

# COMMEMORATING 80 YEARS *in the Pacific*





# PROUDLY SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE FOR 80 YEARS



On May 14, 1945, Stars and Stripes published its first newspaper in the Pacific. To commemorate 80 years serving the military community in the theater, we're taking a look back at Stripes history through the writing and photography of a dedicated staff spanning generations. Stars and Stripes has proudly supported the Pacific military community since the beginning and will continue to serve the troops and families at the heart of our work.

Check out more of our history at



[www.80.stripes.com](http://www.80.stripes.com)

**M**ore than eight decades ago, as the world reeled from the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States entered a war that would reshape history. Amid the turmoil of the Pacific theater, Stars and Stripes emerged as a vital source of information, reporting the battles, the hardships, and the triumphs of American service members.

Today, as we mark the 80th anniversary of Stars and Stripes Pacific, we celebrate a legacy of dedication to truth, service, and the enduring bond between the U.S. military and the region it has helped shape and the commitment to those who served.

From the fiery days of World War II to the Cold War standoff in Korea, from the Vietnam War to the long fight against terrorism, Stars and Stripes has been the eyes and ears of those who serve. Our journalists have embedded with troops, walked the streets of post-war Japan, and documented the changing face of U.S. military strategy across the Indo-Pacific.

Through it all, our mission has remained the same: to report the facts, give voice to the men and women in uniform, and help their families understand the sacrifices they make.

The Indo-Pacific of today is a vastly different place than it was in 1945. Nations that once stood as bitter enemies are now steadfast



Toshi Tokunaga, Arthur Millholland and his wife compare tabloid size from 1951 to current size in 1963. Stars and Stripes

allies, bound by shared interests and a common commitment. American military families have spent generations calling this region home, forging friendships and deep cultural ties.

Yet, the need for a strong U.S. presence endures. China's rise, North Korea's nuclear ambitions, and other regional security challenges demand continued vigilance, partnership, and commitment to maintaining peace and stability.

As much as the military's role has evolved, so too has Stars and Stripes. We have embraced new technologies, expanded our storytelling through digital platforms, and adapted to the changing ways service members consume news.

But one principal has never changed: our commitment to independent journalism. In a world where information is often weaponized, Stars and

Stripes remains a trusted source, standing apart from the military commands while standing beside those who wear the uniform.

To all Stars and Stripes staff members who have contributed to this mission over the years—this anniversary is yours.

To our loyal readers—whether in the barracks, aboard a Navy ship, or at home with loved ones—thank you for allowing us to tell your stories. Your experience inspire us, and your sacrifices humble us.

And to the men and women who continue to serve in the Indo-Pacific, know that Stars and Stripes will be there, as it always has been, to record history as it unfolds.

Here's to 80 years of reporting with courage and integrity. And here's to the future—wherever the next story takes us.

**In a world where information is often weaponized, Stars and Stripes remains a trusted source, standing apart from the military commands while standing beside those who wear the uniform.**



Stars and Stripes' Tokyo office circa 1965.



**Max D. Lederer Jr.**

The publisher of Stars and Stripes news media organization was appointed in 2007 after holding various positions with Stars and Stripes since 1992 including chief operating officer, general counsel and general manager of Europe operations. Before his employment with Stars and Stripes, Lederer served as a U.S. Army judge advocate with assignment in Europe and South Korea, and Fort Ord, Calif., and Fort Sill, Okla. During his time with the Army, he was Airborne-qualified. He also deployed with 2nd Armored Division (Forward) to operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm to liberate Kuwait in 1990-91. He received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Richmond law school in Virginia and Bachelor of Arts from Marshall University in West Virginia.

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## STARS AND STRIPES MARKS

# 80 YEARS

*OF DELIVERING*  
**MILITARY NEWS**  
**THAT MATTERS**  
*ACROSS THE PACIFIC*

*By Joseph Ditzler, Aaron Kidd and Wyatt Olson  
Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — For eight decades, Stars and Stripes reporters across the Pacific have covered wars, revolutions, natural disasters and the political changes that marked turning points for the United States and its military overseas.

As Philippine bureau chief for Stars and Stripes' Pacific edition in 1991, Susan Kreifels experienced firsthand the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, which hastened the U.S. exit from its military bases in the island nation.

"I kept thinking we'd be dug up one day just like the people in Pompeii," Kreifels said. She and her driver stuffed a car full of refugees in an Angeles City barrio in a blizzard of volcanic ash.

"This stranger pushed a crying baby through the window into my lap and disappeared," she said. "Can you understand the fear that would cause someone to give a baby to a stranger?"

The Philippine chapter marked just one in the long American experience in Asia. Just as journalists from Stars and Stripes witnessed that change, they have

been present for momentous events since May 14, 1945, when the first Pacific edition rolled off the press.

Born in the late stages of World War II in the Pacific, the “soldier’s newspaper” lived up to its name. Its front pages brought the big-picture news to the troops in the field, while the inside pages told the stories of those same soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.

From World War II, the occupation of Japan, the Korean War, Vietnam, the long wars around the fight against terrorist organizations down to the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, Stars and Stripes was present as events unfolded.

Brian Brooks, the former associate dean for the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, spent two years as editor of *Stripes'* European edition. He also served as an Army public information officer during the late stages of the Vietnam War.

Brooks remembers troops in Vietnam and Bosnia emptying the racks of newly arrived Stars and Stripes newspapers and sharing them among themselves, six or eight to a paper.

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*Our front pages bring the big-picture news to the troops in the field, while the inside pages tell the stories of those same soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.*



## The Pacific Stars of Stripes

Stars and Stripes was meant to be a GI's newspaper, so it should come as no surprise that many of the publication's standout journalists were active-duty service members. Stars and Stripes' Pacific staffers went on to work for "60 Minutes," draw for Marvel Comics and snap photos for Life magazine. Here's a sampling of the bureau's brightest stars, both civilian and military.



## Shel Silverstein

Author, composer and cartoonist Shel Silverstein served as a draftee on Stars and Stripes' Pacific staff in the mid-1950s and said it was the catapult that launched him to success and wealth.

Silverstein wrote and illustrated such children's classics as "The Giving Tree" and "A Light in the Attic," but he was only an aspiring cartoonist when he arrived at the newspaper in 1953. He had never done any steady and serious cartooning until he began drawing daily panels about barracks life and field-soldiering.

"For a guy of my age and with my limited experience to suddenly have to turn out cartoons on a day-to-day deadline, the job was enormous," he told the newspaper in 1969. "It was a great opportunity for me, and I blossomed."

Silverstein became world famous for his cartoons, poetry and songs, such as the Grammy-winning "A Boy Named Sue" recorded by Johnny Cash. He recalled a Stars and Stripes cartoon that almost caused a collision with the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Drawing a page of cartoons for April Fool's Day, he sketched a soldier holding out a mess kit with a slab of toast in it. A cook splashed dark matter over it, saying: "Today, it really is."

The managing editor, required to inspect all Silverstein cartoons before they were printed, called him over and asked, "Shel, what does this mean?"

"Well, you know, powdered milk, powdered eggs. Today it's the real thing. April Fool! Get it?"

That editor approved the cartoon. Many readers gasped over their breakfast on April Fool's Day. Or as one of Silverstein's contemporaries with the newspaper put it at the time: "That cartoon, shingle and all, flew in and out of the fan for several days."

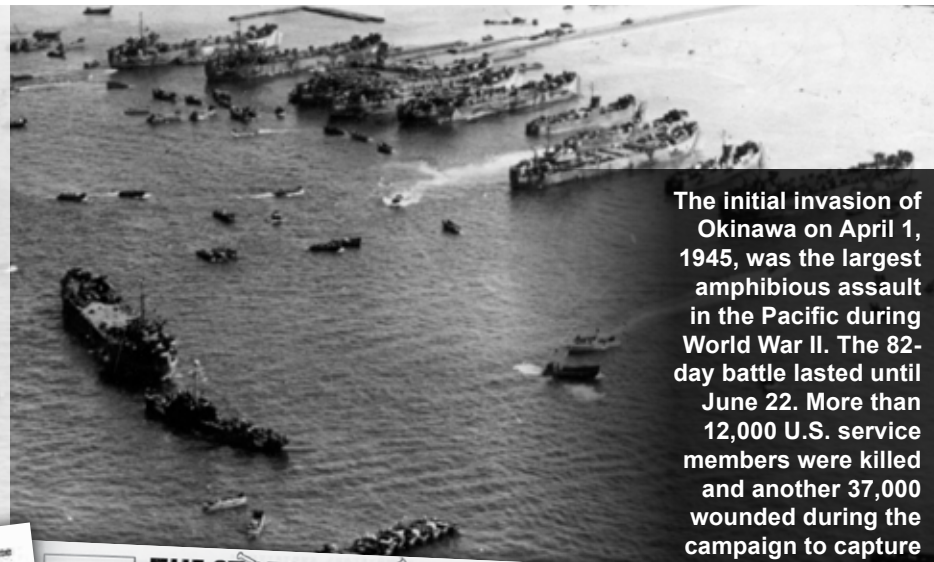
After leaving the Army, Silverstein struggled as a cartoonist until he heard about Hugh Hefner, who was putting together the first Playboy. Hefner hired Silverstein, who literally moved from ground floor to an executive suite in the Playboy Mansion.

Silverstein died of a heart attack in May 1999 in Key West, Fla. He was 68.

— Aaron Kidd/  
Stars and Stripes



USS Indianapolis survivors are taken to a hospital following their rescue in early August 1945. Courtesy Naval History and Heritage Command



The initial invasion of Okinawa on April 1, 1945, was the largest amphibious assault in the Pacific during World War II. The 82-day battle lasted until June 22. More than 12,000 U.S. service members were killed and another 37,000 wounded during the campaign to capture the island, while about 90,000 Japanese troops were killed. U.S. Army



### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"The most important thing to me about Stars and Stripes is it is an example to the rest of the world of how open we are as a society in the United States," he said. "What other military in the world publishes a newspaper that the commanders don't control the content of? It's unheard of. I think it's a great example of press freedom and what we stand for as a country."

## 'Every Man's Role'

The first Stars and Stripes Pacific edition—eight pages—was produced in Honolulu, where the military newspaper shared office space with the Honolulu Advertiser and wire services with the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

War news dominated the front but inside pages carried an array of features, sports and entertainment. The Brooklyn Dodgers were on an 11-game winning streak that month. Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall were about to wed, and actor Boris Karloff and playwright Moss Hart appeared with an "all-soldier cast and band" in a USO Camp Show on Saipan, only a year earlier a stage for vicious combat.

