

Press Release

Contact: Sandra McGee
bmcpublications@aol.com
415-435-1883

“Little has been written about service in the Naval Armed Guard in which nearly 145,000 men served...McGee remedies this with a book that has value for historians.”

—*Naval History Magazine*

“Bluejacket Odyssey, 1942-1946” is a memoir within a military history

SANTA BARBARA, CA, November 2000—*Bluejacket Odyssey, 1942-1946: Guadalcanal to Bikini, Naval Armed Guard in the Pacific* by William L. McGee is a “memoir within a military history” spanning the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to the atomic bomb testing at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

McGee, a Montana country boy, joined the U.S. Navy in 1942 on his seventeenth birthday. He had to agree to serve in the regular Navy until he was twenty-one. These minority enlistments were tagged a “kid's cruise”, but McGee was no kid when his four-year hitch ended.

He was assigned to the Naval Armed Guard, the branch of the Navy whose mission it was to protect merchant ships and their valuable cargo and crew from enemy attacks and sabotage.

Within weeks after gunnery training, McGee was in the middle of two major enemy attacks by air and torpedo at Guadalcanal. When the war ended, the author had a front-row seat aboard the heavy cruiser USS *Fall River*, the target fleet flagship, for the atomic bomb tests at Bikini.

Along the way, he experienced the ups and downs of Navy life—boot camp in Idaho, life on merchant ships, duty in the Fleet, “stewed, screwed and tattooed in Tijuana” (well, almost), endless days of drills, drills and more drills, followed by moments of sheer terror.

Bluejacket Odyssey is the story of a generation of Armed Guard, seen through the eyes of a young volunteer. Drawing on his daily shipboard journal, interviews with former shipmates, records and declassified documents from the National Archives, and exhaustive historical research, McGee has produced an engrossing book, all from the unique perspective of an enlisted man who has “*been there and done that.*”

“Your book brought tears to my eyes. A must read for all veterans and their descendants.”

—Charles Espy, Lt. (jg), USNR, SS *Thomas Nelson*, Armed Guard C. O.

The book is an honest, factual story—laced with humor—that takes the reader for a ride on Liberty ships, Victory ships, fast transports, destroyers, minesweepers and the heavy cruiser, USS *Fall River*. The reader will experience history up-close at such now legendary places as Guadalcanal, New Guinea, the Marshalls, Marianas and kamikaze attacks in Leyte Gulf, the Philippines.

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From Japanese Zeros, nuclear tests, and South Sea native customs, to marathon poker games, *Bluejacket Odyssey, 1942-1946* is a close-up view of the life of an Armed Guard sailor as it really happened.

Availability

Direct from the publisher at www.BMCpublications.com or from Amazon.com.

Bluejacket Odyssey, 1942-1946: Guadalcanal to Bikini, Naval Armed Guard in the Pacific

by William L. McGee

\$35.00, softcover, 546 pp 250 b/w photos plus appendices, bibliography and index, 6" x 9", ISBN-13: 978- 0-9701678-0-4, (2000). Foreword by C. A. Lloyd, Chairman, USN Armed Guard Veterans of WWII.

To the Media

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About the Authors

William L. McGee enjoyed a 32-year career in the film, radio and TV industry. He is the author of numerous books including the acclaimed Pacific war trilogy, *Amphibious Operations in the South Pacific in World War II*. He and his co-author/wife Sandra have appeared on numerous radio and TV programs.

About BMC Publications

BMC Publications is an imprint of Broadcast Marketing Company ("BMC") founded in 1971 by William L. McGee to provide sales support and training services to radio and TV stations. Titles in print include *Amphibious Operations in the South Pacific in World War II*, *A Pacific War Trilogy*; *Bluejacket Odyssey, 1942-1946: Guadalcanal to Bikini, Naval Armed Guard in the Pacific*; *The Divorce Seekers: A Photo Memoir of a Nevada Dude Wrangler*; and *Learning To Cope with Sight Loss: Six Weeks at a VA Blind Rehabilitation Center*. For more information, visit www.BMCpublications.com.

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