

Fellow Mustangs and Ladies:

I do hope this Commander's Message finds every reader in good spirits and good health. A significant fraction of my cohorts in the office are suffering from the sniffles after the near-record breaking warm weather for the past six weeks came to a screeching halt this weekend when we got a good taste of winter temperatures.

On a lighter note, we have a small cadre of our Mustang Ponies taking the helm in planning our 2006 convention/reunion. Ron and Joan Dungey, Dan Hunt and Sharon Norlander are looking into San Antonio, Texas the week of October 16. If all goes as planned, we would arrive on Monday, 16 October, have our Board of Directors meeting and buffet dinner on Tuesday, with our memorial, business meeting and banquet on Wednesday, and our get away breakfast on Thursday morning. The last time NOBC held a convention/reunion in San Antonio, it was very successful. Look for particulars in the summer edition of the Mustang News.

Past National Commander Pete Armstrong, Deputy Commander Steve Shivers and I have been

Commander's Message

by Robert Evans



beating the proverbial bush contacting our Vietnam members trying to get them off top dead center and into our active participating ranks. In addition, we three continue to follow leads related to potential NOBC candidates. On the subject of leads, we are firmly convinced there are a significant number of eligible Vietnam veterans who remain untapped. To each of you reading this message, if you know of anyone who might be a potential NOBC candidate, please do not hesitate to alert any one of us (our email addresses are in the Mustang News).

I was fortunate to present Sherman Pratt with his

Commander's Trophy on February 1. While Sherm was a 2005 recipient, we waited until early this year to present because Sherm had hip replacement and we wanted him to be up and about. Up and about he was. Please see the picture on page 4 of the Mustang News, taken by Sherm's gracious and lovely wife Anastasia.

In January, Roger Charles (see Soldiers for the Truth) and I had our monthly meeting over a couple cool ones. Roger informed me Eilyhs England Hackworth planned a spring trip to the Washington area. She is aware NOBC has a plaque and citation to be presented to her honoring her late husband Colonel David Hackworth. Eilyhs has been extraordinarily busy since her husband passed away in May 2005, but sees a bit of light at the end of the tunnel and plans a trip to the DC area this April. When she is here, I will present her with our plaque and citation. Pictures will appear in the following edition of our Mustang News.

Until the summer edition of our Mustang News, I wish everyone a healthy and safe balance of the winter and spring.

Officers and Directors

National Commander

Robert C. Evans
(202) 414-3020 (O)
(703) 838-5548 (H)
e-mail: rcevs@mmm.com

Deputy Commander

Stephen L. Shivers
(864) 292-1423
e-mail: slshivers@aol.com

Admin & Fin Officer

Stanley W. Schmucker
(321) 255-5919
e-mail: stanobc@webtv.net

National Adjutant

Council J. "Pete" Armstrong
(828) 654-9920
e-mail: PeteBeret@aol.com

TMC Representative

See National Commander

Chaplain

Warren P. Schilling
(239) 454-0064

Historian

James W. Plate
(815) 399-6953
e-mail: jwplate@aol.com

Judge Advocate

James M. Davis
(402) 341-9900 (Off.)
e-mail: polo@uswest.net

PX Officer

Gilbert H. "Gib" Bolton
(760) 433-7746

Editor, Mustang News

William "Bill" Wynn
(808) 672-9930
e-mail: wynnwynn@gte.net

Publisher, Mustang News

Barbara Nutter
(405) 247-5864

Past Commanders

Gilbert H. "Gib" Bolton
Russel M. Brami
Neal G. Grimland
Council "Pete" Armstrong
e-mail: peteberet@aol.com
Donald C. Van Roosen
e-mail: donvr@pinehurst.net

Board of Directors (yrs)

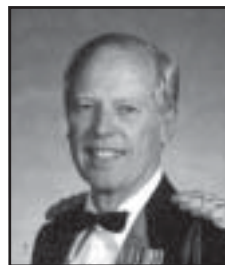
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Ralph A. Casperson (3)
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Is Your God Too Small?

