

# The James Jones Literary Society Newsletter

Vol. 8, Nos. 1 & 2 Winter 1998-1999

The Society newsletter is published quarterly.

Submissions of essays, features, anecdotes, photographs, etc., that pertain to author James Jones may be sent to the co-editors for publication consideration. Every attempt will be made to return material, if requested upon submission. Material may be edited for length, clarity and accuracy. Send submissions to R.R. 2, Box 401, Urbana, IL 61802

Ray Elliott and Vanessa Faurie, Co-Editors

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**Don't Miss This Year's Symposium On Long Island June 26, 1999, at Southampton College**

## **Special Guests**

**Norman Mailer, William Styron, Budd Schulberg, Betty Comden Have all agreed to discuss the life and work of James Jones at this milestone symposium for the Society. Other literary notables may also be there.**

## **WILL YOU?**

Please contact the Society if you think you will be able to join them. An estimated attendance will greatly assist the Society in finalizing plans for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Jones fans. Call Juanita Martin at 618-544-8657 or write to the Society at 11220 State Highway 1, Robinson, IL 62454 by MARCH 1.

Accommodations will be available in the Southampton College Dormitories at \$45 per person, per day. The college cafeteria and grill also will be open to symposium attendees. Plan to stay the weekend to explore Jones; New York. More complete information will be printed in the April newsletter.

## **Symposium Enjoys Revived Interest In Keeping Up With The Joneses**

The eighth annual symposium of The James Jones Literary Society, held in Robinson, Ill., Nov. 7, featured more childhood remembrances and a focus on two recent films that have brought renewed, wide-spread attention to James Jones and his work.

Jones friends Helen and Tinks Howe and Don Sackrider started off the first morning session with a collection of anecdotes and descriptions of Jones during the years he lived in and around Robinson. Vincennes University reference librarian and Society Web site administrator Richard King also shared a series of comments electronically submitted to the Web site from Jones fans literally throughout the world (See related story in this issue.)

The next session was new board president Ray Elliott's account of visiting the Australian set of *The Thin Red Line*. He described the scenes he saw filmed under the direction of Terrence Malick, as well as the conversations he had with actors and crew members about the filming of Jones' Guadalcanal novel.

After the lunch break and book-signing session, the 1998 James Jones First Novel Fellowship was presented to Judith Barnes for her novel-in-progress, *A Year in the Woods*, which was selected from a total of 470 submissions. Barnes received the \$2,500 award and read a selection from her work.

"It means so much to a beginning writer to have this support and acknowledgment of work done," Barnes later wrote in a thank-you note to the Society. "Mr. Jones must be smiling on you all for your continued support of writers. I am thoroughly braced and more eager than ever to keep on with it."

Barnes previously received the George Pascoe Miller Prize for best first chapter submission at the Squaw Valley Community of Writers Conference in August 1997. In February 1998, her short story, "Buffalo," appeared in *Faultline*, the literary journal published by the University of California at Irvine.

In the mid-1960s, she lived in Paris for two years and traveled in Africa, Europe, England and Canada. Barnes began writing five years ago and also has worked as an artist. She has written a half dozen short stories and is currently editing *A Year in the Woods*. She lives in Glendale, Calif., with her 15-year-old son and two cats.

This is the sixth year the Society has awarded the First Novel Fellowship. Four of the previous winning novels have been published. During the general meeting earlier in the day, the membership approved that the prize be increased to \$3,000 for 1999.

The afternoon concluded with a panel discussion about the filming of another Jones book, daughter Kaylie's *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, and then a screening of the film.

The author, husband Kevin Heisler and Don Sackrider described their experiences on the Merchant Ivory set, as well as other details of the making of the film that is a fictionalized version of the Jones family in Paris and then in America.

The symposium audience then watched the James Ivory-directed *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, starring Kris Kristofferson, Barbara Hershey and Leelee Sobieski, at a time when the film was only showing at a very limited number of venues in the country.

