



Mustang News



Vol. 29 No. 1

Quarterly Newsletter of the National Order of Battlefield Commissions

Spring 2008

Fellow Mustangs and Ladies:

As always, I hope this spring message finds each of you in good health and good spirits.

I do hate to open a message with an apology, but must here. Seems our NOBC Constitution and By Laws do not provide the necessary authority to close our organization with a formal ceremony. The governance documents are specific relative to the deactivation of NOBC. It is only when at an annual business meeting 15 active members are not present to meet the quorum requirements that NOBC will be deactivated. I must apologize for jumping the gun in my Winter-2007 Message when I stated we would hold our October convention/reunion in Washington, DC to conduct a ceremony to formally deactivate NOBC.

I jumped the gun, in large part, because the active members present at the 2007 convention/reunion numbered 16 and in the business meeting the membership voiced a concern for the health of NOBC going forward, given the incremental drop in attendance year on year. It seemed we were at a decision point and did not want

Commander's Message

by *Robert Evans*



NOBC to just cease to exist without planning a formal ceremony to honor this one-of-a-kind organization and its membership. However, a formal ceremony is not feasible without changing our governance documents.

There is most likely not a single active NOBC member who wants to see the organization deactivated, but without a minimum 15 members at the 2008 convention/reunion, we will be summarily deactivated. The Officers and Directors of NOBC are understandably concerned and have suggested we pulse the active membership. To this end, we have provided, in your Mustang News, a

brief questionnaire for your consideration. The questionnaire is designed to address important concerns related to your plans to attend the 2008 convention/reunion, your preference for dates in October and location.

The questionnaire is stamped and addressed. Once you have completed it, please return it as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2008. We will tally your responses and plans for the 2008 convention/reunion will reflect your input.

Certainly an item to be discussed during the 2008 annual meeting will be the potential for developing a formal ceremony and the necessary changes to our Constitution and By-Laws to afford such a ceremony. We have some eight months before we meet. In the interim, please do share your thoughts and concerns related to the continued health of our organization, my email address and phone number is on page two. You are NOBC and your input is important.

I wish you all a healthy and prosperous 2008.

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Our Government is About to Change

Obviously our nation is going through a big transition period that always takes place after a presidential election, but especially when the new president is of a different political party. The 2 sides had very different opinions on meaningful subjects. Hundreds of polls were reported day after day. But former President Harry Truman said it best "I wonder how far Moses would've gone if he had taken a poll in Egypt!"

Two words used often were "values" and "ethics." But a close look at their meanings showed that they were often used in ways that confused people. The truth is, a person's values are really his desires and they can change. Ethics have a more solid basis: the law. But as Judge Earl Warren noted years ago as he saw our nation's culture beginning to deteriorate "The law floats on a sea of ethics, and the ethics and the sea seems to be draining away."

Certainly our government is about to change. Do we have a good government or a bad government? The philosopher Tocqueville said "The most dangerous time for a bad government is when it starts to reform itself." Then let us pray that the bad parts of our government are in danger and we have leaders who have a solid ethical Bible oriented plan to reform it. Andrew



Warren Schilling

Jackson said "The Bible is the Rock upon which our republic stands."

Since the 1960s when the hippies rebelled against authority our republic has become more and more a humanistic society not honoring the Rock on which it stands. Their theme was "do your own thing" and it has infiltrated our culture. Daniel Webster noted "Only

if we abide by the principles in the Bible will our country go on prospering." God is not tolerant of evil, but he is merciful and patient. Hopefully we have some time before we suffer the consequences of having gone the wrong way in some areas.

The Old Testament gives an example of how God punished Israel. The kings and most of the people had been violating His laws for years. After many warnings from the prophet Jeremiah and no change, God brought "the sword, famine, and pestilence" and finally, "captivity" upon them. In Jeremiah 11:11 God says "I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to me I will not listen to them."

This is not meant to be all "gloom and doom." Much of our government is handled by spiritually minded people. Let's pray that our leaders will be guided by the Bible. Thank God for his mercy and patience.

Winter 2001

From the Hawaii Editor's Desk

by Bill "Scotty" Wynn



Mustang News

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TAPS

for Mustangs answering
their final muster:

1064-Edwin H. Duhme-KY
1034-George H. Fodor-PA
1060-Allison O. Hunt
1108-Karl W. Schettenhelm-MI

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

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



A farm boy accidentally overturned a wagon of corn on the road. A nearby farmer saw the accident and went over to have a look and found the boy trying to right the wagon.

"Hey Willie," the farmer said. "Forget your troubles for a spell...its late, come have dinner with us. I'll help you with the wagon after we eat."

"Well, okay," the boy said, "But Pa won't like it."

After a hearty meal, Will thanked the farmer. "I feel a lot better now, but I just know Pa will be upset."

"Where is your Pa anyway?" the farmer asked.

"Under the wagon."

A Thank You From the Winner of the John C. Angier III Memorial Scholarship Award

4 December 2007

Dear Mr. Stanley Schmucker.