A basic teaching of the Bible is that God never changes. Yet any serious, frequent reader of the Bible will admit that the more he knows about God the bigger he gets! Obviously since we can never grasp God completely, what happens is our concept and understanding of Him is getting bigger - yet He will not be changing.

Over 32 years ago, after spending more than a year in weekly Bible studies in the homes of fellow officers and their wives, I had a strong conversion experience. I read every book I could find on God and the Bible. I read J. B. Phillip's book *Your God is Too Small* and came to realize that even as a frequent Bible reader for years, I had settled for a small God. Because of that I know others are, at times, having the same experience and I remain aware that God is still bigger than I realize.

If in our minds we can get God down to the size we often want Him to be, then we feel we can control Him and He can have no authority over the way we live our lives. Unfortunately that's the way we sometimes want it,



Warren Schilling

and much of our nation is deep into that kind of thinking. Once we get God down to a small enough size, if He pops up in our life, we can just flick Him off our desk. But look out - then we think we become God.

Don't let your God be too small. Know that the Almighty God of the Bible is actually and completely in control of every atom and every situation in the universe. For us to try to outrank Him can bring about terrible eternal consequences if we don't turn from that attitude and submit completely to His unchanging bigness.

Summer, 1994



A 6 year old was asked where his grandma lived. "Oh," he said, "she lives at the airport, and when we want her we just go get her. Then when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport."

Usually grandmothers are fat, but not too fat to tie your shoes. They wear glasses and funny underwear.

When they read to us, they don't skip. They don't mind if we ask for the same story over again.

They have to answer questions like, "Why isn't God married?" and "How come dogs chase cats?"

from Jim Plate

From the Hawaii Editor's Desk

by Bill "Scotty" Wynn



Mustang News

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Mail submissions to:
Bill Wynn, *Mustang News*
92-1244 Hunekai St.
Kapolei, HI 96707-1541
Phone/fax: 808-672-9930
e-mail: wynnwynn@verizon.net



TAPS

for Mustangs answering
their final muster:

- 672L-William Abbotts III-NC
- 103L-Woodrow W. Acord-IL
- 862-Sam L. Cochran-GA
- 662-William H. Cunningham-KY
- 238-George P. Peroni-NY
- 511L-James J. Rye-TX

Our apology for a mistake in spelling Harold's name
in the Winter Issue

683-Harold F. Lange-OH

Note: We depend on family members, friends and members to inform us of the deaths of our members. Please provide Stan Schmucker, Admin. & Fin. Officer, with pertinent information and details as soon as possible. Thank you.

Taps

There will be a great encampment
In the land of clouds today.
A mingling and a merging
Of our boys who've gone away.
Though on earth they are disbanding,
They are very close and near,
For those brave and honored heroes
Show no sorrow, shed no tear.
They have lived a life of glory,
History pins their medals high,
Listen to the thunder rolling,
They are marching in the sky!

--*Artus Nottingham Chappus*

New Members

1150

William B. Bradley
92801 Sibert Drive
Marcellus, MI 49061
366th Signal Det
195th Assault Hel. Co.
214 Aviation Bn
(Vietnam)

1151

David C. Sebright
P.O. Box 137
Hopkins, MI 49328
176th Assault Hel. Co.
Attached
101st Airborne Div
(Vietnam)

Letters from NOBC Next of Kin

NOBC widows or next of kin receive a plaque and citation honoring their late husbands from Gib Bolton

From Mrs. Marjorie Hansen:

Thank you so very much for the lovely memorial plaque. It is going to hang next to his medal plaque. Chris was proud to be a Mustang and of his service to his Country. I was proud to be his wife of nearly 60 years.

Donation

829L Virgil L. Goewey has very generously provided NOBC with a donation of \$100.00.



