



**Stars and Stripes
Association®**

An organization of past and present, military and civilian, staffers and employees, their families and friends of the U.S. Armed Forces daily newspaper, *The Stars & Stripes*.

NEWS

July 2011



Fifty-foot brick wall honors the memory of Stripers at our museum in Bloomfield, Mo.

S&S museum locks in U.S. military history for all time

Photos and Story

By Shirley Tyler-Bowman

Not long after the death of my husband, *Pacific Stars and Stripes* reporter Greg Tyler, in 2006, I received a large envelope in the mail. I looked at the left of the envelope to see who it was from. It read “Stars and Stripes Museum.”

“Museum?” I said to myself. “There’s a Stars and Stripes Museum?”

Having no idea what it was, I opened the envelope and pulled out a letter, a certificate and photo of a brick wall. The letter read: “A brick was donated in memory of Greg Tyler, a Stars and Stripes reporter, for his place in our Memorial Wall of Bricks.” I

felt a tear roll down my cheek as I read through the brochure, which showed photos and told about the Stars and Stripes Museum and Library. It is an archive of memorabilia in Bloomfield that tells the story of the nearly 150-year-old newspaper



published by and for U.S. military service members.

Ever since that day, I had hoped one day to visit the museum and take photos of Greg’s brick, etched forever with his memory. I remarried in March 2010 to Russ Bowman and traveled from my new home in Oregon

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Author to address reunion banquet

Author Virginia Vassallo, who has an impressive Stripes “bloodline,” will be guest speaker at our reunion in Bloomfield, Mo.

Frank Praytor’s review of Vassallo’s biography of her grandfather, World War I Stripes founder Guy T. Viskniskki, appeared

in the May edition of the newsletter.

“She delves into the life of Viskniskki, whom she never met, with an abundance of detail, but with a style that makes it a page-turner for anyone interested in Stripes history,”

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Stars and Stripes Association Inc. is a California non-profit corporation with more than 300 members worldwide. Address: 4456 Moss Lane, Camino, CA 95709.

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In memory of Maurice (Maury) Martin, Col., USAF (Ret.), whose efforts as co-founder made this association possible.

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ALLIED WITH

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Stars and Stripes Association News

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Museum, From Page 1

to my former home in Georgia to make arrangements to ship my household furnishings. We finished packing and planned our trip across country. Russ, who also is widowed, understood my need to stop at the Museum, which is in southeast Missouri about three hours drive from St. Louis. I wanted to take some photos and meet the staff that was dedicated to preserving the memory of the newspaper that brought us to Japan, and where Greg had spent seven years of his life, almost to the day.



Shirley Tyler-Bowman

On Sunday, July 10, Russ and I made it to the highway that would take us to Bloomfield.

As we drew closer to the small town, we saw an old barn sitting just off the highway with large and familiar lettering on the roof: "Stars and Stripes." I couldn't believe how easy it was to find. We parked in front of the small museum adjacent to the barn. Glad to find it open on Sunday, we walked into warm greetings from Museum Manager Deloris May. She, and other volunteers helping her that day, took us in as though we were family.

We could see the museum was rich with interesting displays and exhibits. I stepped outside to see the Wall of Honor, made up of dozens of donated bricks like the one purchased in Greg's memory. One of the volunteers helped me search for Greg's memorial brick because the wall is big: about 10 feet high and 50 feet long.

As I began to sort through the hundreds of names from all over the world, I began to feel warmth flow from the wall into my heart. "This is a family," I thought. I ran my hand over some of the names with my eyes closed and in my heart thanked them for their stories through the years. When I opened my eyes I saw Greg's brick, I yelped with joy! It read, "In Memoriam — Greg Tyler — Pacific 99-06." When I spotted it, I got out my camera and clicked away. I felt grateful to Steve Liewer, a fellow Stripes reporter and good friend of Greg's, who donated the brick. Greg loved writing for Stripes, making new friends and getting to know many of the service members. He enjoyed writing their stories. The last story he wrote prior to his demise was one of a service member who enjoyed writing poetry. Before he was employed by Stripes, Greg was a city editor for a couple of daily papers, then went on to be a Web content editor for the *Augusta Chronicle*, Augusta,

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STARS AND STRIPES ASSOCIATION'S REUNION 2011

September 22 – September 25

HOTEL

Drury Inn

2608 E. Malone Ave., Sikeston, Missouri

NOTE: Make motel reservations on-line at <http://www.druryhotels.com/Reservations.aspx?groupno=2112170> or call 1-800-325-0720 and use the same group number. Make reservation by August 22, 2011 for the \$89.95 rate for one room with two queen beds. After that date, rooms will be provided on a space-available basis at prevailing rates.