I would like to start off by saying what an honor it is to have received the National Order of Battlefield Commissions John C. Angier III Memorial Scholarship. From the bottom of my heart I send a very, very warm thank you to all the amazing people who have made this possible. Never in my life have I felt so unbelievably honored by something. Little did I know when I came home for the Thanksgiving holiday how thankful I would truly be this year. Seeing my grandfather brought to tears how proud he was of me is a moment I will not soon forget. I am a fairly precocious person and I was stunned into complete silence by this gesture! This scholarship means so much to me and I greatly appreciate it. Coming from a military family, I have always admired the men and women who serve our great country. I am currently pursuing a degree in psychology and a degree in criminology in the hope that one day, I too can serve my country. My ultimate goal is to work for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. With my education from Southern Oregon University, I am hoping to make America an even better and stronger country. As a member of the Southern Oregon University's Student Senate, I am continuing to grow and learn about our government and making our world a little better in the process. Again I would like to thank you so much for this incredible honor and wonderful opportunity!

Sincerely and with many thanks,
Taylor M. York

Correction

In the Convention/Reunion 2007 write-up in the Winter 2007 issue, the winner of the \$200 50/50 Lottery drawing should have read John E. Anderson. We regret the error and extend our apologies to Mustang Anderson.

A Dining-in at West Point

A speech to the cadets in 2003 by LTC Guy Lofaro

Let me say before beginning, that it has been my pleasure to attend several dinings-in here at West Point and hence, I have some basis for comparison. You people have done a fine job and you ought to congratulate yourselves.

In fact, why don't we take this time to have the persons who were responsible for this event, stand, so we can acknowledge them publicly. I guess I am honored with these invitations because there exists this rumor that I can tell a story. Cadets, who I have had in class, sometimes approach me beforehand and request that, during my speech, I tell some of the stories I've told them in class.

For the longest time I have resisted this. I simply didn't think this the right forum for story-telling, so I tried instead, with varying degrees of success, to use this time to impart some higher lesson - some thought that would perhaps stay with one or two of you a little longer than the 10 or 15 minutes I will be standing here. I tried this again last week at another dining-in and I bombed. Big time. Of course, the cadets didn't say that. They said all the polite things - "Thank you, sir, for those inspiring words - You've provided us much food for thought - We all certainly learned something from you tonight, sir." And I'm thinking - yeah - you learned something all right. You learned never to invite that SOB to be a dining-in speaker again.

So in the interim, I've spent quite a bit of time thinking about what I would say to you tonight. What can I say that will stay with you? And as I reflected on this I turned on myself - what stays with me? What makes a mark on me? What do I remember, and why? How have I learned the higher lessons I do desperately want to impart to you? Well - I've learned those higher lessons through experience. And as I thought further, I realized that there's only one way to relate experience - that is to tell some stories.

So I'm going to try something new here this evening. I'm going to give you your stories and attempt to relate what I've learned by living them. I'm going to let you crawl inside my eye-sockets and see some of the things I've seen these past 18 years.

Lesson One. Imagine you are a brand new second lieutenant on a peacekeeping mission in the Sinai Peninsula. You are less than a year out of West Point, and

only a few weeks out of the basic course. You are standing at a strict position of attention in front of your battalion commander, a man you will come to realize was one of the finest soldiers with whom you've ever served, and you are being questioned about a mistake - a big mistake - that you've made.

You see, your platoon lost some live ammo. Oh sure, it was eventually found, but for a few hours you have the entire battalion scrambling. Your battalion commander is not yelling at you though, he's not demeaning you; he's simply taking this opportunity to ensure you learn from the experience. And you do - *you learn that people make mistakes*, that those mistakes do not usually result in the end of the world, and that such occasions are valuable opportunities to impart some higher lessons.

Then, out of the corner of your eye, you see your platoon sergeant emerge from behind a building. He's an old soldier - a fine soldier though - whose knees have seen a few too many airborne operations. He sees you and the colonel - and he takes off at a run. You see him approaching from behind the colonel and the next thing you see is the back of your platoon sergeant's head. He is now standing between you and your battalion commander - the two are eyeball to eyeball.

Your platoon sergeant says, a touch of indignance in his voice, "Leave my lieutenant alone, sir. He didn't lose the ammo, I did. I was the one who miscounted. You want someone's ass, you take mine." And you learn another lesson - *you learn about loyalty*.

Lesson Two. It's a few months later, and you're one of two soldiers left on a hot PZ in some Caribbean island. There's been another foul up - not yours this time, but you're going to pay for it. It's you and your RTO, a nineteen-year-old surfer from Florida who can quote Shakespeare, because his Mom was a high school literature teacher, and who joined the Army because his Dad was a World War II Ranger. The last UH-60 has taken off on an air assault and someone is supposed to come back and get you guys.

But the fire is getting heavy, and you're not sure anything can get down there without getting shot up. You're taking fire from some heavily forested hills. At least two machine guns, maybe three, maybe more, and quite a few AKs, but you can't make out anything else. You and your RTO are in a hole, hunkered down as the

bad guys are peppering your hole with small arms fire. Your RTO is trying to get some help - another bird to come get you, some artillery, some attack helicopters - anything. But there are other firefights happening elsewhere on this island involving much larger numbers. So as the cosmos unfolds at that particular moment, in that particular place, you and your RTO are well down the order of merit list.

You feel a tug at your pants leg. Ketch, that's what you call him, Ketch tells you he got a "wait, out" when he asked for help. The radio is jammed with calls for fire and requests for support from other parts of the island.

What we gonna do, sir?" he asks. And all of a sudden you are learning another lesson. *You're learning about the weightiness of command*, because it's not just you in that hole, it's this kid you've spent every day with for the last five months. This kid you've come to love like a kid brother.