Thank You from the recipient of the John C. Angier III Memorial Scholarship

Thank you very much for awarding me the NOBC Mustang Ponies Scholarship. I appreciate it very much and it means a lot to me to have received such a great honor.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Hunt



Due to inherit a fortune when his sickly, widower father died, Charles decided he needed a woman to enjoy it with. Going to a singles bar, he spotted a woman whose beauty took his breath away. "I'm just an ordinary man," he said, walking up to her, "but in just a week or two, my father will die and I'll inherit 20 million dollars." The woman went home with Charles, and in four days she became his stepmother. Men will never learn.

"A society in which men recognize no check upon their freedom soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few."

Judge Learned Hand (American jurist) (1871-1961)

"...one fundamental principle of politics is to be always on the side of your country in a war. It kills any party to oppose a war."

Abraham Lincoln
from *Team of Rivals*

Fix Bayonets

The morning of the engagement Captain Lew Millett described the weather as being ideal for battle. The skies were clear and the temperature was not too hot or too cold. At dawn his company was on the flank and when preparing to engage the enemy he called out to "Fix bayonets!"

Leading the company, Captain Millett and his soldiers quickly merged with the enemy. Confused by the ferocity of the American's attack they panicked allowing Easy Company to roll up their flank. It was only when a Chinese soldier carrying a sub-machinegun froze at the sight of Millett's bayonet did Lew truly gain a true appreciation for cold steel. That hesitation cost the Chinese soldier his life.

History

Millett joined the National Guard before graduating from high school and as WWII escalated, he enlisted in the Air Force as a machine gunner. Being discouraged with the U.S. for dragging its feet about entering the war, he went AWOL transferring his allegiance to the Canadian Army, which had already committed to the war. When the U.S. did get in the war, Americans fighting for the Canadians were transferred back to U.S. units. Sent to North Africa as a Private, he distinguished himself by shooting down a German ME-109 firing twin 50s jury-rigged on the back of a 3/4-ton truck. He was a Buck Sergeant with a Silver Star when his U.S. records caught up with him. Court-martialed as a deserter he was fined \$52 and promoted to Second Lieutenant.

Leaving the Army at the end of WWII, Millett went back to college and was one semester short of a degree when Korea lured him back. After serving two years as a Director of Education in Japan he was sent to Korea as a forward observer.

Korea

Promoted to Captain, Lew took over Easy Company where he learned of a battlefield report saying the Chinese thought the Americans were afraid of bayonets. This was too much of a challenge for

the feisty New Englander and he immediately began the process of equipping the company with bayonets. When asked how he expected to get close enough to the Chinese to use bayonets he answered, "That was not a problem as the Chinese liked to attack en masse. Hand-to-hand fighting was not that unusual."

What is not universally known about Millett's bayonet charge is that he did it two more times. This is tantamount to crossing the 110 freeway at high noon in downtown L.A. and finding yourself safe on the other side only to do it again. Sooner or later you're gonna get hurt. The word came down for Millett to stop it as he had been recommended to receive the Medal of Honor and it wouldn't look good if he got killed. With that Millett was on his way home, where he was decorated by then-President Harry Truman.

On 15 December 05 Medal of Honor recipient Lewis Millett became 85. In his honor, the Orange County Chapter of the 82d Airborne Association held a celebration for him on 17 December at the Cypress American Legion Hall, Cypress, CA.

Jerry Hoosier, Orange, CA

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Sherm Pratt receiving his Commander's Trophy from Commander Bob Evans

A book by one of our own Mustangs - Jack Roberts

Announcing

... the arrival of the book
YOU CAN'T PUT DOWN!!!

This book was written about the experiences Jack Roberts had while in combat when serving with the 106th Infantry Division during WWII which highlights being ambushed and captured by the Germans on the first day of the Battle of the Bulge in December, 1944.



He goes into a detailed account of his harrowing escape while being marched behind enemy lines as a Prisoner of War.

Early chapters let you learn about Jack's youth including military training leading up to his capture and finishes with his adjustment to civilian life with its rewards.

