, he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in 1915, received his wings in 1916, and was assigned to night patrol over London against German zeppelin attacks.

itching for combat action, Bishop wrangled a transfer to France, where he joined 80 Squadron. Allowed to conduct

# 2 THE ORIGIN OF TOPGUN

Pursuant to CNO message DTG240306Z July 1968, during the period 8 August - 8 November 1968, a five member review team, directed by Captain Frank W. Ault, USN (retached/US30, NAVSUP/SCOM, USN-000), conducted an in-depth review of the entire process by which the Navy's Air-to-Air Missile Systems are acquired and employed in order to identify those areas where improvements can and should be made.

Thus, in the dry, acronym-filled text that is the military style, begins the fifty-eight-page report, with six appendices, officially titled "Report of the Air-to-Air Missile System Capability Review (R)" its author, Navy Captain Frank Ault, lent his name to the document: "the Ault Report" as it came to be known, forever changed US Naval Air fighter doctrine and tactics.

Written during the height of the Vietnam War, the report sought to explain what was taking place in the skies over North Vietnam: supposedly inferior North Vietnamese pilots (in equally inferior Soviet built MIG-17s and MIG-21s) were going toe-to-toe with the US Navy's best pilots flying McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantoms and Vought F-8 Crusaders—and shooting them out of the skies at an alarming rate.

In World War II, the kill ratio for US Navy pilots was 14:1, meaning that, for every fourteen enemy planes shot

down, the Navy lost one. In the Korean War, that ratio was 12:1. In the Vietnam War, it had fallen off the eastern face of Mount Everest: a shocking 2.8:1.

The Ault Report posed five hard questions:

1. Is industry delivering to the Navy a high-quality product, designed and built to specifications?
2. Are Fleet support organizations delivering a high-quality product to the CVAs (aircraft carriers) and to the forward area sites ashore?
3. Do shipboard and squadron organizations (afloat and ashore) launch an optimally ready combat aircraft-missile system?
4. Does the combat aircraft crew fully understand and exploit the capabilities of the aircraft-missile system? (Corollary question: Is the aircraft-missile system properly designed and configured for the air-to-air mission?)
5. Is the air-to-air missile system (aircraft/fire control system/missile) repair and rework program returning a quality product to the fleet?

The short answer to all five questions was "Hell, no." Admiral Thomas H. Moorer was chief of naval operations (CNO) when Captain Ault's report landed on his desk on January 1, 1969. The CNO is the Navy's

After World War II—and, more specifically, the Vietnam War—the Navy recognized the need for an advanced air-to-air tactical fighter unit. That unit became Topgun. Here, a catapult officer signals launch of an A-4 Skyhawk screens down the deck of an aircraft carrier in the South China Sea in March 1965.



*Continued from page 29*

Thanks to the internet, image acquisition for historical-themed books and articles has never been easier or cheaper, provided you know where to look. Broadly speaking, images (photos, drawings, paintings, maps, etc.) fall into two categories: rights-secured and public domain. Rights-secured means that an individual or company owns the reproduction rights to an image. Stock houses are companies that specialize in the distribution and selling of images. Some do so for free, others charge a sliding scale fee based on the type of project. Getty Images is one of the biggest of the royalty fee stock houses. Fotosearch is one of a number of royalty free stock houses.

Now, in addition to ownership/rights, the other thing to keep in mind is use. Will the image appear on the internet, in an e-book, or in print? Something that looks perfectly in focus and detailed on the computer screen could, when printed on paper, look pixilated, especially if enlarged. So, if your image is only going to appear on a website or blog, for instance, you can get away with a low-resolution image in the 75K (kilobyte, sometimes also written as “KB”) range. But, print quality requires an image with a minimum resolution of 1MB (megabyte) and 300 dpi (dots per inch).