--**Vanessa Faurie**

### **Minutes Of The 1998 Annual Society Business Meeting**

The general meeting of The James Jones Literary Society was called to order by President Jerry Bayne at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 7, 1998, in the auditorium of the Zwermann Arts Center at Lincoln Trail College, Robinson, Ill.

Minutes of the 1997 general meeting and the treasurer's report were passed to members, along with reports from committee chairs. Dave Nightingale moved approval of the minutes. Michael Lennon seconded the motion, which carried.

The report by treasurer Juanita Martin stated that the Society's operating fund cash balance on Jan. 1, 1998, was \$6,435.54. During the year, a total of \$8,321.29 was received, and \$8,810.02 was disbursed, leaving a balance of \$5,946.81. Marilou Becker moved that the treasurer's report be accepted. Vanessa Faurie seconded the motion, which was approved.

Finance committee chair Warren Mason reported that the Charles Robb bequest had provided \$69,903.75 to the Society's General Investment Fund, with donations and interest bringing the Fund's total to \$73,067.94 by the end of June 1998. The Finance Committee opted to invest \$71,000 of that sum, placing \$50,000 in a two-year Certificate of Deposit at the First Crawford State Bank in Robinson, Ill., on June 6, 1998. As of Oct. 29, 1998, the value of the CD was \$51,152.05. On July 20, 1998, the remaining \$21,000 was divided into three investments of \$7,000 each and placed in no-load mutual funds through Fidelity Investments of Boston, Mass. Current value of the three investments stands at \$19,894.05.

Don Sackrider reported to the membership the Board of Directors' decision to seek independent status for the Society, stating, "We don't want to separate from Lincoln Trail College, but we need to become a separate tax entity." Sackrider then moved that The James Jones Literary Society maintain its headquarters at Lincoln Trail College, but, upon request of the Lincoln Trail College Foundation, seek independent nonprofit status at the federal level. Juanita Martin seconded the motion, which was approved by the membership. President Jerry Bayne named Don Sackrider as head of the effort to change the Society status, and Sackrider accepted the appointment.

Warren Mason reported on the progress in the effort to have the U.S. Postal Service issue a James Jones commemorative stamp. In February 1998, the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee nominated the Society's proposal for consideration. Mason said that in a recent conversation, the manager of the Stamp Department indicated that a decision would be made in the next 12 to 18 months. Mason suggested that Society members send brief letters of testimony and encouragement to the Advisory Committee, supporting issuance of a James Jones commemorative stamp in 2001--the 80th anniversary of Jones' birth and the 50th anniversary of the publication of *From Here to Eternity*. President Jerry Bayne reinforced that suggestion to the membership.

Michael Lennon reported that 470 entries were received in the Society's First Novel Fellowship Award competition. Forty-five entries were chosen as semi-finalists and seven as finalists. Lennon moved that the Fellowship Award be increased from \$2,500 to \$3,000 for 1999. Don Sackrider seconded the motion, which was approved by the membership. Lennon then moved that the Fellowship Award be increased to \$5,000 in the year 2000 with the understanding that Don Sackrider would make up the dollar deficiency in any year in which the First Novel Fellowship Endowment Fund failed to produce sufficient funds for the award--as Sackrider had offered to do. The motion was seconded by Maxine Zwermann and approved by the membership.

President Jerry Bayne announced that no George Hendrick Research Award would be given by the Society this year.

Under New Business, a proposal to hold the Society's 1999 symposium in Southampton, Long Island, New York, was discussed, following Kaylie Jones' statement that the Southampton campus of Long Island University had agreed to host the symposium in June or July 1999 and offer dormitory rooms at nominal cost to those attending. President Jerry Bayne appointed a committee of Ray Elliott, Vanessa Faurie, Kathy Stillwell, Kevin Heisler, Kaylie Jones and Warren Mason to work on the 1999 symposium.

