Spirit of America, Vol. 47

A DOCUMENTARY CALLING

Courage to Write, Photograph, Edit, & Publish in US, UK, Korea & Traces of Other Good Places Too.

Words & Photos by David Joseph Marcou (DvJM);
Book Design by Sarah Schultz, DigiCOPY.

For God, providers, work-subjects, archivists, counselors, medics, readers, family & friends, esp. my mom (Rose), Tom & joy Marcou, Matt & Jessica A. Marcou & their family-to-be, plus Max & Lisa, a good man named Tim, Françoise Gilo, Mr. Bernard McGarty, David W. Johns, Charles & Christine Freiberg, Roger L. Chase, Ignacio & Argentina Peterson, & my brother Dan, who asked me to title his 1st novel, which I titled "The Calling" I've wanted to title 1or more of my books similarly & this is a good time for SA47's sub-title.

"All serious doing starts from within.”
—Budorla Welby, fellow UW Badger, who happened to be a top writer & a pretty fair photographer too.

"I stuck with it and was able to get an education that could get me to college. [I] was always beloved in me.”
—UW FB's Quantz Captain; his dad was killed at a GA book store early this year.

"Through travel I first became aware of the outside world; it was through travel that I found my own introspective way into becoming a part of it.”
—Budorla Welby.

"David [Marcou] has woven a tapestry of the human spirit that transcends cultural, geographic, and ideological boundaries.”
—Emer Prof/Roger Conlee Intro to DvJM's Pictures of Human Life

"The many years to come people will be able to look back on your 30 volumes and learn a lot about C20th C21st life.”
—Jon Terrant, Emeritus Editor, British Journal of Photography

"I very much appreciate having your Spirit of America as part of my library.”
—American Spirit author/2x Pulitzer winner David McCullough April '92 note to DvJM re: SA1.

"The challenge for me has first been to see things as they are, whether a portrait, a city street, or a bouncing ball. In a word, I have tried to be objective.”
—Bennieus Abbott

SA47 is David Joseph Marcou's 132nd book. His works have been nominated for Pulitzers & POYI's; have won Sept. 12th Initiative & Governor's Commendation awards; & have been displayed at Smithsonian. He's done work for nytimes.com, theguardian.com, thetimes.co.uk, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, RPS Journal, RIP Business Korea, La Crosse Tribune, Catholic Life, Greenpeace, Missouri Life, Smithsonian mag, etc. He springs from explorers (incl. Louis Joliet), farmers, teachers, shop-keepers, meat-cutters, record-keepers. His son Matt A. Marcou is a Army Ranger combat medic veteran, magna cum laude univ. graduate, & electrical engineer married to talented artist/univ. teacher Jessica A. Marcou.

Cover photos: (Top L-R) Picture Post journalists Bert Hardy & James Cameron (R), southeastern Korea, Sept. 1950 (Getty Images); Matt & Jessica Marcou, w/ aunts/uncles (Right Half L-R) Vicki, Dan, Dennis, Polly Marcou, Old Country Buffet, Omakaska, WI. 12-15 (DvJM). (Bottom L-R) Elderly Filipina farm woman, road south of Manila, July 1966 (DvJM); Two little girls chat-chat, London's Cenotaph Day Centre, 1981(DvJM); Statue of Liberty, NYC, 2000 (Photo by Jon Terrant).