REUNION ACTIVITIES REGISTRATION

To register for the reunion activities, please complete the form below carefully to assure proper credit and spelling of names. Registration fee is \$100 per person if mailed by August 1, 2011 and \$125 after that date. This includes the hospitality room each day and evening of the reunion, Friday evening banquet, transportation from the motel to the Stars and Stripes Museum/Library and lunch on Saturday.

Member(s)' Name(s) _____ Number in Party _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Email _____

Guest(s): _____

Payment calculation and instructions:

Registration by August 1: \$100x _____ (number in party) = \$ _____

Registration after August 1: \$125x _____ (number in party) = \$ _____

Number in party needing transportation from the hotel to the museum on Saturday _____

I plan to drive to the museum on Saturday; number in my vehicle _____

Send checks or money orders payable to: Stars and Stripes Museum (note Reunion 2011 in memo).
Mail to: R. Sue Mayo; 18084 State Highway J, Bloomfield MO 63825

Friday night banquet buffet menu: Roast beef w/gravy, chicken breast in mushroom sauce, au gratin potatoes, whole green beans, glazed carrots, green salad, dinner and cinnamon rolls, cheesecake and chocolate cake, cash bar

Saturday lunch buffet: Fish, shrimp, chicken strips, slaw, potatoes, hush puppies, cash bar

Museum, from Page 2

Ga. Before accepting a position with Stripes, he had told me it was his desire to go back to his love of writing. When he took the job with Stripes, it pleased him that he could take his wife and son overseas to a new experience and go back to his love to write. Later, on his deathbed, I saw his look of contentment for his life. Then, as I held his hand, I watched as he slipped away peacefully.

As I walked away from Greg's memorial brick, blowing a kiss or two, I headed back inside to view the exhibits throughout the museum. We watched a short film chronicling the history of the newspaper: The filmmakers described its sporadic publication during the Civil War, its resurrection during the First World War, and again during World War II, and its modern incarnation as the "hometown newspaper" of soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines serving overseas.

By the time it ended, I was in awe. I had no idea Stars and Stripes had been a part of so much of the nation's military history. The exhibits of Steve Kroft and Andy Rooney, former Stripes reporters who later gained fame with CBS News and were featured in the film; photos of a Stripes reporter, Adam C. Johnston, posing with Geraldo Rivera with a comment "Who's interviewing who?" made the museum tour even more interesting.

Then Deloris took us through the museum, describing not only the exhibits but some of the stories behind them. She told us about one display, "Battle of the Bulge," which shows soldiers in a foxhole with snow and brush around them. She mentioned a veteran of that day who had toured the Museum. He told the volunteers the exhibit brought memories flooding back for him because it captured the spirit so well.

The volunteers pulled out archive copies of the Pacific edition

so I could share some of the articles Greg wrote during his time as a reporter in Sasebo, Japan. It was a way of tying our own history with that of this historic newspaper, and to tell them how much he enjoyed serving the men and women of our Armed Forces. I told them Greg was thrilled and honored to work for such a prestigious newspaper. I thanked them for preserving its history so well.

When thanking Steve in an email recently for his contribution, he replied "It makes me happy to know how much this particular tribute means to you. I recall being so saddened by Greg's early death, and feeling for you and James being alone overseas. I wanted to find a tribute that was more lasting than flowers and being unsure if this memorial brick at a place that was far away from you and from me was the right thing to do. I am so glad it turned out to be the right thing — and it led both of us to visit the Museum, didn't it?"

I learned that the Museum is supported by contributions from visitors and through the Stars and Stripes Museum/Library Association with backing from members of the Stars and Stripes Association, an organization made up of former employees of the newspaper.

If you've ever served in the military, whether overseas or stateside, this would be a visit well worth your

while. While in the area, you may want to visit the nearby Bloomfield City Cemetery to read the inscriptions on over 150 Civil War Memorial Markers for Stoddard County soldiers who lost their lives during that war.

Before we left, Russ and I took photos of the Museum, the displays, and the volunteers who give of their time to staff the facility. I don't know when I'll be back, but I feel like I've made friends — really, a whole town of them — who care about the legacy of the newspaper that meant so much to Greg and to generations of service members who have tasted a little bit of home when they read it.