Michael Lennon commented, "It may be difficult to pull off, but it's a James Jones year, and we are wise to ride that wave and capitalize on it." He suggested that it may be possible to enlist such speakers as literary notables Norman Mailer, Joseph Heller, George Plimpton or William Styron if the symposium is held in Southampton. A show of hands from the membership indicated approximately 80 percent of those present would plan to attend a symposium in Southampton.

Carl Becker inquired whether alternative plans should be considered in case the Southampton locale proves unworkable. Helen Howe replied that if the Southampton plan cannot be implemented, this fact would be known in sufficient time for other plans to be made. Michael Lennon warned that it might not be possible to make the First Novel Fellowship Award as a summer symposium, as it might be impossible for all the 1999 entries to be read and judged by that time, and the award might have to be made later in the year. Dave Nightingale suggested that in that case, the award might be made in the winner's hometown.

The following amendments to the Society's Bylaws were moved and approved by the membership:

Helen Howe moved that the wording to Bylaw No. 5 be changed to read: "The Society will meet each year at a place to be determined by the Board of Directors. The meeting will be held in Robinson every three years." Michael Lennon amended that wording to "at least every three years" and seconded the motion.

Michael Lennon moved that in Bylaw No. 8 the number of members of the Board of Directors be changed from 21 to 24; that the office of Archivist-Historian be added to the list of officers; and that the clause, "The treasurer will be an employee of Lincoln Trail College" be dropped. The motion was seconded by Kathy Stillwell.

Kathy Stillwell moved that in Bylaw No. 9 the clause, "Lincoln Trail College shall oversee the financial affairs of the Society" be eliminated. The motion was seconded by Dave Nightingale.

Michael Mullen moved that Bylaw No. 10, Finance and Technology be added to the list of standing committees established; that the George Hendrick Research Award be added to the enumeration of Society awards; and that the clause, "The president of Lincoln Trail College will establish a Selection Committee for a scholarship award. This scholarship shall be awarded to a student who is, was or will be a participant in the creative writing course on the Lincoln Trail College campus" be stricken. Juanita Martin seconded the motion.

Michael Lennon placed in nomination the names of seven members of the Board of Directors-Ray Elliott, Vanessa Faurie, Tom Wood, Don Sackrider, Juanita Martin, Kaylie Jones and Michael Lennon-for re-election to a term on the Board through the year 2001; and added the nomination of Dwight Connelly for election to the Board for a term through the year 2001. Dave Nightingale seconded. The election carried.

President Jerry Bayne then offered a slate of officers for election: President, Ray Elliott; Vice President, Don Sackrider; Secretary, Margot Nightingale; Treasurer, Juanita Martin; and Archivist-Historian, Tom Wood. Kathy Stillwell seconded the nomination. The election carried.

Adjournment was moved by Helen Howe and seconded by Kathy Stillwell, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

**--Margot Nightingale, Secretary**

### **Sign On To Support Jones Commemorative Stamp**

One of the goals of the Society is to have a James Jones commemorative stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service in the year 2001. That year marks the 80th anniversary of Jones' birth and the 50th anniversary of the Publication of *From Here to Eternity*.

The proposal has already moved past two major hurdles and now awaits a final decision within the next 12-18 months by the Stamp Advisory Committee.

Society members and all other interested parties are encouraged to send brief, one-page letters of testimony and support for a James Jones commemorative stamp to the following address:

**Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee  
C/O Stamp Management  
U.S. Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20260-2437**

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

### **Public Awareness Of James Jones At A Pivotal Stage**

The first time I remember hearing about James Jones was in 1951, not long after the publication of *From Here To Eternity*. I lived about 20 miles from Robinson, Ill., and rarely made it into the county seat. But I did read the newspapers and had heard about the controversial World War II novel that included words not found in books of the day or used in polite company.

I was just old enough to begin understanding what was going on in the world. Friends and relatives gathered for funerals at one of the local churches every time a body was shipped home for a long time after the war. Grim-faced former GIs fell out in tight-fitting uniforms to pay respects to comrades who never made it back alive.

