

THE AMERICAN **Legion**

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\$2.50 FEBRUARY 2016 *The magazine for a strong America*


Religious Liberty

**THE ROLE OF
JESSE OWENS**

**Eleven brothers:
Farm to arms**

**Oklahoma
Dust Bowl post**

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7 Tips FOR A *Relaxing Retirement*

More people are working longer to maintain their standard of living in retirement. Are you prepared?

For many Americans, the dream of a relaxing retirement fades in the midst of inadequate savings and rising health-care costs. Add an unsure market and the potential for inflation, and the variables can seem too daunting to secure anything close to a tranquil retirement.

To help make your retirement years a little closer to the dream you've envisioned, here are seven tips to consider:

1 | Don't quit working too early.

It may not have been your original plan, but delaying retirement could yield very positive results. Social Security's maximum monthly benefits are available at age 70, and taking benefits before Normal Retirement Age results in permanently reduced benefits. Beyond that, the additional working time can also help boost your retirement savings, leave your retirement savings untapped while you're working and may allow you to maintain eligibility for affordable health care.

Many retirees probably don't anticipate living into their 90s, but according to the Social Security Administration, one in four people age 65 today will live past 90. Life expectancies are increasing; don't ignore this important reality as you map out your plan for retirement.

2 | Don't ignore your health.

Maintaining your health is of utmost importance. After all, if you fall ill, you might not be able to keep working, and instead of building your retirement funds, you could find yourself tapping them.

Rising health-care costs lurk around every corner. Take Medicare, in 2016 many participants will see double-digit increases in Part B premiums. Combined with the relatively new income-related premium adjustments, Medicare alone is poised to eat up an increasing portion of your retirement budget.

Beyond that, there are potential costs for custodial, therapeutic or rehabilitative care not covered by Medicare or other health insurance plans. Long-term care insurance offers an option to transfer some of the risk associated with these types of care — care that can

come with a big price tag. According to the 2015 Genworth Cost of Care Survey, average nursing home costs topped \$80,000 a year. Explore purchasing this type of insurance. The younger and healthier you are when you purchase your long-term health insurance plan can lead to a lower annual premium and a decreased risk of rejection.

3 | **Avoid more debt.**

Rising debt levels for Americans close to retirement pose a threat to the financial well-being of that demographic. Mounting debt can hamper efforts to save enough for retirement and make it difficult to even imagine life without the income provided by active employment.

Create a budget and a plan to start paying off those debts well in advance of retirement. Fewer obligations in the form of mortgage payments, car loans and other debts can increase flexibility and options and certainly reduce the burden of any dips in the stock market. Being debt free can be synonymous with a relaxing retirement.

4 | **Keep contributing to retirement funds.**

With Americans living longer, a seemingly sufficient retirement fund at age 65 might come up short at age 85. The earlier you start investing in your financial future, the more fiscally prepared you can be for your later years.

Live the old axiom, “pay yourself first.” But don’t stop with just getting things set up; expand your savings program at every opportunity all the way to the finish line. Bump up what you are putting away with pay raises, promotions and the elimination of payments associated with debts you’ve knocked out.

Employer plans; Roth and traditional IRAs; guaranteed savings annuities; and non-

retirement brokerage, mutual fund and bank deposit accounts may all play a role in your retirement savings efforts. Explore the options and get started today.

5 | **Put yourself first.**

Helping out your children is great, but don’t put your retirement plans in jeopardy to do so. Or at least understand the retirement ramifications of the decisions you make. Remember, there are no lending sources to help you out when you retire without saving enough. On the other hand, college students can seek scholarships, grants, loans and work-study programs for financial aid with tuition, books, fees and other school-related expenses.

6 | **Let Uncle Sam lend a hand.**

IRS allowed catch-up contributions for those 50 and older, special savers tax credits and the tax benefits associated with the aforementioned retirement savings vehicles, which should all be enlisted to help you get to your retirement destination.

7 | **Have a vision.**

What are your dreams when you leave the daily grind behind? Maybe it’s a cross-country trip in your motor home or perhaps a permanent stay in a warmer, sunnier place. Don’t make the mistake of winging it. Having a goal or vision of what relaxing means to you is the first step.

And if you’re not saving for your future, start now. It doesn’t matter if you’re 20, 45 or 60 — or anywhere in between — it’s never too late. Otherwise, your retirement dreams may never come true.



Find out more
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usaa.com/legion



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NEVER FORGET

A group of Marine recruiters walks through King Veterans Cemetery in Waupaca, Wis., on National Wreaths Across America Day on Dec. 12.

Photo by Lucas Carter

The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.2 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

NOTICE TO VETERANS WITH MESOTHELIOMA

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A STEADY HAND
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MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

Veterans who served at least one day of active military duty during wartime, or are serving now, are potentially eligible for membership in The American Legion. Members must have been honorably discharged or still serving honorably.

ELIGIBILITY Aug 2, 1990 – current
DATES OF Dec. 20, 1989 – Jan. 31, 1990
MILITARY Aug. 24, 1982 – July 31, 1984
SERVICE Feb. 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975

June 25, 1950 – Jan. 31, 1955
Dec. 7, 1941 – Dec. 31, 1946
April 6, 1917 – Nov 11, 1918
(Merchant Marines who served from Dec. 7, 1941 to Dec. 31, 1946, are also eligible.)

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'Yuletide in Vietnam'

I have proudly been an American Legion member since 1955 and read every monthly issue. Keith Nightingale's story (December) is marvelous writing. The description of those young men in the jungle heat, being extracted for the Bob Hope show – I almost felt I was there.

– Charlie Carlson, Hurst, Texas

Keith Nightingale's article is a wonderful story. While I never saw Bob Hope over there, he certainly was a patriot the likes of which this country sorely needs now. Thank you for publishing this article, and a hardy welcome home to all our veterans.

– Beau Gregory, Tunica, Miss.

'Broken Engagements'

The article by Alan W. Dowd (December) is one of the best I have ever read on the costs of disengagement. The financial cost of war is enormous and does not end with the money or the war, as those of us who are disabled for life or who paid the ultimate price can attest, along with our families.

Yet it would seem we never learn what Neville Chamberlain learned with Hitler years ago. Of the current agreement with Iran, all I could think was, what will be the cost of misplaced trust and the hope in an illusion that we live in a different world?

It has so far encouraged and emboldened aggressors.

This veteran will find it very difficult to ever support putting troops on the ground when our leaders walk away and turn their backs on any victory won. The results are clear, as noted in Dowd's article. A sad state of affairs, yet it is the politics of those who cannot lead this great nation and of too many citizens who have little clue that freedom and peace are never free in this world.

– Eugene B. Richardson, Sunrise, Fla.

Alan W. Dowd never tires of telling us how we need a bigger military, no matter the cost and no matter who suffers. Now he says the United States has the obligation to lead the world, using the spurious argument that our leadership following World War II was by design. Dowd often sounds like he's espousing our nation's "manifest destiny" as expressed in the mid-1800s.

His opinions about Iraq are especially troubling. A conservative president saw to the dismantling of that nation, which led almost immediately to the influx of al-Qaida and later to the rise of ISIS. I lay those developments at the feet of George W. Bush and his band of hawks.

The United States is not turning inward; it is becoming more mature in its dealings with the world.

— Roger Digel-Barrett, Pickerington, Ohio

Defund Planned Parenthood

Until Planned Parenthood can provide all its essential services for women's health without providing abortions, it's clear that the funding of its abortion business is one big carnival shell game, and the feds are its marks. If supporters of funding for Planned Parenthood are so worried about women not getting good health care, let them reorganize their institution into one that provides all those services except abortion and get the federal government to help fund that organization.

— Donald Woolery, Rockford, Ill.

Someone on TV said recently, "If we can't win the argument about selling baby parts, what argument can we win?" Notice that Sen. Ben Cardin does not bother to address the selling of baby parts. He and the rest of the Democrats easily dismiss the issue by claiming the recordings were doctored. They would find a rationalization to dismiss the matter in any case, but the recordings were not doctored.

They were edited. There were hours of recordings, far more than could reasonably be presented for public viewing. Editing was necessary, and the producers offered to make their entire unedited archive available.

— Bart Rice, Kapolei, Hawaii

As a veteran and a resident of Arizona, I was appalled to read the comments of Rep. Trent Franks regarding the defunding of Planned Parenthood. The issue is not about abortion, which is only a small part of what the organization provides. Franks continues to refer to the videos as his prime reasons for supporting defunding, claiming "irrefutable" evidence shown by the videos. Yet prior to a congressional hearing, when pressed, he admitted that the committee didn't even request unedited video from the Center for Medical Progress (CMP). He didn't note that every state investigation since CMP's smear campaign began has cleared Planned Parenthood of wrongdoing entirely.

The hysteria caused by these doctored videos is dangerous. The recent murders at the Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood are an example of what can come from falsehoods.

— Ronald Pies, Tempe, Ariz.

Blended retirement plan

I can tell you right now that the amount veterans will receive under the new retirement plan will be much less than what they receive now (Veterans Update, December). I worked for the U.S. Postal Service, which in 1984

introduced the Thrift Savings Plan. It is terrible, and few have any idea how to manage the money in the market. You can lose an incredible amount in a short period of time. Not understanding how each investment works or the ups and downs of the markets, and having no real information as how to handle your investments, are the real problems. You will almost be guaranteed to lose money, or in the very best scenario make some but lose it quickly by a turn in the markets. Only with the best of luck will you come out with as good an amount of money as what is now received in retirement.

They forecast a 7.3 percent annual return in investments. Good luck. If I could find such an annuity, I'd be on it in a minute. There are plans that can guarantee that amount or better, but you have to forfeit your right to the money left in your account. If you and your spouse pass away, the remainder is the property of the investment company, not your children.

— Howard Metzger, Estherville, Iowa

Welcome from a king

Concerning the piece on Post 138 in Montana (Rapid Fire, December), the letter from King George V to "Soldiers of the United States" was apparently one of a number of copies given to members of the AEF on arrival overseas. I recently discovered one among my grandfather's effects. It appears to be written by automatic pen or whatever was used in those days.

— Thomas H. Brouillard, Whiting, N.J.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

Include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters published are subject to editing.

Due to the volume of mail received, not every letter can be acknowledged.

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Call a **Hep C Educator** at **844-4HepcHope** who will help guide you in preparing a **personalized plan** for a conversation with your **Hep C specialist**. Register for more information at **HepcHope.com**.

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Amid devastation, Legion offers hope

I am proud of the role The American Legion plays in trying times. Through our National Emergency Fund (NEF), we are able to provide financial grants to Legion Family members who have had their homes damaged or, in some cases, destroyed. The grants provide up to \$3,000 of immediate financial assistance to individuals and \$10,000 to American Legion posts for housing, food and supplies.

I saw this great program in action when flooding hit my home state of Georgia in 1994. Chances are the NEF has helped disaster victims in your state as well.

Formally established after Hurricane Hugo struck the East Coast in 1989, the NEF has provided more than \$8.5 million in emergency assistance. Its message of compassion and hope combined with its record of efficiency led me to choose the NEF as my preferred fundraising program for my year as national commander. The goal is a big one: to raise \$1 million by our next national convention.

The NEF exists to help people like Maria Marcotte, an Army veteran and member of Post 100 in Washington, Ill. When an F-4 tornado tore through her town in 2013, Marcotte was attending services at her church. She immediately thought of her daughter and husband, who were home at the time.

"The church wasn't hit, but the preacher continued with his sermon in the dark because the power went out," she recalls. "I received a text from my brother that he heard my street was hit, so I drove home. It was crazy. I drove over a tree and a power line. I saw my house, which was damaged, and started yelling for my husband and daughter. No answer. It was scary. A neighbor heard me screaming and told me they were in a basement next door. They were OK. But it took us seven months to rebuild our home."

Marcotte had joined the Legion a few weeks earlier and knew nothing about the NEF. "The veterans service officer for the county suggested I fill out a request for the NEF to help," she says. "I didn't expect anything of it because I had homeowner's insurance, but just before Christmas I received a check for \$1,500. It was so useful and totally unexpected. All our stuff was in storage and we had to live in an out-of-town rental."

Today, Marcotte works as a veterans benefit coordinator at Illinois Central College, where she shares this story with student veterans. Her husband, also a veteran, is a member of The American Legion too. Together they attend all their post's meetings.

There are many reasons to join the American Legion Family. But the NEF, which serves current members, is a benefit that could cover a lifetime of dues. More importantly, it allows us to help those in need. This is a concrete way for veterans to support other veterans and their families in some of life's darkest moments. By joining or renewing your membership in the Legion, you're helping guarantee we'll be there to assist someone when disaster strikes – maybe even you.




National Commander
Dale Barnett

MEMORANDA

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

This month, hundreds of Legion Family members will visit Capitol Hill for the 56th Washington Conference. Events include:

Credentialing Summit,

Washington Hilton, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Feb. 17

Employment & Empowerment Summit,

Washington Hilton, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 18 and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 19

Hiring Our Heroes Career Fair,

Washington Hilton, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 19

Veterans Education Symposium,

Washington Hilton, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 20 and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Feb. 21

HEROES Women's Entrepreneurship Course,

Washington Hilton, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feb. 21

"Know Before You Go"

legislative briefing and Commander's Call, Washington Hilton, 8 a.m. Feb. 23 (the latter streamed live at www.legion.org)

Veterans Business Development Workshop,

Washington Hilton, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Feb. 23-24

National Commander's

Testimony, Capitol Hill, Feb. 24

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*"I always want to let
Legionnaires know what's in
The American Legion for them."*

Watch an interview with
Eunice Butts online:

 www.legion.org/magazine

See an archive of past interviews:

 www.legion.org/iamlegion

EUNICE BUTTS

Eunice Butts didn't know much about The American Legion before joining it in the mid-'80s. Six years in, she still didn't know much – until she came across some information about the Legion's Children & Youth programs.

"I read the paper, and I said to myself, 'Oh. Is this what The American Legion is about?'"

"That's where it started for me."

Since then, Butts has devoted a lot of time to bringing the Legion to the attention of local youth.

"I find that they don't know anything about veterans unless their parents were in the service," Butts says. "I love to go and talk to them (and) give them educational gifts. We'll also sit and read to them, and let them ask questions of us."

In addition, Butts is involved with Middleton High School, her alma mater. Her post, Carmichael-Legree Post 167 in Tampa, has adopted the school's ROTC program, where she is a frequent speaker.

"It's just an awesome feeling, especially when you walk in and they say, 'Miss Butts, Miss Butts, what are you going to talk about today?'"

BRANCH OF SERVICE Air Force (1965-1966),
Air Force Reserve and Alabama Air National Guard
(14 years combined)

MOS Supply

RANK Technical sergeant

AMERICAN LEGION POST Carmichael-Legree
Post 167, Tampa, Fla.

YEARS IN THE LEGION 30

VETERANS ACTIVITIES

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Photo by Lucas Carter



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**Rep. Seth Moulton,
D-Mass.**

■ Moulton serves on the House Armed Services Committee. He is a Iraq War Marine Corps veteran.



OPPOSE

Rep. Brian Babin, R-Texas

■ Babin is a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. He served as a captain in the Air Force.

The Islamic State (aka ISIS) wants to murder more Americans and hopes to attack us here at home. Our refugee policy has important implications for our strategy to defeat this brutal terrorist organization and protect ourselves. The congressional furor over accepting Syrian refugees is handing ISIS a propaganda victory while distracting attention from its most likely avenue of attack.

Refugees undergo the strictest screening of any travelers to this country. The process is so exhaustive that it often takes more than two years. Given a choice between attempting to infiltrate this country through a vigorous and extended vetting process or working to radicalize those already here, where do you think ISIS is concentrating its efforts?

That's why, along with a comprehensive political and military strategy to defeat ISIS abroad, our focus must be on preventing them from recruiting people already on U.S. soil.

I voted against the Republican bill to halt lawful immigration of Syrian refugees for two reasons. First, it did nothing substantive to improve the screening process. Even the director of the FBI opposed it. Second, the bill ignores the greatest threat ISIS poses to the United States: recruiting terrorists right under our noses.

Singling out Muslims or Syrians – the very victims of the Islamic State's special brand of terror – gives ISIS a propaganda tool it can use to recruit more foot soldiers. Such overreaction might well harm our anti-terrorism efforts.

