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Legion

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ON THE COVER

Wounded Navy and Marine Corps veterans discover new limits and wash away their worries on a first-of-its-kind rafting trip through the Grand Canyon. *Photo by Dave Gill*



MOMENT OF SILENCE

A member of The American Legion's National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission walks through the memorial amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery. Legionnaires visited the nation's capital Feb. 21-24 for the annual Washington Conference. Look for full coverage in the May issue. *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.

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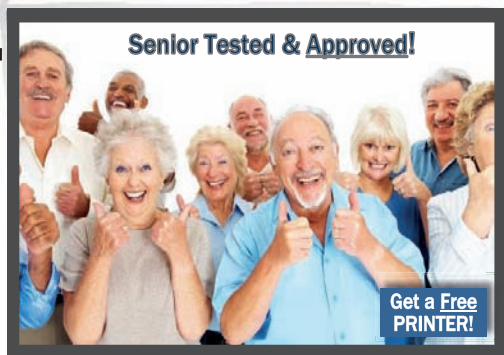
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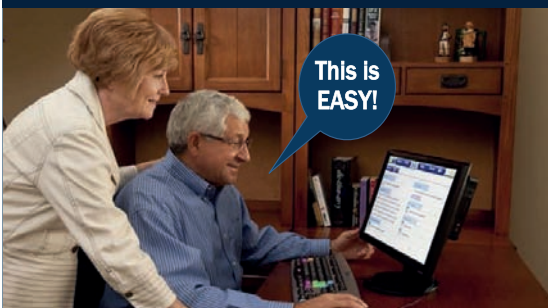
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'Not to Be Trusted'

As I read Alan Dowd's article about religious liberty (February), it occurred to me that world history indicates this cycle of repression is a constant evil to be confronted. As was pointed out, it was prevalent during the time of the second world war – and only because of the United States did we escape it.

Sadly, the current world situation reflects the same patterns of repression present during the 20th century. Even sadder is the fact that many of our leaders in Washington do not recognize the danger the world is facing, having the attitude that we're in no danger from those trying to eliminate freedom, especially religious freedom.

Our country has become polarized, and freedoms are steadily eroding – especially freedom of speech, spilling over to freedom of religion. Many of our institutions of higher education seem at the forefront of this new trend.

– Vernon Junker, Redwood Falls, Minn.

Alan Dowd's article provided an interesting historical account of man's struggle to worship as one sees fit, but he falls short of the most pressing issue of religious freedom we face: our freedoms here at home. For over a decade there has been an onslaught against Christianity, led by secular progressives.

Thanks to the ACLU and activist judges, the federal judiciary has repeatedly struck down Christian observances in America's town squares and Main Streets, from manger scenes to the removal of crosses and the Ten Commandments from public venues. Christian business owners are fined out of existence because they refuse to cater to gay marriages.

Hollywood portrays Christians as aggressive zealots, drooling lunatics or some other kind of threat to the peace of the community. The venom is spread by television into every home, where it infects the uninformed.

No one would suggest that Christianity be forced upon anyone, but Christians deserve the same tolerance being extended to other religions. The White House is in no position to shame any regime into protecting human rights, because it won't do the same for all its own citizens. On many levels of government, our own leaders have proven themselves the ones not to be trusted.

– Walter R. Privette II, Medaryville, Ind.

As I read this excellent article, I kept thinking that the next paragraph would indict the U.S. government as an emerging example of religious freedom's demise. Alan Dowd clearly explained the dangers of government control of religion, whether by suppression or theocratic dictatorship. He did not, however, make mention of the blatant attack on religious freedom in our own country, under the guise of political correctness and gender equality. I think our canaries are dying.

— Ann Bardell, Sunnyside, Wash.

This article offered insight into how a lack of religious liberty has allowed some of the worst examples of governments to exercise power. But I wish some time would have been dedicated to examining the use and misuse of claims of religious liberty in our own country.

In "1984" fashion, the term has been twisted into a parody of its original meaning. It appears that the new meaning is the liberty to coerce others into conforming to "my" belief structure. Recent examples include a large company that wants to impose its religious belief on employees' health decisions, non-believers who want to remove historical religious artifacts from public places, and a church group that uses "religious liberty" to demean warriors killed in action.

First, meanings are altered. Then groups are demonized. Then it becomes OK to impose sanctions on them, up to death in some countries.

— Marshall Brown, Perham, Minn.

'Brothers in Arms'

The article by Matt Grills (February) was impressive. Not only did all those brothers serve with distinction, but look at their parents and the home in which they grew up. The number of children and the demand that the boys go to school – the parents were saints. It reminded me of my situation somewhat. I, too, was from a poor family, drafted with only a 10th-grade education. I served in the Army, working my way up to college courses. I resigned and went to medical school, then returned to the Army and later retired.

I feel sorry for all the young people on the street today who could become something great if only they had a high school diploma. It seems like a special draft and special training would save a lot of them.

— Robert C. Todd, Olympia, Wash.

It was a pleasure reading this article. Hats off to the Davis family, especially their mother and father. Those brothers should raise their heads high for what they have accomplished.

