

April 25, 2007

A Newsletter for and by Veterans:

- Human Interest
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- Veteran's Stories

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**Missouri Ex-POW Annual Convention**

By Pat McGrath Avery

In 2003, President George W. Bush designated April 9 as National Former Prisoner of War Day. Two articles in this issue of Salute honor those who served in battle, survived captivity and returned home. We also remember and honor those who served, were captured and died while imprisoned.

The Missouri Chapter of the American Ex-Prisoners Of War held their annual convention in Osage Beach, MO, on April 11 and 12. In a separate article, Hodge Wood writes about the Oklahoma celebration of National Former Prisoner of War Day.

Don Ballard, recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor for service in Vietnam and keynote speaker for the annual banquet, expressed his admiration and respect for those who suffered so greatly at the hands of their captors. Most of the members are WWII veterans, with a few from the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

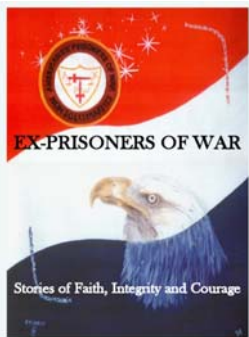
WC Rowden read the names of 28 Missouri members and spouses who died since the 2006 convention. As WWII veterans age, these rising numbers are part of every chapter of the organization. In a statement before the House and Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs last month, National Chairman, Robert W. Fletcher stated, "There are only 20,000 still alive out of the nearly 140,000 captured in WWII to the present."

At the closing banquet, new officers took the oath of office. These included Eugene Wopata as Commander, John Clark as Senior Vice Commander and Ed Slater as Junior Vice Commander.

With our respect and gratitude for former prisoners of all wars, we dedicate this issue of Salute to them.



Above: Ex-POW Jim Clark with St. Louis VA POW  
Left: Slater, Clark, Wopata



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## POW Recognition Day Identifies Heroes

By Hodge Wood

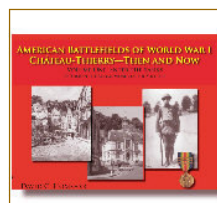
While attending other ceremonies at the Oklahoma City VAMC April 11<sup>th</sup>, I joined a group in the old gym for National POW Recognition Day. Guest speaker William H. "Bill" Talley described his capture and stay in the "Hanoi Hilton" in North Vietnam. Bill Talley had previously gone home to McConnell AFB in Kansas with 169 combat missions under his belt. With promotion to Major, he planned to retire. Suddenly, developments in the war in 1972 activated his unit. On his 13<sup>th</sup> mission back in country, the enemy shot down his F105 Thunderchief. In a casual fashion and using appropriate humor, Bill Talley created visuals I won't forget about the horrendous torture endured and the incredible courage shown by him and his fellow American POW's.

Major Talley hid under a rock for a day before they found, beat, and marched him through villages for three days with no food or water. Blind-folded and dumped in the back of a truck, he entered the Hanoi prison. A much needed cup of water would not stay down. Talley regurgitated into

a "honey bucket" and drank it again to survive. He, like the others, began to exist on a daily cup of pumpkin or rice soup. Much that he spoke about I will leave unsaid. I can only imagine the hardships. What made them tick?

Bill Talley described three fellow POW's with their stories of "Faith in God, Faith in Country, and Faith in Comrades." A ranking officer spent four of his five years of captivity in solitary confinement for trying to create church services on Sundays. Each time guards rushed in to stop the singing, he took the beatings but never quit organizing church. Bill Talley asked what kept him ticking, and he assured Bill that God would see them through, and that he looked forward to a cold glass of water from the fridge. He remained upbeat, with faith in God. Another prisoner made a small American flag. He sewed chips of red tile droppings from the cell ceiling into a skimpy piece of white cloth, and retrieved thread from his blanket. He attached the little flag on the inside of his shirt.

When there was a chance, this patriot removed his prison garment and waved the flag at his two cell mates like the wind was whipping old glory! Their spirits lifted, and they and others nearby sang our anthem. One day, a shake down exposed the garment lined flag, and the beatings and solitary confinement started. Days later, they returned him. He immediately gathered red tile droppings and built another flag to lift the spirits of his countrymen; he had faith in country. The guards attacked one of our men and his cellmates watched as they shackled him and broke his arm. The bone openly protruded. After days of torture, he was returned – hardly recognized by his two other men that shared a cell. The bone still stuck out in his arm, and he bled from his nose, mouth, ears, and penis. He could do nothing for himself. They took complete care of all bodily functions and surely saved his life. He had faith in comrades.