We should not let ISIS win by giving in to fearmongering and changing our values. We must remain steadfast and resolute in who we are as a people and a nation: a beacon of hope for all those "yearning to breathe free."

The attacks in Paris by militant Islamists are exactly why we must stop President Obama's reckless and foolish plan to allow tens of thousands of poorly vetted Syrian refugees into the United States. With at least one of the

terrorists entering Europe as a "Syrian refugee," it would be a failure of our sworn duty to protect the American people if we did not suspend this dangerous program.

The president's directors of national intelligence, the Department of Homeland

Security and the FBI have already admitted they cannot properly vet those claiming to be Syrian refugees. According to these officials, there is simply not enough information on them to review. Common sense dictates that if we cannot guarantee there is no connection to terrorism, we should not let them enter the country.

President Obama says that those who believe we should pause the program and put greater security checks in place are acting un-American. However, it recently came to light that after several dozen terrorists slipped through the Iraqi refugee security checks in 2011, he directed the State Department to stop processing Iraqi refugee requests for six months. This is a complete double standard.

Simply put, the president's plan is a recipe for disaster. We have already seen more than 400 Americans join ISIS' ranks, and there are reports of more than 1,000 ongoing ISIS investigations.

A strong majority of Americans want to pause this program. They've seen what happened in Paris and are rightfully concerned. Our duty is to defend the American people against all enemies, foreign and domestic. President Obama's plan violates that oath.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE
In the wake of the Paris terror attacks, many Americans want to stop resettlement of Syrian refugees in the United States, citing security concerns. Others say these fears benefit the Islamic State's propaganda and recruitment efforts.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Honorable (name), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121

The Honorable (name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121

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CHOCOLATE, good for the heart?

A study of some 21,000 people older than 12 years old found that those who ate the most chocolate a day – up to 3.5 ounces – had a 14 percent lower risk of heart disease and a 23 percent lower risk of stroke than those who ate no chocolate, according to HealthDay.

The research suggests that the more chocolate an adult eats, the better the heart and stroke outcomes. “People who ate the most chocolate had a 29 percent reduced risk of heart disease and a 21 percent reduced risk of stroke, compared with those who ate the least. They also were 45 percent less likely to die from heart disease, heart attack or stroke.”

British researchers published the study in the medical journal *Heart*.

“People who want to eat chocolate should not be worried too much about their cardiovascular health,” said Phyo Myint of the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, the study’s co-author. “The key is moderation.”



Media Bakery

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.



Media Bakery

Rehab makes a difference in stroke recovery.

BY MARK L. FUERST

Stroke is the fourth-leading cause of death in the United States and a leading cause of adult disability. Nearly 7 million Americans have survived strokes, and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) estimates that 15,000 veterans are hospitalized for them each year.

Forty percent of stroke patients are left with moderate functional impairments, and 15 to 30 percent with severe disability. Effective rehabilitation initiated early after a stroke can enhance your recovery and minimize functional disability.

“Stroke is largely preventable, beatable and treatable,” says Ralph Sacco, chairman of neurology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. Some strokes are preventable by modifying risk factors and making lifestyle changes; high blood pressure and high blood sugar levels can be treated with diet, exercise and medication. But other strokes are hereditary and largely unpredictable.

After a stroke, you are at

increased risk for another and possibly for a heart attack. Your doctor may prescribe therapies to control the platelets in your blood and reduce your blood pressure and lipid levels.

The primary neurological symptoms of a stroke are described by using the acronym FAST: face drooping, arm weakness, speech difficulty and time, indicating the need for urgency in dealing with those symptoms. Other major symptoms are sudden weakness or numbness and tingling on one side of the body, sudden loss of speech or slurred speech, sudden loss of vision, difficulty walking and severe headaches, although headaches occur mostly during hemorrhagic strokes, Sacco says.

‘I KEEP FIGHTING’ Stroke rehabilitation can be intense and requires focus. “The right attitude and being goal-oriented can make a difference in recovery,” Sacco says.

Army veteran Jerome Dunn, 60, is back at work at the VA

New York Harbor Healthcare System in Manhattan after a mini-stroke and a major stroke. In 2003, he suffered a transient ischemic attack caused by a temporary blood clot and went to the Manhattan VA for help with his recovery.

While working on his rehab, Dunn found a position as a compensated work therapy employee, which led to a permanent job in housekeeping. While at work in 2013, he suffered a major stroke. He was stabilized and then underwent surgery to clear his carotid artery. One month later, he returned to work.

Once or twice a week, Dunn goes to physical therapy to strengthen his left leg. His speech is also slightly slurred. He maintains a regimen of medications to prevent blood clots and assist his memory. "It will be a long time before I get better," says Dunn, who plans to work until he's 65. "I keep fighting every day. I know in my heart I'm doing better."

According to VA/DoD guidelines, every stroke patient should have access to an experienced, coordinated rehabilitation team, which may include a physician, nurse, physical therapist, occupational therapist, kinesiologist, speech and language pathologist, psychologist and recreational therapist. Rehab can take place in inpatient hospitals, outpatient facilities, the patient's home and more.

For many stroke patients, like Dunn, the real work of recovery begins after formal rehabilitation.

Mark L. Fuerst is a Brooklyn-based health and fitness writer.



Media Bakery

Track health on the go

Want to better manage your health, get more exercise or have more fun while you're working out? Look no further than your smartphone.

■ **Harvest** helps you select the best produce at the supermarket and provides storage tips for preserving freshness.

■ Wristband activity trackers such as **Fitbit**, **Jawbone** and **Garmin vivosmart** have sensors that track your daily steps, heart rate, sleep and more. Upload your daily data to your smartphone or iPad to monitor your health habits over time.

■ **GoodRx** gives you instant access to current prices of individual drugs at 75,000 pharmacies, coupons to help cut costs and more.

■ Use **iTriage** to check symptoms, get information on possible conditions, and find the nearest doctor, emergency room or urgent-care facility. It also tracks appointments and stores health information. Content is reviewed by Harvard Medical School.

■ **MapMyFitness** maps your walking, running or cycling route using GPS and lets you record your workouts, activities and food. For extra motivation, use the app to connect with friends.

■ **Pocket Yoga** shows images of yoga poses while a soothing voice guides you through the routine. You can vary the practice, duration and level of difficulty.

■ **FitnessBuilder** has more than 7,000 exercise images and videos, hundreds of step-by-step workouts, and tools to put together your own custom routine.

GRAIN CHECK

Media Bakery

We've all heard that whole grains – whole wheat, rye, oats, brown rice – are good for our health. New research, though, shows just how good.

A massive research study tracking the eating habits of 100,000 adults over 25 years reveals that "for every 28-gram serving of whole grain the participants ate per day, they cut their overall death risk during the study period by 5 percent," WebMD reports, citing research recently published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*. "Each daily serving of whole grains cut heart-related death risk by 9 percent."



For people with a higher risk of stroke due to
Atrial Fibrillation (AFib) not caused by a heart valve problem

I won't accept going for less than my personal best.

ELIQUIS® (apixaban) is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation, a type of irregular heartbeat, not caused by a heart valve problem.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

- **Do not stop taking ELIQUIS for atrial fibrillation without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke.** ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.
- **ELIQUIS can cause bleeding, which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death.**
- **You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, NSAIDs, warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, SSRIs or SNRIs, and other blood thinners. Tell your doctor about all medicines, vitamins and supplements you take.**

While taking ELIQUIS, you may bruise more easily and it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop.

- **Get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding:**
 - unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as unusual bleeding from the gums; nosebleeds that happen often, or menstrual or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
 - bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
 - red, pink, or brown urine; red or black stools (looks like tar)
 - coughing up or vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
 - unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain; headaches, feeling dizzy or weak
- **ELIQUIS is not for patients with artificial heart valves.**

Now I'm going for something better than warfarin. ELIQUIS.

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better than warfarin.

ELIQUIS® (apixaban)

Had significantly less
major bleeding than warfarin.

No routine blood testing.

ELIQUIS and other blood thinners increase the risk of bleeding
which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death.

Ask your doctor if switching to ELIQUIS is right for you.

- **Spinal or epidural blood clots (hematoma).** People who take ELIQUIS, and have medicine injected into their spinal and epidural area, or have a spinal puncture have a risk of forming a blood clot that can cause long-term or permanent loss of the ability to move (paralysis). This risk is higher if, an epidural catheter is placed in your back to give you certain medicine, you take NSAIDs or blood thinners, you have a history of difficult or repeated epidural or spinal punctures. Tell your doctor right away if you have tingling, numbness, or muscle weakness, especially in your legs and feet.

- **Before you take ELIQUIS,** tell your doctor if you have: kidney or liver problems, any other medical condition, or ever had bleeding problems. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant or breastfeed.

- **Do not take ELIQUIS if you** currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding or have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS.

A reaction to ELIQUIS can cause hives, rash, itching, and possibly trouble breathing. Get medical help right away if you have sudden chest pain or chest tightness, have sudden swelling of your face or tongue, have trouble breathing, wheezing, or feeling dizzy or faint.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see additional Important Product Information on the adjacent page.

Individual results may vary.

Learn about savings and offers.
Visit ELIQUIS.COM or call 1-855-ELIQUIS

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Eliquis®
**(apixaban) tablets 5mg
2.5mg**

IMPORTANT FACTS about ELIQUIS® (apixaban) tablets

Rx ONLY

The information below does not take the place of talking with your healthcare professional. Only your healthcare professional knows the specifics of your condition and how ELIQUIS may fit into your overall therapy. Talk to your healthcare professional if you have any questions about ELIQUIS (pronounced ELL eh kwiss).

What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

For people taking ELIQUIS for atrial fibrillation: Do not stop taking ELIQUIS without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke. ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.

ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death. This is because ELIQUIS is a blood thinner medicine that reduces blood clotting.

You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (called NSAIDs), warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), and other medicines to help prevent or treat blood clots.

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one listed above.

While taking ELIQUIS:

- you may bruise more easily
- it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding when taking ELIQUIS:

- unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as:
 - unusual bleeding from the gums
 - nosebleeds that happen often
 - menstrual bleeding or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
- red, pink, or brown urine
- red or black stools (looks like tar)
- cough up blood or blood clots
- vomit blood or your vomit looks like coffee grounds
- unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain
- headaches, feeling dizzy or weak

ELIQUIS is not for patients with artificial heart valves.

Spinal or epidural blood clots (hematoma). People who take a blood thinner medicine (anticoagulant) like ELIQUIS, and have medicine injected into their spinal and epidural area, or have a spinal puncture have a risk of

forming a blood clot that can cause long-term or permanent loss of the ability to move (paralysis). Your risk of developing a spinal or epidural blood clot is higher if:

- a thin tube called an epidural catheter is placed in your back to give you certain medicine
- you take NSAIDs or a medicine to prevent blood from clotting
- you have a history of difficult or repeated epidural or spinal punctures
- you have a history of problems with your spine or have had surgery on your spine

If you take ELIQUIS (apixaban) and receive spinal anesthesia or have a spinal puncture, your doctor should watch you closely for symptoms of spinal or epidural blood clots or bleeding. Tell your doctor right away if you have tingling, numbness, or muscle weakness, especially in your legs and feet.

What is ELIQUIS?

ELIQUIS is a prescription medicine used to:

- reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation.
- reduce the risk of forming a blood clot in the legs and lungs of people who have just had hip or knee replacement surgery.
- treat blood clots in the veins of your legs (deep vein thrombosis) or lungs (pulmonary embolism), and reduce the risk of them occurring again.

It is not known if ELIQUIS is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take ELIQUIS?

Do not take ELIQUIS if you:

- currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding
- have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. Ask your doctor if you are not sure

What should I tell my doctor before taking ELIQUIS?

Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you:

- have kidney or liver problems
- have any other medical condition
- have ever had bleeding problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ELIQUIS will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ELIQUIS passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take ELIQUIS or breastfeed. You should not do both

Tell all of your doctors and dentists that you are taking ELIQUIS. They should talk to the doctor who prescribed ELIQUIS for you, before you have **any** surgery, medical or dental procedure.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some of your other medicines may affect the way ELIQUIS (apixaban) works. Certain medicines may increase your risk of bleeding or stroke when taken with ELIQUIS.

How should I take ELIQUIS?

Take ELIQUIS exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Take ELIQUIS twice every day with or without food, and do not change your dose or stop taking it unless your doctor tells you to. If you miss a dose of ELIQUIS, take it as soon as you remember, and do not take more than one dose at the same time. **Do not run out of ELIQUIS. Refill your prescription before you run out.** When leaving the hospital following hip or knee replacement, be sure that you will have ELIQUIS available to avoid missing any doses. **If you are taking ELIQUIS for atrial fibrillation, stopping ELIQUIS may increase your risk of having a stroke.**

What are the possible side effects of ELIQUIS?

- See **“What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS?”**
- ELIQUIS can cause a skin rash or severe allergic reaction. Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
 - chest pain or tightness
 - swelling of your face or tongue
 - trouble breathing or wheezing
 - feeling dizzy or faint

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all of the possible side effects of ELIQUIS. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about ELIQUIS. For more information, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, call 1-855-ELIQUIS (1-855-354-7847), or go to www.ELIQUIS.com.

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June 2015
432US1501088-11-01

VA unveils changes to Choice program

BY TOM PHILPOTT

More than a year after Congress passed the Choice Act, many veterans remain frustrated and confused in trying to access VA-paid private-sector health care. Acknowledging that the program isn't working quite as envisioned, VA in December announced two changes in eligibility rules, both from modifications made last summer.

VA also unveiled a longer-range and more costly push to improve its integration with community care by consolidating the existing hodgepodge of non-VA health-care authorities for veterans under a new program called the New Veterans Choice Program (New VCP).

Before Dec. 1, veterans enrolled in VA care gained automatic access to Choice if they reside more than 40 miles from any VA medical facility, regardless of whether it offers the care they need. On that date, the eligibility pool deepened to include any veteran living more than 40 miles from a VA facility with a primary-care physician on duty at least 36 hours a week. That made 160,500 more veterans eligible.

Another change lifted a requirement that to qualify for Choice a veteran must have enrolled in VA health care by Aug. 1, 2014. That date was removed so that newer enrollees are immediately eligible if they reside more than 40 miles from VA primary care or wait longer than 30 days for care.

Toward the goal of more seamless integration of VA care with community-based care, VA unveiled New VCP as a three-part legislative reform package. It carries a cost of up \$400 million to \$800 million a year across a three-year startup period, plus \$1.5 billion to \$2.5 billion more the first year with cost increases annually thereafter. This left VA committees and major VSOs skeptical and seeking more details before fully endorsing.

Roscoe Butler, The American Legion's deputy director for Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, testified that the Legion is "cautiously optimistic" that New VCP "may work and could represent an important step toward a truly integrated model for delivering veterans health care."

But Butler said consolidating all non-VA care "is clearly a huge undertaking and we have concerns about VA's ability to implement the plan. VA has

attempted to roll out, or has rolled out, numerous projects in past years that have required dramatic system, information technology and policy changes. VA must guarantee Congress, veterans service organizations and veterans that the community care plan will not result in similar failures."

Noting that Choice was an emergency response to the wait time scandal that hit VA in 2014, Butler

said the Legion believes VA has not yet shown the expertise to establish large health-care provider networks. "So far this year, it has relied on third-party participants such as Health Net and TriWest to fulfill these requirements," he said. "VA plans do not specify whether it will continue utilizing third-party contractors to fulfill this requirement

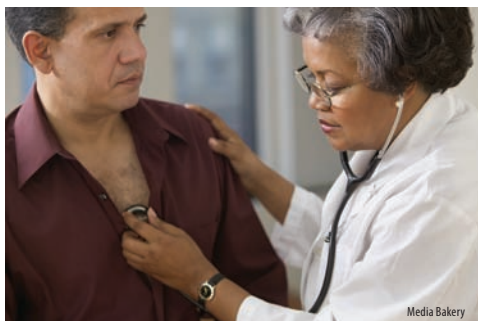
if the (New VCP) plan is approved."

The Obama administration has less than a year to shepherd any major VA initiative into law and would have to leave implementation to a future administration. But VA leaders added a sense of urgency, describing an administrative nightmare executing Choice against a backdrop of multiple authorities for accessing outside care that Congress previously approved.