Greg's memory is in good hands.

*** **

Shirley is a published author of children's books "Nite Nite Bedtime" and "Where is Time." She is also a photographer and musician, and she enjoys creating websites for businesses. She believes everyone has a story, so when given the opportunity, she creates documentaries of life stories of American citizens. You can see her work on <http://www.portlandmetroap.org> and www.artistphotogintheraw.org

She resides in Oregon with her husband, Russ, and dogs, Nellie and Soshi.



In 2004, Greg, Shirley and James enjoyed a trip to Hirado, Japan.

Museum exhibits bring Stripes history to life



Women in the Military Display

Uniforms, photos and other memorabilia pay tribute to the history of women's service to the military.



Delores May greets Russell Bowman at gift shop.



Early editions required skills and sweat.

Remembering Don Towles and star-studded chase

Editor's note: Don Towles, a longtime Kentucky newspaper executive who had served as a GI reporter for Pacific Stars and Stripes (1953-54), died June 26 at age 83. He had served in the Army during the Korean War. In the article below, Toshi Cooper, chairman emeritus of the Stars and Stripes Association, relives a shared journalistic adventure from the golden past.

*** **

Don Towles will always have a special place in my heart. After more than 20 wonderful years at Stars and Stripes, I retired with many, many mementos—clippings, photos and autographs, including celebrities, entertainers and athletes. They are all precious, but one is extra special, so special in fact I have it on a wall near my desk and I look at it every day.

GI reporter got his story on that wintry evening in 1954.

It's a photo of Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio with their autographs together side by side. They came to Tokyo on their honeymoon. Why is this so special? Because the experience was one of the most exciting adventures I had while working at Stripes.

It was young Pfc. Don Towles who got the assignment to cover the arrival of the newlyweds. Besides Don and I there was a GI photographer, as I recall, and a driver. We headed to Tokyo International Airport at Haneda on the evening of Feb. 1, 1954 in a freezing wind but we were warm with excitement. When

we got to the airport it was total chaos. The plane was late, so it only got worse. There were media and fans everywhere.

Don said to me: "Toshi, you wait here, we'll come and get you after checking what's going on" and off they went.



Don Towles

In addition to covering their arrival we were supposed to deliver a letter to Marilyn from the PS&S officer in charge inviting her to visit the newspaper. It took awhile before Don and the photographer returned and when they did they were very frustrated. As they climbed into the back seat of our car, they said, "Well, let's go back and get drunk! Toshi, we'll tell you what's happened on our way home."

And so we were back on No. 2 Keihin highway, very disappointed.

They told me that after Marilyn and Joe stepped out on the landing platform of the plane for a brief appearance, they had to go back in the cabin to escape the crush of fans and photographers. Then suddenly they disappeared. Don heard that Joe and Marilyn apparently slipped through a door on the opposite side, got into a convertible with baseball legend Frank "Lefty" O'Doul, who accompanied them on this trip, and quickly drove off.

In our car on the way back to Tokyo from the airport we were dejected. The boys were grumbling in the back seat. I was sitting in the front seat, listening to them. Then, on the road in front of us, I couldn't believe

my eyes, "Oh, no, can it be?" In the back seat of the car in front of us (it was a yellow convertible, with the top up) I saw blond hair. I couldn't see the rest of her, but I started to get excited. I yelled to Don, "It's Marilyn, I think it's Marilyn!" Our spirits soared and we pursued the car. We followed them to the Imperial Hotel, where they slipped past another huge crowd, and pulled up to a back entrance. We were right behind them. They got out of the car and we walked right up and delivered the letter of invitation.

They were gracious but as it turned out Marilyn and Joe weren't able to visit the paper. That was too bad, but for me, at least, a dream had come true. I had their autographs. And Don got his byline story and the thrill of seeing Marilyn and Joe up close.

Don was discharged that year and in August I came to the States to attend Ohio Wesleyan University. I visited Don and his family in Lexington, Ky., the following year. We reminisced about the excitement of covering Marilyn and Joe. Don arranged for me to be honored as a Kentucky Colonel.

In 1955, Don was instrumental in publishing a very useful booklet of Pacific Stars & Stripers featuring bios and photos. Then, bless his heart, he did it again in 1992.

He and his wife Judy joined us in four reunions: Chicago in 1991, Bloomfield in 1999 and 2005 and Nashville in 2003.