The war in Europe had concluded but the fight in the Pacific grinded on. Stars and Stripes told that story, often in tones that reflected the grim and callous nature of the 3 1/2-year-old conflict.

The United Press in that first edition reported a daylight raid on Nagoya, Japan, by 500 B-29 Superfortress bombers that dropped 3,500 tons of incendiaries—40 tons every minute for 90 minutes.

"A couple more like that and you can scratch that town off your list," the news service quoted Col. Carl Storrie of Denton, Texas, as saying.

Meanwhile, the fight for Okinawa was underway, and Stars and Stripes reporters were there. The writing reflected the tenor of the times. The Japanese enemy was routinely referred to in terms regarded today as offensive. Stories often focused on killing and survival.

Staff writers surveyed Pacific combat veterans for advice on fighting the Japanese that they'd share with Europe theater veterans expected to arrive for the final push on Japan.

Stars and Stripes staff writer Pfc. Bill Land profiled Staff Sgt. Jon Freeman of Arkansas, also known as "Killer" Freeman, who had single-handedly sent 27 enemy soldiers to their deaths during six weeks of combat in Leyte, Philippines.

Land's photograph of Freeman captured the image of an American fighting man in the final stages of the war. A cocked steel helmet shadows the right side of his face, a cigarette angles down from the corner of his mouth, his left eye focuses on something to his right. He cradles his rifle in his arms across his midsection. Three grenades hang on his field jacket on either side of his chest.

Killing the enemy was Freeman's hobby, according to a headline. "Shoot him from the belly up," was his advice to the newcomers.

## Winning a 'Feverish Race'

The outlook changed on Aug. 6, 1945, although the page 1 story out of Washington, D.C., by United Press, in retrospect, left questions unanswered. An atomic bomb "with power equal to 20,000 tons of TNT," had been dropped on Japan.

The story identified Hiroshima as the targeted city and divulged that the U.S. had won a "feverish race" with German scientists to harness atomic power.

The front-page headline on Aug. 7, 1945, revealed more information and strode across six columns: "Report Atom Toll Heavy," with a smaller headline indicating the city was wrecked beyond Japan's ability to immediately comprehend.

A Stars and Stripes editor, Cpl. Anthony Kott, summed up news of the first atomic bombing. "The atom bomb continued



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Lt. Morris R. Jeppson, one of two weaponeers who armed the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima, is pictured before his first and only combat mission. Emma Brown/The Washington Post  
Courtesy of National Museum of Nuclear Science and History

Near the end of Okinawa campaign, GIs take cover behind a bullet-pocked statue. U.S. Army/Stars and Stripes



More than 1,000 Marines were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded in the Battle of Tarawa, which took place Nov. 20-23, 1943, on Betio, a tiny island in the Pacific Ocean's Tarawa Atoll.



A massive column of billowing smoke, thousands of feet high, mushrooms over Nagasaki, Japan, after the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Aug. 9, 1945. A B-29 plane delivered the blast killing approximately 70,000 people, with thousands dying later of radiation effects.



to pale all other news into insignificance in the States," he wrote, "as the American public was heartened by prospects of a shorter war but was awed by the bomb's implications."

Two days later, news arrived of a second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki. Played just as prominently was word that Soviet troops had made their first moves against Japan. Both developments signaled the conflict's end.

A roundup of reports carried the headline, "Nagasaki Resembles Volcano Still Afire, Says Eyewitness."

A week passed before a banner headline on Tuesday, Aug. 14, 1945, in flowing typeface heralded "Peace" above the news: "The Pacific war ended Tuesday—1,347 days after the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor."

The first Stars and Stripes staffers to report from Japan's main islands did so from air and sea Aug. 28-29, 1945.

Cpl. Davis wrote from Okinawa of riding aboard one of the final B-24 bomber combat missions over Kyushu and Shikoku. Other than flying over what had been recently the enemy homeland, the flight was routine, he wrote. Davis looked

down mostly on rice paddies, terraced slopes and empty roads, he reported from the "recon mission."

Tech Sgt. Dick Koster wrote from the USS Gosselin on Aug. 29 that Japan's naval base at Yokosuka, today home of the U.S. 7th Fleet, looked "desolate and ghostly." He described the battleship Nagato, crippled by American air attacks; sunken or beached barges; and white flags dotting the hillsides marking gun emplacements.

With the war's end near, the news turned to the coming post-war economy and the nation's capacity to absorb the discharged veterans coming home to the labor force.

The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars demanded improvements to Veterans Administration hospitals "to avert an imminent breakdown," the paper reported June 12, 1945.

A United Press report quoted a psychiatrist warning of the effects of combat on returning veterans. What today is called post-traumatic stress disorder would result in higher rates of alcohol abuse and alcoholism.

Less than four months later, Stars and Stripes started publishing from Tokyo. The first Pacific edition rolled off the presses of the Asahi Shimbun

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Tom Sutton

Long before artist Tom Sutton began contributing to Marvel Comics and the popular Warren Publishing series "Vampirella," he was sharpening his drawing pencil, and his skills, at Stars and Stripes' office in downtown Tokyo.

The Massachusetts native joined the Air Force in 1955 and was later stationed at a base near Osaka, Japan, before being assigned to the newspaper, where he created a daily strip titled "Johnny Craig," named after one of his favorite comic book artists.

The sci-fi comic took place in 2058 and followed a rocket pilot whose "quest to find a second Earth leads him into undreamed of dangers among the stars."

A story published in Stars and Stripes the day "Johnny Craig" debuted said the then-20-year-old Sutton got his start "earning soft drink and malt money by illustrating comics for Weird Science Fiction, Vault of Terror and Starman comic books for \$45 per eight-page story while his high school pals were still peddling newspapers for pennies."

According to "It Crept from the Tomb," a book on horror comics edited by Peter Normanton, Sutton's early work received praise from legendary artist Norman Rockwell.

While in high school in the late 1940s, Sutton took a correspondence art course and his assignments were graded by Charles Schulz, who was trying to get "Peanuts" off the ground at the time.

After leaving the Air Force and finishing college in New York, Sutton took his Stars and Stripes comics to Marvel, where they were reviewed by Stan Lee, co-creator of iconic characters like Spider-Man, X-Men and the Incredible Hulk.

"I think he was rather impressed by the fact that I had actually done a daily comic strip for two years," Sutton told The Comics Journal in 2001. "He just reached over and he pulled off this huge pile of blank paper. And he said, 'OK, do me a couple of Westerns and I'll see you next week. Have fun.' I remember that very well. 'Have fun.'"

Sutton, best known for his writing and illustration work on the popular "Vampirella" horror series, looked back fondly on his time with Stripes, which he called "my art school."

"I remember one of the first jobs I got was they wanted me to draw this temple and some GIs or something, and they tossed a couple of photographs on the drawing table, and they said, 'You've got 45 minutes! Forty-five minutes?'" he told The Comics Journal. "There were men there who had worked at Collier's, who had worked at Saturday Evening Post, who had worked on various other magazines, you understand what I'm saying? That was real. I don't think there is anything better than what we used to call on-the-job training or apprenticeship."

Sutton, who also worked under the pen names Sean Todd, TFS and Dementia, died of an apparent heart attack in May 2002. He was 65.

— Aaron Kidd/  
Stars and Stripes





# STARS AND STRIPES

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on Oct. 3, 1945. The newsroom and other offices were several blocks away at the Nippon Times (now the Japan Times).

The newspaper remained there until 1952, when it moved to the Hardy Barracks compound, also in Tokyo, a former Japanese infantry base. In 1962, the paper relocated to a new structure on those grounds, the Akasaka Press Center, where its Pacific offices and printing press remain today.

## 'Korea At War'

Pacific Stars and Stripes delivers news as it happens. It did so June 25, 1950, when a page 1 headline declared "Korea At War" on the same day North Korean troops poured over the 38th parallel "with tremendous power at 5 a.m.," according to a wire report.

Several editions rolled off the press that day, and subsequent days, as events in Korea unfolded. The front page carried big-picture stories about the unfolding conflict posted mostly by civilian reporters for The Associated Press, United Press and International News Service.

Stars and Stripes staffers found the local angle in the conflict, whether frontline accounts of battle action; high-level meetings in Tokyo between Gen. Douglas MacArthur and government officials like John Foster Dulles, foreign policy adviser to the State Department; or rear-echelon events, like jazz singer Al Jolson performing in Tokyo for wounded soldiers.

The war news at first was grim as North Koreans cornered U.S. and South Korean forces inside the Pusan perimeter

from August until early September. While U.S. B-29 bombers lashed North Korean troops, allied units strengthened defensive positions.

MacArthur turned the tide by sending waves of Marines ashore Sept. 15 at the port city of Inchon, behind the North Korean lines and at the doorstep of Seoul. Wire services kept the troops abreast of the big picture.

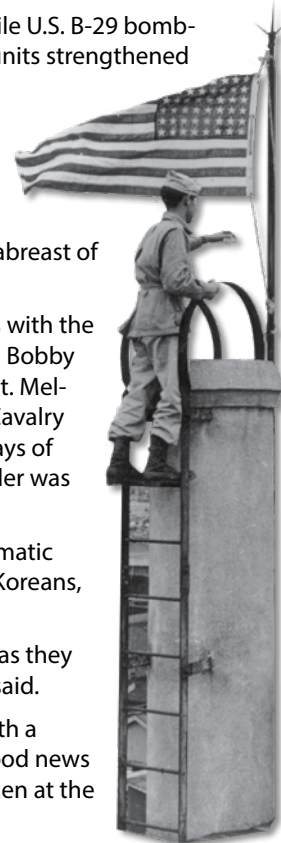
Meanwhile, Pacific edition reporters with the grunts reported action at the front. Cpl. Bobby Rushing wrote how medical officer Capt. Melbourne Chandler led a surrounded 1st Cavalry Division battalion to safety after four days of heavy fighting. The battalion commander was killed, leaving Chandler in command.

The unit came under tank and automatic weapons fire from the "Reds," or North Koreans, Chandler told Stars and Stripes.

"We couldn't move in any direction as they were firing right down our throats," he said.