Though VA refers more veterans to private-sector care than ever before, said Deputy VA Secretary Sloan Gibson, "we're saddled with a confusing array of programs, authorities and mechanisms that greatly complicate the task of ensuring veterans get the care they need." That includes Choice, new Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) networks, Project ARCH for rural veterans, two different VA-paid emergency care plans, and VA affiliations with other federal agencies and academic partners, as well as numerous individual agreements between VA facilities and outside providers.

VA wants Congress to commit to spending a lot more money to modernize multiple VA systems to coordinate outside care appointments, capture and share information on care provided, and pay private-sector providers in a timely way, thus cleaning up the mess it helped create. 🌿

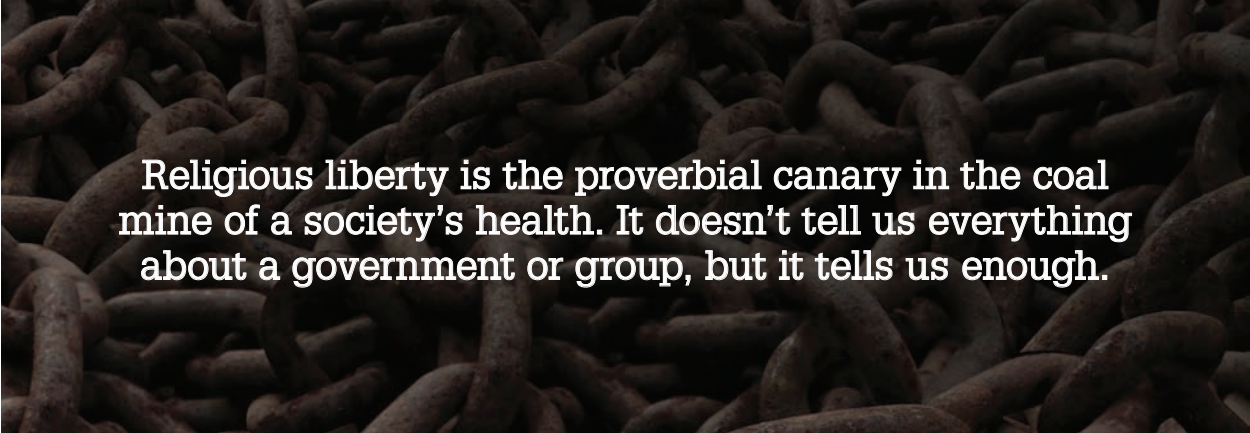
Tom Philpott has been covering military personnel and veterans issues for more than 30 years.



NOT to be TRUSTED

*Nations that stifle religious freedom
aren't friends of the United States.*

BY ALAN W. DOWD



Religious liberty is the proverbial canary in the coal mine of a society's health. It doesn't tell us everything about a government or group, but it tells us enough.

Eleven months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt shared his vision of a world founded upon four essential human freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom from fear, freedom from want and “freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world.”

Importantly, Roosevelt asserted those four freedoms in the context of a speech about “the democratic way of life ... being directly assailed in every part of the world” by a “new order of tyranny.” In short, he understood that religious liberty is the proverbial canary in the coal mine of a society's health. It doesn't tell us everything about a government or group, but it tells us enough.

Whether they're mass murderers masquerading as holy men in Nigeria or Syria, atheist dictators in Pyongyang or Beijing, theocrats in Tehran or autocrats in Moscow, regimes and movements that rationalize the stifling of religious liberty inside their borders are more likely to rationalize unacceptable behavior beyond their borders – and more likely to threaten U.S. interests.

ROOSEVELT SPOKE during the high noon of godless tyrannies – or, more accurately, tyrannies that elevated their leaders to godlike status.

Some observers contend, wrongly, that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis hijacked Christianity and used it to validate the Nazi program. The truth is that Hitler's Nazis embraced a pagan religion of mysticism, racialism and social Darwinism.

The Nazi Party platform called for religion to be subordinated to the state and to “the manners and moral sentiments of the Germanic race.”

“The destruction of Christianity was explicitly recognized as a purpose of the National Socialist movement,” Nazi leader Baldur von Schirach explained.

Historian Gerhard Weinberg argues that Christianity and Judaism “were removed simultaneously” by the Nazis.

In 1938, Hitler's SS destroyed 300 synagogues and arrested 25,000 Jews. A year later, he began to deport Germany's Jewish population to Eastern Europe, where his war on religion would crescendo. By the end of the war, Hitler had murdered 6 million Jews.

Likewise, the Nazi regime desired “a complete extirpation of Christianity,” as the U.S. government concluded after combing through Nazi records, but “considerations of expediency made it impossible” to do so in one fell swoop. So Hitler employed a policy of gradualism: lying to church leaders about the Nazi program and then lying about church leaders to the German people, abrogating laws protecting religious independence, seizing control of church institutions, shuttering religious schools and seminaries, declaring certain denominations illegal, fomenting violence against church leaders, sending anti-Nazi church leaders to concentration camps and murdering others.

Imperial Japan elevated its emperor to a god status, making it easier for his high command to justify anything and everything.

In the interwar years, Japanese authorities began reversing liberal policies on religious activity. By the late 1930s, as Princeton University's Sheldon Garon details, the regime was regulating religious activity, ordering religious groups to correct “discrepancies between their teachings and the imperial myth,” and subordinating all faiths to the cult of the emperor.

As Paul Johnson adds in his history of the 20th century, “Modern Times,” Japan's imperial masters turned Shinto into a state religion that encompassed emperor worship in the military and in schools. Shinto was thus transformed into “an endorsement of a modern, totalitarian state,” and “religion, which should have served to resist the secular horrors of the age, was used to sanctify them.”

The Soviet Union – an enemy-of-my-enemy ally during the war – rejected religion altogether, purged those who refused to genuflect to the state

and elevated government above all else. Vladimir Lenin, founding father of the Soviet Union, viewed religion as “a powerful and ubiquitous enemy,” Johnson writes.

Virtually the entire clergy corps of the Russian Orthodox Church was liquidated or sent to labor camps in the 1920s and 1930s. “By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open,” the Library of Congress reports.

Although Josef Stalin, in the grimmest days of World War II, permitted the practice of religion to rally the Russian people, it was a self-serving – and short-lived – response to an existential threat. As evidence, in 1953, Stalin ordered more than a million Soviet Jews deported to Siberia. They were spared only by his death.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PROFESSOR WILLIAM INBODEN notes that “every major war the United States has fought over the past 70 years has been against an enemy that also severely violated religious freedom.” He sees a clear “correlation between religious persecution and national-security threats.” Indeed, today’s worst violators of religious liberty represent the most serious threats to U.S. interests.

■ North Korea stands out “for its absolute prohibition of religious organizations and harsh punishments for any unauthorized religious activities,” the State Department concludes. “Thousands of religious believers and their families are imprisoned in penal labor camps,” according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), which consigns North Korea to the lowest tier – the bottom eight – on its ranking of religious freedom. The religious are “arrested, tortured, imprisoned and sometimes executed.” Some 300,000 North Korean Christians have disappeared since the end of the war.

A special United Nations panel finds in North Korea a “complete denial of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.” State-sponsored crimes include “extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment ... persecution on political, religious, racial and gender grounds.”

Recognizing the “many parallels” between North Korea and Nazi Germany, panel chairman Michael Kirby concedes, “I never thought that in my lifetime it would be part of my duty to bring revelations of a similar kind.”

■ China also ranks in the very worst level on USCIRF’s review. According to USCIRF, “independent Catholics and Protestants face arrests, fines and the shuttering of their places of

worship.” Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims, practitioners of Falun Gong, folk religionists and Protestant house-church attendees are subjected to “jail terms, forced renunciations of faith and torture in detention ... Protestants and Catholics who refuse to join the state-sanctioned religious organizations continue to face severe restrictions ... and property destruction.”

Consider what’s happening in Wenzhou, a city in eastern China “known for its relaxed ties between church and state,” *The New York Times* reports. Too relaxed, it turns out. Xia Baolong, a regional Communist Party leader, saw a massive spire atop a new church and ordered government authorities to bulldoze the entire place of worship. A dozen other churches in the region were then forced to remove their crosses or face demolition. Importantly, Xia is a close ally of Xi Jinping, China’s president.

Or consider the story of Bishop Cosma Shi Enxiang, who recently died after 60 years in prison. His crime: refusing to renounce his allegiance to the Vatican – and refusing to bow to Beijing’s illegitimate form of Catholicism.

According to a 2015 Freedom House report, “hundreds of thousands” of religious adherents – many of them guilty of “simply possessing spiritual texts in the privacy of their homes” – were sentenced to labor camps or prison.

According to the State Department, Beijing prohibits teachers and civil servants from worshipping at mosques, fines individuals “for studying the Quran in unauthorized sessions” and positions the Chinese flag on mosque walls “in the direction of Mecca so prayers would be directed toward them.”

■ Moving from an atheist dictatorship to a fundamentalist theocracy, the picture in Iran is not terribly different. Iran is also ranked in the lowest tier on the USCIRF’s review of international religious freedom. The Iranian regime is in the midst of what USCIRF describes as “systemic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom, including prolonged detention, torture and executions.”

According to the State Department, the Iranian government “deems conversion from Islam to be apostasy” (punishable by death), bars non-Muslims from engaging in public religious expression (punishable by death), bans the Bahá’í faith from public pensions and imprisons Christian church leaders for spreading “anti-regime propaganda.”

Considered “illegal networks” and “Zionist propaganda institutions” by Tehran, house

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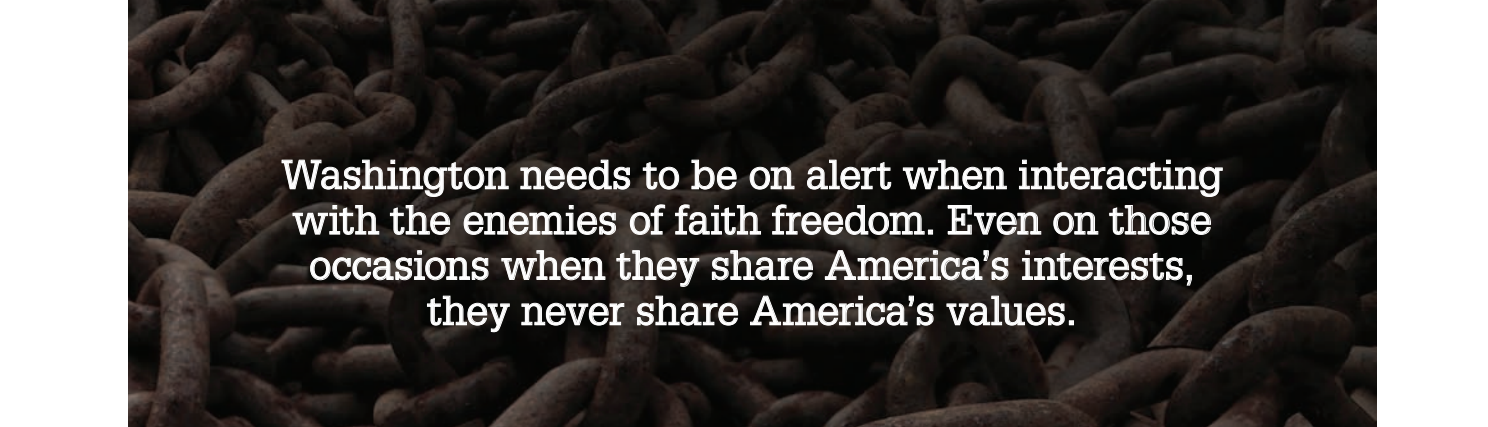
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Washington needs to be on alert when interacting with the enemies of faith freedom. Even on those occasions when they share America's interests, they never share America's values.

churches are regularly raided. According to USCIRF, “Christians, particularly evangelicals and other Protestants, are subject to harassment, arrests, close surveillance and imprisonment.”

■ Shiite theocrats and Sunni autocrats may have different interpretations of the Quran, but the results are largely the same. Like Iran, Saudi Arabia is consigned to be the lowest tier on USCIRF's survey. Saudi Arabia is a place where “not a single church or other non-Muslim house of worship exists,” where promoting “unbelief” is a crime, where even private religious practice is not protected, according to USCIRF. Worse, high school textbooks “teach hatred toward members of other religions,” promote violence “against apostates,” and label Jews and Christians “enemies.”

■ According to USCIRF, religious freedom in Pakistan has “hit an all-time low due to chronic sectarian violence” targeting Shiites, Christians, Ahmadis and Hindus (actions for which the Pakistani government is not necessarily responsible) and due to the fact that “the Pakistani government failed to intervene effectively” to protect these groups (inaction for which it is very much responsible). For example, when suicide bombers attacked a church in Peshawar, killing 100 people, and mobs rampaged through Christian villages in Punjab, destroying at least 100 homes, “few, if any, perpetrators were held to account.”

■ Vladimir Putin's Russia is a second-tier regime on the USCIRF rankings, among the 26 worst governments when it comes to religious freedom. The State Department cites Russia for “imprisonment, detention and degrading treatment of members of religious minorities.” The Russian government arbitrarily imposes restrictions that infringe on the rights of various Muslim sects, Christian denominations and other religions. A new blasphemy law curtails “the freedoms of religion, belief and expression,”

according to USCIRF, which adds that the Russian government prosecutes Muslims without evidence, issues baseless fines against Protestant churches, and denies permits to Mormon, Armenian Catholic and Muslim houses of worship.

INBODEN'S CORRELATION between religious persecution and national security is striking. The unsavory regimes noted previously, along with the transnational movements detailed ahead, represent some of the Pentagon's gravest worries.

The United States is just a hair-trigger away from renewed hostilities with North Korea. China (in cyberspace and the South and East China seas), Russia (in cyberspace and Central and Eastern Europe) and Iran (in the Persian Gulf, Damascus, Baghdad, Manama and Sana) are waging proxy wars against the United States.

To be sure, both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are technically, nominally, allies. But it pays to recall that Saudi Arabia is “the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide,” according to State Department cables. For years, Osama bin Laden hid in plain sight in Pakistan. Also, Pakistan's intelligence agency midwived the Taliban, which made common cause with al-Qaida.

Beyond the boundaries of any regime, transnational groups target faith freedom.

The Afghan Taliban, for instance, ordered Hindus to wear special identity labels, destroyed ancient statues of Buddha, executed those belonging to opposing sects of Islam, considered evangelism a “severe crime” and imprisoned foreigners who talked about Christianity. The Pakistani Taliban has targeted Christian churches. A 2001 attack killed 15, a 2002 attack killed five and wounded 45, and a 2013 bombing killed 81.

In short, no one should have been surprised when the Taliban allowed bin Laden to use Afghanistan as a launching pad for his war

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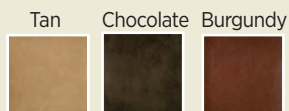
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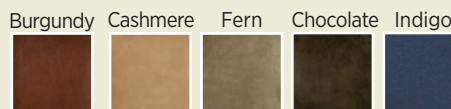
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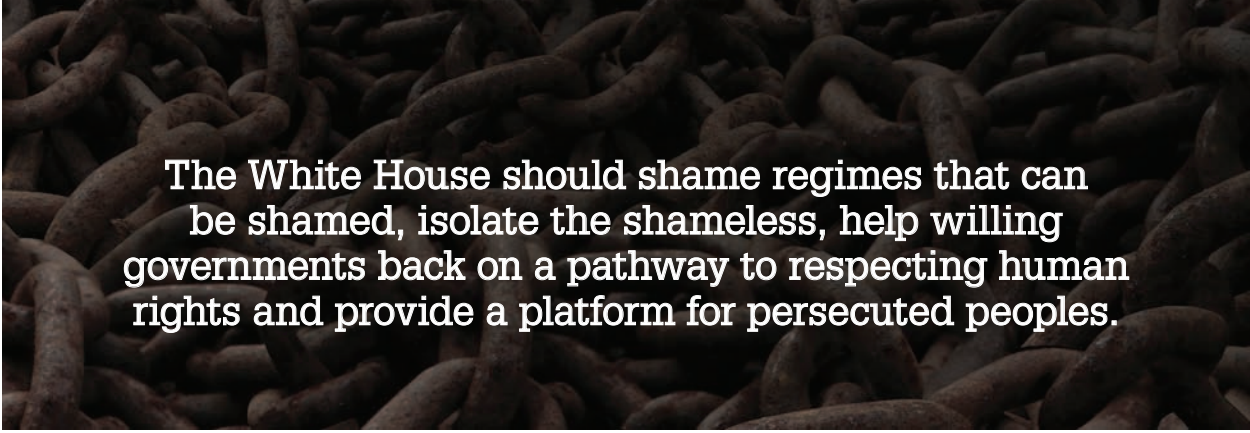
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The White House should shame regimes that can be shamed, isolate the shameless, help willing governments back on a pathway to respecting human rights and provide a platform for persecuted peoples.

against civilization. The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, were the natural endpoint for such a monstrous movement – or perhaps we should say “midpoint.” After all, the Islamic State has pushed the jihadist war on civilization to new lows.

