

## Sharon Pitt—The Forest's First Chief Operating Officer

by Shannon Purves

A visitor to Sharon Pitt's office notices that her desk faces a wall taped with enormous paper charts on which organizational titles, lists, numerical addenda are hand written in large letters. What's this?

"Just something I'm working out," says Sharon, laughing. "Not for publication!" She welcomes all other questions, however, and her answers are direct and they welcome followup.

What are the duties of a Chief Operating Officer?

"In general, overseeing an organization's daily operations." And here? "Oversight is more immediately focused on areas of need."

Meaning, right now, TFAD's dining services?

"Exactly!" She goes on to describe how she works with Chef Alex Brown, for whom she has high praise. He is now in charge of menu design, food supply and preparation, organization of the 85 member dining staff and, during this pandemic, twice daily meal delivery to 400+ residents. The two of them meet frequently and also have weekly visits to the kitchen at the Health and Wellness center to see the service manager and dietitian to work out any current kinks in the job of making sure food gets to those residents in the best possible state.

Another of her regular meetings is with TFAD's new Project Manager, Sara Haney, refining their complementary jobs overseeing the community. Right now they're working to develop an in-house agency—The Forest at Home—that will enhance independent living with the availability of home helpers.

And, while Marketing Director, April Ravelli, was on maternity leave, Sharon oversaw the Marketing Department.

She is, of course, also involved in the search for a

new Dining Director, a process she describes as "ongoing." The visitor wonders if there's anyone who could do it better than she's doing? "Of course! The next Dining Director will be at it full time!"

Sharon's organizational interests and skill are obvious. How did her early interest in nursing (an RN, she also has a BS degree in nursing) lead her in this direction?



Photo by Bennett

One of her first jobs was Director of Nursing at Richland Convalescent Center in Columbia, SC. Subsequent nursing jobs all entailed leadership roles and, in 2004, she went to work for the American Red Cross, starting as Director of Operations (for the State of South Carolina) and ending up as Chief Executive Officer, American Red Cross Carolinas Region. In that role, she successfully merged two stand-alone regional centers into a single operation with a focus on accountability and efficiency. Later she also created her own home care agency in her hometown of Sumter, SC, which she ran for three years.

So how did she and TFAD find each other?

By happenstance, an astute employment agency recognized their common goals. To our very good fortune, she began her work here in January, just in time to settle in before the contagious Covid 19 locked us down.

Sharon is the mother of three children—one stay-at-home mom, one lawyer, and one teacher—and grandmother of one, Charlotte, age two. Now happily settled in her new home in Durham, she has plans to adopt a puppy. "I'm a dog lover and a vegetarian," she says. And then adds, "And here at the Forest, I am engaged, excited, and very fulfilled."

It shows! Sharon's vibrant positivity is *happily* contagious. ♣

### The Forester

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Sharon Dexter,

*Managing Editor*

Shannon Purves & George Williams,

*Contributing Editors*

Dean McCumber,

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Maidi Hall, *Copy Editor*

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*Resident Biographers*

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*Circulation Managers*

Bennett Galef, *Photographer*

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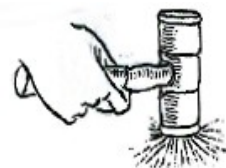
#### Columnists

Banks Anderson

Carol Oettinger

Carol Reese

## President's Podium



by Banks Anderson

Connections. A satisfying life is being connected. Some are armadillos with little room for plugging in the connecting cables. Others are Velcro where cables attach frequently and easily. They are softies. An early attachment is our first name. This cable, plugged into us by our parents, becomes a lifetime outside link. With passing years we accrete more names, addresses, labels, and titles. We become wired into our local environments. Everyone knows just from relocating to The Forest that reestablishing connections broken by moving is not trivial. Attachments to family, banks, card issuers, insurance companies, schools and colleges, motor vehicle departments, the IRS, the SSA, cable and telephone companies, and periodical issuers are just a few of the many connections requiring repair. You former military types are extremely familiar with this drill.