**The book may be ordered from Jack Roberts at:
1059 Alter Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304**

**Cost of the book is \$27.95 (including S&H).
Checks should be made payable to him.
25% of each sale will be donated to the NOBC treasury**

Hirohito's Last Redoubt

Many of us know about Nagano, Japan, host of the XVIII Winter Olympics in 1998. We saw the athletes perform in an Alps type setting with beautiful snow capped mountains all around the city.

What most people do not know about is the secret Imperial Underground Headquarters located at the southern edge of Nagano in a village called Matsushiro. This underground tunnel complex is immense with approximately 27,991 square yards of floor space or about 6 acres where the Emperor, the Imperial Family, High Government Ministers, and Military Leaders were to be hidden as the invasion of mainland Japan, by American and other Allied Forces commenced. It was started on November 11, 1944 as the tide of war continued to turn against Japan and ended on August 15, 1945 with the Emperor's announcement that unconditional surrender would be accepted after two atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The whole construction was done in total secrecy for it would not have been great for the morale of the Japanese people to realize that a "last redoubt" was being built underground to save the Imperial Family just in case Japan would be invaded in the future. The most damning aspect of the construction is that it was done at the expense of thousands of Korean laborers who lived in filth and untold misery until they eventually died in the construction process. The Japanese construction managers were so efficient, that a crematorium was constructed with ovens that Germany's Auschwitz will always be identified with. Each day the dead laborers would be deposited and burned with smoke from the furnaces never seeming to stop.

Why the underground redoubt? It was the strategic concept by Japan military and government at that time that if the Imperial Family, with the Emperor could be hidden during the invasion of mainland Japan, then the casualties and loss of life inflicted on the Allied invaders would be so horrific, that America and the Allies would sue for peace and present favorable (to the Japanese) surrender terms that would retain the Emperor and not cause the loss of much "face."

Was this realistic? In my opinion yes! Japan was poised to defend its homeland to the last person, woman, old man and child. I know of a US citizen who remembers, when she was a child in Japan, that soldiers came to their village and held drills with sharp pointed poles for each village member with the admonition that they

would kill one American before they themselves were killed. The dropping of two atomic bombs saved countless American/Allied lives, but also saved Japan as a nation for their death toll would have been staggering, way beyond the deaths resulting from the atomic bombs.

*An excerpt from War in the Pacific
by BG Jerome T. Hagen (USMC ret.)*

Who Packs Your Parachute?

Sometimes in the daily challenges life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason.

CDR Charles Plumb, was a jet fighter pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was hit by a surface to air missile. He ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He spent 6 years in a communist prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man from another table came up and said, "You're CDR Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the carrier Kitty Hawk. And you were shot down!"

"How in the world did you know that?" he asked.

"I packed your parachute," the man replied.

CDR Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man shook his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" with a smile. Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If it hadn't I wouldn't be here to day."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about the man. He kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform, Dixie cup hat and bell bottom trousers. How many times I might have seen him and not even said good morning, how are you, because I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor.

He thought about the many hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the packing room, carefully weaving shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hand the life of someone he didn't know.

Now CDR Plumb asks his audience, "Who packs your parachute?"

Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. His experience reminds us all to prepare ourselves to weather whatever storms lie ahead. As you walk through your life, recognize the people who pack your parachute.

Soldiers For The Truth

This organization was founded by Col. David Hackworth and is continuing under the capable auspices of Roger Charles, President. Roger has agreed to continue our access to the SFTT website to select articles for the Mustang News. We will continue to head this as Hack's Page in his honor.

There Are More Than Just Cracks in the System

There's been a lot written lately about whether America's Grunts have the best-available body armor. There are passionate voices on both sides of the argument, but those defending the Army and Marine Corps claim that the troops are in fact wearing the best-available body armor labor under a huge handicap.

For these defenders to sway public opinion and placate a semi-aroused media, they must hide information and distort facts.