SA47 Designed, Printed, Bound, & Published by DigiCOPY, of La Crosse, WI (LaX), Sept. 2017. Retail Price: $20.
British Romanticism thrived during the early Industrial Age, led by such poets as Coleridge, Wordsworth and Keats; painters such as Constable and Turner; and novelists like Sir Walter Scott. The two Sir Walter Scott novels (part of his famed Waverley series) most popular today are Ivanhoe and Rob Roy. Ivanhoe is one of Scott’s most complex yet effective writings, evoking vivid images of what Britain must have been like between the historical romances, Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh in 1771. After graduating from Edinburgh University, he was admitted to the bar in 1792. From 1799 until his death in 1832, he was sheriff of Selkirkshire, and from 1806-30 he was also principal clerk to the chief Scottish civil court. In addition, from 1805 on, Scott was a secret and controlling investor in the Ballantyne brothers’ printing businesses. Despite having polio early, conflicts in his teens with his lawyer father, romantic rejection in his 20s (moving on to marry Charlotte Carpenter, who bore him five children, the first dying soon after birth) and near financial ruin in his 50s, Scott proved an energetic translator, editor and novelist. His significant original work, The Lay of the Last Minstrel (1805), began his series of narrative poems focusing on events and settings from Scottish history. After declining the poet laureateship in 1813 (recommended Robert Southey instead), Scott moved into fiction. Waverley (1814) and its sequels fictionalized the political, social, economic, cultural, military and religious conflicts of Scottish history. Some novels in that series, beginning with Ivanhoe (1819), even extended back into the England of the Middle Ages. This is an adventure story. Wilfred of Ivanhoe is a Saxon knight returned from the Crusades still loyal to Richard Plantagenet. It is filled with colorful figures, both fictional and historic, fair and foul: Richard the Lion-Hearted; the beautiful Jewess Rebecca; her father, Isaac; beloved and beautiful Rowena; Cedric the Saxon; Robin Hood and his Merry Men; the infamous Prince John; Knight Templar Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert; helpful hag Ursula; loyal manservant Gurth; and the simple jester Wamba. The conflict Ivanhoe faces is between “ancient” and “modern” fealties—not so much Norman versus Saxon or Jewish versus Christian, but humane versus inhuman. Or more simply, good versus evil. It is an imagined world striving to be modern in the face of prejudices and fantasies, virtues and vices. Jousts are fought on many levels, and despite its trials, good triumphs in the end. Scott was something of a righteous knight himself. Created a baronet in 1820, he nearly became insolvent during the financial crisis of 1825-26 along with his printer (Ballantyne) and his publishers (Constable, et al.). He chose not to declare bankruptcy and instead worked hard to pay his debts. Despite failing health, he continued to write new novels, as well as revise and annotate earlier ones. He also wrote a nine-volume Life of Napoleon and a four-volume history of Scotland (Tales of a Grandfather). Sir Walter Scott’s creditors were paid from his literary proceeds soon after his death, and his works are still read and revered today. Despite the cynicism of modern life, perhaps we still like to be reminded that there are timeless virtues. 

--A Reader’s Guide to Writer’s Britain by S. Varlow. Via Trafalgar Square, N.Poumret, VT.—Reviewed for British Heritage & historynet.com by David J. Marcou. A Reader’s Guide to Writer’s Britain, by Sally Varlow, is a wonderfully informative, richly illustrated travelogue of literary Britain and a must-read for everyone interested in learning more about what makes British writers so skilled, and in tune with their surroundings. The book takes readers to King Arthur’s one-time realm, to Chaucer’s and Eliot’s Canterbury, to Shakespeare’s Stratford-upon-Avon, to Wordsworth’s Lakes, to Stevenson’s Edinburgh, to Kipling’s East Sussex, to the Bronte’s North of England, and to Dickens’ London. In each of these places you will experience the sights and sounds that have inspired British authors for centuries. Nowhere else in the world has so much literature been as successfully produced as in Great Britain, and Varlow shares stories of the great literary campaigners—Dr. Johnson and his circle, Cambridge’s Apostles, the Bloomsbury Group—and their wars against the intellectual apathy of their age. She also explores the impact of non-British writers such as T.S. Eliot, Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad, and Mark Twain, whose works nonetheless influenced the British world. The stories relating to why William Shakespeare was the ‘Soul of the Age’; how Charles Dickens used the British Museum and Library to rehearse his craft; how Beatrix Potter illustrated her picture-book House of the Tailor of Gloucester; how North Yorkshire’s town of Thirsk became Darrowby in James Herriot’s tale of a country veterinarian; and how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s special patch near granite-strewn Dartmoor became the setting for ‘The Hound of the Baskervilles’ are among the stories that will make you want to read more, as well as visit the settings. Among the many beautiful excerpts from these works, one does seem to me to be seductively simple: ‘I come from haunts of coot and heron. I make a sudden sally...’ From the cynicism of modern life, perhaps we still like to be reminded that there are timeless virtues.