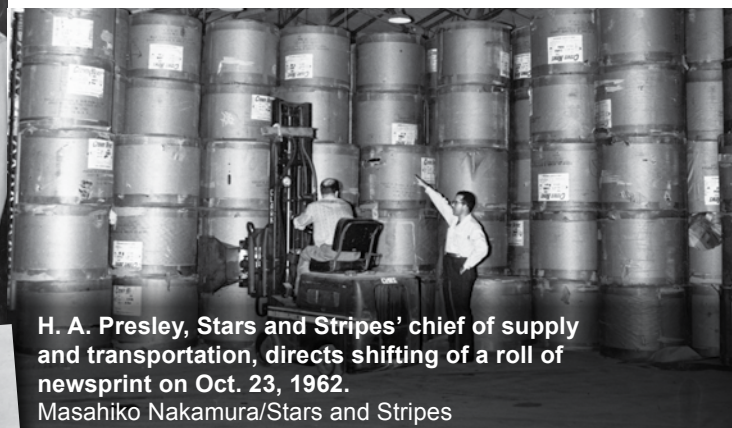
The same day, a front-page story with a three-deck headline delivered some good news from general headquarters in Tokyo: "Men at the Front Will Have Beer."

The northward push by the U.S. X Corps brought them to battle with forces sent by China to push the allies back into South Korea. They met at Chosin Reservoir in the final, cold months of 1950.



General L. L. Lemnitzer, the United Nations and Far East command-in-chief, presses a button to start Stars and Stripes' Goss press on July 28, 1956.

James Baumbarger/Stars and Stripes



H. A. Presley, Stars and Stripes' chief of supply and transportation, directs shifting of a roll of newsprint on Oct. 23, 1962.

Masahiko Nakamura/Stars and Stripes



Chaplain George E. Fort holds Sunday service for hospital patients on Oct. 31, 1957.

Harold Slate/Stars and Stripes

Members of 1st Republic of Korea Marine Brigade storm ashore on the Gimpo Peninsula, 40 miles northwest of Seoul, Sept. 21, 1961.

Kim Ki Sam/Stars and Stripes



## Steve Kroft

Veteran broadcaster Steve Kroft, who retired from CBS-TV's "60 Minutes" in 2019 after three decades with the groundbreaking news program, began his journalism career with Stars and Stripes Pacific during the Vietnam War.

Kroft, 74, broke into news as a correspondent and photographer while serving in the Army in Vietnam.

"[Stars and Stripes] would be the thing that I really wanted to do, and I felt it was something that would show up on my résumé and that I would be proud to have on my résumé," he said in October 2018 at the Washington, D.C., premier of a documentary film on the newspaper, which he narrated.

Following his military service, Kroft earned a master's degree from Columbia Journalism School and worked for local television stations in Jacksonville, Fla., and Miami before joining CBS News in 1980.

He was transferred to New York in 1987 as principal correspondent for "West 57th," a news magazine that led to his assignment on "60 Minutes."

He won his first of five Peabody Awards for a 1990 critical look at how the military disciplined an experienced officer for a friendly fire incident. His interview with President-elect Barack Obama drew more than 25 million viewers in November 2008 and remains the largest "60 Minutes" audience since 1999.

Kroft was the longest-tenured reporter for "60 Minutes," which was created by fellow Stripes alumnus Don Hewitt and for years featured another, Andy Rooney.

His numerous citations include the Investigative Editors and Reporters Award, the George Polk and JFK Journalism Awards and a Lifetime Achievement Emmy Award.

— Stars and Stripes

Check out more of our history at



www.80.stripes.com





Stars and Stripes reporters with the Marines and Army units of X Corps filed delayed accounts of the battle that became U.S. military lore. Holding out against repeated assaults, U.S. troops battled their way out of the high, frozen plateau in December.

“Grace of God, Courage of GIs Enables Escape” was the headline on an account by Sgt. Connie Sellers with the Army’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division that appeared Dec. 17, 1950. He wrote how Capt. Lincoln Wray led his 300 men from a death trap to eventual safety.

“By this time, we had walked for 16 hours and about 40 miles through rugged mountain ridges. The men were tired out, but determined not to be trapped and captured,” Master Sgt. Jerry Grafton said in Sellers’ account. “We by-passed the machine guns and kept going.”

Another account from the X Corps told how Army and Marine engineers repaired a tortured, impassable, 20-mile-long stretch of highway and gave allied troops an escape route from the Chosin Reservoir.

“Craters were filled, a vital bridge twice rebuilt after infiltrating enemy troops cut it and dozens of roadblocks of timber, brush and blasted vehicles cleared,” said the Stars and Stripes report.

The war raged across the Korean Peninsula nearly three more years. On Monday, July 27, 1953, the troops read in Stars and Stripes Pacific the news they’d long awaited: “Fighting Ends Tonight.”

Inside, Pfc. Tony Ricketti reported from Panmunjom, the village where documents were signed instituting an armistice that remains in place today.

“Even as the signing took place mortar rounds could be heard in the distance and American jets struck a bit further off,” Ricketti wrote that day.

### A Golden Era

As the Korean War drew to a close, events in the French colony of Indochina in Southeast Asia set the stage for U.S. involvement there.

The Vietnam War, which for U.S. combat troops lasted from 1965 to 1973, ushered in what some regard as a golden era for the paper.

“They did really robust reporting from ‘67 to ‘69,” said Cindy Elmore, a journalism professor at East Carolina University who has published scholarly articles examining command influence and censorship of the newspaper.

During that period, the Pacific paper’s top editor was Col. Peter Sweers, a World War II veteran and Bronze Star recipient who held a bachelor’s degree in journalism.

“He was very supportive of freedom of the press and of treating Stripes just like any newspaper covering the Vietnam War,” said Elmore, a Stars and Stripes reporter in the late 1990s.

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## John Olson

Former Stars and Stripes Pacific combat photographer John Olson is known for his haunting images of the Vietnam War, particularly those taken during the bloody Tet Offensive and Battle of Hue in 1968.

“I was a highly motivated photojournalist,” he told the newspaper in 2018. “I’d been in Vietnam for a year, and if you are a combat photographer, you can’t fake it. The more dangerous the better, and I learned that the heaviest fighting was at Hue. So, I went to Hue.”

The powerful photographs Olson took as he followed the 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment through Hue have often been credited with playing a role in America’s eventual withdrawal from the war.

“They were published in Stars and Stripes and also Life magazine,” said Olson of those images, which earned him the prestigious Robert Capa Gold Medal. The award is given by the Overseas Press Club of America for the “best published photographic reporting from abroad requiring exceptional courage and enterprise.”

The March 1968 issue of Life featured a six-page spread of Olson’s photos titled “The Battle that Regained and Ruined Hue.” After leaving the Army, he became the publication’s youngest-ever staff photographer.

“Like many veterans, I came back from Vietnam and I spent decades not talking about it,” he said. “But as we approached the 50th anniversary of the Tet Offensive and the Battle of Hue, I began to wonder what had happened to the young men I’d photographed.”

Olson was able to track down nearly a dozen of those Marines, interview them and capture their harrowing stories on tape.

“They told me about their time in Hue and how the years since Hue have affected their lives,” he said. “How the battle and the fighting—what impact it had on them.”

Olson eventually turned this personal project into an exhibit called “The Marines and Tet,” which ran at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., to mark the battle’s 50th anniversary in 2018.

The Washington Post described the exhibit’s centerpiece photo this way: “The picture—the most important he’s ever taken—shows a half dozen Marines sprawled atop a mud-crust tank. One man’s arm and eye are bandaged. Blood coats another’s legs. In the foreground, a third man lays atop a wooden door his comrades used as a makeshift stretcher. His shirt has been ripped off because, in the center of his chest, is a bullet hole.”

Olson told the newspaper he had “next to no memory” of taking that photo. When he was asked how the Vietnam War had affected him, the photographer didn’t have an answer.

“I don’t have all that figured out yet,” he said.

— Stars and Stripes

Marines scale a mound of rubble as they fight their way into the NVA stronghold in the Citadel—the ancient imperial capital’s fortress—during the battle for Hue. John Olson/Stars and Stripes



Stars and Stripes photographer John Olson, far left, poses with other journalists behind their tent while covering the Vietnam War. John Olson/Stars and Stripes



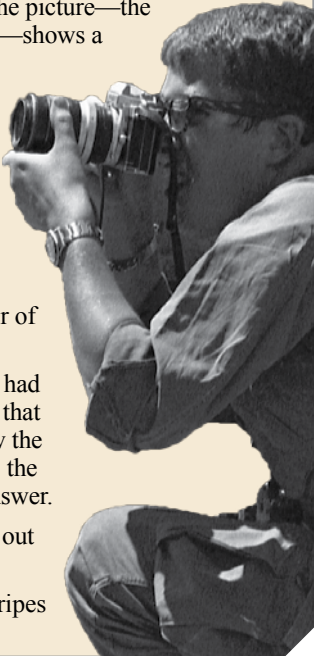
**Truce Signed**

**Stars and Stripes**

**Fighting Ends Tonight**

A squad leader with 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division is treated for wounds during a firefight in South Vietnam, July 13, 1966. Gary Cooper/Stars and Stripes

Debbie Reynolds brings a bit of Hollywood to Korea as she sings for 5,000 soldiers who jammed the Seoul Military Post baseball field on May 28, 1955. Charles Taylor/Stars and Stripes





# THE JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE

After wartime terror and defeat, a Japanese life is rebuilt around Stars and Stripes

www.80.stripes.com

Toshi Cooper  
James Kimber/Stars and Stripes

*Editor's note: This article, originally published in August 2015, focuses on Toshi Tokunaga Cooper, who spent her teens in a world of air raids, shortages, death and at the end, the shock and humiliation of defeat. Over time, her life transformed as she went to work for the occupation forces and later for Stars and Stripes, where she built a career and met her husband. Now living in Delaware, Cooper recalls her own personal journey—part of Japan's transformation from bitter enemy to close ally of the United States.*

By Seth Robson,  
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Toshi Tokunaga Cooper and her coworkers listened on the radio as Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender to the Allies on Aug. 15, 1945. It was the first time the Japanese public had heard his voice, and the news was devastating.

"We stood in the courtyard and listened to the emperor's speech and cried like hell," recalled Cooper.

After hearing of their nation's defeat, Cooper and several friends walked from Tokyo's Ebisu district to the Imperial Palace, where they wept and apologized to the emperor.

"We were very nationalistic," she said. "I heard later that some of the people around us had committed suicide."

The end came as a shock to the Japanese people, even if many had suspected the war was not going as well as it was spun by the government's propaganda machine. For many in reclusive Japan, America was a strange and distant place.

When news of the Pearl Harbor attack broke in December 1941, Cooper's father, a civilian contracting officer in the Imperial Japanese Navy, spread a big map of America on a table and compared it to Japan. Her father was fascinated by foreign things and spent time in London before the war. The family ate English breakfasts of toast, eggs and coffee on Sundays and celebrated Christmas, she said.

The start of the war meant she couldn't watch her favorite American movies. Tokyo cinemas stopped showing them and only screened German, Italian and Japanese films, she said.