ISIS (whose adherents are Sunni Muslim) has summarily executed hundreds of Shiite Muslims in Iraq, set fire to “apostate” homes across Syria and Iraq, executed independent imams and Yazidis, subjected Yazidi women to “systematic rape and sex slavery,” according to the Kurdish government, and orchestrated mass beheadings of Egyptian Christians. ISIS has given Christians a choice to convert to Islam, pay extortion to remain Christian or face execution. And in its self-styled capital of Raqqa, Syria, it has installed sharia law, complete with public executions in the town square.

This is the enemy the United States has been fighting – not by proxy but at close range – for 14 years. But America is not at war with Islam. In the past quarter-century, U.S. forces have rescued Muslims in Kosovo and Kurdistan, Somalia and Sumatra, Kuwait and Kabul. However, the United States is at war with those who would force people to submit to Islam or any other faith. Now, as in Roosevelt’s day, Americans long for a world where neither government dominates religion (like the People’s Republic of China) nor religion dominates government (like the Islamic State or the Islamic Republic of Iran).

THERE’S A PARADOX at work here. Regimes that have no respect for religion naturally see no limits on their power and no moral constraints on what they do. Since they believe nothing is above the state, they can rationalize everything they do in the name of the state or the fatherland or the revolution. Consider Hitler, Stalin, Mao and the Kim dynasty. Yet regimes and groups at the opposite end of the spectrum – those that see themselves as exponents of a religion and

instruments of their god – end up at the very same destination. Since they believe they are acting on behalf of their god, and since nothing is above their god, they can rationalize everything they do in the name of their god. Consider ISIS and al-Qaida, Hezbollah and Iran.

This isn’t to suggest that the United States should go to war against every enemy of religious liberty, but Washington needs to be on alert when interacting with the enemies of faith freedom because even on those occasions when they share America’s interests, they never share America’s values. They are not friends of the United States and are not to be trusted.

As President Ronald Reagan once said, “It is difficult to imagine that a government that continues to repress freedom in its own country, breaking faith with its own people, can be trusted to keep agreements with others.”

Put another way, now is not the time to cut deals with Tehran, take Putin at his word, avert our gaze from the latter-day gulags in North Korea and China, or breezily conclude that we’re “turning the page on a decade of war” – especially given that the enemy in this war is still viciously fighting and still violently opposed to religious pluralism.

Instead, leading policymakers should draw attention – relentlessly and repeatedly – to assaults on religious liberty. The White House should shame regimes that can be shamed, isolate the shameless, help willing governments back on a pathway to respecting human rights and provide a platform for persecuted peoples.

“A little less detente and more encouragement to the dissenters,” Reagan concluded, “might be worth a lot of armored divisions.” 🌿

Alan W. Dowd is a senior fellow with the Sagamore Institute Center for America’s Purpose (sagamoreinstitute.org) and a contributing editor for The American Legion Magazine.

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Brothers in Arms

For 11 young men in the Davis family, military service offered a way off the farm and a future.

BY MATT GRILLS

If there's another family with 11 brothers who served in the military, Lebronze Davis would love to hear about it.

He's not boasting. He's not trying to get in the record books. He'd just like to know. In fact, it was only a few years ago that it occurred to him that his family might be noteworthy.

Over three decades, Lebronze and 10 of his 13 brothers joined up, starting with the oldest, Ben Jr., who entered the Navy in 1944, and ending with the youngest, Arguster, who retired from the Air Force Reserve in 1998. Together, they have a combined 165 years of military service.

"I'm the 14th child and the ninth to serve," says Lebronze, 67, a member of Fletcher-McCollister American Legion Post 135 in Phenix City, Ala. He was drafted in 1968, went straight to Vietnam after infantry training and made a career of the Army.

"Once I re-enlisted, I said, 'Well, I guess I'm in now, and I'm going to make the best of it,'" he says. "That's when I really started to become a soldier. I stayed and I stayed, and I'm glad I did."

Five Davis brothers, including Lebronze, retired from the military; the others served shorter periods of two, three, four, even 12 years. For each of them, enlistment was their best shot at leaving Wetumpka, Ala., and getting a good job.

"I graduated Friday and went into the Army on Monday morning," says Octavious, 77, the fifth brother to serve. "I volunteered to go before school was out. I just wanted to get off that farm."

Their father, Ben Sr., worked at a sawmill and grew cotton and other crops. He and his wife, Hattie, brought up their kids in a three-bedroom house, with as many as nine at home at one time.

"We had sisters and cousins who lived across the road, so we always had somebody to play with," Octavious says. "We always had plenty to eat because we raised our vegetables and meat. We had everything but money and didn't know any better. We just thought that was the way it was."

Ben had only a third-grade education, Hattie ninth grade. But they set expectations for their children: you'll finish high school.

LEFT: Octavious Davis, center, shares a laugh with his brothers during their family reunion last August in Pittsburgh. Photo by Steph Chambers

Growing up, Octavious loved seeing his older brothers – Ben Jr., Washington, Edward and Calvin – return home wearing their uniforms. And every day he watched his teacher’s husband, an Air Force captain, drop her off at school; Octavious put a giant H on the shoulders of his shirts, telling everyone that if he ever joined the Army he’d be a captain.

He enlisted in 1957 and served two years as a medic at Fort Benning, Ga., and Fort Jackson, S.C., before getting out at the rank of corporal. Then he became a nurse and moved to California, where he worked 30 years as an operating-room technician. He retired in 2001.

Octavious never wore captain’s bars, but he couldn’t be prouder of his service. “I still like to see a sharply dressed soldier today,” he says.

It was Octavious’ idea to collect photos of his brothers in uniform for a collage, which they display at family reunions. There, you’ll find them huddled around tables, laughing, sharing memories of growing up in Alabama or swapping stories about their time in the service.

“You can’t pull us apart,” he says.

‘A LOT HAD CHANGED’ No one even knew when Nathaniel, the 10th child and the seventh to serve, went to enlist. On a summer day in 1962, he caught a bus headed to Montgomery, where he met with Army recruiters at the post office. He trained at Fort Jackson and spent most of his three years stationed in Germany with an ordnance supply company.

“Up until I went in, I hadn’t really thought much about the military,” he says. “I wanted to go to school to become a teacher but didn’t have any money.”

At the time, the United States was on the edge of tremendous social change. Nathaniel, 71, remembers the long ride to Fort Jackson; at his first stop, Columbus, Ga., there were separate waiting rooms for blacks and whites. “The bus wasn’t segregated, but at that time, you kind of segregated yourself,” he says.

While he was overseas, the push to break down racial barriers intensified with clashes in Birmingham, Martin Luther King Jr.’s March on Washington and passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

“When I came back, I remember going to Montgomery with one of my brothers,” Nathaniel says. “We went to what had been an all-white restaurant and could go in and sit down and eat. A lot had changed.”

He got an apprenticeship at Ford Motor Co. in Detroit, working there 33 years as an electrician. He thinks the military gave him the confidence he needed to succeed. “The Army was a great stepping stone for me,” he says.

The Davis brothers



EDWARD DAVIS

Air Force, Army



BEN DAVIS JR.

Navy, Army,
National Guard

**OCTAVIOUS
DAVIS**

Army



CALVIN DAVIS

Navy



**WASHINGTON
DAVIS***

Army

*Deceased





**NATHANIEL
DAVIS**

Army

**ALPHONZA
DAVIS**

Army



JULIUS DAVIS

Air Force

**LEBRONZE
DAVIS**

Army



**FREDERICK
DAVIS**

Army

**ARGUSTER
DAVIS**

Air Force



Now retired, Nathaniel lives in Montgomery, near Frederick, 64, and Ben Jr., 94, who ran Alabama's American Legion Baseball program and is a 47-year member of the organization. Their younger brothers are only an hour and a half away: Arguster, 63, lives in McCalla, and Lebronze lives in Phenix City.

Though scattered, 10 of the 11 brothers who served are living; Washington died in 1994.

"As we got older we got closer, especially when we started golfing," Nathaniel says. "For eight or nine years, we'd all meet somewhere. We've golfed in Florida, Vegas, Tunica. We just picked different places."

'WE HAD FIREFIGHTS EVERY DAY' Growing up on the farm, there were good days and hard days, Lebronze recalls. Chopping cotton, picking cotton, plowing – "I feel like I walked behind a mule from Alabama to New York, across to California and back, not one time but several times," he says, laughing. "But I wouldn't trade it for nothing."

"Mama made sure we all knew how to cook, wash and clean house. Daddy showed us how to be a man – how to take care of the family. None of us boys ever got so much as a speeding ticket. That's the way they brought us up."

Then came the day Lebronze had to make a decision about his future, like his brothers before him.

"I graduated from high school on a Friday," he recalls. "Daddy said, 'You can leave and go wherever you want to go, or you can stay home. But if you stay home, you've got to help on the farm.' I left Saturday morning."

Lebronze went to Baltimore to stay with an aunt and uncle, and later made his way to Detroit, where he got a job at a paper mill. Then a draft notice arrived. He did basic training at Fort Benning and advanced infantry training at Fort Gordon.

In Vietnam, "I spent 10 and a half months in the field," Lebronze says. "We had firefights every day. I never got a scratch, but there are things I can't even think about – don't want to think about."

Sometimes the memories surface anyway. Like the wounded soldier who was being pulled up by a rescue helicopter when the enemy shot it out of the air. He fell, hit his head on a rock and was shot three times in the back. When Lebronze and others made it to him, the soldier groaned, "I'm not going to die over here. I'm not going to die in Vietnam."

"Last we heard, that man was at Walter Reed, still living," Lebronze says.

During his 20 years in the Army, Lebronze was a drill sergeant and instructor, serving all over the country: Fort Carson, Colo.; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; Fort Polk, La.; and Fort Benning twice. He also did tours in Bamberg and Baumholder, Germany.

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Nathaniel Davis of Montgomery, Ala., Edward Davis of DuBois, Pa., Octavious Davis of Vacaville, Ca., Arguster Davis of McCalla, Ala., and Lebronze Davis of Phenix City, Ala., from left, are five of 11 brothers who served. "We're very close," Nathaniel says. Photo by Steph Chambers

'HE WAS PROUD OF US' Edward, 86, is fourth oldest and third to serve. Like Lebronze, he did a tour in Vietnam and retired from the Army. They also share a birthday, Nov. 11 – 19 years apart.

Like most of his brothers, Edward didn't set out to join the military. He'd heard about World War II from an uncle, Tom, a Pearl Harbor survivor. But the idea of traveling and getting an education changed his mind.

Edward joined the Air Force in 1951 and studied preventive medicine at the University of Denver. He spent a few years in the reserves and switched to the Army in 1963. Eventually, he did see more of the world, serving in Okinawa, Korea and Honolulu, as well as Fort Meade, Md., Fort Knox, Ky., and Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

From 1966 to 1967, Edward traveled Vietnam as a noncommissioned officer in charge of three medical units. From water purification to checking mosquitos for malaria, "our job there was really to keep the troops healthy," he says.

He cherishes his memories of the last time he saw their father. The year was 1972, and Edward was headed to a symposium at Emory University in Atlanta. "He looked at all his boys and said, 'You're all doing a nice job,' Edward remembers. "He was very happy and proud of us."

Two other brothers, Julius and Frederick, are Vietnam veterans, too. Julius did 12 years in the Air Force, and Frederick two years in the Army.

The youngest, Arguster, joined the Air Force in 1971. He went straight from high school to college at Tuskegee University in Alabama, where he intended to go ROTC and become a pilot.

After a while, "I just felt like my life wasn't progressing fast enough for me," Arguster says. He left school and stayed with one of his brothers, Alphonza, in California for a time. Unable to find work, he decided to enlist.

During his four years on active duty, Arguster used the Air Force's tuition assistance program to finish most of a bachelor's degree in business administration at Texas Christian University. He worked for a trucking company for a few years and then got hired by the U.S. Postal Service, where he worked for 26 years.

While in the service, Arguster and his brothers all chipped in to take care of their aging parents.

"We'd always try to help them with something around the house," he says. "We eventually put in running water, a bathroom, a new refrigerator. Each one of us did something or we'd send the money and take care of it."

Arguster was the last Davis brother to hang up his uniform, retiring as a senior master sergeant. Like the rest, he says the military is one of the best decisions he's ever made.

"I'm an American patriot," he says. "I believe in this country. I really do. I think it's the greatest on earth. I don't agree with everything that goes on in it, but there's nowhere else I'd rather live." 🌿

Matt Grills is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.

The Davis brothers are looking for other families with 11 or more brothers who served in the U.S. military. If you know of one, send an email to magazine@legion.org.

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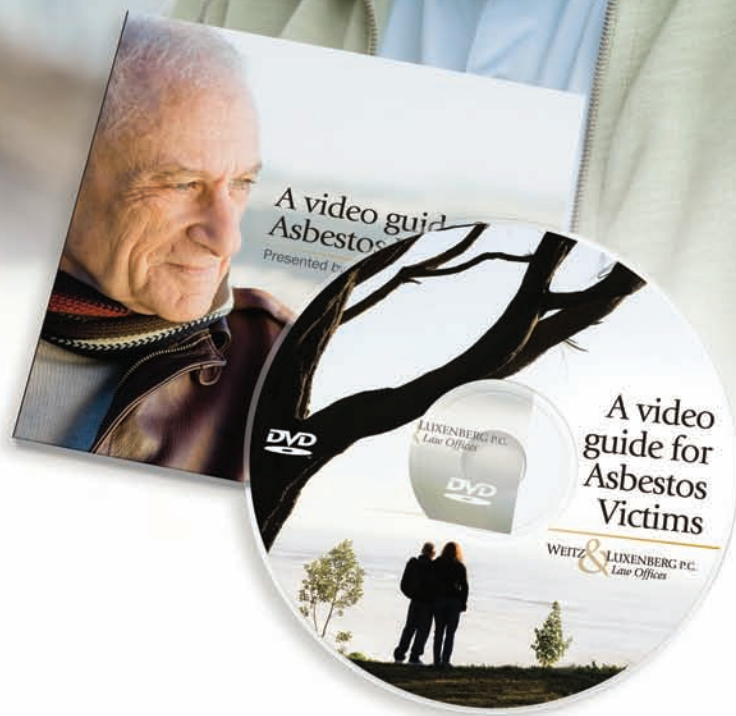