### BATTLEGROUND PRODUCTIONS

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CHATEAU-THIERRY -- THEN AND NOW  
VOLUME ONE: ENTER THE YANKS

## Preparation

By Mike Mullins

A person cannot prepare for life at birth.  
One can prepare for death at least.  
There are events, once living, that hurt.  
How does one deal with that beast?  
Some pain is lessened with Preparation H.  
Medicine does not soothe all aches.

There are too many things to address in words.  
One came to mind that must be said.  
It is about a soldier leaving home and hearth.  
He or she leaves us; all are afraid.  
There is no magic elixir for a time of goodbyes.  
The pain of separation is felt on all sides.

The look on a face of one whose life is in serving,  
Is etched in the memory of those departed.  
Eyes wrinkle at their corners, emotions contorting.  
Separation is anticipated with wrenched heart.  
Consider the parent holding a child so beloved  
When answering a higher call they covet.

The date of leave-taking looms on the horizon.  
Dread of that shard has hearts bleeding.  
Pain is controlled, longing becomes a prison.  
Like water behind the dam, it is seething.  
Strength is not only in muscles, never assume.  
It must be woven into the character's loom.

Duty calls, preparation is done a bit at a time.  
It still reminds one there is no good way.  
The cost of leave-taking is high, like a crime.  
The price paid for the call is only delayed.  
To serve one's country is a privilege is true.  
Its demands cannot be misconstrued.

How do you prepare for a look in a loved one's eyes?  
How do you focus on all that might be?  
Do you square your shoulders, a smile as a disguise?  
Confidence can be worn but is somehow empty.  
Everyone is touched by the demands at the higher call.  
All give something, others will give all.

All that can be done is to accept the Hand of God.  
Do what you must; He is your mightiest sword.  
One must march on, life and duty are intertwined.  
Whatever the outcome, giving is almost divine.

## Army Opens Wounded Soldier Hotline Army News Service | March 19, 2007 WASHINGTON, D.C. -

The Army will open phone lines Monday on its new Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline, providing wounded and injured Soldiers and their family members another way to resolve medical issues.

The hotline also provides an information channel for Soldiers' medical-related issues to go directly to senior Army leadership in order to improve the way the Army serves the medical needs of Soldiers and their families, said the commander of U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Maj. Gen. Sean J. Byrne.

"We designed this call center to be able to collectively hear what Soldiers say about their health-care issues so as issues are raised, we can identify systemic faults or problematic areas and senior leaders can better allocate resources," Byrne said. "It's all about serving our wounded and injured Soldiers and their families. If we can find a way to improve our system, we will. It's that simple."

Many wounded and injured Soldiers who have supported the war on terror, and their families, are enduring hardships in navigating the medical care system, Byrne said.

"Our Army is committed to providing outstanding medical care for the men and women who have volunteered to serve this great nation," Byrne said. "But recent events at Walter Reed Army Medical Center made it clear the Army needs to revise how it meets the needs of our injured and wounded Soldiers and their families. In certain cases, the chain of command could have done a better job in helping to resolve medical-related issues."

Leaders in the chain of command need to know that this call center exists, and that it was not created to circumvent the chain of command, Byrne said.

"In this particularly challenging time, as our senior Army leadership looks to ways to improve our service to wounded and injured Soldiers and their families, this is another step in the direction of improvement," he said "Our wounded and injured Soldiers and their families expect and deserve the very best care and leadership from our Army."

The Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline can be reached from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at (800) 984-8523. The call center is under the command of the U.S. Army's Human Resources Command.



## Solders And Sailors

by Joyce Faulkner

They asked me to speak to veterans about writing. At the appointed time, I sat in the front row. Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania isn't huge – but it seems to be. The podium sat on a stage backed by an enormous wall inscribed with the Gettysburg Address.