There is only one way out and that's through the bad guys. You see, you are on a peninsula that rises about 100 feet from the sea. the inland side is where the bad guys are. You figure you are safe in this hole, so long as they don't bring in any indirect fire stuff, but if they come down off those hills, onto the peninsula, then you're going to have to fight it out. And that's what you tell your RTO. We either get help or, if the bad guys come for us, we fight. He looks at you. You don't know how long. And he says only four words. Two sentences. "Roger, sir. Let's rock." Appropriate coming from a surfer. Then he slithers back down to the bottom of the hole. Staying on the radio, your lifeline, trying to get some help. You are peering over the edge of the hole, careful not to make too big a target.

You're thinking about your wife and that little month-old baby you left a few days ago. It was two o'clock in the morning when you got the call. "Pack your gear and get in here." You kissed them both and told them to watch the news. Hell, you didn't know where you were going or why, but you were told to go, and you went.

Then all of a sudden it gets real loud, and things are flying all around and then there's a shadow that passes over you. You look up and find yourself staring at the bottom of a Blackhawk, about 15 feet over the deck, flying fast and low, and as it passes over your hole you see the door gunner dealing death and destruction on the bad guys in those hills. It sets down about 25 meters from your hole, as close as it can get. You look up and see the crew chief kneeling inside, waving frantically to

you, the door gunner still dealing with it, trying to keep the bad guys' heads down, who have now switched their fire to the bird, a much bigger, and better, target. You look at Ketch and then you're off - and you run 25 meters faster than 25 meters have ever been run since humans began to walk upright. And you dive through the open doors onto the floor of the Blackhawk. There are no seats in the bird since this is combat and we don't use them in the real deal.

And you are hugging your RTO, face-to-face, like a lover, and shouting at him "You OKAY? You OKAY? You OKAY? But he doesn't tell you he's OKAY since he's yelling the same thing at you - "You OKAY? You OKAY? You OKAY? And then the pilot pulls pitch and executes a violent and steep ascent out of there and had you not been holding onto the d-rings in the floor and the crew chief holding your legs, you might have fallen out. Then you're over water, you're safe, and the bird levels out, and you roll over on your back and close your eyes - and you think you fall asleep.

But then you feel a hand on your blouse, and you open your eyes and see the crew chief kneeling over you with a headset in his hand. He wants you to put it on so you do. And the first thing you hear is, "I-Beamer, buddy boy. I-Beamer." You were in I-4 while a cadet, and that was your rallying cry. And you look up to where the pilots sit and you see a head sticking out from behind one of the seats. He's looking at you and it's his voice you hear, but you can't make out who it is because his visor is down. Then he lifts it, and you see the face of a man who was two years ahead of you in your company. He tells you that he knew you were there and he wasn't going to leave an I-Beamer like that. *And you learn about courage, and camaraderie.* And friendship that never dies!

Lesson Three. It's a few years later and you've already had your company command. You're in grad school, studying in Michigan. You get a phone call one night, one of the sergeants from your company. He tells you Harvey Moore is dead, killed in a training accident when his Blackhawk flew into the ground.

Harvey Moore. Two-time winner of the Best Ranger Competition. Great soldier. Got drunk one night after his wife left him and took his son. You see, staff sergeants don't make as much money as lawyers, so she left with the lawyer. He got stinking drunk, though it didn't take much since he didn't drink at all before this, and got into his car. Then had an accident. Then got a DUI. He was an E-6 promotable when this happened, and the SOP was a general-officer Article 15 and a reduction one grade,

which would really be two for him because he was on the promotion list.

But Harvey Moore is a good soldier, and it's time to go to bat for a guy who, if your company command was any sort of a success, played a significant part in making it so. And you go with your battalion commander to see the CG, and you stand at attention in front of the CG's desk for 20 minutes convincing him that Harvey Moore deserves a break. You win. Harvey Moore never drinks again. He makes E-7.

And when you change command, he grabs your arm, with tears in his eyes, and thanks you for all you've done. Then the phone call. *And you learn about grief.*

Lesson four: And then you're a major and you're back in the 82d - your home. And one day some SOB having a bad week decides it's time to take it out on the world and he shoots up a PT formation. Takes out 20 guys. You're one of them. A 5.56 tracer round right to the gut. Range about 10 meters. And you're dead for a little while, but it's not your time yet - and there are still so many lessons to learn.

And you wake up after five surgeries and 45 days in a coma. And you look down at your body and you don't recognize it - it has become a receptacle for hospital tubing and electronic monitoring devices. You have a tracheotomy, so there's a huge tube going down your throat and you can't talk, but that thing is making sure you breathe. And there's a tube in your nose that goes down into your stomach - that's how you eat. And there are four IVs - one in each arm and two in the vein in the top of your feet. There is a tube through your right clavicle - that's where they inject the high-powered antibiotics that turns your hair white and makes you see things. But disease is the enemy now and its gotta be done.

And there are three tubes emerging from three separate holes in your stomach. They are there to drain the liquids from your stomach cavity. It drains into some bags hanging on the side of your bed. And they've shaved your chest and attached countless electrodes to monitor your heartbeat, blood pressure, and anything else they can measure. They have these things stuck all over your head as well, and on your wrists and ankles.

And your family gathers around, and they are like rocks, and they pull you through. But there's also a guy, dressed in BDUs, with a maroon beret in his hand, who stands quietly in the corner. Never says anything. Just smiles. And he looks at you. He's there every day. Not every hour or every day, but he comes every day. Sometimes

he's there when you wake up. Sometimes he's there when you go to sleep. He comes during his lunch break. He stays an hour, or two or three. And just stands in the corner. And smiles. No one told him to be there.