--The City of London Churches, by Derek Kendall. Trafalgar Square, N.Poumret, VT.—Reviewed for British Heritage Mag & historynet.com by David J. Marcou. If you enjoyed our feature on ‘Christopher Wren’s London’ (December/January 1998/1999, page 50), The City of London Churches: A Pictorial Rediscovery by Derek Kendall will make the perfect follow-up. This adextly introduced, superbly illustrated book on the churches of the old City of London’s Square Mile fits honourably into a tradition of restoration and preservation few cities can claim. Central London is a kaleidoscopic zone that broadly divides into the West End, comprising theatres, shops, restaurants, and entertainments; the City (or Square Mile) made up of businesses, law courts, and ancient buildings; and Westminster, consisting of government offices and many famous landmarks. The Square Mile is a synonym for the City of London, the oldest part of the greater metropolitan area. Nowhere is Britain’s enthusiasm for preservation more apparent than within the Square Mile. Its religious heritage dates back to early Christian times. St. Paul’s Cathedral—which is not included here partly because photographing it adequately would have required a book in itself—traces its foundation to AD 604, and has been rebuilt several times since then. While London’s most famous cathedral does not appear in Kendall’s work, he does capture the City’s parish churches in more than 2,000 photos, which have been edited and laid out in 46 chapters introduced by The Rt. Hon. Lord Faringdon, chairman of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, and the Rt. Rev. Richard Chartres, the 132nd Bishop of London. Peter Guillery wrote the text. From the gorgeous Grinling Gibbons limewood cherub font cover of 1682 in All Hallows Barking by the Tower to the gateway view of the front of St. Bartholomew the Great, many poetic interiors and exteriors invite the reader into these eloquent pages. The pre-War splendour of ‘The Journalists Church’, St. Bride Fleet Street, which was gutted by air raids in the 1940s is a reminder of the destruction of many of London’s churches throughout the ages, in the Great Fire of 1666 and in the Blitz. In contrast, the stained glass likeness of that great British architect Sir Christopher Wren in St. Lawrence Jewry (located in part of the City occupied by Jews until their expulsion from England in 1290) calls to mind the man who rebuilt many of London’s
William Wallace, the Scots nationalist hero recently made famous in celluloid form by Mel Gibson’s Braveheart, was undoubtedly a first-rate hero and, throughout most of his life, a man devoted to achieving Scottish independence. He was also a man, like most men of his day, who returned violence with violence, killing any of those unfortunate enough to end up on the wrong side of his sword. In WILLIAM WALLACE: BRAVEHEART, author James Mackay, known for his biography of Scottish poet Robert Burns, has done a true service for the cause of historical preservation. Combining through the scanty records of Wallace’s life, Mackay has ferreted out the details of Wallace’s courageous guardianship of Scotland in the years just before Robert Bruce became king and compiled them into a useful, well-presented chronology. Early in his life, William’s uncle, a priest, taught him the value of independence: ‘My son, I tell thee soothfastly, / No gift is like to libertie; / Then never live in slavery.’ This childhood lesson served as a mantra throughout Wallace’s turbulent lifetime. Following the heinous murder of his knight father by the English, young Wallace began a period of resistance that ranged from small-scale guerrilla warfare to open combat with the much larger forces of Edward I’s army. The English fueled his rage by murdering his wife, Marion Braidfute, just after the birth of their daughter. Something of a cross between King Arthur and Robin Hood—only Scottish—Wallace and his men defeated the English in numerous military engagements, including the incredible battle of Stirling Bridge, where Wallace, at age 23, served as the unified Scots commander, a post he held until the Scots were defeated one year later near Falkirk in 1298. Falkirk was to be the last major battle for Wallace and his men, who were reduced to desperate measures to stay alive once Scotland’s magnates had caved in to England’s Edward I. After he was betrayed to the English by Sir John de Menteith, a former comrade, Wallace was taken to London, where he was given a show trial and an even more ‘showy’ hanging, drawing, and quartering. His huge physical stature and an unequaled reputation as a rebel leader made him a prize capture for the English, who did little to disguise their pride and delight at Wallace’s execution. In his account, Mr. Mackay sheds light on the true figure of William Wallace. Although Hollywood’s silver screen mythmaking serves its purpose, the author does an equally good job, in words, of illustrating why and how Wallace became so prominent in his day—and why it was he, in fact, who had the bravest of hearts.—DvJM

Elizabeth: The Queen Mother by Grania Forbes. Via Trafalgar Square, N.Pomfret.VT—Reviewed for British Heritage Mag & historynet.com by David J. Marcou