The chaplain of a National Guard unit headed for Iraq gave the opening prayer. He told us it was bad form to wish a chaplain 'good luck' so we wished him 'God speed' instead. A younger chaplain with a sadder face had just returned from Iraq. He talked about being in a war zone for eighteen months. He talked about yesterday's joy and tomorrow's adjustments. In the name of other soldiers, he asked for our patience – and understanding. After he left the stage, he reached out to me. "Thank you for what you are doing, Joyce," he said as he grasped my hand. Me? I swallowed and searched for the right words. Somehow, 'thank you' didn't seem enough so, in the end, I wished him 'God speed' too.

Another man, not much more than a boy, spoke next. He talked about coming home – and about wounds that forced him to retire. He gripped the podium as he described the transition – from a military world of enforced black and white to a civilian one of blurry gradations. After the riotous homecoming parties – after the welcoming hugs and approving back claps, everyone returned to their busy everyday lives – and he faced a sudden vacuum. "Who am I now," he wondered after years of being sure. In the Army, his choices were limited. What to wear, where to go, how to act -- were mandated. Now, the endless array of options freezes him like Lot's wife – his old life is gone and the new one hasn't yet begun. I smiled at him but he focused on his toes as he left the stage.

One more soldier stepped forward. His limp was slight – his face scarred. An elasticized glove covered his left hand. Behind me, the families of other veterans sucked in air through clenched teeth. I was close enough to see pain behind his eyes – and I shivered. He told us about driving down the road – moving supplies. He talked about eying the garbage that littered the throughway. Was there a bomb in that paper bag? Were those children playing ball just kids – or were they pawns in someone else's war? He remembered coming around a curve and seeing a parked police car suddenly come alive and head toward him. A suicide bomber intent on ramming his vehicle! He described the crash and the heat on his face as the fireball engulfed the Hummer. He knew he had to save himself. We watched in our mind's eyes as he struggled to get out of the burning truck – and as he lay in the dust waiting for his comrades to rescue him. We cheered him on in our hearts when he talked about the damage – and his determined recovery. A smiling Vietnam veteran met him as he left the stage with an offer of a gym membership to help the young soldier regain his strength. The older man wasn't the only one that wanted to help.

When it was my turn, I climbed the steps to the stage – and looked out into a sea of expectant faces. I licked my lips. "We must save them," I said. "We must save them by writing about them." At first the audience was quiet. Then I felt it -- a chorus of beating hearts thumping out the same message -- "Yesssssssssss."

Ms McGrath Avery tells the stories of Korean War POWs.

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## Last WWI Navy Veteran Dies

By Lloyd A. King



With each passing hour, the few remaining World War I military veterans are dying, thus slowly drawing the curtain closed to the end of the 'Great War Era' ... a period of time in our nation's history that helped define the United States as a country that cares, gives, and believes in freedom, personal rights, and peace for everyone, boldly demonstrated through the courageous, selfless acts, and sacrifices made by young American men and women willing to put their lives in harm's way to help other nations and people throughout the world.

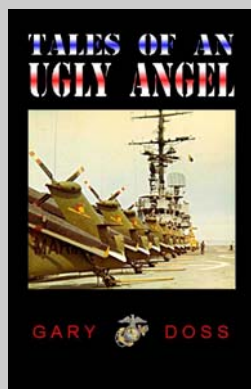
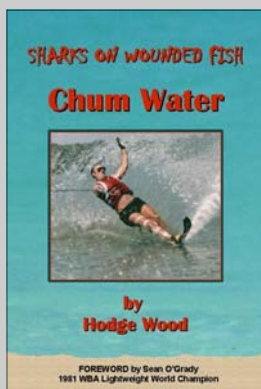
March 29, 2007 sadly marked the death of the last known World War I Navy veteran, Lloyd Brown, age 105 who died at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home in Charlotte Hall, Maryland. Mr. Brown died a few days after the death of the last known surviving female World War I veteran, Charlotte L. Winters, age 109. Charlotte Winter's death followed the February 22, 2007 death of World War I Army veteran, Corporal Howard V. Ramsey, age 108. Mr. Ramsey's story appeared in the March 2007 edition of *Salute* magazine.

Their deaths leave only four known World War I military veterans still living. Three of the known survivors served in the U.S. Army and the fourth known survivor, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, actually served in the Canadian Army and currently resides in Washington State.