One of my cousins had landed at Normandy on D-Day with several other area men, including Arkie Ashby, the man Jones later used as a model for Bama in the post-war novel *Some Came Running*. The barber who cut my hair had landed on Iwo Jima with a Marine rifle company.

I never tired of the war stories I occasionally managed to hear from them by listening quietly or asking questions when I could no longer stand not asking.

One Sunday at my grandmother's house, I cornered an uncle who lived in Robinson and asked him about Jones and his work. I went on about how great I thought it was that he had written such a famous book and that he lived in Robinson. At 11, I could hardly wait to read the novel.

"It's not fit for you to read," my uncle said, and he said he and many other people in town didn't think much of Jones or what he had written. "It's just full of filth."

I was stunned. It had never occurred to me that anyone wouldn't be proud of a native son who had just written a best-seller, touted as one of the best books to come out of World War II. But I soon learned that many people did feel just that way, although many of them probably hadn't read the book, didn't know Jones or both.

Against that mindset, I was in high school before I read *From Here To Eternity*. The book was among those I read in study hall, stuck between the pages of a history book that gave the larger historical pictures of period but failed to show how life really was for people like I knew.

Often times, I had books snatched from me in mid-sentence because they "weren't fit for me to read." Luckily, I managed to hang on to the Jones book and reread it more than once over the years.

In that time, I came to believe that James Jones captured, more clearly than anyone else I'd read, the beginning of World War II and that moment in time that marks the beginning of the modern world era. Sometimes his sentence structure and syntax drove me crazy. But each time I'd reread one of his novels, I came away with a growing appreciation of what he had to say and a better understanding of his style.

Whether Jones was a nice guy or a jerk-and I suspect that like most of us, he was a little of both-it seems to be that it must be acknowledged that his perspective of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the effects of the resulting war on the men who fought it is one that will be looked to for insight into the war and his times for years to come.

Even though the public kept reading his work in large numbers, Jones was mostly ignored by the literary and academic communities for years and continued to be looked upon unfavorably by many in his hometown. Arkie once told me Jones was an SOB and let it go at that, unwilling to elaborate.

For a long time, you had to look hard to find any evidence that a man named Jim Jones ever lived and worked in Robinson, Ill. Then after his death in 1977, books, a documentary and the Society came along to keep his name alive and his works read.

And now, nearly 50 years after the publication of *From Here To Eternity* and more than 20 years after his death, the Jones Renaissance that has been gradually building has escalated greatly with director Terrence Malick's stunning film adaptation of *The Thin Red Line*, often touted as the novelist's best book, and by the Merchant Ivory production of Kaylie Jones' novel, *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, a touching ode to a loving father.

Nearly 10 years after The James Jones Literary Society was formed to increase public awareness of the work and the man who spoke for the fighting men of what Tom Brokaw has called "the greatest generation," the Society is holding its first conference outside the Midwest. With many of Jones' old friends and writing contemporaries planning to participate in the Long Island conference, it promises to be one of the best to date.

In the next few years, conferences are being considered for Paris, where the Joneses lived for many years; for Austin, Texas, where the Jones papers are housed at the University of Texas; for Urbana-Champaign, Ill., where the original and unexpurgated manuscript of *From Here to Eternity* is kept in the University of Illinois Library's Rare Book Room; and other places with James Jones connections or interests.

As the greatest generation dies off-and they're dying at the rate of hundreds a day now-and classes spring up at universities and colleges across the country to study the World War II years and its writers, the Society hopes to see the works of James Jones included in the required reading lists.

While the new movie of *The Thin Red Line* has been a boon to increasing the public's awareness of the works of James Jones, increasing membership in the Society, holding symposia that consider his work and getting it in the curriculum are continuing keys to achieving the Society's mission.

That's no easy task with all the competition for attention in today's world. So drum up a few new members, start making plans for Long Island and Paris and...wherever...and take another look at James Jones' work.

It grows on you. That's a fitting destiny for a kid who left Robinson, Ill., more than 50 years ago on a journey that he probably hadn't even conceived in his wildest dreams.