Despite official efforts to put a positive spin on news from the front, it was hard to believe that Japan was winning—casualty lists were growing and rations were short. American

bombers pounded Tokyo, destroying entire neighborhoods near Cooper's home in Tokyo's Shibuya district. At times it seemed as if the bombs were dropping only a few yards away.

Some of Cooper's schoolmates were killed in the air raids.

"There were so many people who had a terrible time," she said.

Still, to a young person, the war seemed exciting.

"When a B-29 went down, we all clapped," she recalled.

Workmates at the navy yard in Shibuya, where Cooper was a supply clerk, would arrive each morning with captivating stories.

One woman said she left a pot full of raw rice when she fled to an air raid shelter. When she returned, heat from bombing had cooked the rice, Cooper said.

Her family had a bomb shelter in their backyard stocked with food and supplies. But after a heavy snowfall, the shelter flooded. When the family opened the shelter door during an air raid, they saw all their carefully stored supplies floating in deep water.

News of the atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was vague at first, Cooper said.

"The radio talked about a strong weapon being dropped," she said.

When Allied occupation troops arrived in Tokyo after the surrender, residents were scared. Tokyo was a battered city where black markets sprung up to meet the demands of hungry masses and exhausted soldiers returning from far-flung battlefields.

Australian soldiers set up camp near Cooper's house. There were rumors that they were abducting young girls, and families kept ropes ready so they could escape out the window if the soldiers came for them.

Cooper got a shock when she rode a train to the countryside to trade kimonos for food and felt the hands of a tall Australian lifting up the bag of rice on her back.

"I yelled in English: 'I'm not a street worker.' But he was just trying to help me carry the bag," she said.

Cooper's father was angry when she got a job in the Public Information Office at Allied headquarters, where Gen. Douglas MacArthur ruled Japan during the post-war occupation. He wanted her to get married. She argued that the job would help improve her English—a valuable skill in U.S.-occupied Japan—which she had learned at a Methodist high school.

Soon she was working as a linguist for American reporters. Her English was poor but

**"WE WERE VERY NATIONALISTIC. I HEARD LATER THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE AROUND US HAD COMMITTED SUICIDE."**

— Toshi Tokunaga Cooper on Japan's defeat in World War II

good enough to do the job and earn her gifts such as bars of soap from the journalists.

When the chief of the news section at the PIO, Maj. Fred May, took command at Pacific Stars and Stripes in 1948, he invited Cooper to join as an assistant librarian.

Cooper started building contacts with Japanese officials whom she won over with cigarettes and chocolate from the exchange.

"There were few female Japanese journalists in those days, and they had a terrible time compared to the males," she said. "But I could do anything I wanted."

It wasn't long before Cooper was going on assignments as a translator. A memorable assignment involved tracking down Marilyn Monroe, paparazzi-style, when she visited Tokyo in 1954.

Stars and Stripes staked out Haneda Airport, where Monroe and her new husband, famed baseball player Joe DiMaggio, touched down, but there were so many people—"2,500 wild fans"—that the journalists decided to give up and "go get drunk," Cooper recalled.

"We started driving home, but I saw blonde hair in the car in front of us," she said. "I said: 'Let's follow!'"

The car traveled to a back entrance at the Imperial Hotel—avoiding 1,500 more fans

at the front—and out stepped Monroe. Stars and Stripes got the story and photo. Cooper got an autograph.

During the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, Cooper helped make posters of the U.S. military athletes who were participating. She moonlighted as a translator for some of the foreign reporters who attended the Games and received plenty of free tickets in return.

Cooper was the translator for Stars and Stripes reporter Army Cpl. Ernie Peeler for his interview with Princess Kazuko—elder sister to Japan's current emperor, Akihito. She was about to become the first member of Japan's imperial household to marry a commoner. Cooper said they had a tough time persuading the princess to smile for a photo.

Before the story could appear, Peeler left for Korea, where U.S. Forces were fighting to hold their own against a communist invasion. On July 28, 1950, he and another journalist, Ray Richards of the International News Service, were declared missing in action—perhaps killed by a tank shell that blew their Jeep off the road.

In 1970, she married fellow Stars and Stripes employee Gary M. Cooper and retired the following year.



This 1959 photo taken at Stars and Stripes' office in Tokyo shows librarian Toshi Tokunaga with artist Shel Silverstein on the bottom row. Pictured from left to right on the top row are admin assistant Michiko Shibata, photographer Neal Callahan, city editor Pat Carroll, entertainment editor Al Ricketts, artist Sanae Yamazaki and features writer Norm Sklarewitz. Shel Silverstein/Stars and Stripes





# STARS AND STRIPES

UNOFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF UNITED STATES FORCES, FAR EAST

**EXTRA! EXTRA!**  
**Vol. 80**  
[www.80.stripes.com](http://www.80.stripes.com)

## THE COST OF NEWS GATHERING

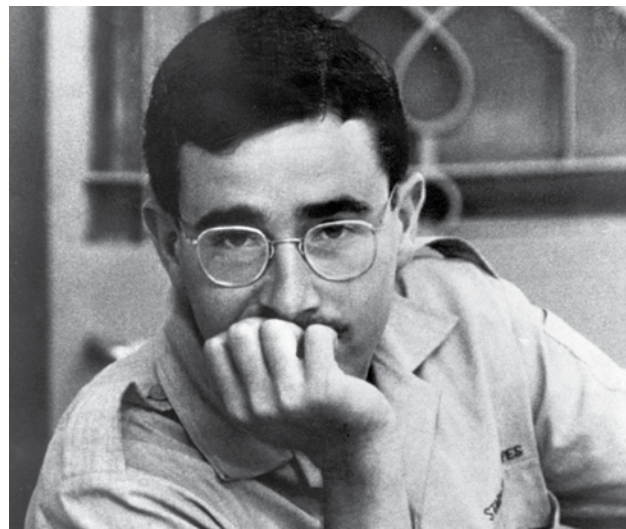
The following is an edited version of a column written by former Stars and Stripes senior reporter Hal Drake and published in October 1995.

Pacific Stars and Stripes has lost two reporters in two wars—one a 37-year-old veteran, the other a youngster only 24. I knew one only slightly and the other not at all.

I called the home of Ernie Peeler's son in California not long ago, wanting to know as much as he might remember about his dad—the reporter we lost in the hard and early days of the Korean War.

Gone before my time, he was a man I never knew, except by reputation and the quality of work I found in a few faded library clippings.

I learned Peeler had been an International News Service reporter and could believe that because of his neat, tight writing, the kind required by telegraphic news services. During World War II, he had worked in military information offices, which ideally qualified him for Stripes—a guy who knew the business from both ends of the telephone.



**Paul Savanuck**

He was good and he was gutsy, this Peeler—the kind of reporter who would stand fire to get his story, walking into enemy cylinders of every caliber millimeter.

Peeler and Hal Gamble were the first Pacific Stars and Stripes reporters sent to cover the war, which broke over the benign occupation life in Japan like a storm over a picnic. Within days, the two were of Tokyo and in Korea, reporting a difficult and confusing conflict.

Peeler took chances—a lot of chances. Good reporters always do, taking a soldier's chances to do a newsman's job.

So it was July 28, 1950, when he was declared missing in action—perhaps slain by an enemy tank that blew his Jeep off the road. Old-timers at Stripes told me of hopefully scanning POW lists provided by the Communists at Panmunjom. Ernest never turned up.

On the day he disappeared, Peeler was out of hostile range when he and Ray Richards, an International News Service correspondent, decided to head north, toward a broken, disorganized nonentity called the front, to get “just a little more” before they wrote their stories—a decision that can cost a reporter's life.

But the good ones do it.

There was another man I scarcely knew, and wish I had known better.

Two decades have gone by since the last shot in Saigon, but I can't forget the most hurtful happening of a long-ago war—the loss of Paul Savanuck.

Why can't I scrub my memory of a 24-year old kid I hardly touched hands with?

He was like a face on a passing streetcar or casual acquaintance at a bit party. A quiet kid—one of those who could sit in a crowded room for four hours without saying a word. Bespectacled and absently preoccupied, he was remindful of a student for the priesthood or rabbinate.

His constant expression was a thoughtful frown—the one he wore that day in early 1969 as I walked into the Pacific Stars and Stripes Saigon Bureau with colleague Al Kramer, sent from Tokyo to do a special supplement on the war.

The bureau of Vo Tanh Road was a bizarre place, manned by youngsters who lived in the age of Aquarius and Zumwalt. It showed. The walls were done over in psychedelic rainbow, along with pungent lyrics from the rock musical “Hair” and pinups that would have sent a chaplain into convulsive shock. Our people were called the Wild Bunch, and not without reason.

All except Paul Savanuck, who was a few days new to the bureau and had a discomfited look, like a chaplain's assistant who was trying to be one of the guys but still blanched at a dirty joke. As we met, all I got was a loose handshake and a mutter.

Oh no, I thought. Was this another anti-Vietnam draftee, not here to report the war but to protest it? The indiscriminate draft had dumped all manner of characters on us, and the last thing we needed was another Greenwich Village poet posing as a reporter.

I spoke these fears aloud, in private, to Dave Walsh, a Navy journalist attached to the bureau.

“No, Hal,” Dave assured me. “He's a shy sort, doesn't like to push himself. He's new here, hardly been around a week—just feeling his way around. Give him time. He'll open up.”

Bureau Chief Bill Collins told me Savanuck had volunteered for both Vietnam and Stripes, aggressively pounding on the door until Bill granted him a tryout and nodded him in. His diffident manner belied that. Again, I was told—give him time.

There was a drowsy afternoon we were all sitting around, with Savanuck right beside us but a hundred miles away under a canopy of mood. Mike Kopp, a bureau photographer, had a new Nikkormat and was trying it out on anybody who would hold still for five seconds. Savanuck was staring at our well-sized battle map.

“Hey, Paul,” Kopp said. “This way.”

Startled, Savanuck absently jerked around and put his chin on the heel of his hand, looking like that classic statue of The Thinker. We would have that, at least—a picture that caught perfectly the subtle and introspective character of Paul Savanuck.

A day or so later, he was gone, headed up country to cover the war.

Then came that gloomy morning.

There had been a rowdy party at the bureau the night before. Master Sgt. Bill Bradford, the first shirt, expressed bitter regret that a can of beer and the contents of a wastebasket has been flung into an overhead fan. He stood by, in a surly posture with his hands on his hips, while we meekly mopped up the mess. Lt. Col Sal Fede, the officer in charge, waling in with a stormfront over his face. Having just borne Bradford's wrath, we braced for Sal's.