But he made it his place of duty. His guard post. You see, it's your Sergeant Major, and his Ranger buddy is down, and a Ranger never leaves a fallen comrade. *And you learn, through this man, the value of a creed.*

Lesson five. And every four hours two huge male nurses come in and gently roll you on your side. The bullet exited through your left buttock and made a hole the size of a softball. The bandages need to be changed. Take the soiled wads out and put clean ones in. And a second lieutenant comes in. She seems to be there all the time. She's the one changing the bandages. And it hurts like hell, but she, too, is smiling, and talking to you, and she's gentle.

And you know you've seen her before, but you can't talk - you still have that tube in your throat. But she knows. And she tells you that you taught her Military Art History, that now it's her turn to take care of you, that she's in charge of you and the team of nurses assigned to you, and she won't let you down. *And you learn about compassion.*

Lesson Six. And then it's months later and you're still recovering. Most of the tubes are gone but it's time for another round of major surgeries. And you go into one of the last, this one about nine hours long. And they put you back together. And you wake up in the ICU one more time. Only one IV this time. And when you open your eyes, there's a huge figure standing over your bed. BDUs. Green beret in his hand. Bigger than God. And he's smiling.

"It's about time you woke up you lazy bastard," he says. And you know it's your friend and former commander and you've got to come back with something quick - something good. He's the deputy Delta Force commander, soon to be the commander. And you say, "Don't you have someplace else to be? Don't you have something more important to do?" And without skipping a beat, without losing that smile he says "Right now, I am doing what I consider the most important thing in the world." *And you learn about leadership.*

So there you have them. Some stories. I've tried to let you see the world as I've seen it at various points in time these 18 years. I hope you've learned something. I certainly have.

More from the Cowboy Philosopher Will Rogers

Congress and Congressmen

When a Gentleman quoted me on the floor of Congress the other day, another member took exception and said he objected to the remarks of a Professional Joke Maker going into the Congressional Record.

Now can you beat that for jealousy among people in the same line? Calling me a Professional Joke Maker! He is right about everything but the Professional. They are the Professional Joke Makers. Read some of the Bills that they have passed, if you think up half the amount of funny things they can think of in one session of Congress. Besides my jokes don't do anybody any harm. You don't have to pay attention to them. But everyone of the jokes these Birds make is a LAW and hurts somebody (generally everybody)...And by the way, I have engaged counsel and if they ever put any more of my material in that "Record of Inefficiency" I will start suit for defamation of character. I don't want my stuff buried away where Nobody ever reads it. I am not going to lower myself enough to associate with them in a Literary way.

A bunch of Congressmen landed in New York from the Panama Canal where they had been at government expense to see if it really did connect the two oceans, or was it just propaganda. Well, they got back to New York and they only searched one of their baggage and found four quarts. The other 14 claimed it and got home with theirs. All but Congressman LaGuardia, an Italian American (and a good one). He admitted that he had started from down there with a few steins of grog, but he had drank it up before arrival at Quarantine, purposely. Now he will be ostracized from Congress for honesty.



Too bad all the people who know how to run the country are busy driving taxi cabs and cutting hair.

George Burns, American comedian (1896-1996)

Many people's tombstones should read, "Died at 30. Buried at 60.

Nicholas Murray Butler, American educator (1862-1947)

You Lovers of the English Language Will Enjoy This

There is a two-letter word that perhaps has more meanings than any other two-letter word, and that is "UP."

It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP and why are the officers UP for election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report?

We call UP our friends. And we use it to brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, we warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and some guys fix UP the old car. At other times the little word has real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed UP is special.

And this UP is confusing: A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP. We open up a store in the morning but we close it UP at night.

We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP! To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look the word UP in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4th of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions. If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you might wind UP with a hundred or more. When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out we say it is clearing UP.

When it doesn't rain for awhile, things dry UP.

One could go on and on, but I'll warp it UP, for now my time is UP, so.....Time to shut UP!

O.K.! That't it! I'm Thru....Threw....Through!

Soldiers For The Truth

The organization was founded by Col. David Hackworth and is continuing under the capable auspices of Roger Charles, (LTC USMC Ret.), 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.

"DAMMIT! WHEN BIG PEOPLE VISIT LITTLE PEOPLE, MARINES GET DEAD"

I have only recently read the article by David Hackworth from March 14, 2005 – "Another Shameful Navy Cover-Up." I am happy to hear that people have come forward and talked about what this self-serving asshole (Rear Adm. Charles Kubic) has done.

I am no longer with NMCB-14, so I am not worried about stating my name. It is Brigitta Thompson. I was with a small group of Seabees attached to 3/7 Lima Company in Husaybah, Iraq, in 2004. It was the convoy who took us to Husaybah that was attacked in Hit on their return, and two of our members were killed.

I would like to add more dead to Rear Adm. Kubic's list. Three Marines from 3/7 were killed on July 5, 2004, during one of his "photo-ops." I will always remember Husaybah — July 5, 2004, especially — as though it were yesterday. It was hot. Near 120 degrees. Mortar fire at us, or in town, was a daily occurrence. If you went outside the compound, it wasn't a question of "if" you were going to be attacked; it was just a matter of "when."