Covid-19 is damaging our personal connections. Missing that sitting around a table in the Taproot with a beer on Fridays or around a committee table in the Party Room is hurtful. Fortunate are those who have unbroken connections. Having hooked up long ago with Nancy, I have never been totally isolated. And most of us are electronically blessed. Our email addresses and telephone numbers don't change. There are advantages to meetings by Zoom. We need not worry about what pants to wear or where the meeting is located, or whether we need to go early to get a good seat. I suspect that the Zoom option for meetings will continue to be used even after this pandemic has ended. And the email program on my computer is quite intelligent about connections. It automatically junks hundreds of messages touting cures for erectile dysfunction, offering employment interviews, or suggesting world cruises. On its opposite side, when I type only the letter "c" on the message address line, Carol McFadyen's name and email address appear automatically and immediately. My computer knows well how invaluable she has been to me and to TFAD during my RA presidency. This is my last Podium contribution and Nancy and I will be moving. But our email addresses and telephone numbers will remain unchanged. Please stay connected. ☸

### In Memoriam

Barbara Blair                      September 24, 2020

Murry Perlmutter                      October 6, 2020

## In This Issue ....

As the year of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II draws to a close, we honor the Forest residents who were veterans of that great war, highlighting especially three current residents—Penelope Easton, George Williams, and Jack Hughes. In addition, resident author John Duvall outlines the crucial role of American hero, General of the Army George Catlett Marshall, in preparing the nation for war, providing leadership during the war, and guiding the reconstruction of Europe after the 1945 Allied victory.

*Archived full-color issues of The Forester are available under Quick Links at <http://www.ForestRes.org>*

## Library Science 101

by Carol Reese

### IN HONOR OF OUR VETERANS

The book exhibit for November and December honors our veterans with its theme of **AMERICANS AT WAR: 1776–2020**. The exhibit includes both fiction and non-fiction books. Here are some examples of what you will find: 1) David McCullough's *1776* "... a lucid and lively work that will engage both Revolutionary War bores and general readers who have avoided the subject since their school days." [*N.Y. Times*]; 2) *March* by Geraldine Brooks "... combines her penchant for historical fiction with the literary-reinvention genre as she imagines the Civil War from the viewpoint of *Little Women*'s Mr. March." [*Kirkus*]; 3) Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* "... a powerful denunciation and exposé of the horrors of war, specifically World War I." [*Washington Post*]; 4) *Up Front* by Bill Mauldin "... the truest glimpse most Americans got of the "real war" came through the flashing black lines of twenty-two-year-old infantry sergeant Bill Mauldin." [*Goodreads*]; 5) Toni Morrison's *Home* "... tells the story of Frank Money, an African-American veteran traumatised by his experiences in the Korean War. He has been back in America for a year, but feels too violent and dislocated to go home." [*The Guardian*]; 6) *Finding Moon* by Tony Hillerman "... its protagonist begins a redemptive journey that takes him first to Manila and then across the South China Sea to Cambodia, just as Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge begin their reign of terror." [*Publishers Weekly*]. You will find the exhibit on a book cart as you walk into the library. So take some time to browse this interesting exhibit. With the variety, you will be sure to find something that will pique your interest.

### FINDING WHAT YOU WANT

You can locate something in the library that you like by browsing the shelves or by using our **Online Catalog**. To access the online catalog, open the Residents' Association website ([www.forestres.org](http://www.forestres.org)) (user name: resident; password: RAweb2701). Once on the website click on "Quick Links" then click on "Search Library Books." The online catalog will come up. You can **search** by title, author, or subject. You can also **browse** by title, author, or subject. So, don't forget to use this capability to find items on certain subjects, especially when you don't have a specific title in mind. ¶

## The Residents' Association Officers and Directors

Fiscal Year 2020–2021

The Officers and Directors of the Residents' Association for the fiscal year beginning November 1, 2020, are:

### Officers

Lois Oliver	President
Margaret Keller	Vice President
Marge Nordstrom	Secretary
Ken Barrett	Treasurer
Banks Anderson	Past President

### Directors

Mac Mellor	<u>Committees</u>
Jim Freedman	Activities
Bob Pavan	Caucuses
Bennett Galef	Finance
Maureen Johnson	Food Service
Tom Small	General Services
Tom Keller	Governance
Bill Losee	Health
Jean Vail	Marketing
	Resident Services

### The Forest at Duke, Inc., Board\*

Banks Anderson  
Arnold Lerman  
Dean McCumber

\*Banks Anderson, in transition, a seat normally reserved for the RA President. Arnold Lerman's term expired October 31, 2020, pending the selection of his replacement. Dean McCumber's term will expire October 31, 2022. ¶