**Ernie Peeler**

Sal walked over to Collins and spoke in a confidential tone that still carried: “Savanuck's dead. He bought it last night up at Quang Tri.”

There was more boozing that night, but it was morose and depressing. To Dave Walsh fell the stressful job of going up to a remote corner of the Marine base at Da Nang and walking under a sign that read: “In Reverence—Uncover.” Dave nodded as an attendant lifted a rubber wrapping from a still form.

Not long after, Dave was in Tokyo and he and I toured the Kanda district that abounds with bookstores. It also had the oldest beer hall in Tokyo, we and stopped to pay proper respect to a cultural landmark.

After a time, Dave looked absent and thoughtful much like Savanuck, and said: “Jesus, that was awful about Paul. If he'd just been around a little longer and gotten to know you and Kramer and all the guys, he'd have opened up. He was a nice kid.”

I wept a little, for somebody I hadn't known very well for very long.

I could never feel like Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Savanuck, but I still felt sadly deprived.



**Maj. Gen. Ethan A. Chapman, chief of staff for U.S. Forces Japan, looks at a painting honoring Stars and Stripes correspondent Ernie Peeler on Feb. 8, 1964. Peeler was the first journalist reported missing in action during the Korean War.**  
Henry Magnuson / Stars and Stripes



## Vernon Grant

Cartoonist and Army officer Vernon Grant had a unique ability to capture the soldier's perspective during the Vietnam War.

"One Vietnam veteran said to me, 'We had some terrible times in Vietnam, but we also laughed a lot,'" Grant's widow, Betsy Grant, told Stars and Stripes during a recent phone interview.

Grant's work "will make you laugh. His sense of humor was universal for all soldiers."

The youngest of five children in a family that immigrated to Massachusetts from Barbados, Grant was 23 when he joined the Army in 1958, with segregation still a dehumanizing force in the United States. Two years in, he was invited to enroll in the Infantry Officer Candidate Course at Fort Benning, Ga., and was commissioned a second lieutenant.

Grant made captain in 1966 and went to Vietnam a year later, where he commanded the Signal Security Force, 400 men guarding 23 communications sites scattered the length of Vietnam.

Between 1966 and 1969, Grant drew comics for Stars and Stripes, under the titles "Grant's Heroes," "A Grant Time in Japan" and "Grant's Grunts." They were biting and humorous but offered a window into the soldier's experience in Vietnam.

In one strip, a two-star general looks up at a man sitting on an elevated throne and say, "If you don't mind coming down, Colonel ... I'll give you my ten-minute thing on 'Command Modesty!'"

"He used exaggeration really well," Betsy Grant said.

Grant left the military in 1968, after 10 years of service. He enrolled in classes at Jesuit Sophia University, which had a campus in Tokyo. He wrote three books on Army life and one on Japan: a two-volume graphic novel "Adventures of Point-Man Palmer and his Girlfriend 'Invisible Peppermint,'" "Stand-By One!" and "A Monster is Loose!—in Tokyo."

He told reporters in 1977 that his popularity among front-line soldiers was a bit overwhelming.

"I became an institution for the U.S. GIs who sought comic relief from the danger of combat and the boredom of army life," he told the Cambridge Chronicle weekly in Massachusetts. "More soldiers read my books than any other cartoonist or writer in the front. I still get embarrassed when I meet someone on the street who recognizes me."

He suffered a heart attack on a run July 7, 2006, fell into a coma and died weeks later.

"His creations of the stories of 'Point-Man Palmer' and cartoons in the military field as well as his science fiction world of 'The Love Rangers' are his legacy," his widow wrote in her book.

Speaking with Stars and Stripes in 1972, Grant made his intentions abundantly clear. He just wanted to make people laugh.

"Translating life into humor is the biggest thing with me," he said at the time.

— Matthew M. Burke/Stars and Stripes



### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

The newspaper also benefited from a wide swathe of talented draftees, some of whom had Ivy League degrees or actual journalism experience back in the States, Elmore said.

"We aggressively went out and covered stuff, and the military didn't much like that," said Robert Hoderne, a reporter and assistant editor at the Saigon bureau in the late 1960s.

Many would go on to illustrious journalism careers, such as Jack Fuller, who earned a Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing at the Chicago Tribune, and Steve Kroft, for 30 years a correspondent with "60 Minutes" before retiring in 2019.

"It's probably the best job I ever had," said John Olson, a staff photographer whose work quickly led to a position at the prestigious Life magazine.

A 19-year-old draftee longing to shoot photos for Stars and Stripes when he arrived in Vietnam in 1967, Olson commandeered a jeep and made an unauthorized trip to the newspaper's office in Saigon. The paper pulled some strings and took him aboard after he embellished the scope of a former mailroom job with United Press International.

The first combat assault he covered was Operation Billings in June 1967, where he talked himself onto the second

wave of helicopters heading to the landing zone—air shaking with artillery and a napalm inferno below.

Olson had brought his camera to a particularly hellacious two-week operation that took the lives of 57 Americans.

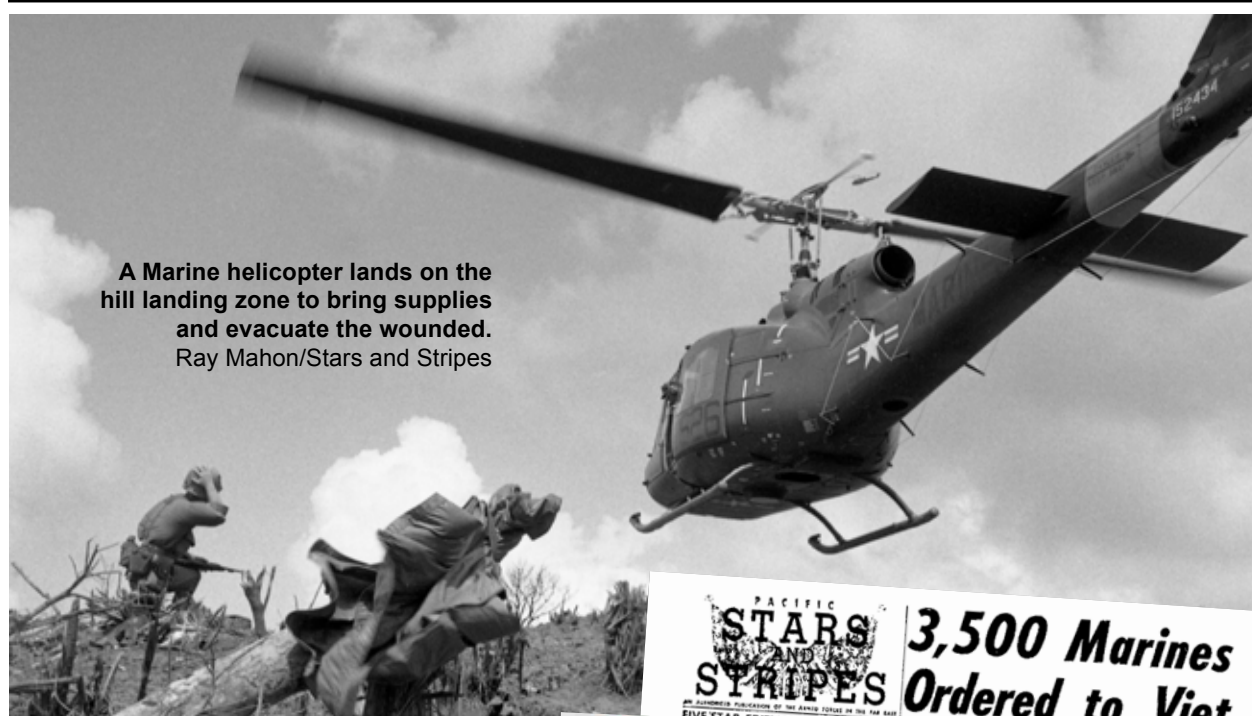
"But I didn't know any better," he said. "I thought this was just another day at work."

He would not see that kind of intensity again until the Battle of Hue in February 1968, one of the longest and bloodiest of the war. Marines waged an inch-by-inch assault to take the well-fortified Citadel from dug-in North Vietnamese troops.

"I went in there with, I think, 19 rolls of film, and I stayed until I shot every exposure I had," Olson said. "It was violent. It was upfront. It was personal."

Getting that film published in a timely manner was no small feat because unlike the wire services covering the war, Stars and Stripes had no in-country darkroom. Hoderne recalled how film had to be brought to Saigon and then put on one of two Boeing 737 planes chartered by Stars and Stripes that flew a Pacific circuit delivering newspapers printed in Tokyo.

"So, if we shot pictures on the field on Monday—if everything went just right—that film could be in Tokyo on Tuesday and be in Wednesday's paper," Hoderne said.



**A Marine helicopter lands on the hill landing zone to bring supplies and evacuate the wounded.**  
Ray Mahon/Stars and Stripes

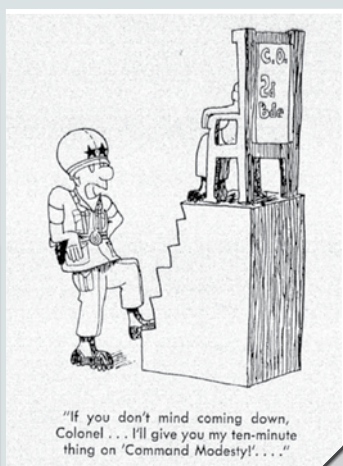


**Marine Staff Sgt. Robert Thoms, also known as "Cajun Bob," leads his men in the Battle of Hue during the North Vietnamese Tet Offensive in 1968.**  
John Olson/Stars and Stripes

**Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur, left, is greeted by Brig. Gen. Charles Morhouse, the 5th Air Force surgeon general, at Yokota Air Base, Japan, July 12, 1961.**  
Sandy Colton/Stars and Stripes



"... BATTALION SEZ WE'RE TRAPPED! ... WE HAVE ENEMY REGIMENTS TO THE NORTH, EAST, AND WEST—AND THE DIVISION EQUIPMENT INSPECTION TEAM TO THE SOUTH!!!"



"If you don't mind coming down, Colonel ... I'll give you my ten-minute thing on 'Command Modesty!'"





## 'A Hellish Nightmare'

The U.S. military's role in world events took a breather after the Vietnam War but history rolled on through civil unrest against authoritarian states in South Korea, Iran, the Philippines and elsewhere, places that presented new challenges to the United States.

Few nations experienced the scale of change that took place in the Philippines when a popular revolt in 1986 unseated President Ferdinand Marcos, a corrupt and authoritarian ruler who held sway in the island nation for 20 years.