Kubic had decided that he needed yet another "photo-op" during his little trip to Iraq for tax-free income. So he decided to fly all the way out to the Syrian border — to Husaybah. I can remember telling Gunny McVeigh that he (Kubic) was supposed to be arriving. He was livid. He had had no call saying that he was arriving. His exact words were, "Dammit! When big people visit little people, Marines get dead." *Editor's note: Here's the Navy IG email to the author, reporting that all the elements of her formal complaint had been substantiated after a three-year investigation.*



Roger Charles

From: "NAVIG Hotlines"

To: "BRIGITTA THOMPSON" X-

OriginalArrivalTime: 23 Jan 2008

19:12:13.0939 (UTC)

FILETIME=[DC972C30:01C85DF3]

Content-Length: 1160

Dear BU2 Brigitta Thompson:

We are responding to your complaint dated December 1, 2004 in which you alleged the failure of your chain of command to take appropriate action on a sexual harassment complaint. Additionally, you alleged that you were sexually harassed and bullied by members of the command. Further you alleged that you were falsely charged with fraternization on hearsay and rumors.

At our request, Commander, U. S. Fleet Forces Command conducted an investigation into these matters.

With respect to the failure of the chain of command to comply with Navy sexual harassment guidelines, our investigation determined this allegation was substantiated. Appropriate corrective action has been taken.

With respect to the bullying and harassment by members of the command, our investigation determined this allegation was substantiated. Appropriate corrective action has been taken.

With respect to the charge of fraternization based on hearsay and rumors, the investigation found there was no violation of rule or regulation and the allegation was unsubstantiated.

We apologize for the delay in responding to your concerns. We have closed our case. Thank

you for bringing these matters to our attention.

Sincerely,

NAVIG Hotlines

Kubic arrived, smiling, cameras rolling. He posed for a couple of pictures and then back into his little convoy to meet the chopper at the soccer field. We heard the explosions after he left.

The French have this handy little mortar shell that they created. It contains hundreds of little steel arrows. The hajis (insurgents and Iraqis) -- they realized that their IEDs really weren't effective enough if they hit us in the mid-section where our armor was. So they started putting the IEDs at head and leg level. That's what the hajis were using that day.

They saw him come in. So they knew he would be leaving soon. They hurriedly planted the arrow-filled mortar shells. There were Marines providing him security that day for his photo shoot. He was going to be running for some sort of political office in Pennsylvania. What happened with that? Did his Iraqi escapades create bad press for him? Anyway, those young men were there ... in the heat, sweating their asses off, protecting his fat ass. And then ... the mortars were detonated.

Yes, he made it out okay. But they didn't. Two were killed outright. Lance Cpl. John Vangyzen IV and Lance Cpl. Michael Torres. Their heads were blown apart by the hundreds of steel arrows. Another, Cpl. Dallas Kerns, was wounded. His arm had been blown off. He eventually died that day. I remember their bodies. They were like meat. Still and unmoving. They were no longer people. While the chopper flew in trying to save Cpl. Kerns, the other two Marines were placed in the back of the truck and their bodies driven through our small compound. The blood was trickling out the back of the truck, making a trail of blood in the dust.

I can also remember the Marines who lived through it. They were furious. I have never seen a

person as angry as these Marines. I was afraid of them. I was too afraid to even offer them water.

All I could think, and still think is this ... IF WE HADN'T BEEN THERE. IF WE HAD GONE BACK TO AL ASAD AFTER WE BUILT THE BUNKERS ... IF WE HADN'T BEEN THERE FOR OUR ADMIRAL TO COME AND TAKE PICTURES TO BOOST HIS EGO AND IMAGE FOR THE CAMPAIGN THAT WAS SURE TO COME ONCE HE RETIRED IN A FEW MONTHS ... WOULD THESE THREE YOUNG, BRAVE MEN ... WOULD THEY HAVE DIED? I WAS SO ASHAMED. IT WAS OUR FAULT THAT HE WAS THERE. HOW COULD THEY NOT HATE US? THOSE MEN SHOULD NEVER HAVE DIED THAT DAY. YES, THEY MAY HAVE DIED AT SOME POINT DURING THEIR TOUR. BUT I WOULD HOPE THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DURING AN INSURGENCY FIRE FIGHT. NOT TO ESCORT SOME FAT POMPOUS ASS IN ORDER FOR HIM TO FURTHER HIS OWN PERSONAL GAINS.

I wonder if he ever considers taking his own life out of shame and regret? No, I don't think so.

Brigitta Thompson



The teacher gave her fifth grade class an assignment. Get their parents to tell them a story with a moral. The kids came back and started to tell their stories.

Kathy said, "My father's a farmer and we have egg-laying hens. One time we were taking our eggs to market when the truck hit a bump and all the eggs were broken. The moral of the story: "Don't put all you eggs in one basket."

Johnny has a story about his Aunt Karen.

She was a flight engineer in Desert Storm and her plane got hit. She had to bail out over enemy territory and all she had was a bottle of whiskey, a machine gun and a machete.

"She drank the whiskey on the way down so it wouldn't break and landed in the middle of 100 enemies. She killed 70 with the machine gun, 20 more with the machete and 10 more with her bare hands."

Moral of story: "Don't mess with Aunt Karen when she has been drinking!"



Bob Evans

Representatives of the TMC were asked to testify at at House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee hearing scheduled the week of February 4, 2008. I have provided the Executive Summary for your information. The testimony reflects the work of eight committees with the

TMC. I serve on the Retirement and Morale, Welfare and Recreation & Military Construction committees.