During an interview conducted in 2005, Lloyd Brown stated, "All the young boys were going in the service ... and all the girls liked someone in uniform." Brown had lied about his age in order to join the Navy and at 16, was soon part of a gun crew on the battleship USS *New Hampshire*, ending his tour of duty in 1919.

After a few years break in service, Brown re-enlisted, learned to play the cello, and was assigned to an admiral's chamber orchestra aboard the USS *Seattle*. Ending his tour of duty in 1925, Brown joined the Washington Fire Department where he was assigned to Engine Company 16, which served the White House and area embassies in Washington, DC.

*Note: Facts contained in this article are based upon information provided in an Associated Press Article dated April 02, 2007.*



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**George Fryett:****The First POW of the Vietnam War**

By Pat McGrath Avery

**Part 3**

The VC radio broadcast a letter they claimed had been written by Fryett:

*"Dear Dad, dear wife Clara and dear daughter Virginia.*

*I have been treated very kindly and have enjoyed in general good health.*

*War has not existed between North and South Vietnam. South Vietnam and its people have only tried to protect their peaceful traditions and happiness.*

*The only thing I can say is that I am very sorry for having played a role in the forces that are being exploited in South Vietnam. The truth has been concealed from the American public. This situation should not be allowed to continue."*

George's dad accurately and adamantly maintained that this was not written by his son. He described George as "100% American." It had been written by the Viet Cong to further their propaganda efforts. They went on to state that Fryett admitted that he was an accomplice in criminal maneuvers by the United States. Although they were false, the press picked up on them, and those words haunted George for years after his release.

On Sunday, June 24, 1962, Fryett had completed another forced march. Approximately thirty Viet Cong came out of the jungle and started talking to a South Vietnamese patrol. Fryett, watching from the jungle, stated, "I couldn't believe my eyes, here were Viet Cong and South Vietnamese forces talking to each other like old friends."

A few minutes later, George was led out of the jungle and put on a bus that had been halted by the soldiers. They gave him a 100 piastre note (\$1.40). The bus headed toward Chan Thanh and George had no idea what was happening. When he arrived, a Vietnamese Ranger Company was waiting for him. They took him to a US helicopter where he boarded and headed toward Saigon.

"I piled on that chopper and just wanted to get out of there," said Fryett.

He refused to leave the helicopter for a photo because he didn't trust any of the Vietnamese. He did allow them to take his picture standing in the doorway.

**After the War**

There were no records of his experience. He never received pay for the time he was a prisoner.

He spent about six months in Letterman hospital, receiving thirty-two insulin therapy and six electro-shock treatments. He had a temperature as high as 106 degrees and had to be tied to the bed because of his delirium. He still remembers a nurse who was especially kind to him.

George has worked in the aircraft industry, insurance, real estate and as a library assistant when he was a student at NWU. He also worked as a printer at a paint factory and for the railroad.

George's family history has been rocky. His mother had left by the time he was three. He has become close to one of his daughters, but has not been able to develop a good relationship with his older daughter.

His wife, Donna, said that the POW experience changed his life. She feels it taught him to never give up and also made him very sensitive to others. He suffered a breakdown following his release. He feels that his tendency to be a control freak is the result of his captivity.

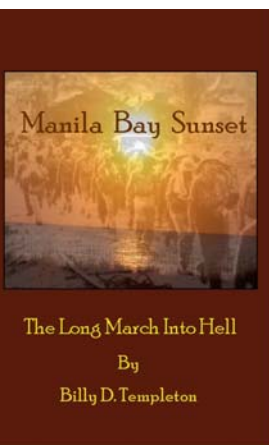
He continually fights to maintain a positive attitude. At times he has required heavy sedation to live with the memories. After ten years working as a Night General Yard Manager for the railroad, he started falling apart. He was unable to obtain any kind of support from the Veterans Administration. He eventually declared bankruptcy and moved back to the Indian reservation in Montana.

*(Continued on page 7)*

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## Helping The Fisher House

By Bill Rollins

Bill Rollins in Triathlon to Raise Money for Fisher House Which Helps Families of Injured Military Personnel

I am attempting my first Ironman race this year. An Ironman is a triathlon that consists of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike and a 26.2-mile run. I am not an athlete, but rather a 40-year-old father of three from Fairfax, VA, who got off of the sofa a couple of years ago and started to enjoy the thrill of racing and living a healthier lifestyle. The race takes place in Louisville, KY on August 26th.