Events following Marcos' departure and the election of Corazon Aquino had deep implications for the U.S. military presence there, symbolized primarily by Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base.



Aquino/AP Photo

Susan Kreifels worked from Clark as a Stars and Stripes bureau chief from 1987 to 1991—the first woman to hold

such a position for the newspaper. Afterward, she moved to Tokyo, where she worked as Japan bureau chief for another four years.

"I always wanted to be a foreign correspondent," she said. "Stripes gave me that opportunity."

Before the Pinatubo eruption that changed the course of U.S.-Philippine relations, Kreifels covered a series of attacks that claimed 10 American lives. A group of communist insurgents, the New People's Army, killed several, including two airmen and a retired Air Force officer outside Clark in 1987 and an Army colonel in 1989.

For Kreifels, reporting on the series of politically motivated attacks was the most important story she covered in her 10 years with the newspaper.

"My editors and I felt we had a responsibility to let our military readers know the real dangers outside the

bases," she said, "and understand what was going on in the country."

A May 1990 article in the wake of two more airmen shot dead interviewed locals whose livelihoods depended on the American presence. Travel off Clark by members of its community was restricted.

A tricycle driver said his income was halved as a result. Another Filipino expressed hatred of the Americans. "We don't need the bases," he said.



Kreifels

Mother Nature soon obliged. Mount Pinatubo, which loomed over Clark, erupted June 12, 1991, after simmering and shaking since April. The explosion instantly disintegrated 900 feet of the summit and blanketed the surrounding area in ash and mud.

Kreifels wrote first-person accounts of the ongoing eruptions and their aftermath. Under a headline, "Scenes from a hellish nightmare," she reported June 17, from Angeles City: "It is difficult to describe the hellish nightmare that 40,000 troops, wives and children are now living in the Philippines. Ash and rocks are covering us, spewed from a volcano in our backyards."

The next day, still working her beat, Kreifels wrote of sleeplessness and the apocalyptic landscape in which the survivors felt somehow damned. She recalled meeting Air Force Staff Sgt. James Nelson and two other sergeants along a roadside in a broken-down Jeep.

"They gave me a wet, crumpled note to get their names to their commander," she wrote. "Fatigue and fear were on their faces as they tried to reach the evacuation site."

The Pinatubo eruption brought the curtain down on the U.S. presence at Clark and Subic Bay, but Stars and Stripes Pacific continues to cover the intersection of Philippine and U.S. military interests to this day.

## 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'

Military campaigns in the Balkans and the Middle East dominated war planners and Washington, D.C., during the 1990s, and Stars and Stripes covered the Persian Gulf War and the conflict that engulfed the former nation of Yugoslavia. But the Pacific was no backwater in terms of military journalism.

On Nov. 2, 1992, a short item on page 6 of the Pacific edition identified a sailor from the USS Belleau Wood whom the Navy said was beaten to death by two shipmates in a park outside Sasebo Naval Base, Japan.

Rick Rogers, at the time an Army sergeant and Stripes reporter in Tokyo, was assigned to follow the story by an editor who had received a letter from others at Sasebo alleging the sailor, Seaman Allen Richard Schindler, was targeted because he was gay.

Being gay in the military is no longer a crime, but at the time a transitional policy, "don't ask, don't tell," was in effect.

"It took a long time to get that story out," said Rogers, now a financial adviser in San Diego. Schindler was killed in October 1992 but not until December did the Navy admit his death may have been linked to his being homosexual, "which turned out to be the case," Rogers said.

"I was an E-5 trying to hold admirals' feet to the fire, and commanders, to give up information. Not the easiest thing in the world," he said.

Rogers, who went on in civilian life to cover the military for newspapers in Virginia and California, said he learned two professional lessons as a Stars and Stripes military staffer.

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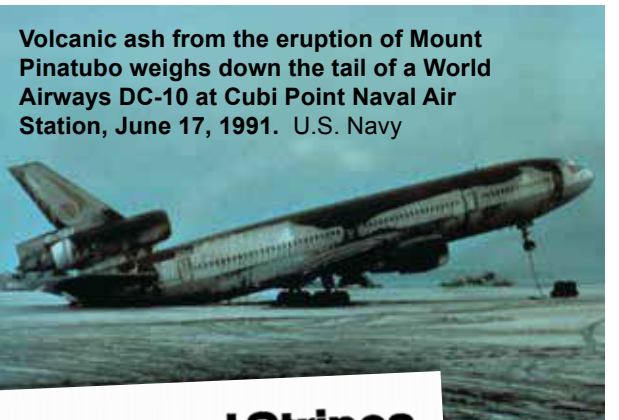


Andrew Headland Jr./Stars and Stripes

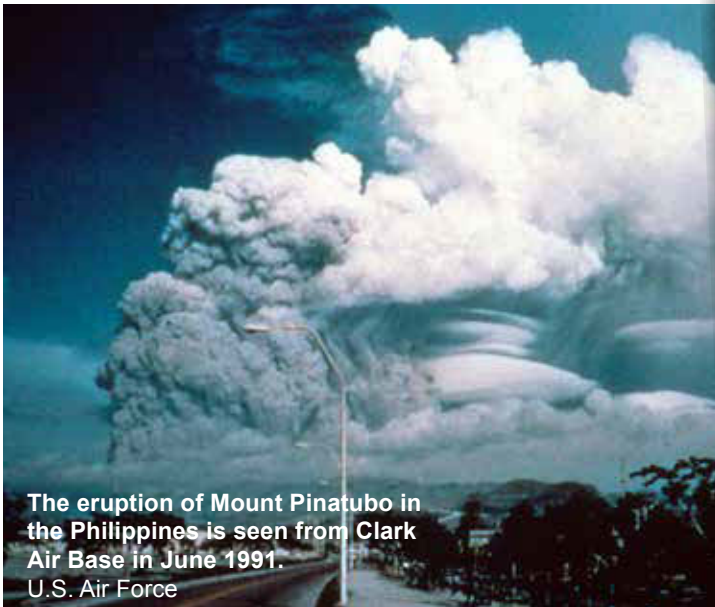
Katsuji Higa, 7 months, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eishin Higa, is a strong Pacific Stars and Stripes supporter. He holds S&S balloons passed out during the carnival fair on July 4, 1962. Stars and Stripes



Volcanic ash from the eruption of Mount Pinatubo weighs down the tail of a World Airways DC-10 at Cubi Point Naval Air Station, June 17, 1991. U.S. Navy



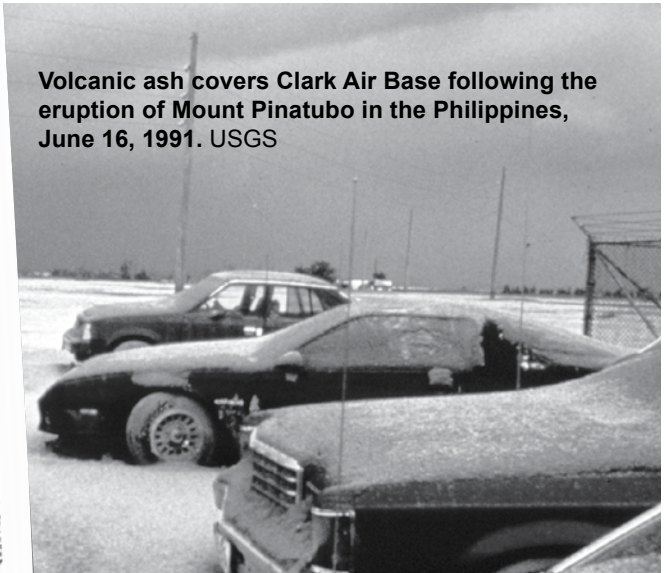
Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos accepts more than \$7 million worth of military aircraft from the United States during a ceremony at Basa Air Base on June 27, 1966. Juanito Pardico/Stars and Stripes



The eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines is seen from Clark Air Base in June 1991. U.S. Air Force



Volcanic ash covers Clark Air Base following the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines, June 16, 1991. USGS





# Hal Drake

During his nearly four decades with Stars and Stripes, Hal Drake covered everything from high-level summits and the release of POWs from Vietnam to Muhammad Ali and high school sports.

A native of Santa Monica, Calif., Drake served 10 months in the Korean War as an artilleryman, viewing up close the carnage on Heartbreak Ridge. He applied for one of a handful of reporting jobs at Stars and Stripes and joined the Pacific staff in July 1956.

Until his retirement on Dec. 31, 1995, Drake worked as a reporter, then later as senior writer and columnist. He traveled four times to Vietnam during the war, and later returned with freelance photographer Jim Bryant in April 1985 for the 10th anniversary of the end of the war.

He was at Clark Air Base, Philippines, in February 1973 to greet returning POWs released from Vietnam.

Every president, “Ford through Clinton—I think I got them all when they came over here,” Drake once said. He was equally comfortable quizzing rock musicians such as Rod Stewart about their choice of song lyrics.

“He managed to find the human element in everything he wrote. And he was always a gentleman in the process,” said former Pacific Stripes news editor Ron Rhodes.

Drake marched to his own drummer, his former co-workers said.

“Hal’s desk—a pile of thousands of papers nearly three feet tall—was the stuff of newspaper legend,” said former colleague Adam Johnston, who was assigned to Stripes from 1993-99 while in the Air Force.

Drake could often be seen wandering the newsroom twirling and eyeing an elongated band of wire called a whirligig.

“He was quirky, but always fun and always smart,” said Gerry Galipault, who worked in the Tokyo office from 1984-90. When working the whirligig, “you could tell his mind was working a mile a minute, thinking about what to write next, what to say. And he always said it beautifully.”

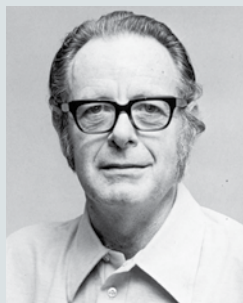
After leaving Stripes, Drake and his wife, Kaz, retired to the Gold Coast in Queensland, where they helped run an international student exchange program.

After a lengthy battle with stomach cancer, Drake died there in 2013 at age 83.

— Dave Ornauer/Stars and Stripes



Stars and Stripes journalist Hal Drake, left, helps lead a Korean orphan, who was adopted by an American couple, down a stairway at Tokyo International Airport in 1974. Hideyuki Mihashi/Stars and Stripes



Paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division provide security at a helicopter landing zone in Hesarak, Afghanistan. Other U.S. forces raided the village earlier in the week on July 16, 2002. Joseph Giordano/Stars and Stripes

U.S. service members are silhouetted against the desert sun in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield, the preface to the Gulf War. Rob Jagodzinski/Stars and Stripes



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

One, don't give up, “because then they win,” he said. Two is do nothing untoward. Press the authorities, hold them accountable, but do it the right way. “You have to be 100% right on everything,” he said.