As my work has been almost exclusively on military-themed projects, and I need high resolution digital copies suitable for reproduction, I have bookmarked the photo archives pages for government departments, agencies, and military branches, which in no particular order are:

Library of Congress ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)). I love the Library of Congress’s website. Its image archive section is for the most part easy to navigate (I’ve occasionally had weird key word problems, when obvious choices don’t produce the results I expected). You can find images on damned near any subject. Its weakness is finding anything less than twenty years old. But, if you are looking for images to go along with your work on, for

instance, the American Civil War—you’ll be in hog heaven.

Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (<https://www.dvidshub.net>) Though it’s a “.net” and not a “.gov” or “.mil,” this is a federal government service image archive site devoted to all branches of the military. Its strength is in modern images. You have to register to acquire images from it. Registration is free. Navigation is easy and once you find an image you want, you will find the reproduction size in the lower right-hand section of the page (it’s not immediately apparent).

What follows is a list of the rest of the sites I use, Department of Defense and the individual military branches. A word of caution when you do your photo research. While some images, particularly those found in the Naval History and Heritage Command archive, are ridiculously high-resolution (200MB or more), some sites include low resolution images (900k and less) along with high resolution ones. So you have to be alert.

U.S. Department of Defense (<https://www.defense.gov/observe/photo-gallery/>)

U.S. Air Force (<https://www.af.mil/News/Photos/>)

National Museum of the U.S. Air Force (<https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil>)

U.S. Army (<https://www.army.mil/photos>)

Naval History and Heritage Command (<https://www.history.navy.mil>)

U.S. Navy (<https://www.navy.mil/viewGallery.asp>)

U.S. Marine Corps (<https://www.marines.mil/Photos/>)

Now, one site I have not listed is the National Archives ([www.nara.gov](http://www.nara.gov)) website. There was a time, decades ago, that I used it, and it was easier to use than the Library of Congress’s site. But

then a decision was made to change the National Archives website's design, and suddenly images I was able to find with a few quick keystrokes became difficult to impossible to locate. Subsequent re-designs over the years have not improved matters, as far as I am concerned. You may find that you can easily get what you want. In my case, I looked for alternatives.

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#### NOTE

The selection of pages from the book are uncorrected design proofs. As such you will see things like watermarks (which indicate that the photo came from the stock house Alamy where Motorbooks has an account) and photo ID boxes (reference for the designer) that will not appear in the final printed version. Also, the text on these pages is uncorrected.

#### Photo from page 25:

This is a photo showing the printouts of articles and photos I found on the internet. I'm an absolute maniac when it comes to research—it's one of the things I find most fun on such projects. Printouts of the photo pages are particularly useful as they provide the necessary legal information should a publisher ask.

#### Photo labeled: Ch2

This is the opening spread for Chapter 2, which begins the story of the Navy's fighter pilot training program. What was fun was finding and

reading declassified documents like the Ault Report, which formed the basis of what would become *Top Gun*. The photo is an official U.S. Navy photo taken during the Vietnam War.

#### Photo labeled: Ch6

Chapter 6 tells the story of the original *Top Guns*—the World War I aces. In addition to accounts of various famous aces on both sides, including, America's ace-of-aces in the war, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker (who almost wound up in prison, instead of a cockpit), the chapter spotlights the man aerial combat challenges fighter pilots faced.







MWSA is introducing several new membership improvements for 2019—“More Bang for your Bucks.”

### **Social Media**

We’ve recently launched several new social media initiatives to help spread the word about MWSA and our members’ books. As you know, for the past two awards seasons, we’ve been putting all our books and reviews on our MWSA Goodreads page. Starting with the 2019 season, we’ve expanded that presence to include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Tumblr!

### **MWSA Social Media Connections**



[Facebook](#) | [Goodreads](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Tumblr](#)

You'll also find links to these social media sites at the bottom of every page of our website. Please have a look around when you have a chance. Like us, follow us, retweet us, friend us... in general, please help spread the word about MWSA, the services we provide, and the wonderful literature being produced by our talented members!

See our website's social media page (<https://www.mwsadispatches.com/social-media/>) for more details.