Wounded Warrior Issues

Joint Transition Office - TMC is encouraged with the creation of a joint DoD-VA office to oversee development of a bi-directional electronic medical record. However, we strongly recommend that the Subcommittee upgrade the scope of responsibilities and span of authority for the new DoD-VA Interagency Program office to include top-down planning and execution of all “seamless transition” functions, including the joint electronic health record; joint DoD/VA physical; implementation of best practices for TBI, PTSD, and special needs care; care access/coordination issues; and joint research.

TMC believes authorizing three years of active-duty-level care for service-disabled members and their families after separation or retirement is essential to align stated “seamless transition” intentions with the realities faced by disabled members and families.

Disability Retirement Reform - TMC urges the Subcommittee to ensure any legislative changes to the military disability evaluation and retirement systems do not reduce compensation and benefit levels for disabled service members.

TMC does not support proposals to do away with the military disability retirement system and shift responsibility compensation responsibility to the VA.

TMC urges an expanded review of all administrative and disciplinary separations since Oct. 7, 2001 for members with recent combat experience to assess whether the behavior that led to separation may have been due to service-caused conditions.

Seamless Transition for Severely-Injured Guard and Reserve Members - TMC urges the Subcommittee to continue and expand its efforts to ensure severely-injured Guard and Reserve members and their families receive needed transition services to make a successful readjustment to civilian status.

Active Force Issues

End Strength and Associated Funding - TMC strongly urges the Subcommittee to sustain projected increases in ground forces and provide additional recruiting, retention, and support resources as necessary to attain/sustain them.

TMC urges the subcommittee to reconsider the consistency of projected reductions of Navy and Air Force forces with long-term readiness needs.

Compensation and Special Incentive Pay - TMC urges the Subcommittee to propose a military pay raise of at least 3.9% for FY2009 (one-half percentage point above private sector pay growth) and to continue such half-percent annual increases over the ECI until current 3.4% pay comparability gap is eliminated.

TMC also urges the Subcommittee to continue periodic targeted pay raises as appropriate to recognize the growing education and technical qualifications of enlisted members and warrant officers and sustain each individual grade/longevity pay cell at the minimum 70th percentile standard.

Access to Quality Housing - TMC urges correction of military housing standards that inequitably depress BAH rates for mid-to-senior

enlisted members by assuming their occupancy of inappropriately small quarters.

Family Readiness and Support - TMC urges the Subcommittee to oppose curtailment of family support funding and instead, expand education and other programs to meet growing needs associated with increasing ops tempo, extended deployments and the more complex insurance, retirement, and savings choices faced by overworked military families in today's complicated world.

Spouse Employment - TMC urges the Subcommittee to support H.R. 2682, a bill which would expand the Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit for employers who hire spouses of Regular and Reserve component service members.

Additionally, the Coalition supports providing tax credits to offset military spouses' expenses in obtaining career-related licenses or certifications when service members are relocated to a different state.

Flexible Spending Accounts - TMC urges the Subcommittee to continue pressing the Defense Department until service members are provided the same eligibility to participate in Flexible Spending Accounts that all other federal employees and corporate employees enjoy.

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Allowances TMC urges the Subcommittee to take action this year to upgrade permanent change-of-station allowances to better reflect the expenses members are forced to incur in complying with government directed relocations, with priority on adjusting flat-rate amounts that have been eroded by years - or decades - of inflation, and shipment of a second vehicle at government expense to overseas accompanied assignments.

BRAC/Rebasing/Military Construction/Commissaries - TMC urges the Subcommittee to continue close monitoring of rebasing/BRAC

plans and schedules to ensure sustainment and timely development of adequate family support/quality of life programs and at closing and gaining installations, respectively - to include housing, education, child care, exchanges and commissaries, health care, family centers, unit family readiness, and other support services.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Programs - TMC urges the Subcommittee to ensure that DOD funds MWR programs at least to the 85% level for Category A and 65% for Category B requirements.

Education Enhancements - TMC urges the Subcommittee to establish the benchmark level of Montgomery GI bill (MGIB) education benefits at the average cost of attending a four-year public college, and support continuous in-state tuition eligibility for service members and their families in the state in which the member is assigned and the member's home state of record once enrolled as a student.

National Guard & Reserve Issues

Reserve Retirement and 'Operational Reserve' Policy - TMC strongly urges expanding qualifying service credit for Reserve retirement age reduction purposes to include service since Sept 11, 2001 in support of a contingency operation or in other emergency situations. TMC urges the Subcommittee to favorably report H.R. 4930 as the minimum next step on this issue.

A Total Force Approach to the Montgomery GI Bill - TMC urges recodification of reserve MGIB benefits for active duty service in Title 38. Accordingly, we support H.R. 4889. In addition, TMC recommends restoring basic reserve MGIB rates to approximately 50% of active duty rates.

Family Support Programs and Benefits - TMC urges Congress to continue and expand its emphasis on providing consistent funding and increased outreach to connect Guard and Reserve families with relevant support programs.

Tangible Support for Employers - TMC urges Congress to support needed tax relief for employers of Selected Reserve personnel.

Retirement Issues

Concurrent Receipt - TMC urges the Subcommittee to act as quickly as possible on the recommendations of the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission and implement a plan to eliminate the deduction of VA disability compensation from military retired pay for all disabled military retirees.