Stars and Stripes provides a perspective no other medium can provide, Rogers said, adding it's the only source of news military service members, their families and others connected to the services have on some issues.

“It's not the type of information they're going to get elsewhere,” he said.

The military hierarchy benefits from Stars and Stripes, though it often works to frustrate its coverage, Rogers said. The newspaper shines light on problems that can be resolved before they escalate into congressional inquiries. The newspaper, he said, is a kind of loyal opposition.

“I was never interested in tearing down the military. I think the military is an outstanding institution, in general,” he said. “That doesn't mean it's a perfect institution. I saw my job as helping make things better.”

## ‘Sprung Into Action’

In early September 2001, Stars and Stripes Pacific reported on Defense Department plans to close military bases, a move that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said was necessary to save money for other uses. Within a day that view suddenly seemed outdated.

The Sept. 11, 2001, edition, published while terrorist attacks on the U.S. were still the better part of a day away, led with a story about the trial of an Air Force staff sergeant for alleged rape. U.S. military bases around Tokyo braced for a typhoon and Marines pitched in to help fight a fire on a small island off Okinawa's coast.

Kathleen Guzda Struck, at the time Stars and Stripes Pacific's managing editor, was at home that evening in Tokyo watching TV when a bulletin appeared on-screen. A plane had struck the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York.



Marines and soldiers at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, check out a camel brought on to the base for entertainment. Camel rides—and photographs—were a popular attraction at the base. Joseph Giordano/Stars and Stripes



A battalion of Georgian soldiers trains at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, to be the nation's third battalion of combat troops to join the fight in Afghanistan on Feb. 25, 2011. Seth Robson/Stars and Stripes





“As I was sitting, watching it, the second plane went in,” she said.

The newsroom in the Akasaka Press Center that night was a beehive, Struck said. She arrived to find everyone at the paper had returned to start working on the story.

“People had just sprung into action, trying to figure out what’s going on,” she said. “The active-duty journalists were always amazing, incredibly well-trained. I loved working with them. Of course, the civilians were, too, but the active-duty staff probably understood on a different scale what was happening.”

From that day on, Pacific edition pages were filled with reports connected to America’s response, military and otherwise, to 9/11. The tone changed. Topics shifted from downsizing military facilities and a slumping economy to the movement of forces from the Pacific and questions of security for service members and their families.

Stripes surveyed its readers and gauged their sentiments, as well. In October 2001, a headline indicated U.S. military and civilians supported the U.S. strikes in Afghanistan in response to the 9/11 attacks. “America did ‘what we had to do,’” the headline said.

Meanwhile, Stars and Stripes journalists based in the Pacific were dispatched along with their colleagues from

other bureaus to cover the invasion of Afghanistan and, in 2003, the invasion of Iraq. Stars and Stripes had a head start in some ways but was caught unprepared in others.

“Not all of our Stripes journalists were accustomed to covering conflict and the [Department of Defense] was kind of scrambling to figure out what their role was, so for instance, that’s when embedding really started for all news outlets not just military,” Struck said.

Journalists from the civilian world were finding their way into the military environment that Stars and Stripes journalists know well. Their organizations—broadcast networks and big-city daily newspapers—could afford to train their employees for combat situations, including exposure to live fire or possible kidnapping.

But Stripes journalists knew their way around military bases and how to work with DOD personnel.

“One of the most amazing things about Stars and Stripes to me was, even though we were independent journalists, we all carried ID cards that would allow us onto any military installation,” Struck said. “So, while we’re walking through the gate trying to find Col. So-and-So or Lt. Col. So-and-So or whomever, our commercial colleagues were having to catch up.”

### ‘Lifted Out of the Sea’

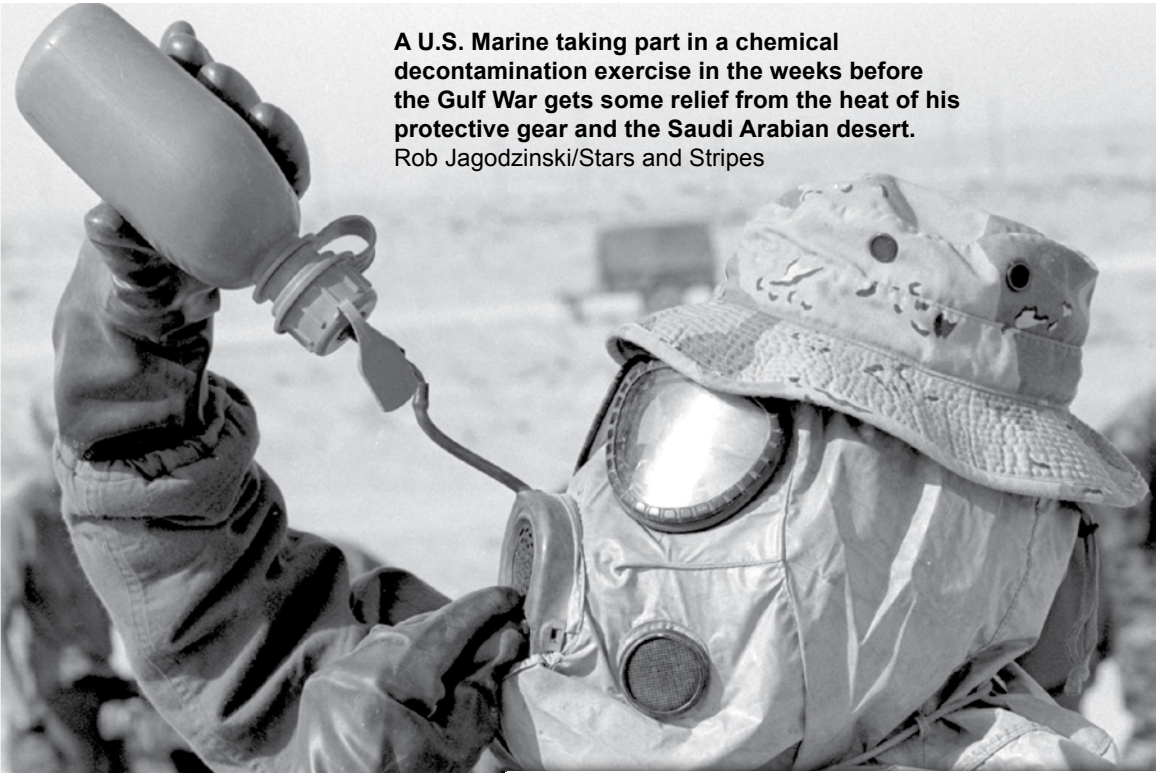
The new millennium only started with 9/11; it continued to present fresh challenges to Stars and Stripes Pacific. Natural disasters would figure prominently in the newspaper’s coverage. Reporters and photographers were dispatched to see firsthand how the U.S. military switched from combat mode to disaster relief.

In December 2004, a magnitude 9.1 earthquake off the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, gave rise to a devastating tsunami, 30 feet high in some places where it came ashore. The series of waves killed about 225,000 people, as many as 200,000 in Indonesia alone.

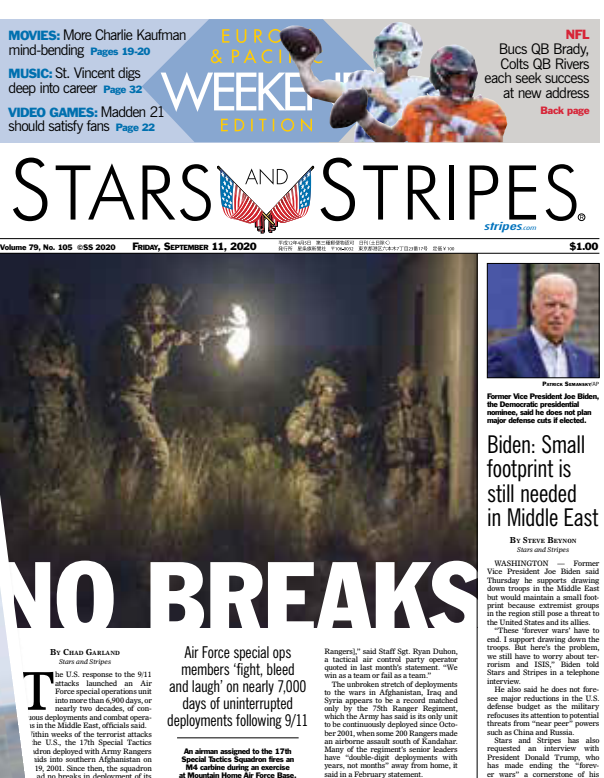
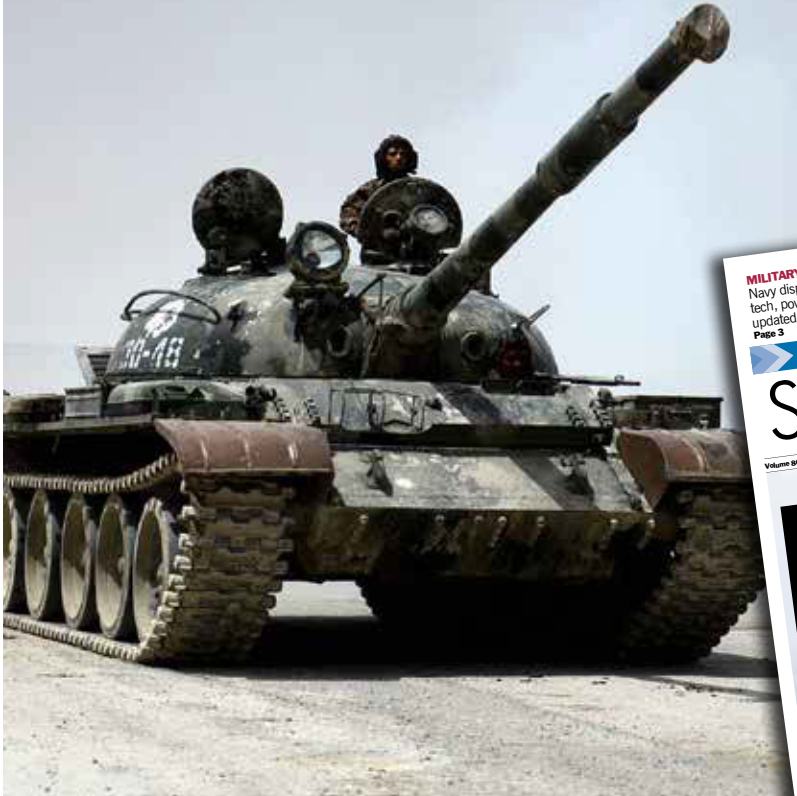
Stars and Stripes Pacific reporters documented the relief effort by U.S. military units stationed on the main islands of Japan and on Okinawa. From Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, Air Force flight crews logged 2,500 hours and hauled 4 million pounds of humanitarian aid to affected areas in four countries, Stripes’ Vince Little reported in 2005.