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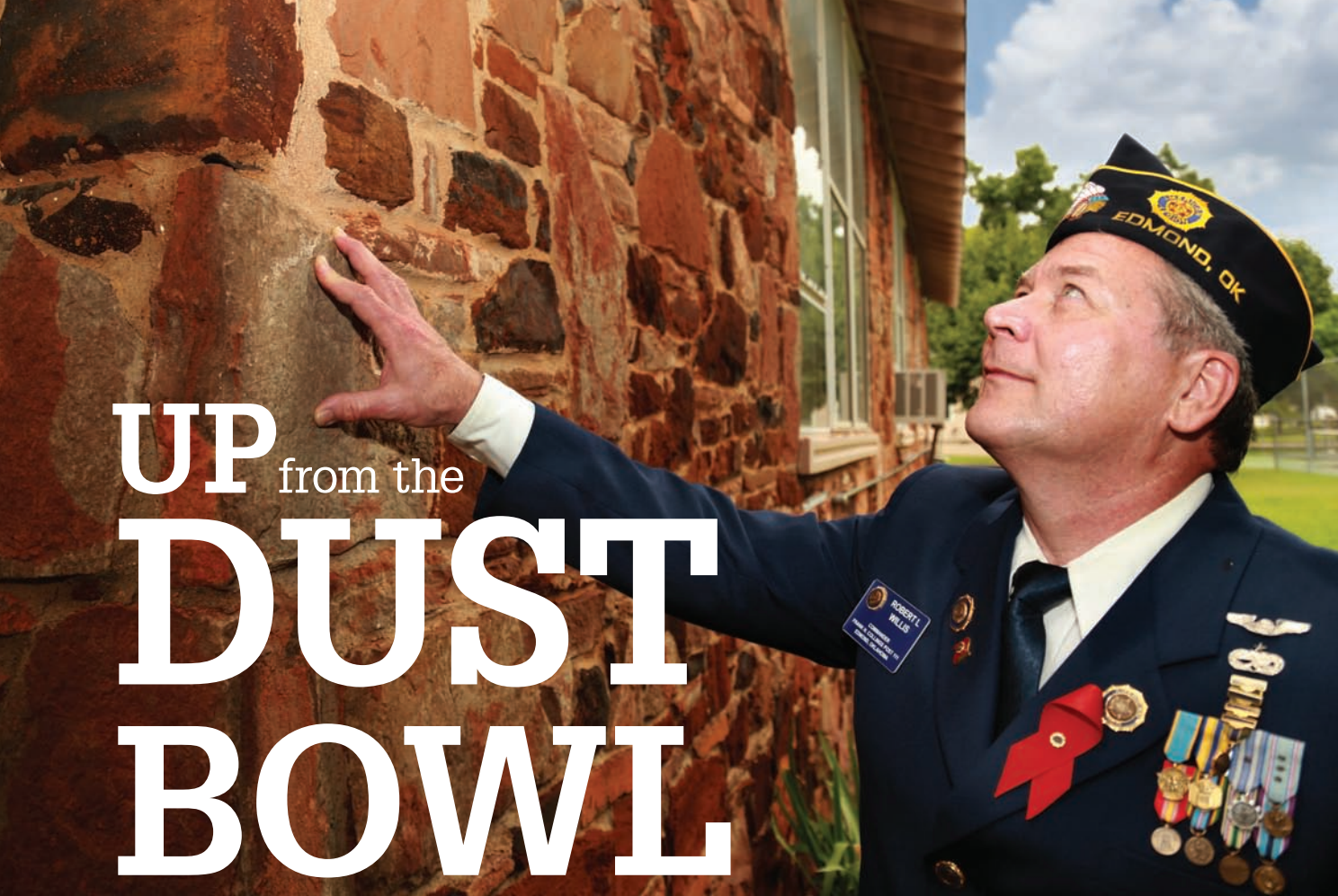
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UP from the DUST BOWL

A historic American Legion meeting hall gave World War I veterans a home and an Oklahoma town a legacy.

BY KEN OLSEN

It was born in a time so desperate that local boys unloaded trucks for day-old bread and a third of Oklahoma families depended on federal relief for the most basic food and clothing. Its variegated sandstone walls were raised by drought-busted farmers lucky to qualify for \$23 a month in Works Progress Administration wages, and paid for in part with money raised at a barbecue, a bridge tournament and a benefit football game.

The American Legion meeting hall of Frank H. Collings Post 111 in Edmond, Okla., feels like a place where, if you listen in the hallowed quiet of a steamy July afternoon, you might hear the voices of veterans of the Great War, pillars of the business community and professors at Central State Teachers College.

“This is like being in Independence Hall or visiting a historic Civil War battlefield,” says Post 111 Commander Rob Willis, who intends to write the biography of this place as a tribute to the

founders, the building’s namesake and nearly a century of service to central Oklahoma veterans. “It gives me goose bumps.”

The post is named for the first resident of Edmond killed in combat in World War I. Cpl. Frank Collings died July 1, 1918, at 23 and is buried at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery in France. Three of Collings’ brothers also served in the Army during World War I; two of them, Harry and Leslie, were founding members of the post.

Sixty-four World War I veterans, some of whom also served in the Spanish-American War, created Post 111 in December 1919. Their names are listed on a framed charter, yellowed by time and locked away in a file cabinet most of the time. Fourteen are pictured in a commanders’ photo gallery that lines

Frank H. Collings Post 111 Commander Rob Willis, an Air Force veteran, examines the exterior walls of the post home in Edmond, Okla. Photo by Todd Trigstad

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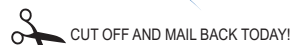
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World War II Army veteran Oren Lee Peters and Commander Rob Willis are making a point to tell Post 111's story in time for The American Legion's centennial. Photo by Todd Trigsted

the 18-inch-thick stone wall at the front of the hall.

The first post commander was Dr. Thomas H. Flesher, an Army physician who came back to Edmond to open a medical practice after the war. His résumé resembles that of many of the inaugural members. Raymond Bender was the Buick agent and Crawford Spearman had the theater. Frank Buell ran a lumberyard in town and Lloyd McMinimy owned a hardware store. William Bryan Oakes and Paul Marks were among several professors at what is now the University of Central Oklahoma. The streets of Edmond bear many Legionnaires' names.

Post meetings were conducted in Edmond City Hall in the early years, Willis says. That came with the requirement that Legionnaires furnish the meeting room with "good substantial fixtures," according to a stack of meeting minutes from the '20s and early '30s that Willis has unearthed.

Edmond was one of the first towns founded when central Oklahoma was opened to settlement in 1889. It depended on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, and it depended on agriculture. Indeed, Legionnaire Earl Rodke milled flour and Post 111 member E.H. Van Antwerp ran Van's Bakery. It was the quintessential town of about 6,000, complete with slights, suspicions and quarrels. Van Antwerp would not buy Rodke's flour. That prompted Rodke to make an unsuccessful attempt at his own bakery, says Oren Lee Peters, whose great-grandfather, grandfather, great-aunt and great-uncle claimed land in what would later become Edmond in 1889.

Nevertheless, Legionnaires and members of the

Auxiliary pulled together to form a stalwart group worthy of consideration when President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the WPA in 1935, six weary years into the Great Depression.

Edmond had been devastated by drought, crop failures and the economic calamity that visited itself on much of the rest of the nation. A small oil boom came and went in the early 1930s, according to background materials that later put Post 111 on the National Register of Historic Places. The schools, libraries, armories, community halls, parks and public works projects the WPA built were part of the lifeline for this community and more than 90,000 unemployed people across Oklahoma, according to historical records.

WPA funding was competitive. Projects had to meet well-defined community needs and required a city, county or other public agency sponsor willing to cover between 10 and 25 percent of the cost with cash, building materials or both. Ninety percent of the people hired for WPA projects had to be on relief.

The resulting buildings were inauspicious, the "architecture of the poor ... mute reminders of the emotional distress and physical pain many Oklahomans suffered during the 1930s," historian David Baird wrote. The American Legion "hut," as it was called, would reflect that ethos: irregular reddish stones taken straight from a quarry to the building site at Fifth and Littler in Edmond, where they were anchored in thick bands of gray mortar.

The Edmond City Council asked the WPA for a community building, college stadium, National

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Oren Lee Peters, with a World War II-era photograph, has fond memories of the post's founders. When he returned from Europe in June 1945, a Legionnaire told him, "You need to belong." He has belonged ever since. Photo by Todd Trigsted

Guard armory, street paving and library repair services before proposing construction of an American Legion hut that also would serve as a community meeting hall. Fundraising began in the fall of 1935, and Edmond responded. Over the next year, the Legion and Auxiliary raised \$2,000, Willis says. (That \$2,000 is the equivalent of more than \$34,000 in 2015 dollars.) At least half of that came from a Halloween masquerade party that drew more than 200 local residents. A barbecue, a benefit bridge party and a fundraising football game between Edmond High School and Foster City High School in Oklahoma City also helped, according to National Register documents.

WPA workers started clearing the site for the new 1,800-square-foot post in September 1936. A dozen men had six months of full-time work building it. Other men on the WPA payroll quarried the stone for the hut, the armory and similar stone buildings that rose around Edmond, the collective effort a boon to the community.

The price tag for the Legion hut was \$8,000, including the cash the Legion and Auxiliary raised and the land and materials the city of Edmond contributed. The building was completed in time to host both the Legion's and the Auxiliary's 5th District Convention in April 1937.

Post 111 welcomed Oren Peters when he returned

home in June 1945 after logging 511 active-duty days with the 45th Infantry Division that included amphibious landings in Sicily, Salerno, Anzio and southern France. He was there for the liberation of Rome and even had an audience with the pope. "When I got back, the first thing that happened is one of the American Legion guys came and said, 'You need to belong. We're having a meeting. I'll come by and pick you up.'" The camaraderie has kept him going back for 70 of his 94 years.

Peters opted to finish two years of high school and became head football coach and senior class president. By 1947, he was Post 111 commander and a student at Central State Teachers College. That combination was fortuitous, he says. "Some of the (Legion) members were professors. One of them taught English literature. I never would have made it if he had not tutored me a little, told me what I should be doing."

Other notable Legionnaires included the late Brown Hudson, an Army veteran who drew the maps that guided the planes that dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Post 111 was a vibrant force in the community with its blend of World War I veterans – the most active American Legion members – and an infusion of men and women just back from World War II.

"In the late '40s and '50s, The American Legion

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was the place to go,” Peters says. The oak floor in the spacious meeting hall was ideal for dances before termites forced its replacement with concrete. “You had to go to the college to find something bigger,” he adds. At least one of the monthly Legion meetings was Family Night.

Today, Post 111 is the only remaining WPA building in Edmond that is virtually unaltered, a monument to “enlightened effort by the federal government that alleviated much of the suffering” during the Depression, Baird wrote. The Legion still fulfills part of its contract with the city by making the post available to other groups. It’s regularly rented for everything from church services to family reunions. (The building is owned by the city and leased to Post 111 for \$1 a year.)

Under Willis’ leadership, Wi-Fi was added with the idea that post-9/11 veterans attending college in Edmond can use the space when they need a quiet place to study.

Willis joined in 2003, a few years after retiring from the Air Force and taking a job with an aircraft renovation firm in nearby Oklahoma City. He’s worked to strengthen Post 111’s ties to the community, initiating a high school oratorical contest and establishing annual awards for the outstanding ROTC cadets at two high schools and the college.

But the past has the greatest pull. “Holding that original charter is like picking up the Constitution,” he says. “There’s a lot of history here. I find it really intriguing.”

That set him searching through old handwritten

census rolls, looking up names on Ancestry.com, and digging through city records, piecing together Post 111’s story. The research is difficult because member names are often misspelled, making them difficult to find in official records.

“Back in the day, everybody did cursive writing and the letters have faded,” Willis says. “Or the person taking the census spelled the name the way they heard it.”

Indeed, a roster of Edmond residents who served in World War II, displayed on one wall of Post 111, misidentifies Oren Lee Peters as Ann Peters.

Yet it thrills Willis to find the draft card of one of the original post members or tie a family name to an Edmond landmark. That speaks to Post 111’s deep ties to central Oklahoma veterans. “As far as I know, the lights have never gone out here in almost 100 years,” he says. “That’s impressive.”

In the course of his research, Willis has also discovered two families in which both father and son were commanders: William P. Thompson and his son Lowell, who were commanders in 1935-1937 and 1956-1957 respectively, and Paul H. Coyner and his son Ray, who were commanders in 1930-1931 and 1953-1954 respectively.

Willis’ son is a post-9/11 Army veteran and a member of Post 111. “Maybe ...” Willis starts reverently surveying the inside of the stone meeting hall as if he’s addressing one of the founders. “Maybe he will step up and be commander.” 🌿

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

How to research your post’s history

Several resources are available to find out more about the founders of your American Legion post.

■ Available online, the multi-volume “Soldiers of the Great War” lists World War I casualties by state.

🌐 archive.org/details/soldiersgreatwa02doylgoog

■ The 1920 U.S. Census is available online.

🌐 www.archives.gov/research/census/publications-microfilm-catalogs-census/1920

■ If a post is on the National Register of Historic Places, search for a copy of the nominating materials, rich in post history, online.

🌐 www.nps.gov/nr/research

■ City, county and state historical archives may contain overlooked details and historic photographs.

■ Genealogy websites such as **Ancestry.com** may offer details about early members of a post or a post namesake.



Cell Phone Inspires Chicago Doctor to Design Affordable Hearing Aid

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Reported by J. Page

CHICAGO: A local board-certified Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has just shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. **This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.**

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Dr. Cherukuri knew that untreated hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer’s disease. **He could not understand why the cost of hearing aids was so high when the prices on so many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, cell phones, and digital cameras had fallen.**

Since Medicare and most private insurance plans do not cover the costs of hearing aids, which traditionally run between \$2,000-\$6,000 for a pair, many of the doctor’s patients could not afford the expense. Dr. Cherukuri’s goal was to find a reasonable solution that would help with the most common types of hearing loss at an affordable price, similar to the **“one-size-fits-most” reading glasses** available at drug stores.

He evaluated numerous hearing devices and sound amplifiers, including those seen on television. Without fail, almost all of these were found to amplify bass/low frequencies (below 1000 Hz) and were not useful in amplifying the frequencies related to the human voice.

Inspiration from a Surprising Source

The doctor’s inspiration to defeat the powers-that-be that kept inexpensive hearing aids out of the hands of the public actually came from a new cell phone he had just purchased. **“I felt that if someone could devise an**

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affordable device like an iPhone® for about \$200 that could do all sorts of things, I could create a hearing aid at a similar price.”

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—Gerald L.

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To Be JESSE OWENS

'Race' captures on film a world-changing moment in history.

BY MICHAEL HJELMSTAD

Like Jesse Owens himself, a new film about the historic athlete's place in history transcends color, creed, society and time. "Race" brings to the modern screen the anguish, sentiment and significance of epic tension felt across the world stage 80 years ago.

The story of Owens, who won four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics as the clouds of World War II were gathering, is told in the Focus Features release. It was written by Joe Shrapnel and Anna Waterhouse, directed by Stephen Hopkins, and stars Stephan James, Jason Sudeikis, Jeremy Irons and William Hurt.

James, already recognized for his 2014 portrayal of civil-rights activist John Lewis in the critically acclaimed "Selma," again finds himself cast in a movie that illuminates a critical moment and a key figure in history.

"It's still hard to fathom that I was able to tell this story," James said of his starring role in "Race." "That somebody gave me the keys to this thing, because he's such a big, big hero ... not just an American hero, but a world hero."

"Race" is not only the story of a black American who helped change the narrative of the future. It is also a vivid snapshot of a tragic point in history, when Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party were proclaiming that the 1936 Olympics would prove Aryan superiority over all other races.

The film opens in Cleveland, where Owens established himself as a natural runner and top competitor who later starred on the Ohio State University track and field team. In the film, James replicates one of Owens' most remarkable accomplishments, when he set three world records in 45 minutes, winning the 100-yard dash, broad jump and 220-yard low hurdles in 1935.