We've automated a lot of this "syndication" process, but we could still use your help if you're interested in volunteering to work with our communications team. Remember, all the time you spend helping MWSA, is also helping you master the social media skills required of all writers these days. Consider it on the job training. To let us know you're interested, just click on the Volunteer button on the "Contact Us" page of our website, or shoot us an email at [volunteer@mwsa.co](mailto:volunteer@mwsa.co).

## Newsletters

Want to keep up with what's going on with *your* MWSA? Want to be the first to know when new books are submitted into our review and awards system (or submitted by member-authors for inclusion in our online library)? Want a reminder when a new edition of *Dispatches* comes out?

You can now do this now via our new Newsletter system. Just sign up to receive these monthly informational emails.

Just visit our website's Newsletter page (<https://www.mwsadispatches.com/newsletters>) to see more details and to sign up. Don't worry, you can always opt-out of any of these newsletter emails with a few mouse clicks.





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*John Cathcart*

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

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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 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 Sandi Linhart at [sandstar62@gmail.com](mailto:sandstar62@gmail.com) or Pat McGrath Avery at [PatAvery@gmail.com](mailto:PatAvery@gmail.com). Thanks.



# 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 [patavery@gmail.com](mailto:patavery@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](#)



*A Conversation with MWSA Member & Author*

**MARK MAYERSTEIN**

**COLONEL MAYERSTEIN ATTENDED** Washington and Jefferson College where he played football and hockey. He then attended the Jewish Theological Seminary of America's Cantorial School and served for a year in a pulpit in a synagogue in New Jersey. After a tour in Vietnam attached to the Army's 5th Special Forces at Kontum, RVN, which was shortened by injury, he finished college graduating with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education. In 1974 he joined the USAF and, after flight training, was assigned to the Strategic Air Command. At various bases, he was a B-52 bomber crewmember, instructor, and Flight Commander, served in a number of staff positions, was a Squadron Officer School instructor, and was a B-52/KC-135 Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Commander twice.

Colonel Mayerstein finished his 24-year Air Force career at the USAF Operational Test and Evaluation Center, Kirtland AFB, Albuquerque, NM as the Operational Test Logistics Officer for the B-2 Program, and then the Operational Test Manager for the Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle program, and two highly classified, multi-service, cruise missile acquisition programs. Ordained to the Gospel Ministry after retirement, he earned his Master of Divinity Degree. After a 1-year hospital chaplaincy residency, he was a Hospice Chaplain for many years. He is currently writing the dissertation for his Doctor of Theology Degree.

Pastor Mark now serves at the First Baptist Church of Rio Rancho, NM where he was the Director of the church's 7-year mission to Belgorod, Russia. He teaches a Bible Study class, and leads the annual Messianic Passover Seder. Pastor Mark was a volunteer Chaplain for 5 years with the Albuquerque Police Department. Also, he hosts a weekly Christian commentary radio show.

He has written and published four books and is currently writing a commentary on the Book of Ezekiel.



**MWSA:** How long have you been associated with MWSA?

**MM:** For about 6 months.

**MWSA:** What was your inspiration for your book?

**MM:** Because of the impact writing it had on my PTSD, it took 38 years to complete the task. It was actually part of my therapy, but my prime motivation was to enable my family to better understand why I had acted the way I did for so many years.

**MWSA:** What do you expect to get from your MWSA membership?

**MM:** I anticipate that through interaction with other authors and by participating in the competitions, my writing will improve.

**MWSA:** If someone were to ask you if they should join MWSA, what would you tell them?

**MM:** I would reply that if they only joined one writing organization it should be this one, because the potential for improvement and networking are many and varied.

**MWSA:** How many other books have you written and published?

**MM:** Three: Two Bible Commentaries (Esther and Galatians) from a Jewish perspective, and a book entitled *Eyes of the Viper* that details my personal experiences with PTSD, the therapies I underwent, what precisely I was required to do during that therapy, how I felt, what I thought, and what were my greatest stressors. I was as transparent as I could possibly be, even though some things were fairly embarrassing. It was the cost I was willing to pay for a completely honest rendition.