I'll always remember Don as a gentle, sweet and kind person ready to help anyone. And I'll miss him even when I'm not looking at the autographs on my wall.



Stripes Museum exhibit simulates a foxhole of the 101st Airborne Division at the Battle of the Bulge.

Reunion, from Page 1

Praytor wrote in his review.

Vassallo draws her story from a substantial number of official documents, writings and letter exchanges her grandfather left when he died in 1949.

Virginia and her husband Russell are authors of a variety of books.

The reunion will be held Sept. 22-25 in Bloomfield, Mo., birthplace of *Stars and Stripes*, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the newspaper's founding in 1861.

Stripers will be staying at the new Drury Inn in Sikeston, Mo., where a block of rooms has been reserved for us. Each room contains two queen-size beds at the rate of \$89.95.

To get this reduced rate, which includes an impressive array of amenities, we must book at least 20 rooms, and reservations must be made by Aug. 22. The rate includes the hospitality room, a full hot breakfast and an evening "kick-back" with hot entrees.

Vassallo will speak at the banquet on Friday evening (Sept. 23) at the convention center next door to the Drury.

On Saturday, the group will visit the Stars and Stripes Museum/

Library in Bloomfield and have lunch before returning to Sikeston.

To make reservations on the Internet go to: http://www.druryhotels.com/Reservations.aspx?groupno=2112170_Reservations

may also be made by calling the toll-free number, 800-325-0720, and giving the same group number. To aid in ongoing planning for the reunion, please register as early as possible.



Virginia Vassallo

The Drury Inn is at 2608 East Malone Avenue, Sikeston, Mo. 63801. Telephone: (573) 472-2299.

There are several options for traveling to the reunion.

The Drury Inn is easily accessible from Interstates 55 (Exit 67) and 57.

Missouri State Highway 60 is now four-lane across the southern part of the state. For those traveling from or through Kansas City, It is suggested that you use Highway 71 to Harrisonville, 7 to Clinton, 13 to Springfield, 60 to Sikeston then north on Interstate 55.

All of these are four-lane highways and have much less traffic

than Interstate 70 across the middle of the state and through St. Louis.

If you fly to St. Louis you can rent a car at the airport or use BART, a van service, to travel to Sikeston. At present, the cost for one person one-way is \$80 and a second person making reservations at the same time is \$70. Prices, however, change with the fluctuation of gas prices.

BART uses either a six-passenger or a 14-passenger van. If several travelers can coordinate their arrival times and use the same van you can probably get a reduced rate by working with BART directly (1-800-294-2278).

Sikeston is about the same distance from Memphis as St. Louis; however, it would be necessary to rent a car to travel to Sikeston if using the Memphis Airport. There are also four weekday flights each way between the St. Louis Airport and Cape Girardeau Airport and two flights each way on Saturday and Sunday.

There is not a good public transportation system between the airport and Sikeston, but both Hertz (573-339-7250) and Enterprise (573-339-7800) have car rental service.

Traveling on Interstate 55, the distance between the Cape Girardeau Airport and Sikeston is no more than 33 miles.

President's Fitness Council honors Bill McNamara

The President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition has bestowed a 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award to Association Member William G. McNamara, citing him for having been "at the leading edge of international health and amateur sports for over 60 years."

The CFSN awards are presented annually to persons whose careers "have greatly contributed to the advancement or promotion of physical activity, sports or nutrition achievement. His award was presented to him May 10 at ceremonies in the U.S. Senate Office Building, Washington. Three other prominent

Americans also received the award.

Bill McNamara's citation further acknowledges his appointment in 1958 as the first Director of Armed Forces and Fitness Committee Secretariat, a position created for him by the Secretary of Defense.

"From 1961 through 1985, McNamara worked as a consultant to the President's Council under four executive directors," the citation continues, "providing technical assistance on a variety of Council initiatives including the Presidential Sports Award program and Regional Fitness and Sports clinics. McNamara

was instrumental in negotiating the agreement that led to the U.S. Olympic Committee's locating its headquarters and national training center in Colorado Springs."

His citation concluded: "Mr. McNamara was responsible for establishing the first center for orienteering in the United States."

During World War II, Bill McNamara was personally responsible for establishing various Stars and Stripes operations in the European Theater of Operations. He is active in our Association and attends annual reunions regularly.

Please register as early as possible for our reunion

First Class Mail

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