## THE REST OF THE STORY

## WALTER PIGEON

Compiled by Phil Baer

In the Epilogue to “A Sign from Above?” in the last issue of *The Forester* (October 2020), I promised there would be more about Walter. But, rather than writing about just my own feelings about this visitor who captivated so many residents, I decided to ask those who I knew had seen Walter to share their thoughts about him. What follows is a sort of eulogy, but, rather than a eulogy given by a single speaker, it is one given in the voices of all who want to be heard. It’s what you might hear at a Quaker meeting, if Walter had visited a Quaker community, and the residents shared their experiences: A comment ... A moment of silent reflection ... A comment ....

“Walter Pigeon was a symbol of hope for relief from the pandemic. Like the dove returning to the Ark. For Walter, life at the Forest must have seemed like paradise ... for the first time in his life he was more than a number, he had a name ... he had status. He no longer lived in a coop, but was a “free range” pigeon. No more exhausting marathon pigeon races and no more Purina pigeon racing chow. Here he had access to a variety of foods scattered below various bird feeders. He also had all the intellectual stimulation a dove could ask for. Simply by sitting on top of the Howell’s carport at 5:00 p.m. each evening he could listen to good humored and always interesting Old Oak conversations. But, of course, all that changed in an instant when one day he was attacked by a Coopers Hawk. At that point he must have thought that the security of the coop wasn’t so bad after all. Walter Pigeon will be missed, but his memory remains and the hope that he brought lingers.” (Tom Small)

“I opened the door and there in front of me was a large, beautiful white bird looking trustingly at me with its sad red eyes. I knew immediately that this was no ordinary bird but a bird that needed help. I could see there were bands on both of its legs. So I did what I always do when I need help, I called **Carol** and **John**. They have good answers for most any problem. I knew Walter was at great risk but I’m devastated at his demise.” (Delaina Buehler)

“When I first saw Walter in **Delaina’s** Cottage 18 carport, I knew two things: first, he was an escapee from a racing pigeon flock and second, he was in a lot of trouble. Walter was too tame, too easily approached to be safe. He was obviously hungry and thirsty. I decided to go back to my cottage to get him some bird seed which, when I presented it to him, was avidly eaten. Racing pigeons are maintained by their owners in large dovecotes where they receive regular meals and a safe place to spend the night. I hoped Walter would eat and move on, hopefully back home. If he stayed in the area, my best guess was that one of our neighborhood hawks would make short work of him. Walter did drop by Cottage 21 a few days later and spent time on our patio. I did not see him around the bird feeders, which is just as well since we get visits from a large female Coopers Hawk who likes to hang out on top of feeder poles.” (John Duvall)

“Sadly, I only briefly met Walter during his last days. He seemed to be enjoying dining at **Delaina’s** feeder. And then he just walked away. I never even got to see him fly.” (Stuart Embree)

“White dove poised on the neighbor’s roofline ... then I see the metal band.

Gathered in our small circle, we silently wish for the white dove’s life.

Shriek of an unseen bird disturbs my early-morning meditation.

The white dove now sleeps under Phil’s car ... omen of despair or sign of hope.

Hawk a speck in the blue sky—beautiful engine of destruction.” (Sue Howell)

“I remember the happiness Walter’s reappearance—on the railing of the pond bridge—brought us. We thought he had left us, but there he was again, if a little beat up and crookedly perched.” (Shannon Purves)

“Gruesome with white feathers flying was the struggle in the backyard of Cottage 40. Although in 1916 women collected and passed white feathers to young Brits in civvies, there was nothing dovish about this deathly duel. Feathers speared the air as Walter’s dark, taloned nemesis struck, arching his wings to add power to his thrusts. As drifting feathers festooned the battleground, the victor posed erect, profiled, wings

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## Walter Pigeon ...