In the film, Ohio State coach Larry Snyder tells Owens he knows he can run, then asks if he can win at a level higher than any other. "Race" captures the battles

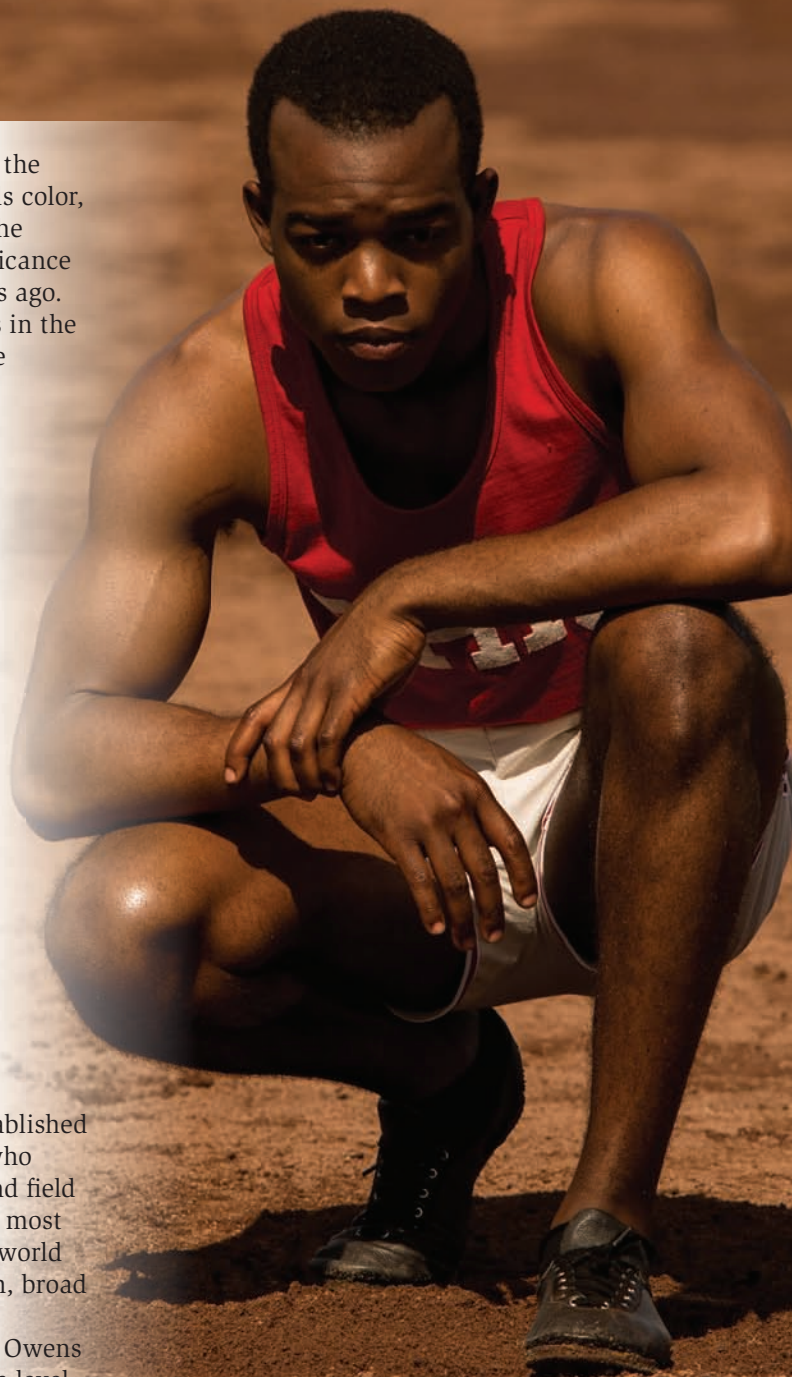


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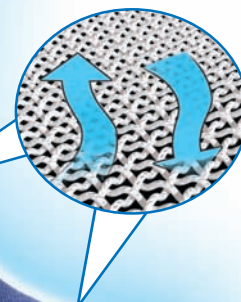
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Owens confronted on many levels to show the world that athletic success wasn't a matter of race, but of talent and determination.

The film also depicts a time when societies and nations were at odds about ethnicity. Just before World War II, racism in the United States was largely overshadowed by the deadly conduct of Nazi Germany. Owens learned to block out the noise of those who tried to make his destiny about skin color, a point James portrays under the director of the film, Hopkins, whom the actor credits with painting the picture.

"It's not only an incredible acting experience, to be in a period piece where you put yourself in a space where you're trapped in a certain world," James explained. "In 'Selma,' I'm trapped in the 1960s during the civil rights movement. And for 'Race,' I'm in the 1930s in America and then in Nazi Germany. So for me, it's an acting experience and a learning experience."

To play Jesse Owens, James had to become Jesse Owens. "It was really an experience where I was literally living like Jesse," he adds. "Imagine being the guy who broke three world records in 45 minutes at Ohio State, being literally the most talented man in what you do, and not being able to compete on the world stage in your prime. How does anyone go through those sorts of pressures knowing that you are one of the few who can



Jesse Owens performs the long jump at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. Wikimedia Commons

actually set an example when people are looking up to you?"

The central conflict was whether Owens should go to Berlin for the games. Should he go and prove a point by showing them up? Or should he prove a point by not going at all and standing in solidarity with the oppressed? What would be his legacy?

"I think he had a lot of internal conflict that he had to deal with, and I in turn had to internalize some of that stuff," James said. "We must remember the year

1936. The climate of the times would dictate the emotions of those who were there. Mussolini's Italy was glorying in its terrible victory over Ethiopia. The Spanish civil war was but one month old. Chancellor Hitler had just moved his troops into the Rhine-Main. World War II was three years away."

"German newspapers were boasting of the Aryan racial supremacy theory of a master race," Owens once said in a documentary film about his life. "The Nazi-controlled newspapers matter-of-factly mentioned that the United States team would be helped in the competition by members of the black legion. I was one of the black legionnaires. This was the climate of the times in the summer of 1936." 🌿

Michael Hjelmstad is a Marine Corps veteran, writer, film producer and member of American Legion Post 43 in Hollywood, Calif.

Actor recounts 'being Jesse Owens'

The American Legion Magazine recently interviewed actor Stephan James about his role in "Race."

What was it like to play the fastest man in the world?

It was hectic and tiring on set. I wanted to make sure I was doing most, if not all, of my running to make sure that Stephen Hopkins was able to just shoot a bunch of different angles. I didn't want him to have to work around me or a stunt double, so I really tried to commit myself to doing as much of the running as possible. So, obviously, that takes a

lot of effort. Every lunch break, I'd just sort of fall asleep in my trailer. I wanted to make sure that the director could shoot everything he wanted to and also that I was being true to Jesse.

Describe the physical demands of the role.

In high school I played sports, so I'm not a stranger to physicality. But I had to learn how to run, to run fast, but also to run like Jesse. How did Jesse run? How did his start look? How did his stride look? How did his facial movements look when he ran? Those are all things that I had to really sort of pinpoint. I was shooting "Selma" at

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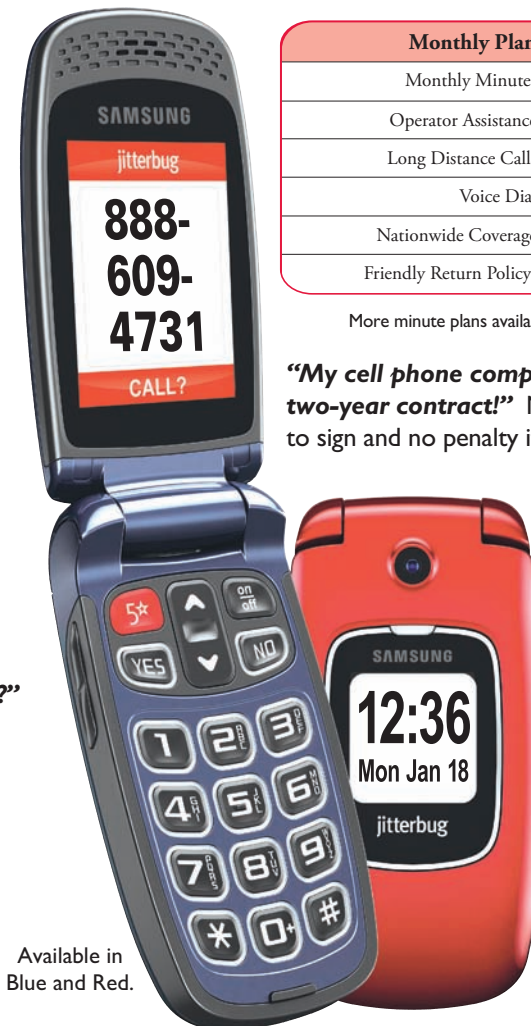
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Stephan James, right, stars as Jesse Owens in "Race," which opens in theaters during Black History Month. Photo courtesy Focus Features

the time, so all my off days I would just go down to Georgia Tech in Atlanta, and hang out with the track and field coaches there. They trained me and helped me to not only get faster but look like Jesse when I was running.

I studied tapes, and that whole process went on for about two months before I started filming.

How historically accurate is the film?

We stayed as accurate as possible. His daughters were around, and they were instrumental in the process of creating the film. They had the early drafts and they were very open about things they didn't agree with, things they didn't think were true, so we were able to play around with things and make sure that we were being truthful and also respectful to his family and his legacy.

What's your take on the social changes that occurred after 1936?

There is a clear difference between 1936 in America and Nazi Germany at that time when it was ruled by Adolf Hitler, who said the Aryan race was the supreme race and that no black person, no Jew, could come over there and do what Jesse did. I was able to go to Berlin 80 years later, and I certainly didn't feel the tension that I'm sure Jesse felt. You go to Berlin right now, and his face is all over the stadium. The street that the stadium is on is called Jesse Owens Avenue. He's such a big, big character, and the thing is, I feel like as big as his name is, and as big as his legacy is, people still

don't know a lot about him – the type of person he was, the type of man he was, the type of father he was. So that was a part of my challenge, bringing a level of humanity to Jesse that people haven't seen before.

What was the most challenging part of making this film?

Some of the more challenging scenes for me were scenes that now have a lot of (visual effects). For example, Jesse walks into the stadium in Berlin for the first time and sees 150,000 people. We didn't have 150,000 extras, so I had to make believe, and make you believe, that I was in that situation. That's a credit to the director.

What was one of the best parts of working on it?

Everything with Jason Sudeikis (who plays Owens' coach Larry Snyder) was cool. We got along really well; as their relationship grew, so did my relationship with Jason. We were sort of able to gain an understanding of each other and get our work relationship to a point where it was very easy.

I had a lot of fun with the running stuff when it didn't get too tiring. It's fun because most of the time you know you're going to be winning ... being Jesse Owens. It's one of those inspiring, hopeful tales, and you really think that if Jesse Owens can do what he did, then there's not much excuse for anyone else.

– Michael Hjelmstad

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ACTIVE DUTY

Father-son shipmates

The aircraft carrier USS *Harry S. Truman* has deployed to the war zones of the Middle East. Along with a strike group of destroyers and cruisers, *Truman* is expected to be on station for a seven-month deployment, *Navy Times* reports. The most unique aspect of this voyage is that the warship is carrying a father-son team: Lt. Cmdr. Kent Davis is on his 13th and final deployment. His son, Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Jordan Davis, is on his first.

"It's awesome," the elder Davis, a 26-year veteran, said. "It's a good opportunity to be together as father and son, and watch him grow in the Navy and serve our country." But he told *Navy Times* that he will try to keep his distance. "It's his turn to go out and see the world ... I'm just happy to give him a wave from time to time."

The younger Davis called the voyage "very special."

Photo courtesy Lori Davis

TROOP SUPPORT

The top military-friendly employers in America

Victory Media has unveiled its 13th annual list of the Top 100 Military Friendly Employers. "At the top of the list again is Illinois-based supplemental insurance provider Combined Insurance," *Forbes* magazine reports. "The company committed to hiring 4,000 veterans by 2016, partnering with organizations including the Transitions Assistance Program and Hiring Our Heroes, as well as VA, to meet that goal." In 2015, fully 39 percent of the company's new hires were veterans.

Second place went to consultancy firm Booz Allen Hamilton. "Nearly one-third of the company's overall employees are veterans, as are 26 percent of Booz Allen's 2015 hires," *Forbes* notes.

USAA placed third on the list of military-friendly companies, with veterans comprising 15 percent of its workforce and 22 percent of its 2015 hires.

ManTech, an IT systems provider, and transportation-operations giant CSX complete the top five.

Other companies of note on the list include Cintas, General Electric, General Motors, Bank of America, PNC Bank, Lockheed Martin, AT&T, State Farm, Northrop Grumman, Home Depot, Capital One, La Quinta, Prudential, Hilton, the U.S. Postal Service, Koch Industries, Starbucks and US Foods.

See the entire list online:

 militaryfriendly.com/2016employers

PRESIDENTS DAY

Presidential trivia, by the numbers

Mitch Tullai, an Army veteran and former history teacher, coach and administrator at St. Paul's School in Brooklandville, Md., is the author of "The Presidency Once Over Lightly: A Potpourri of Facts, Figures and Features About The Men Who Served in the Nation's Highest Office."

Ahead of Presidents Day on Feb. 15, he offers the following tidbits:



At **43**, John F. Kennedy was the youngest elected – but at **42**, Theodore Roosevelt was the youngest to take office (after William McKinley was assassinated). At **69**, Ronald Reagan was the oldest to be elected.

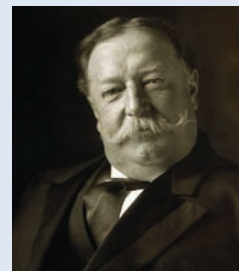
Harrison gave the longest inaugural speech: **8,443 words**, delivered outdoors in bad weather in winter, which led to his illness and death. George Washington's second inaugural address, at **133 words**, was the shortest.



Eight presidents were born in Virginia: Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, Harrison, John Tyler, Zachary Taylor and Woodrow Wilson. **Seven were born in Ohio:** Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, McKinley, William Howard Taft and Warren Harding.

Taft weighed in at about **340 pounds**, and Madison at **less than 100**.

Wikimedia Commons



The president who held the office the longest was Franklin D. Roosevelt, at just over **12 years**. William Henry Harrison, on the other hand, only served **31 days** before his death.

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TROOP SUPPORT

LEGION HELPS TRIATHLETE FULFILL PASSION

John “Gunny Ski” Szczepanowski’s Achilles tendon was severely injured from his deployments during the Gulf War, as well as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, doctors told the triathlete that he risked permanent damage if he continued to run on roads.

“I was told specifically my days of running were done,” recalls Szczepanowski, who retired from the Marine Corps in 2014 after 25 years of service.

“My reply was, my retirement years didn’t comprise me sitting on a couch or doing nothing. I am a runner at heart. I am a triathlete and endurance athlete, so when you take away that ability, it starts to create more issues within my own self. Running, cycling and swimming all make me feel very alive.”

Szczepanowski wouldn’t take no for an answer. He kept looking for alternative solutions. The initial breakthrough was securing a specially designed brace for his right foot and lower leg that helps limit the pounding on his Achilles.

Then, a couple of months ago, The American Legion stepped in with a gift from its Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program. Szczepanowski, a member of Post 434 in Chula Vista, Calif., received a treadmill that allows him to maintain his training for triathlons and marathons.

“It’s very humbling,” he says, adding that he owes “a large debt of gratitude to The American Legion for doing that. It’s something that I use every day. What the Legion has given me is that daily dose of mental health cleansing right here in the comfort of my home.”

The treadmill is an integral part of Szczepanowski’s home gym in Santee, Calif., about 30 miles north of San Diego. “If I had stolen moments here at the house I found myself there on the treadmill preparing,” he says.

“I wanted to go in there and show whoever had their eyes on me that there is no excuse in the world for you not to do something. You’ve got to push yourself outside of that box. What that treadmill gave me was the ability to show others what U.S. veterans are capable of doing even outside of their service.”

Since receiving the treadmill, Szczepanowski has completed a handful of triathlons and is scheduled to participate in more this spring. During his training, he averages about 14 hours a week of running, swimming,



The Legion’s Operation Comfort Warriors program gave Marine Corps veteran and triathlete John “Gunny Ski” Szczepanowski a treadmill to support his training.

Photo by Lucas Carter

OUR WAR

A SPECIAL REPORT
THE POST-9/11 VETERAN

biking and strength training. Altogether, he runs 500 to 600 miles, bikes up to 1,000 miles and swims between 10 and 20 miles to prepare for his events. A half Ironman triathlon is a 1.2-mile swim, followed immediately by a 56-mile bike ride and a 13.1-mile run.

His goal is to complete a full Ironman – double the distance in each discipline – at the world championships in Kona, Hawaii.

“My neck and back are all screwed up,” Szczepanowski says. “Does that mean I want to be a couch potato? No. I have other ambitions in life that I am trying to achieve. Everything I do, I do for myself, my family and my community. When they do my eulogy, I want them to say he was a hell of a triathlete, a good father, a good husband and a good community liaison.”

Sherry Hill, commander of Post 434, says it’s inspiring to see Szczepanowski use the treadmill made possible by OCW donations.

“There should be no fear by potential donors that we are going to squander the money,” says Hill, noting that 100 percent of OCW funds go toward assisting wounded veterans and servicemembers in their recoveries. “We are going to use the money as promised. We are an organization of veterans serving veterans and family members of veterans serving veterans.”

Szczepanowski, who describes himself as a “legacy Marine,” knows the Legion’s history of supporting veterans. His father is a member, as were other relatives.

“It’s always been my philosophy to try to pay it forward,” he says. “The American Legion is the kind of organization I want to affiliate myself with. Those are the people I want to be around, and the people I want to try to embrace, encourage and inspire are those like-minded people.”

