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tered from enemy ground fire and rolled over next to the AD wreckage, injuring Henry in the process. Broomhead's squadron mates frantically called for a fourth helicopter. A rescue attempt by an Air Force helo was driven off by heavy ground fire and 60-knot winds.

Broomhead could not get up with both ankles broken, Henry was down with a sprained knee, and Lt. Moore was not about to leave them. With dusk approaching and the RESCAP planes running out of gas and ammunition, hope for a rescue was lost. All three were now alone in the darkness facing Chinese Communist troops coming up the hill.

By the following morning, the only visible trace of the three airmen was a large circle of what appeared to be blood in the snow near the wreckage. Actually, it was mostly dye marker from life vests that had spread through the snow, creating a huge red circle around the aircraft that gave the appearance of a massacre.

James Michener news-dispatched the death scene of the three airmen from his post aboard Valley Forge, believing that Chinese soldiers had killed them during the night (in reality, all three survived their ordeal and were repatriated as POWs after the war). His United Press article "An Epic in Failure" and International News Service story titled "Heroes Fail to Save Pal" hit the national news a week after the incident. A more detailed dialog of the episode titled "All for One" appeared in Readers Digest in July 1952, and became the inspiration for a magazine novel called "*The Bridges at Toko-Ri*," which appeared in Life magazine on 6 July 1953. Its popularity blossomed into the best-selling 1954 book and movie.

For many years, Cdr. Paul N. Gray, CO of Attack Squadron 54 aboard Essex, was rumored to be the basis for *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* central character, "Brubaker." However, the author's notes reveal that the character was patterned after Lieutenant Donald S. Brubaker of VF-194 aboard Valley Forge, whom Michener interviewed on 5 December 1951 and, like his literary counterpart, was recalled to active duty as a Naval Reserve pilot. The final death scene, however, was taken from the above-mentioned inci-

dent of Brubaker's squadron mate, Ens. Broomhead.

During his stay aboard the carriers of Task Force 77, Michener wrote several other magazine articles about Naval Aviation, such as "The Forgotten Heroes of Korea," published in the Saturday Evening Post on 10 May 1952, in which he expanded on the story of Cdr. Gray and others. Gray was a tenacious and gifted AD Skyraider pilot who made low-level bombing runs against hard-to-reach targets and inflicted great damage to the enemy, but at the cost of some shootdowns and near-misses, prompting RAdm. Perry to ground him. The enthusiastic response to this article laid the groundwork for a cast of other characters that Michener would later use in *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, including "RAdm. George Tarrant" (based on RAdm. Perry); "CAG Wayne Lee" (Cdr. Marshall U. Beebe, Commander Air Group 5); and "Nestor Gamidge" (Chief (AP) Thorin).

Later, "The Forgotten Heroes of Korea" article became a hot commodity to the movie industry. Michener had sold the rights to Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer Studios, which in turn altered the narratives to fit another story by naval officer Cdr. Harry Bums, "The Case of the Blind Pilot," published in the 29 November 1952 Saturday Evening Post. The combined story became the movie *Men of the Fighting Lady*, which supposedly portrayed the true experiences of Cdr. Gray and "blind pilot" Ens. Kenneth A. Schechter. In reality, the "blind pilot" affair occurred long after Cdr. Gray had returned to the United States.

Ens. Schechter of VF-194 was flying an AD from Valley Forge north of Kowon on 22 March 1952 and was severely wounded by an enemy shell that struck his canopy and exploded. Blinded by blood and suffering from shock, he was unable to see to maintain control of his airplane. Lt. (jg) Howard Thayer, hearing his squadron mate's call for assistance and observing his erratic maneuvers, joined up on the damaged plane and literally "flew" it by radioing instructions to the completely blinded pilot. Thayer's controlling was so competent and reassuring that the wounded man elected to proceed to a landing strip rather than bail out. Depending entirely on Thayer's directions, Schechter flew the Skyraider more than 100 miles "blind" to make a perfect wheels-up land-