As part of my journey to becoming an Ironman, I am raising money and awareness for the Fisher House Foundation, a non-profit organization that helps the families of injured American military men and women. Fisher House builds homes on the grounds of major military and VA medical centers. The use of these homes is available free of charge to the families of injured service members. It allows them to be close to their loved ones during hospitalization for a combat injury or other unexpected illness. There are 37 Fisher Houses across the country and more raising money to be built.

All of the money that I raise will go directly to the Fisher House Foundation. I am paying for all of my race expenses (entry fee, travel, equipment, etc.) out of my own pocket. I decided to raise money for Fisher House because I believe that providing comfort to these injured service members and their families is the least that we can do for them. I also want to show our troops that there is support for them back home.

It is easy, safe and secure to donate to Fisher House. I have a fundraising page on [FirstGiving.com](http://www.firstgiving.com). All donations made on their site go directly to Fisher House, not to me. Just follow this link to my fundraising page: <http://www.firstgiving.com/billrollins>. You can also visit my website at [www.billrollins.com](http://www.billrollins.com) for more information about me, the Ironman race and Fisher House. The Fisher House website is at [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org).

(Continued from page 6, George Fryette.)

In 1981, Congressional Hearings regarding Vietnam were held in Montana. George took part in those and realized that he related well to other Vietnam veterans. Since then, George has been active in POW and veteran organizations. He was president of the Montana chapter of the American POW/MIA Association

George and his wife, Donna, live in Dillon, Montana. They both are avid readers. Donna started writing in 1983. For the first time in thirty years, George began to feel like he belonged and she wanted to tell his story. Through the years, George has told his story many times. He continues to do so to help other veterans. He hopes to teach the rest of us that prisoners of war have endured a lot of pain and need our understanding.

## The National World War II Museum in New Orleans

As the New Orleans tourism industry continues its post-Katrina recovery, The National World War II Museum hit an important attendance milestone recently when it attracted 1,000 visitors in one day, marking the first time it has reached that level since the storm devastated the city and its top industry on August 29, 2005.

This robust admission figure included individuals, student and adult groups, and Museum members, in addition to area teachers who attended a workshop on tolerance related to the Museum's current special exhibition, *Anne Frank: A History for Today*. Since the Museum reopened on December 3, 2005, attendance has grown monthly. The Anne Frank exhibition, a compelling exploration of a timeless Holocaust story, has generated the most dramatic increases. Developed by the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and sponsored in North America by the Anne Frank Center USA, the exhibition will be on view through March 25.

Of additional note, the Museum's National Board of

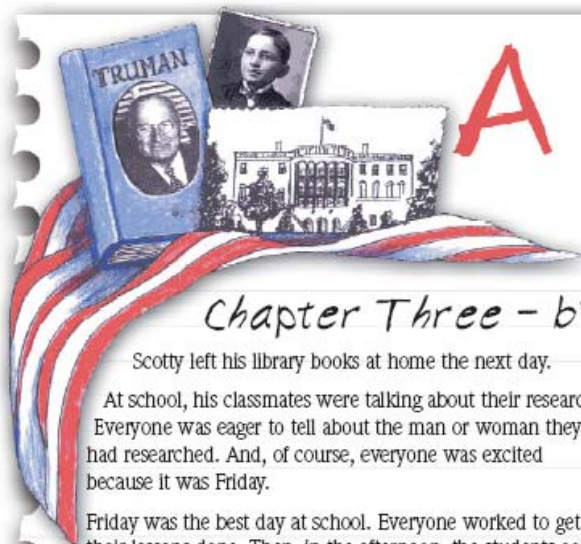
Trustees is proceeding with a \$300 million capital expansion project which, when complete, will create a six-acre campus of exhibition pavilions illuminating the entire American experience during the World War II years. The expanded destination attraction is expected to draw more than 700,000-visitors-a-year when completed.

Congress designated the National World War II Museum in New Orleans as America's National World War II Museum. It interprets the American Experience during World War II years and celebrates the American Spirit, the teamwork, optimism, courage and sacrifice of the men and women who won World War II and promotes the exploration and expression of these values by future generations.