**--Ray Elliot, President**

### **The Thin Red Line: A Review**

Terrence Malick's film version of James Jones' *The Thin Red Line* has been eagerly awaited. It fulfills expectations concerning an excellent literary adaptation and a cinematic vision rarely seen in Hollywood today.

Like the film version of *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, Malick uses the original as a basis upon which to construct his particular treatment but in a much more visually creative and exciting manner than the Merchant Ivory adaptation. Those seeking a straightforward "film of the book" approach will be disappointed.

Many characters and incidents from the novel are either changed or discarded entirely. But Malick understands the necessity of change for appropriate cinematic transformation. He directs a film which parallels, but never imitates, the literary heights of Jones' original novel.

Malick's *The Thin Red Line* is a great cinematic epic in the tradition of Hollywood classics such as von Stroheim's *Greed*, Welles' *Citizen Kane* and Cimino's unjustly abused *Heaven's Gate*. The film also demands the same serious responsibility incumbent on any reader of Jones' fiction, namely close attentiveness to the text and constant rereading to excavate its profound, creative insights.

Malick is obviously familiar with all of Jones' work. He not only creatively adapts the spirit of the original novel, but also places it within the context of a classic literary tradition familiar to Jones.

Malick begins the film with several visually poetic scenes foreshadowing an accessible symbolic choice of narration. It opens in darkness with jungle sounds predominant on the soundtrack before showing a crocodile moving toward green slimy water and submerging itself with the depths. A dissolve reveals the jungle and evocative scenes of a peaceful Melanesian village society whose harmony with nature appeals to Witt, who is temporarily AWOL.



The audience hears the peaceful, religious chant of a village chorus, sees children swimming underwater and enters Witt's subjective narration (one of several in the film) as he ponders over dual competing powers in the universe. These are utopian desires and wartime militarism. The prologue not only connects Witt's vision to the classic search for a South Sea paradise seen in the writings of Robert Louis Stevenson, Herman Melville and Jack London, but also to the darker imagery of the jungle characteristic of Joseph Conrad.

This is one of several scenes where Malick extends Jones' original text into several visually poetic and symbolic directions. Many images also echo Emersonian transcendental themes within Jones' own fiction.

*The Thin Red Line* is more creative, humanitarian and mature than Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*. Japanese enemies are never demonized but viewed as suffering human beings no different from their American counterparts.

Malick develops a neglected cinematic tradition of humanizing the enemy seen in certain films by Samuel Fuller and also in Takakura Ken's role in Robert Aldrich's *Too Late the Hero*.

More could be written about a film needing several viewings to really appreciate its achievements. It is a major creative adaptation, different from but respectful towards a great war novel.

--**Tony Williams**

### **What Other Critics Are Saying...**

"Inevitably, moviegoers will split into *Saving Private Ryan* and *Thin Red Line* camps. I'd like to get my vote in now for the latter." --**Mick LaSalle, San Francisco Chronicle**

"Slower and less graphic than I was expecting. Also more visually inventive and beautiful than I could have imagined....go see this film. Now because it's a war film or because of one actor or another. Terrence Malick deserves all the credit he's gotten. Here is a film that never once finds itself compromised by some actor's 'Oscar moment' or dumbed-down plot developments or studio-required reconciling." --**Joe Hallenback, Ain't It Cool News**

"It is clear that Malick has things on his mind other than the specifics of what it took to turn the tide of the war in the Pacific. Things like the Garden of Eden, Milton's Paradise Lost, mankind as a collective embodiment of the two extremes of nature and other lofty but hardly obscure notions." --**Todd McCarthy, Daily Variety**

"Though its starting point was a book full of gut reactions and detailed particulars, Malick has moved the material to a different plane. Disjointed poetic effects and ravishing physical beauty now supplant the nuts and bolts of wartime experience, even if this film--like *Saving Private Ryan*, with which it happens so bizarrely to overlap--depicts a military landing on a beach and a terrifying assault on a hillside bunker. For all their surface similarities, Steven Spielberg's film was about character and Malick's is about spirit." --**Janet Maslin, The New York Times**

See the full reviews and others on the Internet at Raging Bull's *The Thin Red Line* Unofficial Page ( <http://members.xoom.com/thinredline/index.html> ). This site also provides links to articles on Terrence Malick, the cast and production, historical links and more.