Few people can claim that their lives have spanned a full century, but the life of Britain’s “Queen Mum” comes close to doing just that. Born on 4th August, 1900, the mother of the present sovereign is still going strong at age 99, and she has become an endearing figure in British life. / Grania Forbes sums up this splendid woman’s life in Elizabeth: The Queen Mother. This compelling biography is well-illustrated with 200 colour and black-and-white photographs, including several by master portrait-taker Cecil Beaton. "Chapter One: A Scottish Lass" sets the stage for what was to come in the life of Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes Lyon, the ninth of ten children born to the Earl and Countess of Strathmore. Forbes writes of Elizabeth’s London birth; her beloved youngest brother, David; the great cultural life she was heir to; the early social calendar she kept; the work she did during World War One as a nurse at Glamis Castle; and the fire she and David helped put out in their parents’ home in 1916. Forbes adds that Elizabeth “was the most sought after debutante of her time;” and early photos show why. In subsequent chapters, the author deals with the prime of the Queen Mother’s life. Her marriage to “Bertie,” who became King George VI, was a blessing to the British nation, especially during World War Two, when the King and Winston Churchill led Britain with heroic rhetoric and the Queen insisted on keeping her family in London, despite nine separate bomb hits on Buckingham Palace. The Queen Mother was at her best, though, when raising her daughters. The future Queen, Elizabeth, and her sister, Princess Margaret, did not want for love at home. Very much of that has had to do with the graces their parents bestowed upon them. That older royal generation was not shy about showing their affection toward their children—when they arrived back home after being on tour, or when occasions called for special signs of that affection. They were also decent, day-to-day parents and adoring grandparents. When Princess Elizabeth married Prince Philip on 20th November, 1947, the royals were as enthralled as the rest of the world. It was one of many spectacular weddings pre-dating the nuptials of Prince Charles and Princess Diana in 1981. / There has been intrigue in virtually all Britain’s royal romances. For instance, Lady Elizabeth once was seeing James Stuart and even refused Bertie’s first proposal. But Queen Mary, Bertie’s mother, and Lady Strathmore decided Elizabeth was right for the future King, and James was sent to Oklahoma to be an oilfield-rigger. Bertie and Elizabeth dated, he proposed again, and they were wed in 1923. / During her long, regal life, the Queen Mother has seen huge changes. When she was born, Queen Victoria was on the throne, people travelled by horse and carriage, and the Boer War was in full swing. She has lived through two World Wars, the rise and fall of Communism, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the moon landings. She has seen the Court radically changed and the world of her youth turned upside-down. Through everything—including her husband’s awkward ascendency after Edward VIII’s abdication, Bertie’s early death, the assassination of Lord Mountbatten, and Princess Diana’s early death—he has been the bedrock on which the monarchy and nation have stood, plus a good friend to famous and ordinary folk alike. She is the cornerstone of her family and the most adored grandmother in the land. / Although Forbes says the Queen Mother has been a superb hostess over time, the true measure of why people love her—her grace under pressure—was shown in a safari she and Bertie made in 1924-25. Elizabeth had suffered from chest infections, and doctors had advised a change of climate. The royals journeyed through Kenya, Uganda, and the Sudan, travelling 300 miles by train, then by car and steamer. Elizabeth and Bertie slept in mud huts or under canvas on the deck of the steamer, which broke down. But as a result of that safari, Elizabeth became a skilled hunter and angler, and she grew healthy. / When painter Pietro Annigoni was asked why she was one of his best subjects, he replied: “It’s because she has such inner beauty. The Queen Mother is one of the loveliest people I have ever met. It is hard to imagine a kinder,
warmer, more appealing human being....” — Grania Forbes—who spent ten years as the Press Association’s Court Correspondent—reminds us why the Queen Mother’s family, the British nation, and the world agree.—DvJM.


One reviewer of Brenda Maddox’s unusual but insightful biography of the man many have called the greatest poet of the 20th century, Irishman William Butler Yeats, says the book is “full of wonderful women and preposterous men.” Yeats did indeed travel in idiosyncratic society, with the likes of American poet Ezra Pound, his mentor; the grand dames of the Irish literary Renaissance, Lady Gregory and Maud Gonne (the model for his stirring Cathleen ni Houlihan); orientalist Edward Denison Ross; Swami Shri Purohit; President Eamon de Valera; authors Frank O’Connor, Sean O’Faolain, Francis Stuart, and Max Beerbohm; Pound’s English protégé, poet Basil Bunting; playwrights Sean O’Casey, Oscar Wilde, Gerard Hauptmann, and Ernest Toller; actor Barry Fitzgerald; and literary lights Lady Dorothy Wellesley (the Duchess of Wellington, a poet-protector of Yeats), Lennox Robinson, and Siegfried Sassoon. All of these friends could be preposterous, many of them could be wonderful, too. The poet’s many lovers, especially Gonne, Olivia Shakespear, Ethel Mannin, and Edith S. Heald, were a big reason he had to contend with so many “ghosts.” Of course his wife and the mother of their two children, Bertha Georgie Hyde-Lee Yeats, knew him best of all.