(Continued from Page 4)



Photo by Sharron Parker

### *Walter's Farewell Tour of the Pond*

folded, talons out, like Horus in a tomb cartouche. Then in a white flash Walter was lifted into the air and carried into the front yard, where another pile of white feathers collected—white feathers were all that remained. Happy young hawks, still in the nest, likely welcomed a fledgling feast. For several days thereafter an escutcheon of white feathers decorated the surrounding green, only to slowly disappear without a trace.” (**Banks Anderson**)

“My thoughts on Walter: How ironic, a symbol of peace (white dove) eliminated by a symbol of war (hawk) Walter brought uplifting thoughts to our neighborhood during this trying and stressful year.” (**Ellen Durrett**)

“Ken and I saw the white dove flying overhead when we were walking around the neighborhood. We wondered if there had been a wedding or funeral nearby. I Googled white doves and learned that if it was a release dove (aka homing pigeon) it should have been flying home. But it stayed, and I was intrigued when Phil said he'd learned it was a racing pigeon,

since I'd never heard of such a thing. But rather than continue racing, it stayed here, enjoying the offered birdseed and gazing at the pond. I choose to believe it was doing what white doves have done for centuries—reminding us of peace, love, and serenity.” (**Sharron Parker**)

“With the gift of his presence in our garden, Walter lifted my spirits every day at a time when they badly needed lifting. I still miss him.” (**Ellen Baer**)

“I don't know why, but in a way unlike ever before when birds have come to feed, I felt honored when Walter came by each afternoon for a light lunch and a nap. His choosing to come spend time with us made me feel special. He's been gone for weeks, but I still find myself peering into the tangle of lantana and zinnias where he liked to look for seeds spilled from the feeder—I'm hoping against all reason that I'll see him there again.” (**Phil Baer**)

“Weep not for Walter,  
He flies eternally for home.” (**John Howell**) ☿

## TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE FORESTER

### Who Reads the Forester?

- *The Wall Street Journal* is read by the people who run the country.
- *The New York Times* is read by people who think they run the country.
- *The Washington Post* is read by people who think they ought to run the country.
- *USA Today* is read by people who think they ought to run the country but don't understand *The Washington Post*.
- *The Los Angeles Times* is read by people who wouldn't mind running the country, if they could spare the time.
- *The Boston Globe* is read by people whose parents used to run the country.
- *The New York Daily News* is read by people who aren't too sure who's running the country.
- *The New York Post* is read by people who don't care who's running the country, as long as they do something scandalous.
- *The San Francisco Chronicle* is read by people who aren't sure there is a country, or anyone is running it.
- *The Miami Herald* is read by people who are running another country. ☿

—Anonymous

## Welcome New Residents

### Borbala Tornai

Apartment 3032  
949-683-2350      btornai@gmail.com



Borbala was born in Transylvania (now part of Romania), moved with her mother to Budapest, Hungary when she was two, and lived there until the early 1970's. She met her husband, Istvan, in school when she was a teenager. They married (on July 4!) while attending university. She became a pharmacist and later a research chemist. Istvan studied medicine and was an obstetrician–gynecologist. As children they lived through World War II and as adults through the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

The Tornais had three children, and gradually reached the decision to emigrate, whenever it should be permitted. Istvan volunteered for a government project in Tanzania at a cooperative venture of the two countries. In East Africa they worked at a big hospital and lived in a nice house. The family had a good experience there.

In 1972 their application for immigration to the U.S. was approved, and they left Africa for New Jersey. Borbala worked in chemistry research at Columbia University; Istvan was on the obstetrics faculty. The children adapted well and were educated at Ivy League schools. Esther, who earned a doctorate in art history, lives in Pittsboro NC. Reka, a financial manager, lives in Irvine CA. Martin, an Associate Professor of Radiology at Duke, lives in Carrboro NC. Among them there are eight grandchildren.

After Istvan died, Borbala moved to California in 1996 where she remained until she came to The Forest. Moving back East, she brought her large library of Hungarian books with her. Reading and her children and grandchildren are her great pleasures. ☘

### Margaret Clark

Apartment 3016  
805-319-6607  
margie27705@gmail.com



Margie grew up in Miami and Tavernier FL. She went to Florida State University where she was interested in everything, but achieved her BS degree in education. She managed to include a non-degree level study of library science. She did graduate study at the University of Georgia, for a MEd in Counseling.

She taught for two years, and then married Bruce Straits. He was a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Margie became a southern Californian. After working at a rape crisis counseling center and another community organization, she became an administrative supervisor at UCSB, mostly in the Engineering Department. After 15 years she left UCSB, studied library science and then worked in a local library. She was also a Red Cross instructor and volunteered at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

After a divorce, she married Dale Clark. He had come to UCSB as a visiting faculty member in engineering; his subsequent roles were lab manager and equipment designer. When Dale developed a series of medical problems, Margie became an excellent caregiver. After his death, she decided to come east where most of her family still lives, and chose The Forest at Duke.