## **For Cause Or Comrade?**

Cox Newspapers editor in chief Arnold Rosenfeld had an essay entitled "*Private Ryan* good, but not best," published Sept. 3 in the *Dayton Daily News*. Rosenfeld argues that "the finding of Pvt. Ryan, is long and in search of a larger theme." He contends a "weightier theme" is warranted and that such a theme is present in a 1957 film, *Paths of Glory*, starring Kirk Douglas. Since the group I saw *Private Ryan* with was almost speechless when it ended, I rented the video of *Paths* to see how the two films might be compared.

In *Paths*, a French colonel (Douglas as Col. Dax) defends three soldiers court-martialed for cowardice after failing to seize a German strongpoint. The order for this impossible mission had its origin with an "incompetent and indifferent" general staff officer and was then transmitted to a corrupt field commander--a general concerned with his own promotion and career above all else.

The "weightier" theme, holds Rosenfeld, "is the responsibility of governments and command." This may be a "weightier" theme, but it has long been a settled issue with professional historians. The incompetent French and British generals, notably Gen. Douglas Haig of the British Army, fought a war of attrition with no new ideas of how to attack.

When Haig ordered the British troops forward in the Battle of the Somme River on July 1, 1916, they incurred 57,000 casualties the first day--19,000 of them dead. He then continued to use the same stupid tactics. Incompetence and/or indifference of commanding officers plagued all the European armies that fought in World War I.

*Saving Private Ryan* is, as Pulitzer Prize essayist Charles Krauthammer says, a movie about GIs who did their duty. It is a stunning film because

-it sheds light on what war is really like for the common soldier;

-it bears witness to the daily life of the American infantryman coming under enemy fire from strafing, bombing, artillery and small arms fire;

-it brings home graphically the lessons one must learn to evolve from a green recruit to a real soldier; as James Jones in his book, *The Thin Red Line*, and E.B. Sledge in *With the Old Breed*, noted in their books, a combat soldier eventually comes to accept the fact that he won't survive the war;

-it lays bare the feelings and actions of the average soldier--the fear, anger, hate, regret, relief, hope and anxiety of combat experience;

-it speaks volumes about how profound it is to face sudden violent death on a daily basis at age 19--a time when life is supposed to begin not end;

-it brings to light and helps us understand WHY soldiers fight, i.e. why soldiers do their duty even when their own lives are put in harms way; and

-it gives testimony to the fact that soldiers see little cowardice and little heroism--rather what they see is men doing their duty in order to get along with their fellow soldiers. Soldiers take their turn in order to get along with the men in their immediate group.

*Paths of Glory* and *Saving Private Ryan* are cinematic polar opposites. *Paths of Glory* is an 86-minute film (12 minutes of combat) about French soldiers in World War I. It is heavily laden with ideological and patriotic reasons as the cause of why men fight; it shows us the static nature of trench warfare; and it focuses on the wartime role and perspective of upper echelon officers.

*Saving Private Ryan* is almost a three-hour film (about half of it showing the most harrowing combat scenes ever filmed) about American infantrymen in World War II. The movie is virtually devoid of the ideological and patriotic reasons of why men fight--instead it is comrade, not cause, that motivates the men in Capt. John Miller's (Tom Hanks) squad in this war of rapid movement. The perspective of warfare in *Private Ryan* is that of the common man--it is an infantryman's view of a war involving different kinds of combat--seaborne invasion, urban street fighting, countryside ambush and defense in holding an important bridge.

If the two films are compared, as they will be someday in the future, in terms of clarity of purpose, craftsmanship and persistence over time, Steve Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* will surely be judged as an important contribution to knowledge, while *Paths of Glory* sheds little new light on the nature of war.

