

Buffalo Tales

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

Beauty in Words, Horror in Life: The Poetry of World War II part II

Compiled By Katherine Wielechowski



<http://www.investarcomics.com>

During the all too brief times between bomb drops and attacks from the enemy, some soldiers found the time to pen a few lines of verse. These poems helped the people back home understand what the fighting was really like and what was going through the minds of the men and woman who were in the thick of it.

“High Flight”

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth.
Of sunsplit clouds—and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle, flew;
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

-John Gillespie Magee, Jr.

(19 year old American killed in action with the R.C.A.F)



Parade at the Kearney Army Air Base
(date unknown)

Property of Buffalo County Historical
Society

"Look, God"

"This poem reprinted from the Mengel Company "Emblem" was taken from the body of a dead American soldier during the Sicilian campaign by a Pvt. Day, who sent it to his wife. It was later used by a radio commentator, and is used here for its simple, sincere message."

Look, God, I have never spoken to you,
But now I want to say How do You do,
You see, God, they told me You didn't exist,
And like a fool I believed all this.

Last night from a shell hole, I saw Your sky,
I figured right then they had told me a lie,
Had I taken time to see things You made,
I'd have known they weren't calling a spade
a spade.

I wonder, God, if You'd shake my hand,
Somehow I feel You will understand.
Funny I had to come to this hellish place,
Before I had time to see Your face

Well, I guess there isn't much more today,
But I'm sure, God, I met you today,
I guess the "Zero Hour" will soon be here.
But I'm not afraid since I know you're near.

The Signal! Well, God, I'll have to go,
I like You lots and I want You to know,
Look now, this will be a horrible fight,
Who knows, I may come to Your House
tonight.

Though I wasn't friendly to You before,
I wonder, God, if You'd wait at Your door,
Look, I'm crying! Me! shedding tears!
I wish I'd known You these many years.

Well, I have to go now God, good-bye!
Strange, since I met You I'm not afraid to
die.

-Unknown

"Heroes Each"

The sun rose on a grassy knoll,
A white cross held its light.
The moon rose on the White House dome,
But gave no hope that night.

And as that soldier lies alone,
Our leader lies in state.
And as a mother mourns her son,
A nation mourns its fate.

The two lie sleeping—an ocean apart,
But each fought his battle—united in heart.

-Unknown

"Untitled"

Upstairs almost at Heaven's gates
You man the guns. You soldiers of the air
From school room, farm and factory you
come
Not seeking glory, but to do your share.

You dreamed yourself a king at the con-
trols,
With all the Firmament at your com-
mand—
Perhaps alone—the monarch of the clouds,
But fate stepped in and took your life in
hand.

Just lowly gunners all—your dream world
gone
One job—to bring the hated Jerry's down,
Another's hand than yours decides your
course
Another's head sports your empyreal
crown.

But if some night you air too high, and
blaze
A trail to Glory in the skies above Berlin,
Up to Elysian cities, where the angels are
I'm sure that God won't fail to let you in.
-Ruth Southworth

("The foregoing lines were written at the
request of and are dedicated to the gunners
on some B-17s somewhere in England.")

For those who fought on the front lines, the
thought of death was never far from their
minds, and when thousands of enemy sol-
diers are trying to kill you, it is understand-
able. War is a time of death and destruction
and for that reason, poems about loved
ones who were killed in the fighting were
written to help cope with the loss.



WWII US Army Air Force Navigator's
Wings
[http://www.b24bestweb.com/wings-
navigator.htm](http://www.b24bestweb.com/wings-navigator.htm)

“The Navigator is Young”

Dear God, tonight we learned the
truth.
You have a boy up there who's new in
Heaven;
He's wearing Navigator's Wings
which shine like new
So lately were they given.

Be kind to him. Our Father, when he
calls;

Forgive the rakish angle of his cap
For he is young, so very young You'll
see.

He comes to You with man's estate
untapped.

He loved this world You gave; loved
living in it.

He loved Your stars. He learned them
all by name

For use in one last journey — Our only
son!

Can living on, without him, be the
same?

His name is Don. Please write deep
and clear

Upon the Great White Ledger that You
keep;

Watch over him; we trust him to Your
care.

Then, with compassion, look on us
who weep.

-Mable Poe Blyth



Troops arriving in Kearney NE
October 25, 1945
Property of Buffalo County Historical Society

The joys of coming home from World War II were felt by many, yet far too few and much time was spent adjusting to having the troops home again. The men and woman who had spent months or even years fighting the enemy and following orders were now back to their jobs and home lives. But the America they came home to was different from the one they left. Social roles had changed due to so many men being overseas and the war itself caused many changes in the technology that people encountered in their everyday lives. The time that came after the war was often as trying as the war years. Men and woman, changed by what they witnessed, found it very difficult to go back to the way things were.

“The Isle of Guadalcanal”

There sleeps tonight across the sea,
On the Isle of Guadalcanal
A golden haired young leather neck
Who did his vows so well.

He died while in the battle
Just at the close of the day,
And just before he closed his eyes,
His comrades heard him say —

“When I'm gone, please write my
mother-

The Mother I loved so well
And tell her I died thinking of her
On the Isle of Guadalcanal.”

“When I'm gone write my country
For whom I so proudly fell,
And tell it 'Old Glory's' still waving
O'er the Isle of Guadalcanal.”