Margie is very outgoing. She enjoys book groups, life-long-learning classes, music, and theater. She will be a lively addition to The Forest. ☘

## CAROL'S CORNER

**Charles Thomas Hudgens II**

Manager of Security &amp; Transportation

by Carol Oettinger

Charles is our Manager of Security and Transportation. He came to The Forest by what he calls a “happy accident.” While “surfing the Internet” looking for possible jobs in security, he hit a wrong key and discovered an opening at The Forest. He applied and three years ago was hired for the night shift in Security. He says, “I have climbed the ladder since.”



Charles was born in Warren, Michigan, and because his father was in the military, the family—he has an older brother and an older sister—moved often. Since graduating from the University of Maryland, he’s done a good bit of moving himself. His first job was as Operations Manager for a security company in Georgia. Then he worked as Security Manager at Cox Cable Company in Atlanta. He then moved to Detroit and worked as Surveillance Supervisor for a Greek Town gambling casino. He spent what must have been three interesting years there before taking a job working for the State of Michigan as Account Manager. From there he moved to Cincinnati where he worked for the Juvenile Court System. Returning to Michigan, Charles found work as an Account Manager for the State. And then he moved to Cincinnati to be Safety Manager for the Juvenile Court system.

After many moves of their own, most of his family members had ended up in North Carolina so Charles moved to NC to become reacquainted with and enjoy his family. And thus to The Forest at Duke. Charles has been here for three years. He became interim Manager in December of 2019 and permanent Manager in January of 2020. He says he loves his work and the residents. He loves helping people. I can attest to that because of the many ways he has helped me. Charles plans to stay with us at The Forest, and we are glad to have this well-dressed person and smile as part of our Forest family for a long time. ‡

**Veterans Day**

November 11, the date of the Armistice ending “World War I,” the “Great War,” the “War to End all Wars.” Veterans Day today honors all Americans who served in the military during war-time. This year, the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, it is fitting to remember those many residents of The Forest who served in World War II. Time has taken its toll, but we are proud to dedicate this issue to the dozen stalwarts with whom we share a home.

**World War II Veterans  
Currently at The Forest**

Stanley Barlow	Air Force, 1943-46 Flight Officer/Navigator
Paul Bryan	Army, 1941-46 Sergeant
Penelope Easton	Army, 1945-47 1 <sup>st</sup> Lieutenant
Bill Griffith	Navy, 1944-46 Aircraft Gunner/Radio Operator
Jack Hughes	Navy, 1944-46 Lieutenant, Medical Officer
Bill Louv	Marines, 1942-45 Private
Richard Miller	Army, 1943-45 Lieutenant
Eugene Moriarty	Army 1942-44 Lieutenant
Robbie Robertson	Navy, 1942-76 Rear Admiral
George Williams	Army, 1942-45 Master Sergeant
Gerald Wolinsky	Army, 1943-45 Private

— September 14, 2020



## Penelope Easton, U.S. Army Nutritionist

The last female of a dwindling few TFAD residents to have served during World War II, Penelope has been in and out of the hospital as a patient recently. But with the help of family and friends, *The Forester's* Jo Mooney has conducted this virtual interview. Penelope's answers are taken verbatim from her book *Fleeing the Depression: Finding Refuge in World War II* (Copyright © 2017) Ellipses are omitted for space.

**The Forester (TF):** When and why did you join the Army?

**Penelope Easton (PE):** In our senior year [1942-43 at the University of Vermont where Penelope majored in home economics] Dr. [Florence] King insisted that to be properly trained as a dietitian, we must take a dietetic internship. She insisted that I go downtown to take the civil service examination, required for any government job. It was ridiculously easy, but I learned later that my high score helped me get the Army internship [at Brooke General Hospital in Fort Sam Houston, TX].

My family said they could help me with purchasing the uniforms and pay the fare necessary to go to Texas. I wanted to be part of the war and see more of the world. Less than a month later, [a classmate] and I were on a crowded train going to San Antonio, Texas.

**TF:** What was your life like at Brooke?

**PE:** The Army had great respect for dietetic personnel. We were given desks on the wards and made rounds with the physicians. Every day we would see the horrible results of battlefield engagements.