Uniformed Services Retiree Entitlements and Benefits - TMC urges the Subcommittee to resist initiatives to "civilianize" the military retirement system in ways that reduce the compensation value of the current retirement system and undermine long-term retention.

Permanent ID Card Reform - TMC urges the Subcommittee to direct the Secretary of Defense to authorize issuance of permanent military identification cards to uniformed service family members and survivors who are age 65 and older.

Survivor Issues

SBP-DIC Offset - TMC urges the Subcommittee most strongly to take further action to expand eligibility for the special survivor indemnity allowance to include all SBP-DIC survivors and continue progress toward completely repealing the SBP-DIC offset for this most-aggrieved group of military widows.

Final Retired Pay Check - TMC urges the Subcommittee to end the insensitive practice of recouping the final month's retired pay from the survivor of a deceased retired member.

Health Care Issues

Full funding for the Defense Health Program - TMC strongly urges the Subcommittee to take all

possible steps to restore the reduction in TRICARE-related budget authority and ensure continued full funding for Defense Health Program needs.

Protect Beneficiaries Against Cost-Shifting - TMC urges the Subcommittee to require DoD to pursue 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.

TMC Healthcare Cost Principles - TMC most strongly recommends Rep. Chet Edwards' and Rep. Walter Jones' H.R. 579 and Sen. Frank Lautenberg's and Sen. Chuck Hagel's S. 604 as models to establish statutory findings, a sense of Congress on the purpose and principles of military health care benefits, and more explicit guidelines for and limitations on adjustments.

- Active duty members and families should be charged no fees except retail pharmacy co-payments, except to the extent they make the choice to participate in TRICARE Standard or use out-of-network providers under TRICARE Prime.
- For retired and survivor beneficiaries, the percentage increase in fees, deductibles, and co-payments that may be considered in any year should not exceed the percentage increase beneficiaries experience in their compensation.
- The TRICARE Standard inpatient copay should not be increased further for the foreseeable future. At \$535 per day, it already far exceeds inpatient copays for virtually any private sector health plan.
- There should be no enrollment fee for TRICARE Standard or TFL, since neither offers assured access to TRICARE-participating providers in return for their fee. Congress already has required TFL beneficiaries to pay substantial Medicare Part B fees to gain TFL coverage.
- There should be one TRICARE fee schedule for all retired beneficiaries, just as all legislators, Defense leaders and other federal civilian grades have the

same health fee schedule. The TRICARE schedule should be significantly lower than the lowest tier recommended by the Defense Department, recognizing that all retired members paid large up-front premiums for their coverage through decades of arduous service and sacrifice.

TRICARE Standard Enrollment - TMC recommends strongly against establishment of any TRICARE Standard enrollment system; to the extent enrollment may be required, any beneficiary filing a claim should be enrolled automatically, without denying the claim. No enrollment fee should be charged for TRICARE Standard until and unless the program offers guaranteed access to a participating provider.

Private Employer Incentive Restrictions - TMC recommends Congress modify the law restricting private employer TRICARE incentives to explicitly exempt employers who offer only cafeteria plans (i.e., cash payments to all employees to purchase care as they wish) and employers who extend specific cash payments to any employee who uses health coverage other than the employer plan (e.g., FEHBP, TRICARE, or commercial insurance available through a spouse or previous employer).

Provider Participation Adequacy - TMC urges the Subcommittee to continue monitoring DoD and GAO reporting on provider participation to ensure proper follow-on action.

TRICARE Reimbursement Rates - TMC urges the Subcommittee to exert what influence it can to persuade the Ways and Means/Finance Committees to reform Medicare/TRICARE statutory payment formula. To the extent the Medicare rate freeze continues, we urge the Subcommittee to encourage the Defense Department to use its reimbursement rate adjustment authority as needed to sustain provider acceptance.

Additionally, TMC urges the Subcommittee to require a Comptroller General report on the

relative propensity of physicians to participate in Medicare vs. TRICARE, and the likely effect on such relative participation of a further freeze in Medicare/TRICARE physician payments along with the effect of an absence of bonus payments.

Minimize Medicare/TRICARE Coverage Differences - TMC urges the Subcommittee to align TRICARE coverage to at least match that offered by Medicare in every area and provide preventive services at no cost.

TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) Premium - TMC recommends reducing TRS premiums to \$48/month (single) and \$175/month (family), as envisioned by the GAO with retroactive refunds as appropriate. For the future, the percentage increase in premiums in any year should not exceed the percentage increase in basic pay.

TMC further recommends that the Subcommittee request a report from the Department of Defense on options to assure TRS enrollees' access to TRICARE-participating providers.

Private Insurance Premium Options - TMC recommends developing a cost-effective option to have DoD subsidize premiums for continuation of a Reserve employer's private family health insurance during periods of deployment as an alternative to permanent TRICARE Reserve Select coverage.

Involuntary Separates - TMC recommends authorizing one year of post-TAMP TRS coverage for every 90 days deployed in the case of returning members of the IRR or members who are involuntarily separated from the Selected Reserve. TMC further recommends that voluntarily separating Reservists subject to disenrollment from TRS should be eligible for participation in the Continued Health Care Benefits Program (CHCBP).

Gray Area Reservists - TMC urges the Subcommittee to authorize an additional premium-based option under which members

entering “gray area” retiree status should be able to avoid losing health coverage.

Reserve Dental Coverage - TMC supports providing dental coverage to Reservists for 90 days pre- and 180 days post-mobilization (during TAMP), unless the individual’s dental readiness restored to T-2 condition before demobilization.

