

The Guilfordian

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Opinions expressed in editorials and letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff and editorial board.

The editors reserve the right to edit all submissions for length, style, and taste.

Submissions

The Guilfordian encourages submissions. Typed articles and letters are due by 6:00 p.m. Monday. Letters are limited to 250 words or less and must include author's name, phone number and P.O. Box. Write to:

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Staff meetings are held weekly in the Passion Pit, second floor, Founders Hall, Monday evenings at 9 o'clock. All are welcome.

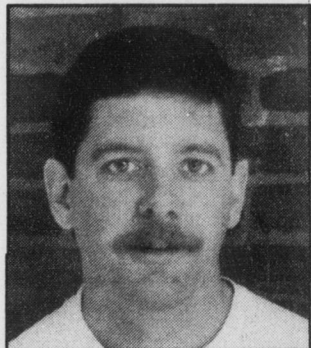
The nature of war

Bob Clegg
 Staff Writer

When I was a twelve-year-old boy, I was riveted by the gripping magnetism of toy soldiers. I was fonder of the tiny ones, maybe an inch or so tall, properly balanced so they didn't need those wide, fake-looking plastic bases. Oh, the glorious wars I presided over in the middle of my bedroom floor! Hundreds of miniature army men, clad in military shades of green and blue, reenacted all the great battles of American history. Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, Jackson's sweeping flanking maneuver at Antietam, Sherman's crushing onslaught at Chickamauga all unfolded once again. My flickering forefinger tipped the toy figures as the shrapnel of ideology picked them off one by one.

At about the same time, the movie "Patton: Salute to a Rebel" was big news. My buddies and I went to see it, and we all left convinced that George Patton sits next to God when Jesus goes out for a coffee break. Our Sunday School teacher, who fought in the European theater in World War II, had actually shaken the hand of the storied general in the days after the Battle of the Bulge. We took it as a challenge to see how long we could forestall the start of Sunday School lessons by peppering him with questions of his experiences overseas. The glamour of life behind the lines, of sauntering about as the quintessential liberator and all-around good guy, fueled my fantasies like petroleum gushing beneath a burning oil rig.

Responding to my constant blathering about military history, my dad suggested I ask Walter Middleton about his time in the army.



Clegg

Old Walt was at least fifty, ancient to my mind, and I had always pictured him as a rather broken-down mountain preacher who had probably never traveled outside of Jackson County. But Dad filled me in on Walter's other side--he had been captured in the Philippines in 1942, had participated in the infamous Bataan death march, and had defied his Japanese captors by surviving three long years in a Manchurian prison.

A few weeks later, I found myself in the back seat of my dad's car, riding with Dad and Walter to Camp Truett, a Baptist camp about an hour from home. Somewhere on the back side of Chunky Gal Mountain, I began to pester Walter about the war. He opened up, slowly at first; something inside told me to shut up and listen, that this was going to be good. Strangely, though, Walter didn't have a lot to say about meeting generals and learning foreign languages. He worked backwards, first telling about life in prison, about fellow soldiers who would give up on the inside, lose some intangible glint in their eyes, waste away, and die within weeks. He told about the death march, whose victims had their skulls crushed with rifle butts in retribution for falling alongside the road, while

the survivors drank their own urine in their struggle to endure the seven-day, 140-mile hike with no food and water.

Walter was talking as a man lost in a time warp, and I was rapt with attention. He reflected back to a hot afternoon when he was alone in the jungle. He was patrolling the American perimeter along the north end of the isthmus. Edging his way around a stumpy papaya tree that had been sheared off by a mortar, he suddenly came face to face with a solitary Japanese infantryman about forty yards away. Their eyes met in the same instant. Walter got off the first shot, but missed, and quickly ducked behind a coconut tree. The other guy fired, his bullet embedding in the trunk with a sharp thud, then jumped behind a tree of his own. Walter peeked out, squeezed off another round, and hit the Japanese soldier's tree, too--but the bullet went all the way through. His adversary crumpled, and the encounter was over.

As starving men, the Americans stranded on Bataan only naturally searched the bodies of the dead for anything that might be useful. Thus, Walter crept over and combed the pockets of his vanquished foe. Like men everywhere, this fellow had a wallet. Inside, Walter found the usual official-looking documents, inscribed in Japanese. The one with the picture must have been a driver's license, and another one looked something like a military identification card. Tucked inside a little flap, concealed deep inside the wallet, he found a flat little packet of foil. Inside were pictures--one of a pretty Japanese woman, another of three beaming children, and a third of the woman and the children posed together. A family portrait.

See WAR page 6

Creative Resistance

Naomi Blass
 Staff Writer

Course: Women's History 101, Text: The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image, by Anne Baring and Jules Cashford.

During the Paleolithic period, the Mother Goddess is the central religious figure through most of Europe and Asia. She comes in many forms, as varied as those who worship Her. For some, the caves of northern Spain and southwestern France are Her womb, Her sanctuary, and "entering one of these caves is like making a journey into another world, one which is inside the body of the Goddess" (16).

And what if one were to look outside the Mother's womb? At night the moon shines brilliantly in all of its different phases. "The crescent moon [is] the young girl, the maiden; the full moon [is] the pregnant woman, the mother; the darkening moon [is] the wise old woman, whose light [is] within" (18).

Contrary to our modern linear mode of thinking, of distinct points, a beginning and an end, the moon represents cyclical time, "a pattern of growing and decaying endlessly renewed" (19). Similarly, unlike the Judeo-Chris-

tian religion, individual men and women are not separate from the Goddess. Rather, "everything [is] an expression of the Goddess" (19). Individuals, animals, plants, insects, etc., are manifestations of the Goddess, who live in a confirmed, existing relationship with Her (19).

The dark phase of the moon as mentioned above represents an important step in the developmental stage of human consciousness and thought.

"When the dark phase of the moon is included as an essential part of the continuing cycle of light, it requires the capacity to hold at present in the mind an image of what is not actually visible to the eye" (20).

Abstract thinking, imagination, may have developed from "the understanding of the moon's phases as four instead of three" (20). Secondly, viewing "the darkening moon [as] the wise old woman, whose light [is] within" depicts a positive image of elderly woman, and the process of aging in general.

Think how different this reality is from our modern society where elders, women and men, are considered sexless, or asexual, feeble-minded, slow, useless, or worthless, and where death is no longer a rebirth. Think.

Grief, Loss, and Sadness?

We are offering a support group and individual aid for those who are affected by the loss of a family member, or close friend, or by anticipated loss due to illness.

Come share sadness, helpful thoughts, and common experiences in hopes of ongoing and deeper understanding.

The group will meet on Wednesday from 1:30 to 3:00 P.M. in the Hut beginning on Nov. 3.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or needs. Jane Caris, Max Carter, Dick Dyer