– Henry Howard

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Dr. Steve Nissen, a cardiologist with the Cleveland Clinic, states "What's going on is a giant experiment with American men's health at stake." A lot of Testosterone

Therapy is off label usage according to Dr. Nissen. A review of medical records revealed that Testosterone might be causing problems by increasing clotting within arteries supplying the heart.

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LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION

Alabama post teaches kids value of freedom

American Legion Post 120's annual veterans program at Cypress Cove Farm in Red Bay, Ala., is growing as more children and schools hear about it. Now in its third year, the program is the creation of Post 120 Commander Frankie Smith and longtime Alabama State Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow, who owns the 300-acre farm.

"Most of these kids weren't born when 9/11 happened," says Smith, a Vietnam War veteran. "We need to tell these kids that freedom isn't free. That somebody paid a price for our freedom. We take it for granted. We need to teach these kids that freedom ... didn't just happen. If we don't tell younger people, they're not going to know."

During its first year, the post invited Red Bay fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders "and just kind of shot from the hip," Smith says. "I got two or three veterans to talk. We started out with four stations. It was a trial to see if it would work."

It did, and Post 120 opened the camp to students at other schools with the help of additional Legion posts. In three years, the camp has grown from 200 campers to more than 1,000. The post began planning for this year's camp last August, Smith says. That included meeting with Morrow, school principals and teachers, and going over camp plans and procedures.

In addition to learning how to march and fold the U.S. flag, campers hear from four veterans about their military experiences and visit the onsite Fred Rosemore and Gordon Morrow Memorial Museum. They also have an opportunity to ride on one or more of the military vehicles Morrow keeps at the farm.

Fourth-grader David Frei, 9, says he had never been to the



Students from Red Bay Elementary participate in a veterans camp for children at Cypress Cove Farm in Red Bay, Ala., Nov. 3.

Photo by Clay Lomneth

camp, and expected "cows and stuff because it was a farm." But he enjoyed his time there – especially riding on a military truck – and went home with a better understanding of what veterans mean to the United States.

"They served our country, and they (make it) a free country," Frei says.

That's what Smith loves to hear. "If it wasn't for veterans, we wouldn't have (freedom)," he says. "If there's one kid out of the whole group who comes here and gets that, we've been successful."

Morrow would like to see other American Legion posts organize similar programs. "This can be duplicated in any state," he says. "All you need is a Frankie Smith – someone who's willing to put some work into the project – and veterans willing to make it happen."

– Steven B. Brooks

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

LifeStation offers Legionnaires, families help for falls

Falls are the leading cause of injuries for Americans 65 and older, and each year one in every three suffers a fall. If you or a loved one are worried about falls or other emergency situations, consider using a medical alert system that provides 24/7 access to help with just the push of a button.

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SCOUTING

An Eagle project unites generations

BY ELIANA OSBORN

When Aiden Sharer was in eighth grade at Clarendon Hills Middle School in Clarendon Hills, Ill., he attended the school's annual World War II Day, when veterans visit and share stories with the students. When a teacher mentioned that three presenters had died in recent years, Sharer realized that his younger brother might not have the opportunity to learn firsthand what veterans of World War II did. That's when the idea for his Boy Scout Eagle project was born.

Sharer, 15, has always been interested in filmmaking, so he worked with Eagle coach Bill Wilson and Assistant Scoutmaster Tom Poisson from Troop 8 in Hinsdale to put together a plan. He'd record interviews with a handful of World War II veterans to preserve their stories for local students.

Joe Craig, an assistant Scoutmaster and adjutant at American Legion Post 250 in Hinsdale, helped Sharer find 11 veterans to participate. "They were willing to share their stories, and a couple of them said that they ended up better off telling them because they had kept this inside for 70-plus years," Sharer recalls. "It was astounding. It was probably some of the coolest hours I have ever spent in my entire life."

The hard part came next: editing more than 25 hours of interview footage into a 90-minute documentary. Sharer spent 280 hours on the project, with volunteers giving an additional 350 hours to complete it and host a screening reception for the interviewees and their families. Sharer's father, Jeffrey, learned the editing software and taught his son. All the Scouts of Troop 8 supported Sharer's project, from setting up cameras to keeping veterans comfortable during interviews.

"I don't think it really occurred to me the impact (the movie) had on them, because I was thinking more that it would impact the students," Sharer says. The veterans "thanked me profusely, and I didn't realize why. Then, when we were actually screening the movie, some of them were brought to tears. They were just so amazed to see themselves on the screen. This is something they can pass down through their family."

Each participant received a copy of the final cut of the movie, as well as their full rough-cut interview. Sharer's middle school received the film, and copies were distributed



At Post 250's Veterans Day dinner, Commander Joe Chiodo presented Aiden Sharer with a World War II Victory Medal, in recognition of his Eagle Scout project. Photo courtesy Elizabeth Veesser-Sharer

to another school, local historical societies, the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project, and Post 250.

At its Veterans Day dinner, the post recognized Sharer with an antique World War II Victory Medal engraved with his name and the date 11-11-15. "Your Eagle Scout project reflects hard work and devotion in telling their stories," Post Commander Joe Chiodo told him. "It is truly remarkable."

After spending so much time listening to veterans' stories, Sharer came away with a new perspective.

"These men led their normal lives and didn't think much about what the war was," he says. "One said he was more interested in basketball and cute girls than what was going on overseas; I identified with that because you hear all these current events going on, but you don't really think that they are actually going to affect you."

Eliana Osborn is a freelance writer living in Arizona.

VERBATIM

Some days I just kind of look down the hall and say I can't believe these are my bosses, and they're the best.

Amanda Thompson, a receptionist at Hilcorp Energy in Houston, on her company's gift of \$100,000 to each of its 1,381 employees as a year-end bonus. Source: Fox News



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VERBATIM

"I call it the ghost ship. It's a weird-looking thing."

Ernest Bowie, a retired electrician in Portland, Maine, who watched the first harboring of the Navy's futuristic-looking new stealth destroyer, USS Zumwalt

Source: Portland Press Herald

DEFENSE

Congress weighs in on cyberdefense

In what the publication Nextgov calls "an unprecedented move," Congress has ordered U.S. Cyber Command to conduct a series of war games expressly focused on Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

The cyberdrills will explore and test the "strategy, assumptions and capabilities of the United States Cyber Command to prevent large-scale cyberattacks by foreign powers with cyberattack capabilities comparable to the capabilities that China, Iran, North Korea and Russia are expected to achieve in the years 2020 and 2025 from reaching United States targets."

The directive was included in the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which became law late last year.

"This is the first time Congress has identified which foreign cyber adversaries the Pentagon must consider an imminent threat to the livelihood of U.S. citizens," according to Nextgov, a publication focused on technology and federal-government issues. The results of the war games must be delivered to lawmakers by fall.

The 2016 NDAA also orders the Pentagon "to scan every weapons system for hacker entryways by 2019," Nextgov reports. "Last year, the Pentagon's weapons tester found every single major weapons program had significant vulnerabilities to cyberattack," according to Peter Singer, senior fellow at the New America Foundation.

DEFENSE

Bracing for dogfights

In a not-so-subtle signal to Russia, the Air Force has deployed at least a dozen F-15C fighter jets to Turkey. As *The Daily Beast* points out, "The other fighters, attack planes and bombers the Pentagon has deployed – including F-22s, F-16s, A-10s and B-1s – carry bombs and air-to-ground missiles and have focused on striking militants on the ground," while F-15Cs "are strictly aerial fighters."

In other words, these dogfighting F-15s "will be escorting attack planes and bombers as they strike ISIS militants in close proximity to Syrian regime forces and the Russian warplanes." The report also notes that "F-15Cs have never deployed to Afghanistan, nor did they participate in the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq." The X factor in Syria is the presence of Russian warplanes.

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CAREERS

Does your résumé meet tracking requirements?



When you upload your résumé for an online job posting, the first place it goes is through an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to identify whether or not you have the skills and qualifications required for that position.

Follow these steps to increase the chances that your résumé will pass each scan:

- Fill your résumé with keywords that relate to the industries and professions you're targeting. An ATS is based on keyword scans. Does your résumé have the skills and qualifications the company wants? That will include both hard skills (electronics engineering, supply chain) and soft skills (project management, communication). Job postings and descriptions are a great resource for finding the right keywords for your targets.

Keyword scans might also be looking for specific degrees and certifications (BS, PMP), schools (OCS, UVA), employers (USAF, Motorola), locations (Annapolis, Md.), ZIP codes, area codes or more. Don't worry too much about these, since you don't have any control over what the employer wants unless it's specified in the posting.

- Use standard headings – Summary, Experience and Education – to be certain your information is read. If you were to put your experience under a heading called "Military Career," the typical ATS would overlook the heading and all the information in that section. The technology doesn't recognize that heading, and your entire career is lost in the upload.

- Integrate design elements wisely. You don't want to create a résumé that's so overly designed an ATS cannot read it. More and more people are including company and military logos, graphics, tables, charts, images of medals, etc., on their résumés. If used well, these can be great additions to make your résumé stand out to the people who will be reading it after you pass the scans. Just be certain that no graphic elements touch any text. If an ATS doesn't read the graphics, it's fine, but you want every word to be read.

Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Modernize Your Résumé: Get Noticed ... Get Hired" and "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions."



CENTENNIAL

Post 267, Ormond Beach, Fla.

The building that serves as the home of Post 267 was the first schoolhouse in Ormond Beach, circa 1900. It was then moved to another location and served a dual purpose as a school and chapel.

In the 1960s, the building was moved again to its present location on New Britain Avenue, where Post 267 took over.

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Upload stories, photos and videos of your post's history on the Legion's Centennial Celebration website.

www.legion.org/centennial

EDUCATION

VA special restorative training



Q: My husband is 100 percent disabled and my daughter qualifies for Chapter 35, the Dependents' Educational Assistance Program. She has special needs and requires additional assistance. I have heard about restorative training. How does she qualify for it?

A: Special restorative training may be available to some people eligible for Chapter 35 benefits.

VA may approve special restorative training where it's needed to overcome or lessen the effects of a physical or mental disability, for the purpose of enabling a person to pursue a program of education, special vocational program or other appropriate goal.

Eligibility for special restorative training must be determined by a counseling psychologist, who, after consulting with the Vocational Rehabilitation Panel, may prescribe special restorative training.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona. askvalerie@legion.org

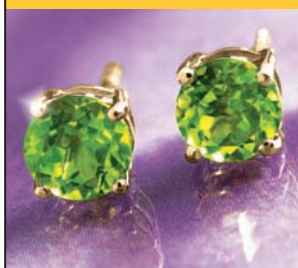
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POW/MIA

National commander urges POW/MIA accounting on Far East trip

As his trip to South Korea concluded in early December, American Legion National Commander Dale Barnett explained the importance of the Far Eastern peninsula following a visit to the nation's Ministry of National Defense Agency for KIA Recovery and Identification (MAKRI).

"I cannot underestimate how important it is that all American POWs and MIAs be accounted for and returned home," Barnett said. "It's the right thing to do. Their families and their fellow countrymen deserve that full accounting."

"I had an outstanding visit with the forensic laboratory run by MAKRI. It works hand in hand with our own Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, and it is clear that finding the remains of these heroes is a sacred mission for them. They have not forgotten the sacrifices that the United States made for their country. More than 7,800 Americans remain unaccounted for from the Korean War, but most of the remains are believed to be in North Korea. This is an issue on which we must remain vigilant."



National Commander Dale Barnett and Auxiliary President Sharon Conatser meet with MAKRI leaders in Seoul, South Korea. Photo by John Raughter

The American Legion delegation – which included Auxiliary National President Sharon Conatser – went into North Korea while visiting Military Armistice Commission Conference Building T2, which straddles the demarcation line between North and South Korea. During the tour, the hosting side locked the door to the other country so the delegation could have the run of the building's interior.

"It was very sobering seeing North Korea and knowing that our military faces danger and challenges every day," Conatser said. "Also, laying a wreath at the national cemetery with Commander Dale made me proud to be a member of the American Legion Family. I was honored to pay tribute."

– John Raughter

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VERBATIM

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American Legion National Commander Dale Barnett, after a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit that sought to remove a cross overlooking a war memorial monument in Bladensburg, Md.



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A new mural commemorating the Korean War connects two others honoring veterans of the Vietnam War and World War II in downtown Amherst, Ohio. Photo by Jason Shaffer

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

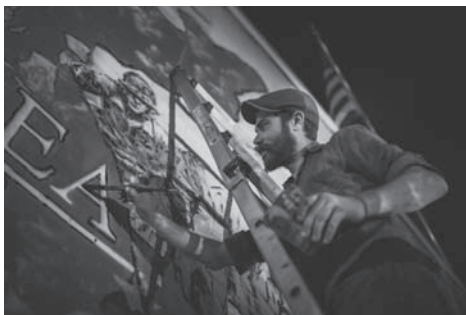
Artist adds 'forgotten war' to building murals

With 2015 marking 65 years since the start of the Korean War, a new 20-foot-tall black-and-white mural in downtown Amherst, Ohio, pays tribute to veterans of America's "forgotten war." It's the third mural for local artist Mike Sekletar, who has painted the outside wall of a two-story brick building into a historic timeline.

The Korean War mural, which was dedicated during a ceremony last Veterans Day, features a silhouette of the Korean peninsula surrounded by combat soldiers, fighter jets, a battleship and a nurse.

"Korean veterans I've met are so proud and thankful that a younger guy paid respect to them with this mural," says Sekletar, a member of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 118 in Amherst. "Truly, it's a real honor for me to pay my thanks in this way, so I guess the Korean War is no longer the 'forgotten war' in Amherst, Ohio."

Sekletar's latest mural, which he finished in three weeks with the help of longtime friend Brian Goodwin, was inspired by the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Sekletar liked the "different portraits and scenes that are engraved and juxtaposed" across the memorial's granite wall, which led him to depict various war scenes and branches of the military in his



Artist Mike Sekletar puts the finishing touches on his Korean War mural. Photo by Jason Shaffer

own mural. As he did with his previous murals, Sekletar projected a design on the wall, then outlined the areas to be painted.

One of the soldiers depicted in the mural is Korean War veteran Lou Repko of nearby Lorain, Ohio, behind the wheel of a jeep. The image first appeared on the cover of a 1950 issue of *LIFE* magazine. Repko attended the mural's dedication ceremony and handed Sekletar an original copy of the magazine featuring his photo.

The downtown Amherst building was a blank canvas until four years ago, when Sekletar began using his talent to "give back to veterans." In 2011, he dedicated a 20-by-35 mural of the iconic photograph "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima," and in 2013 he dedicated a 16-by-35 mural of artist Lee Teter's 1988 painting "Reflections."

"When I stand back from the murals, I'm pleased with the way they pay tribute to different generations of veterans," Sekletar says. "Each mural has its own look, but looking at all three together it shows a reverse timeline, with Iwo Jima being the first thing you see while driving into town on Park Avenue."

"I'm glad I am able to give thanks to veterans and also give back to my hometown of Amherst."

— Cameran Richardson

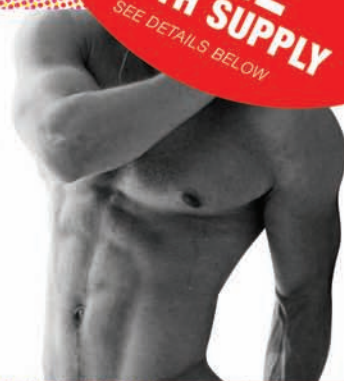
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John Ray Turner Post 18, Timmons, S.C. Chartered Nov. 4 (15 members)

Willie C. Barnett Post 136, Elkhart, Ind. Chartered Oct. 26 (11 members)

Glenn A. Giese Post 323, Springfield, S.D. Chartered Oct. 26 (26 members)

Post TH01, Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand Chartered Oct. 20 (23 members)

Post 337, Grovetown, Ga. Chartered Oct. 15 (27 members)

FLAG ADVOCACY

Legion bookazine leaving retail stores Feb. 9

“Indivisible: The Story of Our Flag” – the American Legion Family Centennial bookazine that covers the history and symbolism of the U.S. flag – will end its run on retail shelves across the country Feb. 9.

The publication is available at Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, Book World, Hastings and Sam's Club, as well as PXs and commissaries, for \$9.95 each.

“Indivisible” is also available through Emblem Sales; bulk orders of 25 or more cut the price to \$7.95 each. Posts can buy in bulk to resell as a 100th Anniversary fundraiser, or to donate to schools, libraries or members.