Restoration of Survivors’ TRICARE Coverage - TMC recommends restoration of TRICARE benefits to previously eligible survivors whose second or subsequent marriage ends in death or divorce.

TRICARE Prime Remote Exceptions - TMC recommends removal of the requirement for the family members to reside with the active duty member to qualify for the TRICARE Prime Remote Program, when the family separation is due to a military-directed move or deployment.

BRAC, Re-Basing, and Relocation - TMC recommends codifying the requirement to provide a TRICARE Prime network at all areas impacted by BRAC or rebasing. Additionally, we recommend that DoD be required to provide an annual report to Congress on the adequacy of health resources, services, quality and access of care for those beneficiary populations affected by transformation plans.

Pharmacy Co-payment Changes - TMC recommends deferral of any pharmacy copay increases pending assessment of the effects of the new federal pricing law on usage and cost patterns for the different venues, and that the Subcommittee instead urge DoD to pursue copay reductions and ease prior authorization requirements for medications for chronic disease, based on private sector experience that such initiatives reduce long-term costs associated with such diseases.

Rapid Expansion of “Third Tier” Formulary - TMS urges the Subcommittee to reassert its intent that the Beneficiary Advisory Panel should have a

substantive role in the formulary-setting process, including access to meaningful data on relative drug costs in each affected class, consideration of all BAP comments in the decision-making process, and formal feedback concerning rationale for rejection of BAP recommendations.

Referral and Authorization System - TMC recommends that Congress require a cost analysis report, including input from each Managed Care Support Contractor, concerning the referral process within DoD and reliance on Civilian Network Providers within an MTF’s Prime Service Area.

Deductibility of Health and Dental Premiums - TMC urges all Armed Services Committee members to seek the support of the Ways and Means and Finance Committees to approve legislation to allow all military beneficiaries to pay TRICARE-related insurance premiums in pre-tax dollars, to include TRICARE dental premiums, TRICARE Reserve Select premiums, TRICARE Prime enrollment fees, premiums for TRICARE Standard supplements, and long-term care insurance premiums.



How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which, an alarm goes off by going on.

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn’t the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices? Doesn’t it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

The Best Officer I Ever Served With...

by Mustang Joe Marlett, Wentzville, MO

While serving my three-year enlistment in the Army, I served two years in Japan and one during the Korean War and extended another year by order of President Truman.

From 1948-51 I served in Co B, 27th Infantry (Wolfhound) Regiment, 25th Infantry Division with **1Lt Gordon C. Jung** as CO. Lt Jung was a WWII vet but was not a West Point graduate.

During the Korean War, Lt Jung was awarded the Silver Star, wounded, returned to duty, promoted to Captain, awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and promoted to Major - all in one year. Later, military historians would describe him as probably the most calm and steady company commander in the regiment; I fully agree.

Capt Jung was not a gung-ho flashy officer who used foul language or ever ordered us to "take that objective at all costs" or "defend this hill at all costs" etc. He always told us to accomplish the mission, but if we ran into overwhelming enemy fire, to stop, take cover, continue firing and call him for assistance. He always kept his promise by committing his reserve, or calling in mortar, artillery or aircraft support. He never sought glory for himself and really practiced the second principle of infantry warfare: Save your men to fight another day.

He cried unabashedly when one of our best sergeants was killed. As for myself, I was promoted to every rank I ever held on active duty in his company. He promoted me from Private E2 to 1st Lieutenant (battlefield commission) at age 19, and I enjoyed the minor distinction of being the youngest officer in the 25th Division and U.S. Army for a while.

After Colonel Jung retired, my old buddies told me that while attending a 25th Infantry Division Association convention, Col. Jung's 87-year-old mother scolded him for saying "damn" when he was rehashing old war stories with his friends. Mrs. Jung said something like, "Gordie, you must wash your mouth out. I taught you better than that!"

Colonel Gordon Jung passed away in the mid-1980s.

Too Close For Comfort

Being a veterinarian, I had been called to examine a ten-year old Irish Wolfhound named Belker. The dog's owner, Ron, his wife, Lisa, and their little boy, Shane, were all very attached to Belker and they were hoping for a miracle.

I examined Belker and found he was dying of cancer. I told the family we couldn't do anything for Belker, and offered to perform the euthanasia procedure for the old dog in their home. As we made arrangements, Ron and Lisa told me they thought it would be good for the four-year-old Shane to observe the procedure. They felt as though Shane might learn something from the experience.

The next day, I felt the familiar catch in my throat as Belker's family surrounded him. Shane seemed so calm, petting the old dog for the last time, that I wondered if he understood what was going on. Within a few minutes, Belker slipped peacefully away. The little boy seemed to accept Belker's transition without any difficulty or confusion. We sat together for a while after Belker's death, wondering aloud about the sad fact that animal lives are shorter than human lives. Shane, who had been listening quietly, piped up, "I know why."

Startled, we all turned to him. What came out of his mouth next stunned me. I'd never heard a more comforting explanation. He said, "People are born so that they learn how to live a good life -- like loving everybody all the time and being nice, right?" The four-year-old continued, "Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long."



Grounds for Divorce

A husband reading a newspaper says to his wife, "You know, honey, I think there might be some real merit to what this article says, that the intelligence of the father often proves a stumbling block to the son."

"Well, thank heaven," said the wife, "at least our James has nothing standing in his way."

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