**--Robert G. Thobaban, Former PFC, 111th Infantry, WWII, Pacific Theater**

## **The Wall**

James Jones died in Vietnam. 25 Jan 66.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 7 Oct 66.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 12 Nov 66.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 26 Jan 67.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 17 Jun 67.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 7 Sep 67.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 22 Oct 67.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 1 Aug 68.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 30 Aug 68.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 7 Oct 68.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 20 Nov 68.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 4 Dec 68.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 30 Jun 69.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 26 Oct 69.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 24 Nov 69.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 9 Jul 70.

James Jones died in Vietnam. 30 Nov 70.

**--David Petreman**

**Editor's Note: Petreman is an associate professor of modern languages at Wright State University. He learned that there are 17 James Joneses--more than any other name--listed on the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial known as The Wall.**

### **Some Great Comments From Society Web Site Visitors**

Now and then Tove and I would visit Jim and Gloria in their nearby apartment. He was writing *The Thin Red Line*. It was interesting to see how this famous writer worked. He sat at the typewriter in a bare room for three hours every morning without brooking interruptions or touching drink and wrote finished copy. Later, when they were moving into their spread on Isle St. Louis, Gloria showed me the mammoth electric hot water heater in the bathroom and explained that Jim wanted it because when he was writing *From Here To Eternity*, he lived in a trailer and he had never had enough hot water.

**--Kenneth Tindall**

James Jones is my favorite writer, and I have read most of his fiction work in English (although many of his novels were translated) while working in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Now I live in Ottawa, Canada, where I have managed to get hold of *The Pistol* and *Some Came Running* (unfortunately, only in a New American Library "Special Abridged Edition..."). The latter is a superb novel, better than his later work with non-war themes.

I would suggest that Jones has actually written a WWII tetralogy because *Some Came Running* follows the lives of much the same types of characters as *From Here To Eternity*, *The Thin Red Line* and *Whistle*.

...Thank you for an excellent Web site. I hope it contributes to revive interest in a great American author.

**--Srdjan Marjanovic**

James Jones is easily one of my favorite writers. For about six years, I've been reading his novels, and your Web site is a great reference for me. I've always felt that *Some Came Running* is one of the most overlooked books of its time.

**--Joe Ranger**

No memory of Jones dear friend except how great it was to read *Eternity* 20 years ago. Began it again last night and felt the tears come when I read that fine first paragraph of the first chapter.

What I find surprising after 20 years is the flowing, almost musical quality of the prose. I didn't notice that on first reading. Also the wisdom of the man. It's strange that the writer of this book is only 30 years of age. Warden also strikes me more forcefully than I remembered him.

You might be interested to know that Jones has many fans in Iceland. His books almost never appear at antique dealers; people hold on to them.

...By the way, are you aware of the recording Jones made? Selections from **The Thin Red Line** and *From Here To Eternity*. It was published by CMS Records in 1968.

...*FHTE* is not sentimental. And Jones does not fail with his women. *Eternity* is the most flawless, in conception, long novel I have ever read, the Russians included. All in all, I would not have wanted to see any cuts in it except for two words. When Bloom shoots himself, it goes like this: "What a silly thing to do, he thought, What a goddamn silly thing to do. You wont even be here to watch their faces.

"Bloom died."

I would have cut the last two words: "Bloom died." And would you not agree that that is a minor complaint to make about a novel totaling most likely some 350,000?

**--Elsa Benjaminsdottir, A Reader in Reyjavik, Iceland**

I have only appreciated Jones' work on the written page--in particular, **Some Came Running**, which I felt to be about one of the best depictions of American small-town life I have encountered.

**--Charles Therminy**

Thanks for the JJ home page! I joined the Society fairly recently and appreciate the resources. I especially appreciate hearing about peoples' response to *Some Came Running*, as it's always been one of my favorite books.

**--Damon Rarey**