

Love Letters from the Front

Media Fact Sheet

Media Contact

Rod MacIlvaine

rod.macilvaine@gmail.com

(918) 914-1802

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The message of Love Letters from the Front

Bill MacIlvaine graduated from Princeton in the spring of 1952 with a degree in psychology. He was a newly commissioned second lieutenant with dreams and ambitions for his future. Married several weeks later, the newlyweds trekked to Ft. Sill OK, for artillery training, and nine months later, he received orders for Korea. Within months, he was promoted to Battery Executive Officer. During his tour of duty in Korea he wrote 171 love letters to his new bride. These letters sparkle with wit, humor and devotion, and as the months progress, they also reveal a growing maturity both as a leader and as a husband.

Love Letters from the Front will inspire anyone facing hardship and challenge that those ordeals can fortify character, renew love and produce fresh leadership strength.

Brief biography of the author

Bill MacIlvaine has held various leadership positions in industry on the east coast and in the Midwest, and ultimately assumed the presidency of a Wisconsin-based manufacturing firm. He completed his career in South Florida in banking and trust, and in retirement served two terms as City Councilman of Naples, Florida. Bill and his wife Lucy were married in 1952 and have four children, ten grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. His avocation is ocean sailing and he has captained multiple charters in the Atlantic, Pacific and the Great Lakes.

Quick Facts about Bill:

- Graduated from Princeton University in 1952.
- Married Lucy Swann Barham in Scarsdale, NY on June 28, 1952.
- Bill was in Korea for just under a year, 1953-1954.
- Not only did Bill send letters to his wife, he regularly sent movies shot on a Kodak Brownie movie camera. Clips of these embedded movies include historically interesting views of Korea in the middle-1950s.
- Bill also took many pictures on Kodak color film illustrating activities described in his letters.
- The leadership lessons learned in Korea were foundational to the rest of his career in business and politics.
- Bill and Lucy have been married for over 60 years.

- Bill served two terms on the City of Naples Council, and is currently a Trustee of the Naples Police Pension Board.
- He is a former Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator and a Certified Financial Planner (Ret.).
- Bill is an experienced yachtsman with experience sailing in the Great Lakes, Caribbean and South Pacific. He and his son co-authored Successful Bareboat Chartering: The Essential Handbook for Captain and Crew.

Ten potential questions to ask Bill in an interview:

- When and how did you first become conscious of the war in Korea?
- What motivated you to join the ROTC at Princeton?
- How did you meet Lucy?
- You were a committed letter writer. How did you develop your writing gifts? What motivated you to write so faithfully?
- How did the discipline of writing those letters help you personally?
- Lucy wrote letters back to you, and you seem to be constantly encouraging her. What was her mood during your year in Korea?
- When did you first realize that you were growing as a leader?
- You write often about your faith in God. How did he sustain you both during your year of separation?
- Soldiers these days can communicate via Skype, Facetime and social media. There are certainly advantages to this, but there are also advantages to letter-writing. What does letter writing do that can't be done over social media.
- What would you say to military couples (or any couples) facing lengthy separation? How can they keep their relationship strong?
- You write about the close relationships you had with fellow soldiers. Have you kept up with fellow soldiers from Korea?