Yeats produced his best work late in life. After he married at age 51, he and Bertha developed an unusual relationship that became the bedrock for his later work. Long a fan of astrology, the poet-playwright didn’t really mature until his new wife, frustrated by her husband’s infatuation with Maud Gonne’s daughter, struck on a plot that eventually resulted in the births of their two children. Mrs. Yeats knew that her husband had begun having sexual relations with women relatively late, at age 30, but that he had an inordinate appetite for beautiful women. During their honeymoon in the Ashdown Forest, Sussex, in late 1917, the determined Georgie conveniently began performing “automatic writing,” claiming that spirits were communicating through her. The “spirits” very helpfully encouraged Yeats to take his wife into his bed. The couple’s Q&A sessions continued for many years, and Georgie bejzed her husband often enough to conceive. Maddox praises George for that. Although Yeats had done much good work before his marriage, afterwards he was stupendous. During the 1920s he was more enthusiastic about promoting Irish literature than Home Rule. However, he also served skillfully in the Irish Senate, though he was sympathetic to fascism, too. /He wasn’t afraid of physical or emotional fights, and he did not avoid controversy. His backing of Sean O’Casey’s plays, The Plough and the Rain, and theרע כוכב, and the Rain, and the רעייתו of the Easter Rebellion of 1916, kept Yeats at the forefront of the Irish dramatic scene. So did his playwriting. Yeats crafted poetic dramas utilizing Japanese Noh forms, and his greatest successes involved poetry—he lived for the rhyme of things. As bizarre as his spiritualist-poetic philosophy was (though Morrow contends that he couldn’t have influenced his wife’s automatic writing), his rhymes worked well. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923. (His honest remark on receiving the news by phone from the editor of the Irish Times, “How much [money], Smmylie, how much is it?” is famous.) Yeats loved his home later in life, Thoor Ballylee, County Galway, but he spent much time in England and France. Just before he died in 1939 he wrote “The Black Tower,” a poem confronting his ghosts. On a wind-swept Irish hilltop, besieged men waiting for a king who won’t return guard a black tower. With echoes of executed Patrick Pearse and 1916, the “oath-bound men” have no hope: “There in the tomb the dark/ grows blacker./ But wind comes up from/ the shore:/ They shake when the winds roar:/ Old bones upon the mountain shake.” /Not much of a believer in “organized religion,” Yeats was buried at Roquebrune, France, in a Catholic cemetery with Anglican prayers, near where he was staying when he died. During the onset of World War Two, his remains waited a decade before authorities tried to locate them. The biographer says the bones sent for burial in Drumcliffe Churchyard, County Sligo, should be DNA tested. Wherever the poet’s remains lie, his epitaph still resounds: “/Cast a cold eye/ On life, on death, Horseman, pass by!”—DvJM.

—Yesterday’s Railways, by Peter Herring. David&Charles, Distib. by F&W Publications, Cincinnati, OH.—Reviewed for British Heritage Mag by David J. Marcone.

ANYONE WITH EVEN A PASSING INTEREST in trains has heard of The Flying Scotsman, the classic British steam train that still makes tours of southern England and that once even made a tour of the United States, and The Flying Dutchman, another venerable British train. But few people outside of England know that one of the first train engines was successfully built and run by its inventor, the Englishman George Stephenson, in 1814. Although author Peter Herring does not cite the latter fact in his excellent coverage of 20th-century British trains, he does mention one train named for George Stephenson, plus the train-engine-building company he and his son founded, Robert Stephenson & Company, the first true makers of trains. But the best stories relating to Britain’s trains involve the immense pleasure people have taken and still take in riding them. During the 20th century, everything from coal, iron, and troops, to milk, workers, vacationers, mail, newspapers, and racing pigeons travelled on them. (In the last case, "pigeon specials" carried pigeons to the startup of races, in style.) Many Brits still travel by train, including Londoners, the latter often via the still-famous Underground that was used for air-raid shelters during World War II. Different systems within the nation have all laid claim to different specialties; the Eastern and Western regions, for instance, named their trains the most memorably, from the Red Dragon linking London and Cardiff, to the Mayflower, by which Plymouth’s connections with the Pilgrim Fathers were commemorated—the same Mayflower that replaced the venerable Flying Dutchman in 1957. As for boat trains, which linked Britain to Ireland, Paris, and the rest of the world, the very famous and less famous travelled on them regularly. On 16th December 1951, the London-Paris service made the only unscheduled stop in its history, when passengers were shocked to realize that their boat train had made a stop at Sevenoaks Tub Hill Station in Kent to take on Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who lived nearby at Chartwell, and who believed the boat train was the most convenient and civilized way of journeying to a meeting in Paris. This book’s 12 chapters run the rails in great shape and include “The Golden Age,” "Stations and Signals,” "Famous Locomotives,” "Delivering the Goods,” “Railways at War,” and “Railways for Fun,” prior to including the story of the demise of steam trains, “Out of Steam,” which Herring says occurred around 1968, when diesel and electric engines came on strong. The world may be sadder for that, but still pleased to travel by train, when the mood and need arise.—DvJM.