For more information on programs and exhibits at the National World War II Museum, visit [www.nationalww2museum.org](http://www.nationalww2museum.org), or call 504-527-6012.



Missouri Ex-POWs with Don Ballard,  
Congressional Medal



# A Familiar Face

## Chapter Three - by Kay Hively

Scotty left his library books at home the next day.

At school, his classmates were talking about their research. Everyone was eager to tell about the man or woman they had researched. And, of course, everyone was excited because it was Friday.

Friday was the best day at school. Everyone worked to get their lessons done. Then, in the afternoon, the students got to do special things. They had spelling bees or math contests. Scotty liked the math competitions. He could add numbers without using a piece of paper.

The morning went by quickly. After lunch, the teacher said the class was going to visit the city museum. Many of the students had been there before. Scotty remembered seeing army uniforms and a model airplane. He liked model planes.

After the students finished their lessons, they gathered outside and hiked to the museum. The lady who worked there was always happy to see the students. Up and down the aisles, she led Scotty and his classmates. She told all about the wonderful and interesting things in the museum.

At every stop she talked about what was on display. She told how things were used by people long ago. She pointed to photographs and paintings, and identified all the people in the pictures.

The students were very polite as they listened to the stories the lady told. Scotty enjoyed himself very much.

Then, about half way through the big exhibition room, Scotty saw something that made him stop and stare. Hanging on the wall was a large picture. It was a picture of the county courthouse that Scotty saw every day on his way to school.

But the thing that made Scotty stop and stare was not the courthouse, but the man in a white suit standing in front of the building. Right away Scotty recognized the man. It was Harry Truman.

Scotty raised his hand and asked about the picture. The lady said when the courthouse was built in 1939, Harry Truman came to town and helped dedicate the new building. At that time, Mr. Truman was a United States Senator from Missouri, the lady said.

Looking at the picture, Scotty could hardly believe that Harry Truman had actually come to his town. As the group moved to the next exhibit, he kept looking back at the courthouse picture. Tomorrow, he promised himself, he would go down to the courthouse and stand where Harry Truman had stood.

That night, Scotty began reading the little book about President Truman. And after he went to bed, he dreamed he was there in the crowd when Senator Truman dedicated the big courthouse.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gfourth Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Truman photo by Harry Barth. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2007.

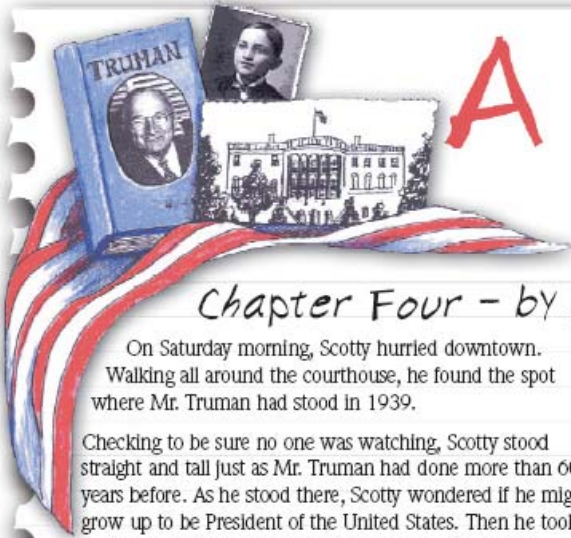
### Things to Think About and Do

- If you have a museum in your town, visit it with a friend or family member. Most small museums need volunteers. Ask someone at the museum if you could be a volunteer or do a special project for the museum.
- Have you ever been a volunteer? Make a list of things that a boy or girl volunteer could do for a museum.
- Cut 10 items from the newspaper that you believe in 100 years could be on display in a museum. Glue these on paper and write a description beside each that could be used in that museum display in the future, explaining what the item is or what it was used for.

STANDARDS: G2:4; G4:3; G4:8; CA:5; SS:6; FA:1

Visit the Truman Presidential Museum & Library at [www.trumanlibrary.org](http://www.trumanlibrary.org)

Next Week: Chapter Four - Grandfather remembers



# A Familiar Face

## Chapter Four - by Kay Hively

On Saturday morning, Scotty hurried downtown. Walking all around the courthouse, he found the spot where Mr. Truman had stood in 1939.