I was glad to learn how hard hospital personnel worked to get special foods for seriously ill patients, regardless of rank. They found a pilot from a nearby airbase willing to fly to Mexico to find a watermelon for a dying private. A dietitian visited the severely wounded at every meal, and we did everything we could to give them the foods they felt like eating that day.



*Penelope as a 2nd Lieutenant, US Army*

**TF:** How did the end of the war change your routines?

**PE:** Headlines proclaiming the surrender of Germany on May 8, 1945, were welcomed and celebrated, but the knowledge of the fierce war in the Pacific muted any real joy. My future was determined because I intended to fulfill my pledge to enter the Army Medical Corps [and was] given orders to report to a Massachusetts post. [During basic training at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, when the war with Japan ended, I was] among six dietitians and fifty nurses who became the lowest form of humanity, women second lieutenants.

I had asked to go overseas, but had little hope for such an assignment. A week before basic training ended, I could hardly believe my luck. I was ordered to go to a South Carolina staging area before embarkation from New York in September. I was going to the China, Burma, India Theater. I was actually to go overseas, not only overseas but to India, halfway around the world. [Penelope's assignment: the only dietitian at the 181st Army Hospital in Karachi, then part of India under British rule]. Each department had only one shift of workers. I was at work by 6 a.m. every day, including Sunday. Operation Magic Carpet—post-World War II operation to repatriate American military personnel from all over the world—was in full swing. The Navy had converted all manner of ships to carry troops, even installing

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## Penelope Easton...

(Continued from Page 8)

tiered bunks on the decks of aircraft carriers. Morale was low as hundreds of thousands of troops wanted eagerly to get home. Our job, the dismantling of the 181st Hospital, continued. My mess personnel, who had reached the required number of service points, were often bumped from troop ships by soldiers with more points. I had similar concerns because I had completed only part of my service time.

**TF:** What was your greatest challenge there?

**PE:** [On Christmas Day] I found my mess hall littered with cooks, drunk from imbibing the raisin jack made in a hidden still. No one there had ever seen me furious. Everyone, patient or corpsman, who stopped in was put to work. I rattled pans, threw coffee grounds into hot water, made oatmeal, and helped the Muslim workers fill the food boxes for the bed patients. No one had guessed that I could cook, much less feed a crowd.

**TF:** How did being in the war change your life?

**PE:** How lucky I was to have been born in exciting times. I had the advantage of a small-town base of support and social values that allowed me to become a strong independent woman.

Our war did not end all wars as we hoped it would do, but it enlarged the vistas of young people, encouraged us to further our educations, and appreciate the civilizations and history we share. ☸

*Penelope S. Easton received her BS from the University of Vermont. Witnessing the effects of malnutrition while she was serving in the Army, she was determined after the war to qualify as a public health dietitian. Using the GI Bill, she was completing her Master's in Public Health at the University of Michigan when she was recruited by the director of the Alaska Territorial Health Department (prior to Statehood) to be a dietary consultant to schools and institutions throughout the Territory from 1948–1950. She often returned to Alaska later, sometimes for research. Continuing her academic studies, she earned a doctorate from Southern Illinois University. In addition to the account of her wartime service, *Fleeing the Depression: Finding Refuge in World War II*, she wrote *Learning to Like Muktuk*, about her two years as dietary consultant to Territorial Alaska. Both books are in the TFAD Library.*

## My Jolly Account of the War's End

by George Williams

As we are printing a memorable and moving account of Jack Hughes' experiences during the first days of the engagement of the USA in World War II, from D-Day, June 6, 1944, it might be appropriate to record an account of another serviceman's experience after the end of our engagement in Europe, July 1945.

My unit, having served in France and Germany, was assigned to the Pacific theater. We were transferred to a camp near a channel port to await shipping to the States. As we had no duty beyond waiting, the US Army provided opportunity for entertainment. We were allowed to go to the opera in Rouen, (or was it Reims?). The opera was (if I remember) *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

As I was standing in line to buy my ticket, I noticed also in line an officer: He was my neighbor from Charleston, SC, and my distant cousin. He was also awaiting shipment to the States. He had served in Liverpool as supervisor of the shipping of troops and supplies. We had a good chat before the curtain. Eight years later, I married his daughter, Harriet, who was fifteen at the time of this conversation. ☸