A PREVIOUS PRINCE OF WALES, the future Edward VIII, refused to celebrate his coming of age. He was fighting in World War I then, close to death. He later told his father, George V: “It was a real eye opener to me; now I have some slight conception of all that our officers and men have to go through!” The current Prince of Wales and his sons had a real eye opener of their own when Diana, “The People’s Princess,” died in a Paris car crash in the early morning hours of 31st August 1997. No one could have expected her to die so young, at 36, and so beloved by the nation and especially by her sons. Charles and Diana’s eldest son, William, second in line to the British throne, is every bit as beloved as his mother was. He clearly has a look of greatness no Brit has had since his parents wed in the summer of 1981. William has inherited both parents’ sensibilities, and author Ian Lloyd covers this well. Lloyd has written about and photographed the Royals for 15 years, with his work finding its way not only onto...
covers of leading dailies, but also into the pages of magazines like Hello!, Majesty, Saga, Women's Weekly, and People's Friend. In this book, which includes many charming photos, both candid and more formal, William, his family, and the world he thrives in are well-revealed. / Prince William is shy, like his mother and personally interested, like both. He also has the same sense of Royal Duty from his paternal grandparents and his great-grandparents. William's goals focus on a life of public service and being a credit to his country. Capable of mingling positively with all types of people, possess keen intelligence, a nice sense of humour, and athletic good looks and ability, he earned his way into St. Andrew's University, having made 12 GCSE's and three A-Levels at Eton. Though officially he is studying the history of art, he is also learning other elements of life, too — at University, on the streets, in the forests, and in the pubs, palaces, stadiums, churches, and other gathering places of this world. / There's much talk, at this writing, about which young lady will win his affections permanently, but if he uses the same good sense as his paternal grandparents — Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip — did in choosing a mate, both couples will prove the value of a few formal royal marriages — the ones that are positive and long-lasting. And after the Queen, then Prince/King Charles, many hope the new King and his Queen-to-be will live and rule happily ever after. —DvJM.


If Dylan Thomas had been known for no other writing than the poem "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" his reputation might still have been secure. In fact, though, he wrote a great enough volume of poetry, stories, and plays to assure his reputation as one of the true geniuses of modern literary life. / Dylan Marlais Thomas was born on 27th October, 1914, in the Welsh seaport city of Swansea. He came to fame in 1934 with the publication of his first book, Eighteen Poems. Following the publication of more books of poetry, and his autobiographical sketches, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog, he wrote scripts for documentary motion pictures during World War Two. After the war, he was a literary commentator for BBC Radio. / That Thomas raged "against the dying of the light" is clear to all those who knew him. His legendary alcoholism was initially spotlighted in Brinnin's biography, first published in 1955 and now reissued in the Prion 'Lost Treasures' series with a new introduction by Drew Milne, a lecturer at the University of Cambridge. / When the great poet arrived in New York in 1950 for an extended run of readings across the country, America did not know what had hit it. Angelic, devilish, immortal, charming, and pursued by an urge to drink far too heavily, Thomas was not what American academe expected. But he made friends with many American writers—from John Berryman, a fellow alcoholic who eventually committed suicide, to playwright Arthur Miller. / Brinnin was Thomas' guide and patron for three years and watched with horror his slow descent, though the poet's charms and genius utterly beguiled him. Brinnin also came to London and to Wales and saw the rebellious poet in his element—embroiled in a passionate but difficult marriage to Caitlin and dogged by money worries. Despite his family—Thomas and his wife had two Sons and a daughter—and his celebrity, he was as abusive of his health as he was brilliant with his verbal imagery and celebration of natural beauty. He had first told Brinnin that he suffered from cirrhosis of the liver, but his deadheaded doctors suspected that diabetic shock, brought on by an alcoholic "insult to the brain," caused his demise. The fact that he slept around often during his American visits couldn't have helped his health either, though he was known to resurrect himself from the ashes to dospelling readings of his work. As he lay in a coma, friends truly thought he'd manage one of his comebacks, but it was not to be. / When this biography was originally published, the New York Herald Tribune's reviewer noted: "It is a story of unusual frankness—a man who spoke of his affairs, of his drinking, with a frankness that gives the true dignity of integrity." But Atlantic's reviewer noted: "Mr. Brinnin's brief attempts to clarify the sources of Thomas's guilt, unhappiness, and compulsive drinking did not seem to me particularly enlightening. / The sources of both the poet's glory and demise included his unashamed love of the physical life and his unlying love of language. Still, it took former President Jimmy Carter's prompting to get a memorial stone placed in Westminster Abbey on 1st March, 1982, to honour the poet. Meanwhile, the grave where Thomas lies, near Lougharne, Wales, his historic home, has a simple white cross as testament to the poet's hope that he would find heaven in the afterlife—not hell, which he desperately feared was where he would end up. —DvJM.


