

# Celebrating unsung heroes

By ANN CARRANZA  
FOR THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

When Jeane Slone started her first historical novel, "She Flew Bombers during WWII," she decided self-publishing was the only way to go.

According to her research, there was a strong niche market for books about World War II among history buffs, former military service members and women wanting to read about the variety of ways in which women worked during the war.

She also liked the idea of getting more than pennies-per-copy in royalties. Four books later, she also has an option for a TV series, with the pilot already written.

With the working title, "War Gals: Unsung American Heroines," Slone said the option is now being shopped by an unidentified (and time-strapped) Hollywood producer to others.

Slone, 66, has been writing steadily since she sold the day care center she owned in Se-



Jeane Slone

bastopol and moved to Healdsburg in 2007.

She lives with her husband, Dennis Ness, and has five adult children.

Her first four books concentrated on World War II and the women who took jobs where they could not work

previously.

Often considered "man's work," these jobs included being in military service, welding in shipyards and aircraft factories, cargo pilots, and working

on and flying bombers across the country.

The enlistment of men led to workforce gaps that opened to women.

About 350,000 women served in the armed forces while the percentage of women in the workforce increased from 27 percent to 37 percent, including nearly 25 percent of married women.

"I love to research about the amazing women of the 1940s," said Slone.

TURN TO AUTHOR » PAGE T2

## AUTHOR

CONTINUED FROM T1

There was a wave of liberation for women entering the workforce for the first time, and she wants to "keep it alive with my historical novels."

The books' protagonists are fiery, strong women, breaking ground in new fields and serving their country during World War II.

Each is a composite of historical figures Slone read about during her research.

"She Flew Bombers," is about the women pilots who ferried bombers around the country. "She Built Ships during WWII" focuses on a "Rosie the Riveter-type" character working in Richmond. "She was an American Spy during WWII" showed the human side of her protagonist

The last book of the World War II series, "She was a WWII

Photographer behind Enemy Lines" is the longest of the four books and was published this year.

Both of Slone's parents were in the Army during World War II, and Slone was the recipient of her mother's scrapbook tome. She originally considered writing about her mother's clerical work experiences during the war but found them unexciting. In the scrapbook, however, she found an article, "WASPS fly into WAC's Barracks," which piqued her interest. WASPS is an acronym for Women's Airforce Service Pilots, and WAC stands for Women's Army Corps.

As she researched the article, she found that women served in many unsung ways during the war. After finishing "She Flew

Bombers," she wanted to know what other jobs women did on the home front during the war, which led her to the Richmond shipyards, which in turn led her to wonder about women spies during the war. Her final questions led her to women war correspondents and her latest book.

Slone's research has led her to parachute in tandem in Cloverdale, to explore Prague during the winter and wander down a quiet lane in England to a spy museum.

In the "it's-a-small-world" way of Sonoma County, Slone met Buzzy Martin and read his book, "Don't Shoot, I'm the Guitar Man." He originally self-published the book, which was later picked up by publisher Penguin. His book is in production for the soon-to-be-released movie "Guitar Man," produced by Ray Robinson of Prodigy Entertainment.

Slone sent along one of her

books, "She Built Ships," to see if Robinson might be interested in producing one or more of her books. A month later, Robinson called her and said, "I love it. I don't have time to read but I got the flu. ..." He then introduced Slone to a screenwriter, who went on to write a synopsis of the book, called in the screen world, "a bible."

The Southern California screenwriter, who asked to be referred to by her first name only, Laurie, said the book would make a good TV series and offered to pitch it for Slone.

Laurie met a cousin of a well-known producer, who told his relative about the project. The anonymous producer purchased the option to all four books.

Then Laurie called and said the producer wanted to meet with them. Robinson offered invaluable advice to Slone, as she was preparing for a meeting in Hollywood with the producer.

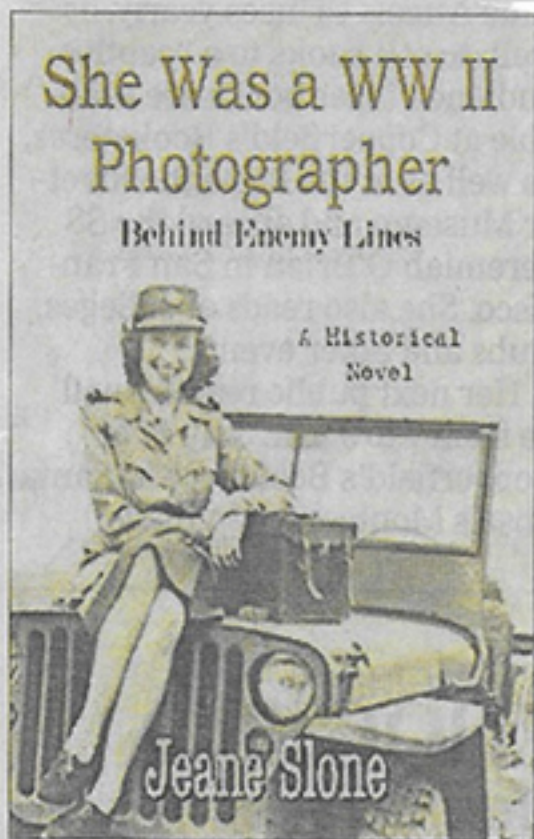
The option contract was 30 pages long.

From there, Laurie wrote the pilot, which the producer accepted, and he renewed the option for another year in April. He is currently shopping the package that includes the project idea, the pilot and the bible to other producers.

Now Slone has started writing her fifth book, which is about the Korean War.

Slone attends the Wings over Wine Country to shop her books every year at the Pacific Coast Air Museum. She attends two Blue Angels Cruises yearly, as well, to sell books to a "captive audience." Her books are available at Copperfield's Bookstores, as well as at the Rosie the Riveter Museum and aboard the SS Jeremiah O'Brien in San Francisco. She also reads at colleges, clubs and other events.

Her next public reading will be from 7 to 9 p.m. July 17 at Copperfield's Bookstore in Santa Rosa's Montgomery Village.



One of Jeane Slone's historical novels is about the unsung heroines of World War II.