Checking to be sure no one was watching, Scotty stood straight and tall just as Mr. Truman had done more than 60 years before. As he stood there, Scotty wondered if he might grow up to be President of the United States. Then he took a mental photograph of himself standing in front of the courthouse door.

When Scotty got back home, he was surprised to find Grandfather Edwards sitting in the porch swing. Grandfather was one of Scotty's best friends. He was full of stories, and he liked to go out to the park to watch the boys play.

Scotty plopped down beside Grandfather and they began pushing the swing as hard as they could. Grandfather was as much of a kid as Scotty, and the two often got into trouble together. Riding too high in the porch swing usually got them in trouble.

Scotty and his grandfather talked about important things when they sat in the swing. On this day, Scotty asked Grandfather if he remembered when Harry Truman was president.

Grandfather smiled and said he did, indeed, remember him. In fact, Grandfather said, he once spent part of a day with President Truman.

Scotty could hardly believe his ears. His own grandfather had spent time with the President of the United States!

Pushing gently on the swing, Grandfather told Scotty about the day he spent guarding Mr. Truman when the President was on Wake Island talking with a famous general.

Grandfather said he was a young soldier in the United States Army at the time.

It was a big surprise to get such duty, Grandfather said. It was something he would never forget. And, as the years passed, Grandfather read the newspapers every day to see what President Truman was doing.

Grandfather said that one of the greatest things Mr. Truman did was to establish the Berlin Airlift. And one of the hardest things Mr. Truman did, Grandfather said, was to order the explosion of the first atomic bomb.

Grandfather said the bomb was a powerful weapon. It was so powerful that it ended a long and bloody war. Grandfather stopped for a moment and then told Scotty that if the war had continued millions of people around the world would have died in the fighting and famine.

Scotty had never heard of the Berlin Airlift, and he wasn't sure what the atomic bomb was. But he didn't ask any more questions. He knew he could learn about them in the books.

That afternoon, after Grandfather Edwards left, Scotty hurried to his room and pulled out the books on President Truman. He had a lot to learn.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Cefourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Truman photo by Harry Barth. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2007.

### Things to Think About and Do

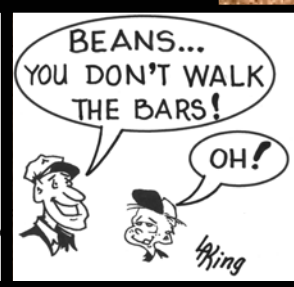
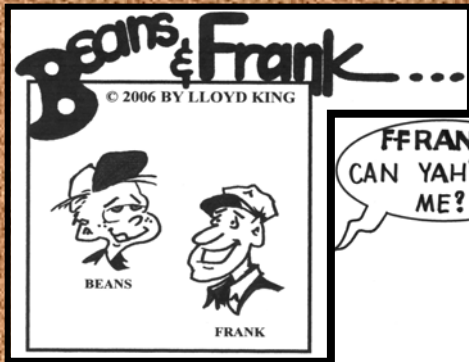
- Using a map, find Wake Island. Find the name of the famous general who had a meeting with President Truman on Wake Island. All Presidents have a military title. What is that title?
- Scotty's grandfather said he read newspapers every day to see what President Truman was doing. Every day for a week, look at a newspaper and circle every article that talks about the President of the United States. Make a list of five different things the President is doing in the articles.
- Research the Berlin Airlift and learn more about the reason for this military action ordered by President Truman.

STANDARDS: G1.2; G1.4; CA3; SS.5; SS.6; SS.7

Visit the Truman Presidential Museum & Library at [www.trumanlibrary.org](http://www.trumanlibrary.org)

Next Week Chapter Five - Jimmy and the wooden bat

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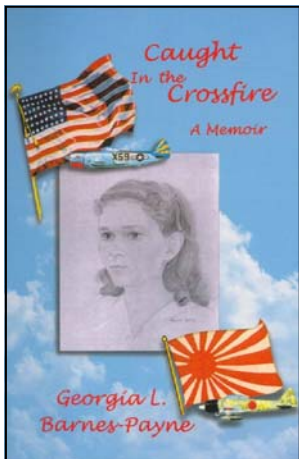
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