Sir Alec Guinness's most famous line as an actor was, "May The Force be with you," in the Star Wars movies. After portraying that magisterial symbol of goodness, Obi-Wan Kenobi, he remarked he didn't know who or what he was playing. But John Russell Taylor—television, theatre, film, and art critic for The Times of London—points out in this biography that this actor, who won an Oscar for his stunning portrayal of the British POW-officer, Colonel Nicholson, in The Bridge on the River Kwai, could be exceedingly modest as well as skilfully devious, not to mention just plain funny. / Born in 1913, Guinness died on 5th August 2000. He may or may not have been an offspring of the Guinness family, because his parents were a bookkeeper, Agnes Cuffe, and a printer, William. That last fact has led some to think that the family name came to find the extraordinary hidden within the ordinary, and played it with affection. From his earliest stage ventures, when Sir John Gielgud was his mentor/role-model, to his later successes in plays, films, and television, Guinness was one of the finest actors ever. Bette Davis may have thought him dull; but, most often, he was, and played, better than superb. / Guinness served honourably as commander of a small coastal vessel in World War II. Also, despite an early aversion to religiosity, he thought to become a Buddhist, then became Roman Catholic in 1960. The husband of Merula for 62 years, and father of Matthew, he became a grandfather, and small children made him happy. He once recalled that while filming Father Brown in France in 1953, he went for a walk one night dressed as that priest, and a small boy came up to him, grabbed his hand, and walked with him. Guinness didn't know the language well, said not a word, and the boy soon ran off, happy. The actor said, "It totally changed my attitude…. I don't base my religion on that. But it's the attitude. No, I think it's marvellous that a small boy has confid
To some people, the Korean War is still “the Forgotten War” but it should not be forgotten. With its origins in 1948, when the two Koreas debated ideologically, elections were slated to occur in both Koreas in 1948, but the communists would not allow them in the north; free elections were not allowed. Victory at High Tide.

Corporal Devine fought his way into Seoul with his unit. In the capital, that Leatherneck earned him two Purple Hearts. He received modest veterans disability benefits for the rest of his life. After serving as a guard for Annapolis Commandant Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill in 1951 and as a drill instructor at Parris Island, South Carolina, in 1952, Staff Sergeant Devine retired from the Marines. He had married Mary Voter who became his first wife in 1952. Meanwhile, the U.S. Marine Corps didn’t leave any doubts about Frank Devine’s heroics. Frank was assigned to Able Company, First Battalion, U.S. First Marine Division, and he was going to be active. His heroics have been written up in Robert Heinl Jr.'sParallel headed for Seoul.

Then Frank pushed north. His heroics have been written up in Robert Heinl Jr.'sParallel headed for Seoul. Victory at High Tide. In his final years, Frank spoke with his son Mark about what the Marines were like. Mark said, “He told me the capital, that Leatherneck earned him two Purple Hearts. He received modest veterans disability benefits for the rest of his life. After serving as a guard for Annapolis Commandant Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill in 1951 and as a drill instructor at Parris Island, South Carolina, in 1952, Staff Sergeant Devine retired from the Marines. He had married Mary Voter who became his first wife in 1952. Meanwhile, the U.S. Marine Corps didn’t leave any doubts about Frank Devine’s heroics. Frank was assigned to Able Company, First Battalion, U.S. First Marine Division, and he was going to be active. His heroics have been written up in Robert Heinl Jr.’sParallel headed for Seoul.

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die. The war was a heartbreaker in many respects.”/ Frank’s heart didn’t improve, even with angioplasties. He had a great passion for cigars and social drinks. On March 13, 1994 Frank passed…. About 400 people, including Mayor Patrick Zelke, attended his funeral at St. James. Mark gave a eulogy, saying, “It’s buried away somewhere.”/ Present Post Manager Dan Evenson said that there were many reasons Frank was special. For instance, “Frank had a wonderful gift of knowing people’s names. He wouldn’t see you for years, but would recognize you as soon as he saw you again.”/ Frank is buried at the Gates of Heaven Cemetery, and a hall at the Post is dedicated to him. Mark said the dedication of the hall was important, because “It was my dad and thousands of men like him that make us grateful for what they did. They made the supreme sacrifice.”/ Eight thousand miles away, some young people still criticize U.S. involvement in South Korea; other people of that nation know the American people still believe in preserving democracy in that part of the world. South Korea may not seem key to some, but it meant a lot to Frank. He knew the Korean War made him a man, and it helped make him a good husband and father as well. / No ordinary man, Frank came through for lots of people. This journalist’s parents were lifelong friends of Frank and Mary’s. I was a journalist in Seoul from 1984-87, and my son, Matthew, is half-Korean. We will forever be thankful to Frank Devine and people like him who have made a free South Korea and America possible – where people can legally protest U.S. involvement in places like “The Land of Morning Calm”, even though they may be wrong in doing so. That’s what democracy is all about.—DvJM.(The 1953 armistice still holds; but there is no peace treaty yet.)