One set of uncomfortable facts revolve around the still-concealed results of a sampling of ballistic-protective plates, brought back from combat units and x-rayed by Army scientists for signs of microscopic cracks that indicate a propensity for "fractionability (sic)," or, what we laymen might call brittleness.

This is not a desired trait in material designed and used on the basis that it can stop several ballistic impacts.

According to two very reliable sources, who requested anonymity for fear of reprisals, 60% of the recalled plates show the tell-tale microscopic cracking that augurs poorly for the survival of anyone taking a hit on that plate. (Unknown is what percentage of the currently issued plates show similar microscopic cracking.)

Instead of openly admitting the problem with the ballistic-protective plates, and specifically, that the material being used for the plates may suffer from some inherent problem that the material encounters in the current manufacturing process, the Army has announced the award of multi-million dollar contracts for "more of the same."

Based on conversations with a number of people dealing with the challenges of providing the best-available body armor to our troops, the problems with the current plates are widely known. In fact, this awareness has generated substantial research and

development efforts to produce better product. It's most definitely seen as a sector with great growth potential.

This brings me to these somber conclusions:

- (1) hundreds, if not thousands, of people "inside" the system know that the current body armor has serious, structural flaws (no pun intended);
- (2) these same people know that lives have been lost that could have been saved with the better body armor;
- (3) they know more lives will be lost that could have been saved, as long as the inferior body armor remains the standard item of issue;
- (4) they don't accept that it is their own silence that permits this execrable situation to continue to exist.

The ones that I talk with tell me they care about the troops being placed at risk, and I believe them. Why should they stand up as a whistle blower when the reality is that this is tantamount to a suicide charge up Mount Suribachi?

The system is stacked against them.

Reforming the corrupt DOD acquisition process is a distant fantasy, given the hundreds of billions of dollars at play. Too many people with too much influence are too heavily invested in the status quo to want meaningful reform.

I guess we'll have to wait for the Pentagon's version of Jack Abramoff to surface. Then the outrage may be great enough to see some serious reform.

SFTT President Roger Charles is an Annapolis graduate, a retired USMC LTC who commanded an infantry platoon in I Corps during the Vietnam War, the winner of the prestigious Peabody Award for news coverage, and was a protege of the late COL David H. Hackworth. Rog can be contacted at SFTTpres@aol.com. Please send comments to DWFeedback@yahoo.com.

Media's Emphasis on U.S. Deaths Undermines Objectives of Iraq War

The media seem to have come up with a formula that would make any war in history unwinnable and unbearable. They simply emphasize the enemy's victories and our losses.

Losses suffered by the enemy are not news, no matter how large, how persistent or how clearly they indicate the enemy's declining strength.

What are the enemy's victories in Iraq? The killing of Americans and the killing of Iraqi civilians. Both are big news in the mainstream media, day in and day out, around the clock.

Has anyone ever believed that any war could be fought without deaths on both sides? Every death is a tragedy to the individual killed and to his loved ones. But is there anything about American casualty rates in Iraq that makes them more severe than casualty rates in any other war we have fought?

On the contrary, the American deaths in Iraq are a fraction of what they have been in other wars in our history. The media have made a big production about the cumulative fatalities in Iraq, hyping the 1,000th deaths with multiple full-page features in the New York Times and comparable coverage on TV.

The 2,000th death was similarly anticipated almost impatiently in the media then made another big splash. But does media hype make 2,000 wartime fatalities in more than two years unusual?

The Marines lost more than 5,000 men taking one island in the Pacific during a three-month period in WW II. In the Civil War, the Confederates lost 5,000 men in one battle in one day.

Yet there was Jim Lehrer on the "News Hour" last week earnestly asking Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld about the 10 Americans killed that day. It is hard to imagine anybody in any previous war asking any such question of anyone responsible for fighting a war.

We have lost more men than that in our most overwhelming and one-side victories in previous wars. During an aerial battle over the Marianas Islands in WW II, Americans shot down hundreds of Japanese planes while losing about 30 of their own.