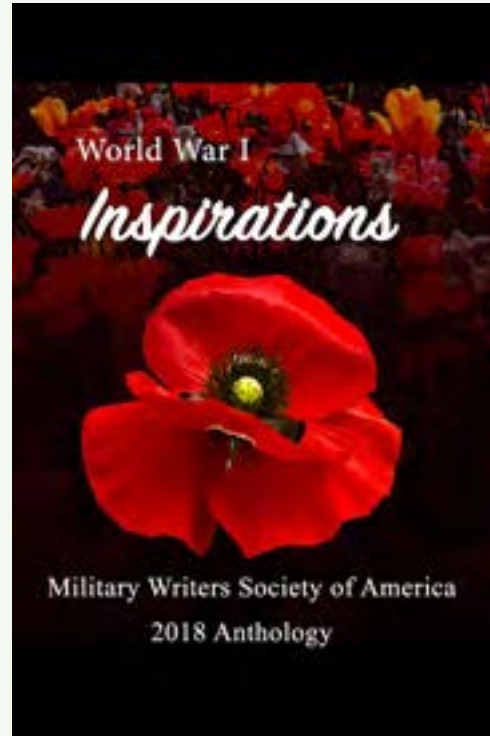
**MWSA:** Are you working on another book now?

**MM:** Yes. I'm writing a commentary on the Book of Ezekiel, which will be followed by commentaries on the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah. My goal is ultimately complete a series covering the Old Testament Prophets.



**Too Young To Die**  
LTC Mark Mayerstein

## 2018 MWSA ANTHOLOGY



### WORLD WAR I INSPRIATIONS 2018 MWSA ANTHOLOGY

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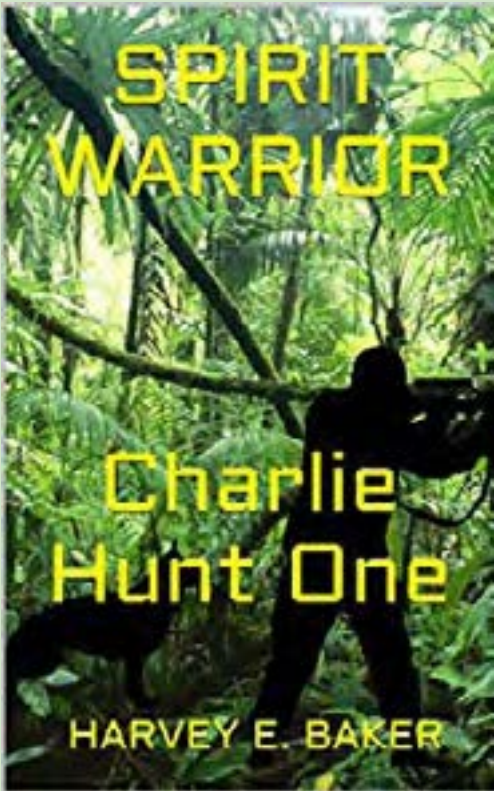
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Genre(s): Fiction, Historical Fiction, History

Format(s): Soft cover, ePub/iBook

ASIN# B00FJO0EXU, ISBN-13 # 978-1521458432

[www.mwsadispatches.com/library/2019/spirit-warrior](http://www.mwsadispatches.com/library/2019/spirit-warrior)

***QL4***

*by James Garrison*

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1946920002>

PFC Justin Bell, a newly-minted U.S. Army MP, quickly discovers that there's more than a war going on along QL 4, the main road from Saigon into the Mekong Delta. It's old-fashioned crime and corruption. He doesn't want to get involved, just serve out his time and go home, but life for an American MP in Vietnam in 1970 doesn't work that way. QL 4 leads Bell deep into a swamp of deception, mayhem, and death that insinuates its way both into towns the MPs patrol each day and into the old French villa where they live.

Genre(s): Historical Fiction, Literary Fiction

Format(s): Soft cover, Kindle

ASIN: B07116M6GV