Then the blond young leather neck
Breathed his last long sigh,
And on his face was seen a smile
For he knew the foe had died.

Now it is all over
The misery and the pain,
But on that blond boy's grave you'll
find
Gone but not in vain.

And now you've heard my story,
Of a boy who was my best pal,
A boy that dies while fighting
On the Isle of Guadalcanal.

-Unknown

Did You Know...?
 ... THAT SLEIGHS USED TO BE CALLED CUTTERS BE-
 CAUSE THEY CUT THROUGH THE SNOW AND ICE? IT
 ALSO HAD A CURVED FRONT TO STOP THE SNOW THAT
 THE HORSE KICKED UP FROM HITTING THE RIDERS.
 SEE YOUR WORDS IN PRINT!
 WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY OF... CHILDHOOD
 WINTERS? WHAT DID YOU DO TO PASS THE LONG
 WINTER HOURS?
 E-MAIL US AT: BCHS.BUFFALOTALES@HOTMAIL.COM



Ghost Hunting

The Central Community College in Grand Island will be renting the Trails & Rails museum to host a ghost hunting class, February 11, 2010. Bill Sinnard and Jacob Sikes, the founding members of the Midwest Paranormal Investigators, will lead the investigation.



Girl Scout Cookie Train

Area Girl Scout Troops make train cars showcasing Girl Scout cookies and put them together to form a Cookie Train. The theme for this year's train is "Leap to Lead." The cars will be judged on three categories: Best use of Theme, Best use of Cookies, and Best in Show. Come see what the girls created, January 4, 2010, 3-5 pm!

BUFFALO TALES is the official publication of the Buffalo County Historical Society, a non-profit organization, whose address is P.O. Box 523, Kearney, NE 68848-0523.
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Dr. Mark R. Ellis, Editor
 Katherine Wielechowski, Production Manager
 2009 Annual dues, payable January 1, are:

Individual	\$35.00
Family	\$40.00
Institutional Membership	\$50.00
Supporting Membership	\$75.00

We have replaced the word 'Basic' to 'Family'.

Directors

Term expiring June 1, 2010: Jim Cudaback, Janice McGregor, Sharon Mason, Jolene Ward
 Term expiring June 1, 2011: Dr. Mark Ellis, Sharon Martin, Duane Muhlback, Barb Riege
 Term expiring June 1, 2012: Mary Kenny, Janice Martin, Dan Speirs, Garry Straatmaan

Officers (1 year term)

President	Sharon Mason
Vice-President	Barb Riege
Secretary	Janice McGregor
Treasurer	Jim Cudaback

2010 Calendar of Events

Sunday, April 18th from 1-3 pm: BCHS Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 13th: 3rd Annual ½ Marathon: Buffalo County Stampede—Reg. @ 6 am. Race begins @ 7 am

Tuesday, June 15th from 6:30-9:30 pm: 4th Annual Trivia Contest & Soup Dinner

Saturday, July 3rd from 9-10:30 pm: Members Only Night (watch city fireworks)

Saturday, July 10: 25th Annual Wagons West Celebration—Music and Exhibitors from 10-6 pm

Includes fiddle contest and "What is it?" portion

Saturday, August 7th from 10:30-1:30 pm: Genealogy Open House with spotlight on One-Room School w/ a picnic!

Saturday, December 4th from 12-1pm: Members Only Preview of the 23rd Annual Christmas Tree Walk

Saturday, December 4th-Sunday, December 12th from 1-5 pm daily: Open to the public: 23rd Annual Christmas Tree Walk

Volunteers and sponsors are still needed for these events. Please contact any staff member to help!

Volunteers, chairpersons, and sponsors are still needed. Please contact the office for more information on supporting your Buffalo County Historical Society!

PO Box 523, 710 W. 11th St., Kearney, NE 68845
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We hope you enjoy these stories about Buffalo County. We would love to have a stock pile of Buffalo Tales ready, so they can go out in a more timely manner. Please submit your memories and stories to us by e-mailing them to bchs.us@hotmail.com or sending them to the post office box: BCHS, PO Box 523 Kearney NE 68848.
We appreciate your support!

Director's Report

-Reminder: The Trails & Rails Museum will be closed December 24-January 4 for Christmas.
-Kearney Keno grant for new blinds: awarded and in progress.***City's Keno check was deposited into the account on 8/28/09 for the full amount of \$2224.53.***waiting for the blinds to come in from back order and then be installed.

-The Christmas Tree Walk was successful. We deposited \$435.15 just from the Penny Wars! The rest of the Tree Walk recap will be next month.

-The 'Bernard & Mary Eckhout & family' donated \$2470 to BCHS and asked that the hotel roof be fixed as soon as possible. Jim Miller was able to reach Paul Gilroy and he recommended Mark Wilder. Mark contacted me and has been out to the museum twice in the last week: once to just walk through with me and a second time to do measurements. He should have an estimate to us soon.

-M & J Signs, out of Elm Creek, still plow the parking lot for us for free. They just ask that we instead of a payment to send the equivalent in free passes to their school kids. After the big snow storm, I asked if we could hire them to clear the pathways, but instead, he had some of his buddies to come in and do it for us for free.

Be sure to Join the Buffalo County Historical Society group or the Buffalo County Historical Society/Trails & Rails Museum fan page on Facebook!



Trails & Rails Museum
Buffalo County Historical Society
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Visit us at
www.bchs.us

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