Another Stripes journalist, Juliana Gittler, reported from Thailand on the work approximately 15,000 U.S. service members undertook to provide relief as well as rebuild some areas swept away by the tsunami.

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Afghan National Army soldiers drive a Soviet-era tank during an exercise at their base in Kabul. The Afghan army has only one tank battalion, made up entirely of tanks provided by the Soviet Union to the old communist regime on July 2, 2014. Josh Smith/Stars and Stripes





# Shelley Smith

Shelley Smith, now a correspondent for ESPN's SportsCenter, was hired by Stars and Stripes in late winter 1982, arriving in Tokyo to become the first full-time civilian woman staffer on the previously all-male sports desk.

It was a time when glue pots and blue pencils were on their way out, computers were taking over the business and cable news was in its infancy.

It was also an era when Stripes covered major national and international sports events in the Pacific, not just what happened on the bases.

"It was the most glorious of times and I still believe I did a service for our troops," Smith recently told the newspaper. "There was no CNN, no USA Today ... How else were they to find out if Duke beat North Carolina?"

Smith was one of the first reporters to greet Clemson's football team for the 1982 Mirage Bowl in Tokyo and question Tigers coach Danny Ford about the NCAA probation just handed his team. She also interviewed a young William "Refrigerator" Perry, who played for Clemson and went on to win a Super Bowl with the Chicago Bears.

"We had so much fun; we were so young and ready to take on the world," Smith said of her days at Stripes. "Our staff was so devoted. We traveled near and far to bring great stories to our readers."

After her time with Stripes, Smith joined the San Francisco Examiner and won a William Randolph Hearst Award in 1986 for her series on Title IX in the Bay Area.

In her early days with ESPN, which she joined in 1993, she won a Sports Emmy for her segment on Magic Johnson as part of an ESPN production on AIDS and athletes. She also worked for The Associated Press.

Smith has also authored two books, "Just Give Me the Damned Ball!" written with former NFL receiver Keyshawn Johnson, and "Games Girls Play: Lessons to Guiding and Understanding Young Female Athletes," written with sports psychologist Carolina Silby and released in 2000.

Smith is a breast-cancer survivor, and was named co-winner of the Sports Illustrated sports media Person of the Year award, along with the late Craig Sager, longtime NBA sideline reporter for Turner Network Television.

Smith also survived a stroke, suffered in May 2017 in the Golden State Warriors locker room after Game 1 of the NBA Western Conference finals, and updated her progress on her Twitter account.

— Dave Ornauer/  
Stars and Stripes

## Clemson coach: I'm glad it's over

By Shelley Smith

TOKYO — A former ESPN Field Reporter and now a correspondent for ESPN's SportsCenter, Shelley Smith was in Tokyo for the 1982 Mirage Bowl, the first full-time civilian woman staffer on the previously all-male sports desk.

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— Dave Ornauer/  
Stars and Stripes



**Texas rips Texas A&M**  
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## Pacific Stars and Stripes

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

"They carried food, drinking water and medical aid to remote locations, removed debris and helped to identify remains of people lost in the disaster," she wrote a month after the quake.

Six years later, reporters and photographers responded to another disaster, this time closer to their home away from home.

On March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 temblor, the Great East Japan Earthquake, followed by a tsunami that came ashore 90 feet high in some places, crushed the Pacific coast of northeastern Japan.

The tsunami inundated an area up to six miles inland in places and when its waters swept back to sea it took 5 million tons of material and debris with it. Ultimately, as many as 20,000 people were declared dead or missing because of the combined disaster.

Complicating matters, the tsunami knocked out generators at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, causing cooling systems to fail and precipitating a partial meltdown of the fuel core. Hydrogen gas in the outer containment buildings exploded, releasing radiation into the atmosphere. Seawater leaking from the plant became contaminated.

In response, the U.S. military launched a relief and reconstruction effort dubbed Operation Tomodachi that lasted six weeks and involved 24,500 service members at its most intense. Tomodachi is the Japanese word for friend.

Stars and Stripes rotated reporters and photographers in and out of the affected area during the operation. They documented not only the relief effort, but also the stories of survival told by dozens of Japanese citizens living in temporary shelters.

Veteran reporter Seth Robson had only recently arrived in Tokyo from his previous post in Germany when he saddled up with Nathan Bailey, a photographer and military staffer, and Elena Sugiyama, an English-speaking Japanese librarian who pitched in as a translator.

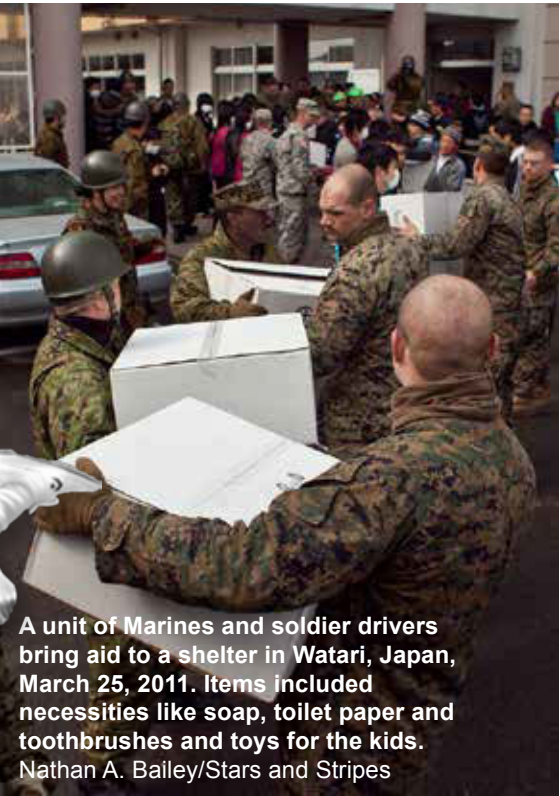
"I've been to half a dozen major disasters for Stripes and this was the biggest in terms of damage," Robson said. "My first impression, it was amazing to see massive ships, including a container ship, lifted out of the sea, to see probably hundreds of cars just wrecked by the flood, even fishing boats and commercial boats in the street."

The reporting team set up shop in the city of Sendai, hard hit by the tsunami.

"We were living on MREs," Robson said. "There was a major aftershock, a really heavy quake, it actually killed people. I remember thinking I might run outside the house, but I remember thinking the other people might think I abandoned them."

Sugiyama logged about a month on reporting trips, going back and forth to the disaster zone.

"What we saw when we first got there was devastating," she said. "It was nothing that I even imagined."



A unit of Marines and soldier drivers bring aid to a shelter in Watari, Japan, March 25, 2011. Items included necessities like soap, toilet paper and toothbrushes and toys for the kids. Nathan A. Bailey/Stars and Stripes

Marines from Okinawa and Camp Fuji play rock, paper, scissors with children at an elementary school shelter in Ishinomaki, Japan, April 4, 2011. They delivered aid and helped clean up the school grounds after a devastating 9.0-magnitude earthquake and tsunami. Nathan A. Bailey/Stars and Stripes



Japan Air Self-Defense Force personnel at Chitose Air Base help load pallets of food and supplies onto a U.S. Air Force C-130H from Yokota Air Base during Operation Tomodachi. Grant Okubo/Stars and Stripes





Robson, Sugiyama and Bailey met a family doing its best to clean up its business, a small bar. What struck Sugiyama was how positive they were. Their attitude amid so much destruction touched an emotional chord.

“They were just doing what they had to do,” she said. “The more I think about it, I kind of choke up. That’s when I realized what I was getting into. I just can’t get emotional in front of these people, that’s not what they want to see.”



**Sugiyama** The hardest part of her experience was approaching a woman looking for her missing sister in a temporary morgue in a gymnasium. “I really didn’t want to do it,” she said, “but I knew that was my job, to do that. I forced myself to do that.” The woman didn’t find her sister, but Sugiyama gave her information on other sites where bodies were collected. The woman was grateful for that information, which gave Sugiyama some comfort knowing she’d helped in some way.

“It was a horrible thing that happened, but it was a great experience for me to be able to work with the journalists,” she said. “It gave me a better understanding of what Stars and Stripes is all about.”

Enduring Legacy

The newspaper faced an existential crisis in 2020, when budget cuts and a proposal to eliminate funding cast doubt on its future.

Public outcry, bipartisan support from lawmakers and the dedication of its staff ensured its survival. The episode highlighted the enduring importance of independent military journalism and Stars and Stripes’ vital role in informing service members around the world.

Meanwhile, a once-in-a-century pandemic crept across the world, complicating the U.S. military presence in the Indo-Pacific.

Stars and Stripes reporters rose to the challenge, documenting the military response and tense relations with host countries as COVID-19 claimed hundreds of lives and forced millions into seclusion.

Reporters brought readers an exclusive interview with a 23-year-old soldier at Camp Carroll, South Korea—the first U.S. service member infected with COVID-19 in February 2020.

The following month, they covered the first active-duty service member to die of the disease—a 41-year-old chief petty officer aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt. The outbreak on the aircraft carrier, which was diverted to Guam, led to the removal of its skipper and the resignation of the Navy secretary.

As the pandemic subsided, Stars and Stripes reflected on lessons learned, exploring changes in relationships with America’s allies, adversaries and host countries, as well as the pandemic’s effects on the U.S. economy and military readiness.



Spc. Angel Ruszkiewicz, 21, a combat camera specialist from Milwaukee, Wis., reads a Stars and Stripes at the passenger terminal on a coalition base in Erbil, Iraq, on Monday, Dec. 23, 2019, before a flight to Syria. Chad Garland/Stars and Stripes



Military members stationed at Yokota Air Base play Magic the Gathering while wearing masks at the bases’s USO, Jan. 14, 2022. Kelly Agee/Stars and Stripes



A sign posted at the commissary on Yokota Air Base in Tokyo reminds shopper of the mandatory mask policy, Jan. 14, 2022. Kelly Agee/Stars and Stripes



Sailors and dependents from Naval Air Facility Atsugi donated thousands of pounds of goods to be delivered to those hit hardest by the massive earthquake and tsunami that devastated northeastern Japan on March 11, 2011. Erik Slavin/Stars and Stripes





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