*Mr. and Mrs. George Williams, leaving St. Michael's Church, Charleston, after the ceremony, November 28, 1953.*

## **General of the Army George Catlett Marshall**

### **“Organizer of Victory”**

by John Duvall

One of the great architects of Allied victories over Nazi and Japanese forces during World War II was General of the Army George Catlett Marshall. When it was obvious that Germany was totally defeated in March 1945, Prime Minister Winston Churchill cabled this message to the British Embassy in Washington:

“Pray ... give ... [General Marshall] my warmest congratulations on the magnificent fighting and conduct of the American and Allied Armies under General Eisenhower, and say what a joy it must be to him to see how the Armies he called into being by his own genius have won immortal renown. He is the true ‘organizer of victory’.”

Marshall and Churchill battled one another during the war over the proper strategy for the defeat of Nazi armies. But the two men appreciated the fighting spirit that each of them personified. When Marshall was sent to England in 1953 by President Eisenhower as the US representative to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, Churchill, again Britain’s Prime Minister, stepped out of the solemn procession in Westminster Abbey to shake Marshall’s hand. In 1959, when Marshall lay dying at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, President Eisenhower and Churchill came for a final visit. Marshall was so sick he could not recognize either man; Churchill cried. Such was the bond that linked the two men.

George Marshall entered the Army in the opening years of the twentieth century after graduating first in his class at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. Young Marshall realized that getting an active duty commission would not be easy. Always an intrepid spirit, he went to the White House to ask the Commander in Chief for a job. After showing up without an appointment, he was led upstairs into the presence of President William McKinley, who wanted to know why on earth he was there.

During World War I he was called by the American Commander in France, General John J. Pershing, to plan the great operations for the First US Army in the Ste. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne campaigns that helped bring the war to an end. During

the interwar years, Marshall would champion the idea of combined arms operations. As Assistant Commandant at Fort Benning’s Infantry School he mentored the young officers who would lead in future wars.

A brigadier general by 1936, Marshall became Assistant Chief of Staff of the Army. Shortly after the Munich Agreement in 1938, President Roosevelt called a major staff meeting to discuss the danger represented by the rising

Nazi state. Marshall attended, representing his boss, the Army chief, General Malin Craig. To defend America, the President proposed building 50,000 military airplanes.

Looking around the room, the President’s eyes came to rest on George Marshall.

“Don’t you agree, George?” he asked. The answer came strongly, with an emphatic tone: “No, Mr. President I do not!” Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, a close friend and advisor of the President, said quietly to no one in particular, “Bye, bye, George.”

For Marshall it was important to speak truth to power. Sure, America needed war planes, but above all else it needed an army. At less than two hundred thousand men, America’s army ranked seventeenth in the world. And one last point needs to be made here: no one called General George Marshall “George.” Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who worked for Marshall after the war, noted this about the general. “The moment General Marshall entered the room everyone felt his presence. It was striking, and communicated force. To all of us he was always ‘General Marshall’.”

On September 1, 1939, George Marshall became Chief of Staff of the United States Army. The President might not have liked being contradicted, but he must have liked the mettle of this man Marshall. If he wanted to build an army, well, his time had come!

The task before Marshall was beyond the imagination, but he had a genius for organization and for picking the right men to do the right jobs. He saw

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## General Marshall ...

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that the army headquarters was antiquated and that the War Department needed a complete overhaul so that it could manage a worldwide conflict. His major goal was to create a modern army of citizen-soldiers; by war's end there was a formidable force of over eight million soldiers deployed worldwide.

When World War II ended, George Marshall was tired to the core of his being and wanted nothing more than to retire and enjoy life with his wife, Katherine. It was not to be. President Truman called on the general to take up a special mission to China to try to head off the coming civil war between Nationalist and Communist forces. Later the President called on him to take on the heavy mantles of Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. To both endeavors he brought his great genius for organization, leadership and selfless service. As Secretary of State he championed the American aid for European recovery that we know as the Marshall Plan, a great work that earned him the Nobel Peace Prize.

George Catlett Marshall gave himself selflessly to the service of his country and to the cause of freedom and democratic values. At the Potsdam Conference in 1945, Churchill and Marshall had an opportunity to discuss their work together in defeating Hitler. When the general left the room, the Prime Minister said to his colleague, Lord Moran, "That is the noblest Roman of all."