Mark Twain once stated, “I have read carefully the treaty of Paris [between the United States and Spain], and I have seen that we do not intend to free, but to subjugate the people of the Philippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem…. And so I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land.” (New York Herald, 15 October 1900) Mr. Twain became vice president of the Anti-Imperialist League in 1901. I’ve long loved many things about the life and works of Mark Twain, America’s greatest novelist. One thing I’ve loved above all else about him, though, are his strong positive feelings about human equality. He believed the “White Man’s Burden”, Rudyard Kipling’s imperialist poem supporting US colonialism in the Philippines, was a big mistake – all people should have equal rights, from birth forward, whether born black in “darkest” Africa, red in America’s heartland, yellow in the Far East, or white in London, Paris, New York, or just outside Hannibal, Mo./ Mark Twain was no lover of Teddy Roosevelt, who gave the orders in 1898, as assistant US Navy secretary, for Admiral Dewey to sail the fleet into Manila Bay to capture the Philippines not only from Spain but from the Filipinos too, beginning the Spanish-American War, which also resulted in the US taking Cuba and Puerto Rico (the latter is still a US territory). After TR was president (domestically he did assist the passage of progressive legislation), the lover of wars pushed hard for US entry into World War I from its outset in 1914 and only relented in his war-mongering when his youngest son, Quentin, was killed in a dogfight over France in 1918; TR died soon after. If the United States wouldn’t have entered WWI (in 1917), and if the resulting war would have been settled with a fair peace treaty not the hateful Versailles Treaty, Hitler might never have risen to power in 1933, and WWII might never have been fought. In addition, as long as US troops did fight in WWII, it would have been best to “permanently” station US troops in Germany in 1919, to prevent a German military buildup again, akin to US troops’ pacifying role in Japan after WWII./ In more recent years, the US is still in “conquest mode”, which stems from our very aggressive, too-often, violent culture, and our alliances with nations like Britain, which has long had its own “conquest mode”. In even more recent times, and speaking personally, I’ve bucked heads with editors to see my most anti-imperialist columns published. Whenever I’ve taken on war-marchers locally, who have had a field day profit-taking with our longest wars, the local daily would not allow it, especially when I named the CEO of the biggest such company in my hometown. Too many of the efforts that pass for “good journalism” here are prompted by convenience, politics, and the almighty dollar. No matter how much good that CEO does financially and veterans-wise for this city, he’s made his fortune on the backs of the Afghan and Iraq wars. The most-recent war in Iraq should never have been fought, and we should have removed all our troops from Afghanistan as soon as Osama Bin Laden was killed. (He should not have been killed by the way, but taken prisoner by the Americans, so we could have negotiated a more effective, long-lasting peace with international terrorists. But I’ve seen Robert O’Neill, his SEAL killer, on Book-TV, and O’Neill is a man with a sense of humor who was doing his job that day, though perhaps too gladly; it’s mainly on President Obama as to how that situation climaxxed, including apparent secret burial of Bin Laden at sea.) To be sure, the biggest veterans cause I support is international peace, because US troops should not generally have to be sent into harm’s way./ On a more local level, La Crosse’s alcohol-selling lobby is strong, and media only occasionally report on tragic results of binge drinking (e.g., 11 alcohol-related drownings from 1997-2014 were reported, but not fully-eligible to bring many positive changes soon &/or permanently). Local media is too shy around officials at times and recoil from covering some stories fully. As far as I know there was not a report on how many body-cameras La Crosse police utilize, though it’s been a national issue in recent years, until a couple days after I broached the subject to a local TV reporter this Aug., soon after city police shot to death their first suspect since 1935. I next heard La Crosse PD was ordering $200,000 worth of body-cameras, since they only have six now for a force of 100-plus. Police did announce a few days before that, that they’re getting another bearcat armored vehicle (their second, or third?). Local media cover many good-news stories fairly well, but mis-report or under-report some big stories that need to be critical of authorities. Official media are included in society’s fourth estate, after the first three estates (branches of government); freelancers/bloggers are in the fifth estate. We should not always be on the same team, though we need to agree on key life-features sometimes too; local media mimic news from the “Police News Room”; yet comprehensive media boosterism isn’t good for society generally. Local officials aren’t generally wrong, but sometimes they do wayward things, like all humans/ When Ms. Powell asked Ben Franklin as he exited the Constitutional Convention if America would have a monarchy or a republic, he said, “a republic… if you can keep it.” And a song from the Disney film ‘Johnny Tremain’ suggests the positive enthusiasm that still inspires many today: “It’s a tall, old tree/ and a strong old tree/ and we are the sons/ yes, we are the sons/ the sons of liberty”. Make that daughters too, in today’s democratic republic.—1st draft written by DvJM 8-18-17 & revised by DvJM thereafter.—DvJM.
SA 47 BW Interior Pictures:
Mother Teresa
Written by Yvonne Riedelsberger
3-17-1990

Hands folded in prayer
What is she holding
What she is holding now
Is it to a forgotten goal
Of some one she's helpless
Now she's helpless

She must now fully grow
Saying prayers for us and all on earth
No more weeps nor emotions
It's thrown for things unseen
And missing for flowers that earth returns
In her body ended hands I see
She's praying for the love
For the helping
Projects to send in to the Holy Trinity above