If the media of that era had been reporting the way the media report today, all we would have heard about would have been that more than two dozen Americans were killed that day.

Neither our troops nor the terrorists are in Iraq just to be killed. Both have objectives. But any objectives we achieve get short shrift in the mainstream media, if they are mentioned at all.

Our troops can kill 10 times as many of the enemy as they kill, and it isn't news worth featuring, if it is mentioned at all, in much of the media. No matter how many towns are wrested from the control of the terrorists by American or Iraqi troops, it just isn't front-page news like the casualty reports or even the doom-saying of some politicians.

The fact that these doom-saying politicians have been proved wrong, again and again, does not keep their latest outcries from overshadowing the hard-won victories of American troops on the ground in Iraq.

The doom-sayers claimed that terrorist attacks would make it impossible to hold the elections last January because so many Iraqis would be afraid to go vote. The doom-sayers urged that the elections be postponed.

But a higher percentage of Iraqis voted in that election - and in subsequent elections - than the percentage of Americans who voted in last year's presidential elections.

Utter ignorance of history enables any war with casualties to be depicted in the media as an unmitigated disaster.

Even after Nazi Germany surrendered at the end of WW II, die-hard Nazi guerrilla units terrorized and assassinated both German officials and German civilians who cooperated with Allied occupation authorities.

But nobody suggested that we abandon the country. Nobody was foolish enough to think that you could say in advance when you would pull out or that you should encourage your enemies by announcing a timetable.

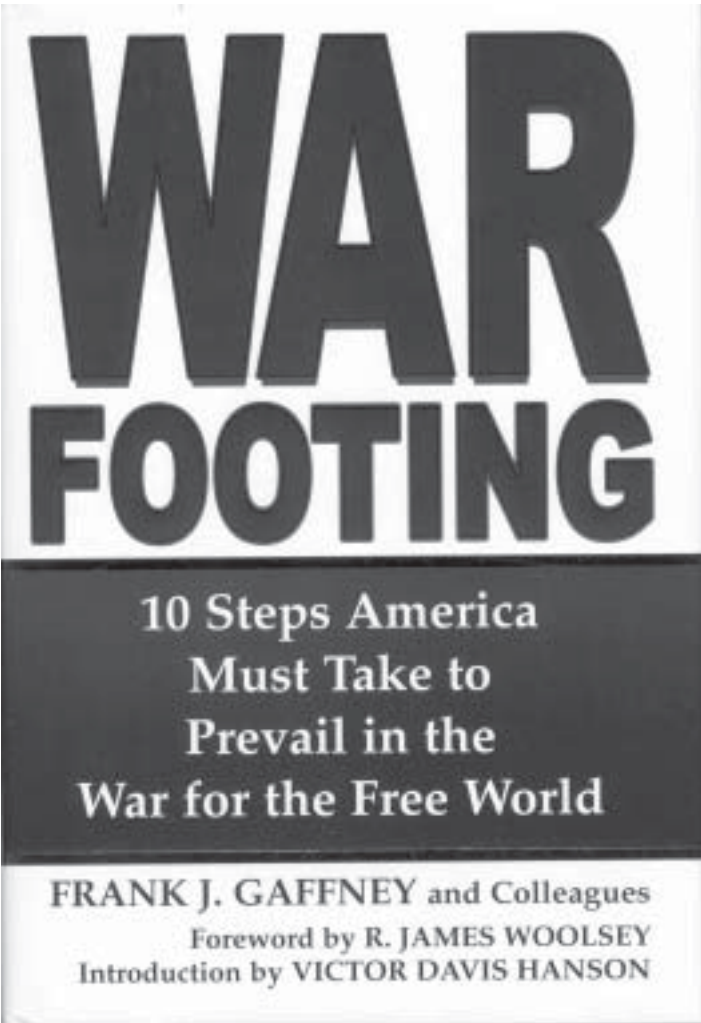
There has never been the slightest doubt that we would begin pulling troops out of Iraq when it was feasible. Only time and circumstances can tell when that will be. And only irresponsible politicians and the media think otherwise.

Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution in Stanford, California.

Reporters interviewing a 104 year old woman: "And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?" the reporter asked. She simply replied, "No peer pressure."

from Jim Plate

Recommended, or perhaps it should be “required” reading. Let’s hope Cindy Sheehan and her ilk read it.



Here is another excellent read: **Team of Rivals** by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Lincoln’s rise to the presidency and skill in bringing rivals into his cabinet.

He had an endless store of anecdotes and here are two:

One of Lincoln’s favorite anecdotes sprang from the early days just after the Revolution. Shortly before the peace was signed, the story began, the Revolutionary War hero Ethan Allen “had occasion to visit England,” where he was subjected to considerable teasing banter. The British would make fun of the Americans and General Washington in particular and one day they got a picture of General Washington” and displayed it prominently in the outhouse so Mr. Allen could not miss it. When he made no mention of it, they finally asked him if he had seen the Wasington picture. Mr. Allen said, “he thought that it was a very appropriate [place] for an Englishman to keep it. Why they asked, for said Mr. Allen there is nothing that will make an Englishman shit so quick as the sight of General Washington.”

Another story centered on a man “who had great veneration for Revolutionary relics.” Learning that an old woman still possessed a dress that “she had worn in the Revolutionary War,” he traveled to her house and asked to see it. She took the dress from a bureau and handed it to him. He was so excited that he brought the dress to his lips and kissed it. “The practical old lady rather resented such foolishness over an old piece of wearing apparel and she said: “Stranger if you want to kiss something old you had better kiss my ass. It is sixteen years older than that dress.”



And here is another: **Born Fighting** by James Webb, a highly decorated Marine who served as Asst Sec. of Defense and Sec. of the Navy under President Reagan. It is the story of how the Scots-Irish shaped America.

If there are no dogs in heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went.

Will Rogers



Bob Evans

The Military Coalition's Health Care Testimony to be presented to Capitol Hill was rolled out this quarter and contains the following points, abbreviated for this report. As an overarching comment, The Military Coalition (TMC) urges continued full funding for Defense Health Program needs.

On the topic of cost shifting, TMC cites comments from senior military personnel indicating the rising military health care costs are "impinging on other service programs." Other reports indicate DoD leadership is seeking more funding for weapons programs by reducing the amount it spends on military health care and other personnel needs. The Military Coalition believes strongly that America can afford to and must pay for both weapons and military health care.

The Department of Defense has suggested that substantial military fee increases are needed to bring military beneficiary costs more in line with civilian practices. The Military Coalition feels comparisons with corporate practices are inappropriate. The Nation has a far greater obligation to military retirees than corporations have to theirs. In demanding such extraordinary commitments from career service members, the government assumes a reciprocal obligation to provide benefits commensurate with their extraordinary sacrifices.

The Military Coalition feels the proposed increases in TRICARE costs are grossly out of line with benefit levels originally enacted by Congress, even allowing interim inflation since current fees were established. The Administration proposes to make annual fee adjustments based on medical inflation, which has been two to three times the inflation-based increases in members' retired pay. This would essentially ensure the members' medical costs would consume a larger share of their income with each passing year. The Military Coalition realizes that this has been happening to many private sector employees, but believes

strongly that the government has a greater obligation to protect the interests of its military beneficiaries than private corporations feel for their employees.