Another note of praise came from Marshall's old friend Admiral Harold R. Stark, former Chief of Naval Operations, who said in a letter to the general, "Back of all the success in the war in Europe is George Marshall. God bless him ... I simply thank God for you from the bottom of my heart. I don't know how we could have gotten along without you." Simply said from the heart.

Just beyond the entrance into Westminster Abby there is a great piece of black basaltic stone in the floor engraved with the words "THANK GOD FOR WINSTON CHURCHILL."

We Americans should never forget our own great leaders, so I say **"Thank God for George Marshall!"**

*John Duvall spent over thirty years as a historian and museum director for the U.S. Army at Fort Bragg, twenty of those with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division.*

## Normandy, June 6, 1944 ...

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wounds. The medical team comprised Jack, another young Navy doctor, an experienced Army surgeon, along with fourteen pharmacist's mates and an Army medic with bags of surgical instruments. LSTs were a



*Jack going ashore, June 8*

primary means of evacuation of the wounded from Normandy. Jack recalled several round trips that returned his ship to Portland, Plymouth, Falmouth, and other English ports to offload the wounded and to take on troops and cargo. Significantly, through D plus 11 days, LSTs evacuated 80 percent of all Allied casualties. It was a dangerous mission and six LSTs were sunk during operations.

For Lieutenant Jack Hughes, Normandy was an incredible experience, and he thinks that he was very lucky to have survived the battle. Jack was witness to the greatest amphibious assault in history, involving some 5,000 ships and landing craft, hundreds of thousands of soldiers, and with the air above full of Allied planes. He arrived at Omaha Beach at a crisis of the battle that saw thousands killed and wounded. For weeks after June 6th the fighting was savage, creating thousands of new casualties. Throughout the campaign Jack and his team worked steadfastly to care for the wounded, moving them to England for hospital care.



Many years after the great battle, Jack Hughes, now a much-loved doctor in Durham, returned to the Omaha Beach area of Normandy. He visited the American cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer that contains 9,385 of our military dead. Here in the beautiful, tranquil setting, set above the once bloody beach, he was able to reflect on the consequences of war and the sacrifice of so many young lives in the cause of freedom. ¶

*Jack Hughes, MD*

## A Navy Medical Officer Remembers

Normandy: June 6, 1944

by John Duvall

D-Day at H-Hour, 6.30 a.m., assault echelons of the 116<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, began landing on the right side of Omaha Beach, near the village of Vierville-sur-Mer. They were the spearpoint of the attack: awaiting them was a defense in full armor.

Within seconds, landing troops were hit by overwhelming fire from well-placed German defenses manned by first-line troops. Mortars, machine guns, and artillery had every inch of the beach under fire. Deadly chaos ensued, as soldiers died immediately on landing, while others were blown up in their landing craft. Whole companies were decimated. The water was full of disabled boats and the bodies of the dead and wounded. A German observer reported the effectiveness of the fire, noting ten burning tanks, as well as dead and wounded lying on the sand. Naval historian Samuel E. Morrison said this of that fateful morning: “Omaha Beach, there’s a name that will live, like Tarawa and Guadalcanal, as long as men prize valor and feel for suffering.”

Heading directly into this maelstrom of fire and fury around 8:00 a.m. was a Navy Landing Ship Tank (LST-437) carrying reinforcements, vehicles, supplies, and much needed medical help. On board was Lieutenant Jack Hughes, a doctor from North Carolina. He could see that the beach ahead was a hell of enemy fire. At that moment a nearby LST was hit by German artillery, losing its bow. Jack’s ship was ordered to retreat out of range to await a more favorable time to land. Around them, other landing craft and ships were taking fire. The medics wanted nothing more than to get ashore and start taking care of the wounded. When darkness fell, the LST moved closer to shore and sailors were able to bring some one hundred wounded soldiers on board. It would be another day or so before Jack’s LST touched shore to unload and begin to bring more wounded on board.

LST-437 had on-board medical facilities, including a small operating room, and the doctors went right to work on amputations and serious chest

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*LSTs, Landing Ship Tanks, on Normandy beaches during D-Day assault operations, June 6, 1944. These vessels were part of a vast 5,000 ship armada that began the liberation of Northwest Europe. LSTs carried troops and heavy equipment to the beaches and were large enough to contain medical facilities used for the prompt treatment and evacuation of battle casualties. Public domain, official US Naval history photograph.*