

Sights&Sounds

The Belly Gunner

By Carol Edgemon Hipperson

Carol Edgemon Hipperson, '89 M.A.-English, continues to win praise for her young adult book about the World War II experiences of Dale Aldrich, a real-life gunner on a B-17 bomber.

To date, her book has been awarded the "Worthy of Note" recognition from the Virginia Library Association, was named a "Notable Social Science Studies Book for Young People" by the National Council for Social Studies, was listed as one of the "Top Ten Junior High/Middle School Titles" by the Kansas chapter of the National Education Association and won the award for "Best Book, Social Studies, Grades 7-12" from the Society of School Librarians International.

After 10 three-hour interviews conducted with Aldrich in 1995, Hipperson constructed an engaging first-person narrative that captures the matter-of-fact style and attitude of the World War II flying veteran.

Without a single attempt at sounding heroic or important, Aldrich recalls his life leading up to and including his service in the war, from being drafted to his early flight training; from his first missions over Europe to his being shot down somewhere over Holland; and from his imprisonment in Stalag 17 to the end of the war and his eventual release and return to the United States.

"The book is intended to be read by anyone who wants to know — or be reminded of — what it was like to be an American soldier in combat during World War II," says Hipperson, a freelance writer and librarian for the Fairchild Air Force Base Heritage Museum.

She notes that the book is distinctive in that, unlike many other books about World War II, it is one of few appropriate for grade 7-12 reading/interest level that also "does double duty in the classroom."

"Students not only learn basic World War II history and geography when they read *The Belly Gunner*, they see the kinds of memories they can expect when they talk with their grandparents or other veterans of the World War II generation in their communities."

The book contains many black-and-white photographs from World War II, drawings and photos of aircraft referred to in the narrative, a time line of World War II events and a thorough glossary



and index.

Hipperson says that her experience in English and history classes at Eastern encouraged her to become a writer of nonfiction.

"I remain grateful to Ursula Hegi and Bob Olafson in the English Department; Fred Lauritsen and James Kieswetter in history; and Nancy Todd in library sciences," she says. "Above all others, I thank EWU for persuading such a famous author as Patrick F. McManus to remain on the faculty long enough for me to take all his courses in graduate school. If I know any-

thing about writing nonfiction, I learned it from him."

The book is available at Auntie's and Barnes and Noble in Spokane, and can also be purchased online at: www.millbrookpress.com or by special order through any retail bookstore.

The Lamb

A novel by Bruce Burnett

What if a scientist could somehow obtain a sample of the blood of Jesus? With DNA testing, what could we learn? And what secrets might be revealed that are best left unknown? This is the premise of the first novel by Bruce Burnett (B.S., biology '87), who is currently a research scientist at Ungen Pharmaceuticals in Colorado.

"I was sitting at my laboratory bench," recalls Burnett, "frustrated with life and science while reading a DNA sequence from a failed cloning experiment when it hit me: What if we found the blood of Christ and what if it coincidentally matched the DNA from a scientist?"

The Lamb, published by Writer's Club Press of iUniverse, Inc., centers around a unique child with special abilities. As an adult, he becomes a professor at Harvard and receives a vial from a collaborator in Israel who believes it to contain the blood of Christ stored for over two millennia by his followers.

After performing DNA fingerprinting, Dr. Adon finds that the DNA exactly

matches his own. This sets in motion a chain of events that could destroy the scientist, his family and the world.

"I began writing *The Lamb* in 1998 and finished in early 2001 before September 11th," said Burnett. "It's a little scary that some of the things I wrote back then have actually come true. I guess the writing was on the wall."

Burnett grew up in small Oregon towns and loved science, baseball and writing. After graduating valedictorian from Klamath Union High School in Klamath Falls, Ore., he went to college at the University of Puget Sound and then to EWU, where he played baseball and received his bachelor's degrees in biology and chemistry in 1987.

"I have fond memories of Eastern," says Burnett. "It was a great place to finish my undergraduate education, and I have fond memories of the people and the campus that continue to enrich my life."

Burnett regards Dr. Don Lightfoot, professor of biotechnology, as being instrumental in his choice of career.

"Undergraduates at Eastern can actually meet with their professors and even help with research," he says. "At Yale [where Burnett got his Ph.D. in biochemistry and biophysics in 1992] undergraduates are lucky to ever meet their professors, let alone help with research!"

Burnett's scientific research has encompassed such diverse topics as DNA recombination and repair, HIV replication, cloning of cancer genes for cell immortalization, hormone research, pain and inflammation, and genetic modulation of gene expression.

For a scientist to write a novel does not seem that odd to Burnett, who always enjoyed writing but postponed it for years while research consumed his time. He also wrote a screenplay and had sold it to a British film company in September 2001, but then the company backed out a few days later after the 9-11 disaster.

"It's important for science-minded people to dabble in the liberal and creative arts," says Burnett. "It's all critical to being a well-rounded person."

The Lamb, published by Writer's Club Press, is available at the EWU Bookstore, through Ingram Books, amazon.com, bn.com, barnesandnoble.com, target.com, Hallfiction.com and many other websites. Burnett will be in Cheney for a book signing Oct. 7 and 8. Call 359-2443 for specific times and locations.