The Military Coalition believes strongly that the Defense Department has not sufficiently investigated other options:

- Promote retaining other health insurance by making TRICARE a true second-payer to other insurance (far less expensive to pay another insurance's copay than have the beneficiary migrate to TRICARE)
- Eliminate DoD-unique administrative requirements that make DoD pay higher overhead fees.
- Size military facilities (least costly care option) to reduce reliance on civilian providers.
- Negotiate with drug manufacturers for retail pharmacy discounts (the most costly venue), which DoD has failed to do, or change the law to mandate federal pricing for retail pharmacy network (rather than charging beneficiaries more if drug companies do not agree to federal pricing).
- Reduce/eliminate all mail order copays to boost use of lowest-cost venue.
- Change electronic claim system to kick back errors in real time to help providers submit "clean" claims, reduce delays/multiple submissions.
- Do more to educate beneficiaries and providers on advantages of mail-order pharmacy.
- Change law to limit incentives private firms can offer employees to shift to TRICARE, or require such matching payments to TRICARE.
- Establish one central DoD facility to order/fill all prescriptions for exceptionally high-cost drugs.
- Centralize military treatment facility pharmacy budget/funding process, with emphasis on accountability and cost shifting.

- Increase efficiency via a single contract for all claims processing.

- Test voluntary participation in Medicare Advantage Regional PPO to foster chronic care improvement and disease management.

Essentially, The Military Coalition will request the Senate Subcommittee to require the Department of Defense to exercise greater efforts to improve TRICARE and find more effective and appropriate ways to make TRICARE more cost efficient without seeking to “tax” beneficiaries and make unrealistic budget assumptions.

The Military Coalition sent three letters on February 6 to Senators Kerry, Warner and Levin thanking them for sponsoring an amendment to the death gratuity authorization law. In the past, death gratuity of \$100,000 was authorized only for survivors of members killed in combat or operations related incidents. All other survivors received \$12,420. This caused an unfair and difficult situation for families by creating two levels of benefits for survivors. The new death gratuity authorization adopted in the Senate bill and included in the final FY 2006 National Defense Authorization Act provides for the \$100,000 across the board.

On The Lighter Side

I’ve sure gotten old. I’ve had 2 by-pass surgeries. A hip replacement, new knees, fought prostate cancer and diabetes. I’m half blind, can’t hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded and subject to blackouts. Have had bouts with dementia, have poor circulation, hardly feel my hands and feet anymore. Can’t remember if I’m 85 or 92. I’ve lost all my friends. But...Thank God, I still have my Florida driver’s license!

During a visit to the mental asylum, Wally asked the Director what the criterion was which defined whether or not a patient should be institutionalized.

“Well,” said the Director, “we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub.”

“Oh, I understand,” said Wally. “A normal person would use the bucket because it’s bigger than the spoon or teacup.”

“No,” said the Director, “A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?”

If I have any beliefs about immortality, it is that certain dogs I have known will go to heaven, and very, very few persons.

James Thurber

If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you; that’s the principal difference between a dog and a man.

Mark Twain

It Pays to Golf

An 80-year old man goes to the doctor for a checkup. The doctor is amazed at what good shape the guy is in and asks, “How do you stay in such great physical condition?”

“I’m a golfer,” says the old guy, “and that’s why I’m in such good shape. I’m up well before daylight and out golfing up and down the fairways.” “Well,” says the doctor, “I’m sure that helps, but there’s got to be more to it. How old was your dad when he died?”

“Who said my dad’s dead?”

The doctor is amazed. “You mean you’re 80 years old and your dad’s still alive. How old is he?” He’s 100 years old,” says the old golfer. “In fact he golfed with me this morning, and that’s why he’s still alive.”

“Well,” the doctor says, “that’s great, but I’m sure there’s more to it than that. How about your dad’s dad? How old was he when he died?”

“Who said my grandpa’s dead?”

Stunned, the doctor asks, “You mean you’re 80 years old and your grandfather’s still living! Incredible, how old is he?” “He’s 118 years old,” says the old golfer. The doctor is getting frustrated at this point, “So, I guess he went golfing this morning, too?”

“No. Grandpa couldn’t go this morning because he’s getting married today.”

At this point the doctor is close to losing it.

“Getting married!! Why would a 118 year old guy want to get married?”

“Who said he wanted to get married?”

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Stanley W. Schmucker
Administrative Officer
1490 Independence Avenue
Melbourne, FL 32940

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