

From the Corresponding Secretary

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Please Don't Fail Your Obligation To History

Have you read the newspaper article that was reprinted about David Gaston Alford in the In Remembrance section? He served in the military for 26 years covering two wars, but I'd bet that all of it that was documented as part of his personal history was that piece which depended upon his widow.

Those of us who served in World War II or Korea are dropping like flies. It will only get worse until we are all gone and if we don't tell our stories now they will be buried with us. To some extent we can say that about those who served in Vietnam. If your experiences are like mine they are not militarily important or significant to our overall national history, and certainly will not win any literary awards. But the time we served was an important part of our lives and it was important to our families. They will be more important to our descendants and their kin in the years to come.

Most of you have seen or read Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*. I've read it and I know that many of us have far more interesting things in our experience than much of what was included in that book. Some of you have read Stephen Ambrose's *Band of Brothers* and/or you saw the HBO special that ran for about ten weeks. That was great and though it was primarily about one company of paratroopers it did have some personal history. I was especially attracted to that one because I spent eight years in the paratroops.

Another such work is *Remembering The Forgotten War - Korea: 1950-1953* which was published by The History Book Club with stories by club members. I know that many of you can outdo most of the articles in that book.

At the present time I am reading *The Secrets of Inchon - The Untold Story of the Most Daring Covert Mission of the Korean War* which is also especially interesting

to me because I spent 18 months at Inchon. But the neat thing about this book is that it was written shortly after the Korean war and put away in a safety deposit box for decades. Gene Clark's courage is equaled only by his modesty. He wrote this story because he felt his Korean comrades who shared the harrowing risks deserved to be remembered. He also thought it was something his wife, Enid, and his children, Genine and Roger, would enjoy reading. But he never made the slightest attempt to publish it during his lifetime. Long after the author's death his family found it and sent it to a friend and asked if it was worthy of publication. This one is fantastic because it is about this one Navy guy who spends two weeks in September 1950, with only South Korean military assistants and civilians, in the Inchon harbor gathering data for the invasion that General MacArthur had promised would not fail. He did not write it for publication, but rather just to pass on to his family. You need to write yours for your family, but please share it with other AAFA members.

It is being done in various ways all around us and we must not miss the opportunity to tell our stories. You and I are not likely to create anything worthy of publication other than in AAFA ACTION - or at least I won't - but we ought to get it done and done now. In many cases wives, widows or children can do great job in place of the veteran.

We have had some reports similar to what I'm talking about. See the *Getting To Know* piece done by Mike Alford in AAFA ACTION #49, Summer 2000, pg 61. That one was good but not as complete as Mike could have made it.

I'll try to lead off in a future issue with something and I want you to promise that you will do the best you can from your end.