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POW/MIA

Former POW Bergdahl faces general court-martial for desertion

Overruling the recommendation of a preliminary military investigator, Gen. Robert Abrams, head of Army Forces Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., has determined that Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl will face a general court-martial, rather than the special court-martial recommended following the initial investigation into his disappearance from a combat outpost in Afghanistan in 2009. The more serious charges could result in up to a lifetime in jail, while the lesser recommendation had suggested that jail time was inappropriate for Bergdahl, who was held captive for five years by Taliban militants.

The general court-martial could result in a five-year imprisonment on the charge of desertion, and potentially life imprisonment on the accompanying, and more serious, charge of "misbehavior before the enemy." Critics of Bergdahl and the swap of him for five Taliban detainees suggested that lives were lost and many were endangered by the actions of the soldier, who inexplicably abandoned the outpost at night without any of his equipment or weaponry. Bergdahl has stated publicly



that his intent was to traverse 20 miles of Afghan countryside dominated by the Taliban to report to a higher headquarters (at Forward Operating Base Sharana) issues dealing with the leadership of his unit.

During the initial investigation, Maj. Margaret Kurz described the search for Bergdahl following his disappearance from the unit.

"For 45 days thousands of soldiers toiled in the heat, dirt, misery and sweat with almost no rest, little water and little food to find the accused," she said. "Fatigued and growing

disheartened, they searched for the accused knowing he left deliberately."

Eugene Fidell, Bergdahl's chief defense lawyer, reacted bitterly to Abrams' ruling, noting that "(this decision) did not follow the advice of the preliminary hearing officer who heard the witnesses," and added that he "had hoped the case would not go in this direction." Fidell also criticized politicians who have spoken out on the case, saying they have unfairly maligned his client.

— Mark Seavey

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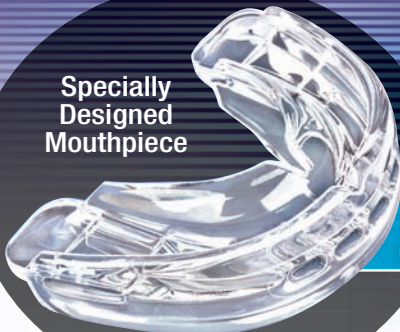
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PERSONAL FINANCE



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J.J. MONTANARO

If you've turned on the TV or radio lately, there's a good chance you've been flooded with ads urging you to buy gold now.

These commercials tout gold as a stable investment in a world gone haywire. While that promise of safety may sound tempting, be aware that the precious metal doesn't hold the same

allure for all investors.

Here are some things to keep in mind if you're considering gold as an investment:

■ **It's an insurance policy.** Typically, an investment in gold is seen as a way to protect against financial, political or economic upheaval. As a commodity, it's also considered a hedge against inflation. The more uncertainty in the world, the better gold is expected to perform.

■ **It's a taxing proposition.** In the United States, gold is generally taxed as a collectible. That means it can carry a burdensome 28 percent long-term capital gains rate. The same collectible rate even applies to exchange-traded funds (ETFs), which are by no means very collectible (unless you want to frame your brokerage statement).

■ **An ETF can make it easy.** Even if it's not romantic or advantageous in terms of tax treatment, a gold ETF can be a convenient and cost-effective way to invest in gold. There are a number of gold ETFs that track the price of gold with no storage cost and relatively low ongoing expenses. Typically, the share price is equivalent to the price of one tenth or one hundredth of an ounce of the underlying shiny stuff. If you decide to go this route, review the annual operating expenses associated with the ETF you choose. Typically, they should run less than half a percent. Your performance should reflect the movement of the price of gold, less those expenses. This is obviously a liquid approach to gold ownership, as you can sell quickly by calling

your broker or executing the transaction online. However, if you're hoarding for a full-scale global catastrophe, it's probably not an attractive option since individual investors generally can't turn shares into gold bars or coins.

■ **An IRA has tax advantages.** By owning gold or a gold ETF in an IRA, you can eliminate some of the precious metal's tax drawbacks. However, this approach comes with its own unique challenge if you want the physical commodity: you will need to find a custodian to hold the gold. Investments in an IRA, even physical gold, cannot be stored in your safe-deposit box or under your mattress. They must be held by a qualified custodian, which will require you to pay for storage and deal with taxes as you normally would for an IRA.

■ **Other factors can affect gold-based mutual funds.** Some mutual funds invest in gold as well as other precious metals – and they may also invest in companies that mine or process those metals. While the performance of such funds generally tracks the commodity price, other factors – including production costs, borrowing costs, management efficiencies and business failures – can also affect prices and performance.

■ **Gold is not an income producer.** Even in today's low-interest environment, many investors look to their portfolio for income. If that's what you seek, gold won't help the cause. Your return will be based on the price of gold moving up or down.

There may be a place for gold in a well-diversified portfolio, but it's probably not a big place. Everyone's situation is different and incorporating this volatile investment in your portfolio is not a move to make without careful consideration. So before you buy, talk to your tax and investment advisers to make sure gold fits your goals.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

www.legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances

HEALTH

VA patients can get no-cost flu shot at Walgreens

Walgreens has joined forces with VA to provide VA patients with no-cost flu shots. The program is subject to availability and runs until March 31.

To participate, download the flu shot form at www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/documents/va_registration.pdf. VA-enrolled veterans should complete this form and bring in their valid VA ID card and a photo ID to any of the 8,200 Walgreens locations nationwide; find a location at www.walgreens.com/findastore.

State-, age- and health-related restrictions may apply. Family members and TRICARE members are not eligible.

Walgreens will send the information to your VA health record within the established requirements of the eHealth Exchange.

For more information on the program, call (877) 771-8537 or visit www.ehealth.va.gov/immunization.asp.

Legion Family members are encouraged to spread the word by downloading a flyer and displaying it at posts; Walgreens is a national patriotic alliance of The American Legion.

www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/documents/va_flyer_0.pdf

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The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

408th MMS (1968-1970), Louisville, KY, 5/24-26, Jim Snyder, (319) 350-7928, jsnyder1941@gmail.com

ARMY

1/83rd Arty (Vietnam, 1966-1971), Herndon, VA, 10/14-16, Bill Taggart, (856) 228-5614, artillery_83rd@yahoo.com; **1st Trans Bn (FAMF)**, Corpus Christi, TX, 5/15-17, Bruce Binns, (269) 345-6279, ccbayerpiper@gmail.com; **4th Bn 503rd Abn Inf**, Columbus, GA, 6/10-11, Peyton Ligon, (205) 746-5586, pligon3392@aol.com; **5th Bn 7th Cav (Vietnam, Aug 1966)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 8/7-13, Don Shipley, (618) 863-2424, www.cav57.org; **11th Abn Div Mid-Atl Chpt**, 11th Air Assault Div 187th Abn RCT, Myrtle Beach, SC, 2/21-24, Artie Heape, (843) 846-4693, artieheape@

centurylink.net; **88th Inf Div "Blue Devil" & TRUST, SE Chpt**, Kissimmee, FL, 4/11-14, Preston Bryant, (803) 245-4462, plbtboat@atlanticbb.net; **94th Inf Div Hist Society**, Richmond, VA, 6/15-19, John Clyburn Jr., (908) 781-1406, 94thhistsociety@comcast.net; **A Trp 3/17th Air Cav "Silver Spurs"**, Branson, MO, 4/20-24, Allan La Grange, (563) 210-2253, allan shumiao@aol.com; **Bravo Co 1/506 Inf 101st Abn**, Biloxi, MS, 6/21-25, Robert Harasick, (360) 670-3521, harsai@msn.com; **Dolan Bks Schwaebisch Hall, Germany (All Units)**, Laughlin, NV, 10/13-17, Jim Watson, jwfire@aol.com

COAST GUARD

NW Coast Guard, Coeur d'Alene, ID, 9/16-18, Darlene Admundson, (208) 292-4840, admundson1693@frontier.com

JOINT

Florida's 29th Annual Vietnam and All Vets Reunion, Melbourne, FL, 4/21-24, Richard "Doc" Russo, (321) 652-4185, rarussol962@gmail.com

MARINES

8th & I Reunion Assn, Arlington, VA, 7/14-17, John Marley, (703) 473-9818, jm1967a15@verizon.net; **L Co 2nd Recruit Tng Bn Plt 217**, Beaufort, SC, 3/17-18, Milton Bice, (205) 822-7886, tajbice@att.net; **Plt 217 (Jan-Mar 1966)**, Beaufort, SD, 3/17-18, Milton Terry Bice, (205) 822-7886, tajbice@att.net; **VMFA-542 1st Mar Air Wing (Chu Lai & Da Nang, Vietnam, 1966-1970)**, Washington, 8/2-7, Jerry Nicholson, (818) 709-6270, jer166@sbcglobal.net

NAVY

Block Island CVE/21 & 106, St. Louis, 5/22-26, Bill MacInnes, (619) 460-3568, wmacinnnes@aol.com; **Coconino County LST 603**, Flagstaff, AZ, 7/14-17, Ric Shute, (970) 568-7066, rics1@aol.com; **Dyess DDR/DD 880**, Fall River, MA, 9/13-17, Frederick LaTour, (802) 754-9332, fredericklatour41@gmail.com; **Forrest B. Royal DD 872**, Portland, ME, 6/23-26, Ron Larsen, (715) 423-8905, mosbyusn@wctc.net; **Fulton AS 11**, Jacksonville, FL, 9/7-11, Bill Guhl, (850) 671-2791, billguhl@comcast.net; **Knapp DD 653**, Melbourne, FL, 6/12-15, Pete Smith, (309) 266-9391, eps@mtco.com; **Mine Div 113 (Vietnam)**, San Antonio, 10/13-16, Don Hecke, (501) 620-0593, don9329@hotmail.com; **Nantahala AO 60**, Norfolk, VA, 8/22-27, William Edwards, (724) 887-9849, wae234@verizon.net; **Navy Postal Clerks Assn**, Nashville, TN, 5/1-5, Alan Hass, (717) 226-1595, hassomnol@aol.com; **Norris DD/DDE 859**, Baltimore, 9/29-10/2, Edward Mehl, (302) 541-0685, e.mehl@mchsi.com; **Patrol Craft Sailors Assn**, New Orleans, 5/11-15, Duane "Bucky" Walters, (315) 487-2623, buckypcsa@twcny.rr.com; **Randolph/Terror**, Chicago, 9/11-18, Sal Rizza, (321) 454-2344; **Sproston DD/DDE 577**, Kansas City, MO, 9/21-25, Orville Amos, (816) 483-2710, oamos541@aol.com; **Vreeland DE/FF 1068**, Charleston, SC, 4/20-24, Mark Smith, (817) 454-4858, mlsmith100000@aol.com; **VW-1 All Hands Alumni Assn**, Branson, MO, 5/9-13, Ralph Link, (309) 828-3244, aewron1fe@gmail.com

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3rd Armd Div (Spearhead) Transportation 503rd S&T (Drake Kaserne, Frankfurt, Germany, 1975), Charles Kyle, (918) 839-4362
41st Comb Eng Bn 10th Inf Div (Kitzingen, Germany, 1955-1958), Loren Leitzke, (605) 426-6726, sleitzke@abe.midco.net

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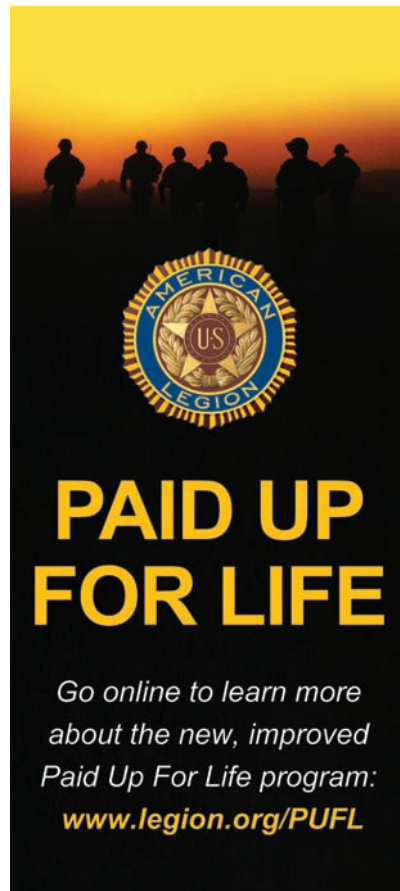
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543rd Trans Co (Long Binh & Thu Duc, Vietnam, 1966-1967), Elmer Schmidt, (712) 348-0631, mjs4647@gmail.com
577th Eng Bn (Vietnam, 1966-1972), Jim Stevens, (910) 579-5704, jrs562@aol.com
A Co 2nd Bn 2nd Inf Rgt 1st Inf Div (Vietnam, 1966), S. Bagozzi, barnies1@yahoo.com
Co 513 (NTC San Diego, Aug-Oct 1965), Allen Throm, palal6872@gmail.com
Fort Lee, VA, Baseball Team (1962-1963), Chuck Roys, (413) 548-9090, sdroys2@gmail.com
HQ & HQ Co 2nd Inf Div (Camp Howze, Tongu, Korea, 1965-1966), Mike Sleva, (313) 562-4146, mjsdal63@comcast.net
HQ 3rd AF Accounting & Finance Office (South Ruislip AB, London, 1967-1969), Martin Christopher, (607) 533-7782, brownsno1fan@hotmail.com
Leary DD/DDR 879 (1944-1974), Al Redden, (308) 530-1284, alshr@allophe.com
Lyster Army Hosp (Fort Rucker, AL, 1968-1970), Tom Hovanec, thovanec@sbcglobal.net
McCracken APA 198 (WWII), Jonathan Gilpin Sr., (309) 454-8357, jong2921@hotmail.com
USCG Coos Bay Stn (Charleston, OR, 1954-1964), Joseph McCarthy, (707) 763-5586

TAPS

Bruce A. Conklin, Dept. of Arizona. Dept. Cmdr. 2007-2008, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2004-2013, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Memb. 2013-2015 and Nat'l Cemetery Cmte. Memb. 2015-2016.
Bernie R. Melter, Dept. of Minnesota. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1995-2001.
Thurman E. Parrish, Dept. of Mississippi. Nat'l Law & Order Cmte. Memb. 2011-2013 and Nat'l Law and Order & Homeland Security Cmte. Memb. 2013-2015.



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An apple a day keeps the doctor away. An onion a day should take care of everyone else.

OPPORTUNITY knocked on my door once. But by the time I unlocked the chain, pushed back the bolt, turned the two locks and shut off the burglar alarm, it was gone.

A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR said to two concerned parents, “I wouldn’t worry about career options for your son. If he becomes a cab driver, he’ll be rich.”

“Why is that?” the mother asked.

“He can’t find the shortest distance between two points.”

ONE SALON CUSTOMER said to another, “You must meet my friend. She’s a medium.”

“No, it’ll only depress me,” the other customer replied. “I’m a large.”

ONE OF THOSE PASSENGERS on an elevator quipped to the operator, “I guess your job has its ups and downs, huh? Heh, heh.”

“I don’t mind those,” the operator replied. “It’s the sudden jerks I can’t stand.”

A MAN asked his coworker, “Do you ever worry the boss is going to replace us with computers?”

“Not really,” the other man answered. “Where is he going to find a computer that grovels?”

THEY SAY THAT most paper money is covered with germs. But I’m not worried. Not even a germ can live on the money I make.



“In my rise to the top, I forgot what was really important in life. Look into it and have a report on my desk by Friday.”



“I’m sorry, but your parents’ insurance doesn’t allow for you to grab a sucker on the way out.”



“You have to miss the meeting because you sprained an ankle? That’s seriously the best you could come up with?”

A TEENAGER told a friend that he was going to the East Coast to continue his trumpet lessons.

“Sounds expensive,” his friend said.

“Oh, my grandparents chipped in. And so did my neighbors.”

A FATHER looking at his son’s less-than-stellar report card exclaimed, “An F in history? When I was your age, that was my easiest subject!”

“Big deal,” the son replied. “When you were my age, how much had happened?”

“IN A NEW INTERVIEW, Tom Brady said he’ll never get into politics because ‘half the people are going to like you and half the people are not going to like you.’ Or, as that’s also known, sports.”

– Jimmy Fallon

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