I am from a family of 10, five boys and five girls, all born and raised in Port of Spain, Trinidad. I am also a Vietnam War Army veteran. Reading this, I could imagine the pride their parents and siblings must have had. It is stuff like this that should be in the news, to show young people what they can do with their lives – and to show white folks that many a black man has put his life on the line to protect this country.

— Monty Marquez, Pico Rivera, Calif.

Syrian refugees in United States

In his support for admitting Syrian refugees to the United States (February), Rep. Seth Moulton is missing an important point: are they moderate Muslims, sufficiently Westernized to assimilate into our culture? U.S. taxpayers – already supporting an enormous number of non-working Americans – will be saddled with increased massive financial responsibilities. Many of these people simply will not absorb our culture, and in my view, the terrorist risk is unacceptable. The inscription on the Statue of Liberty does not require us to abandon common sense.

— Scott Anderson, Green Valley, Ariz.

Not an antique

Please say it ain't so, *American Legion Magazine*! The February issue had thousands of "good" words, but I must quibble about just one. In the story about a young man's Eagle Scout project (Rapid Fire), it shows him holding a World War II Victory medal the story describes as "antique." I've had one just like it in my Army keepsake box for 70 of my 90 years. If it is "antique," am I too?

Give us who are still left from the big one a little more time before relegating us and our service "stuff" to antiquity! My Ike jacket, garrison cap, buckle-type combat boots, one-piece fatigues, helmet beanies and beautiful never-worn Victory medal – yup, all are certainly old, but antiques no. Not until I'm gone, anyway.

— Nade O. Peters, St. Louis

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Expand the definition of accountability

A simple definition of “accountability” is a willingness or obligation to accept responsibility. No one more perfectly illustrates that definition than the men and women who have stood in harm’s way to protect and defend our nation. They have been nothing less than fully accountable to their missions and to the United States.

The federal government has struggled with accountability, in particular as the concept applies to veterans. Congress has tried, with limited success, to address the struggle by passing legislation to remove obstacles that prevent the Department of Veterans Affairs from terminating poor-performing managers and employees. VA has described accountability as a top priority in the aftermath of scandals blamed for costing some veterans their lives and in ill-fated efforts to discipline VA executives who abused their positions. When it comes to accountability, all the words are there. Execution has been the problem.

To The American Legion, accountability includes all that but runs much deeper, too.

First, you can find to whom we are accountable etched on the façade of VA Central Office in Washington: “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan.” Abraham Lincoln’s words endure because they resonate with all who have sent sons and daughters into battle, which we continue to do today. They resonate because we are all accountable to him, to her, their widows and orphans.

Accountability includes the ability to discipline and, if necessary, terminate employees who don’t live up to their responsibilities. In many other ways, as I explained to a joint session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans’ Affairs on Feb. 24, accountability – execution and not mere words – must extend to veterans who deserve rewarding careers that match their skills, training and discipline.

Accountability is lost when veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury are not offered effective alternative treatment programs that can help them and their families. Women veterans continue to lack consistent services at VA health-care facilities. Veterans exposed to Agent Orange and other environmental hazards are denied benefits and care because their exposures did not occur in the right places or times, or because years of research have not yet been completed. Our troops are under-resourced, and our force strength is shrinking, putting them and our national security at risk; the number of U.S. military personnel is expected to be about 200,000 lower this year than it was five years ago, as the war continues. A fully interoperable DoD-VA medical records system remains a work in progress many years and more than \$1 billion after the need was first identified. Accountability to those who have served this nation has proven elusive for our government.

I am confident that the system can work, trust can be regained and accountability achieved. It’s going to take teamwork, transparency, leadership and commitment. It’s going to take more than words. That’s what Lincoln meant when, at the end of a bitter war, he let a healing nation know who deserves the fullest measure of our accountability.




National Commander
Dale Barnett

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ORATORICAL FINALS

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 www.legiontv.org

EAGLE SCOUT AND LEGACY APPLICATIONS DUE

Department nominations for Eagle Scout of the Year are due to National Headquarters April 1, and applications for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship must be postmarked by that date. The Legacy Scholarship is open to high school seniors and graduates, for undergraduate study at accredited U.S. institutions of higher education.

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LEAH MORALES

When Leah Morales observes the Junior Shooting Sports practices at her American Legion post in Bryan, Texas, she knows there's more than just instruction happening. The weekly sessions instill confidence in, and help shape, tomorrow's leaders.

"I want them to learn that they need to practice to get great at something, and to not just quit whenever they're not doing as well as they want to be," Morales says of the young shooters. "I also want them to experience being around veterans and know that we are here to serve the community."

Created by Morales a few years ago, the shooting club is a big part of the post's commitment to youth. "As veterans, it's great that we teach safety and marksmanship, which are among the first things we learn when we join the military," she says.

Morales – who works with veterans as a scholarships and financial aid adviser at Texas A&M – says she and her husband, Eddie, didn't feel like their "true selves" until they joined the Legion and got involved.

"For my generation, we still have a desire to serve," she says. "Once we get out we miss having a purpose. We miss having camaraderie. The Legion offers those things."

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"As veterans, we naturally feel the call to service and want to be a part of something that is bigger than ourselves."

Watch an interview with Leah Morales online:

 www.legion.org/magazine

See an archive of past interviews:

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Photo by Lucas Carter



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Maintain Renewable Fuel Standard



SUPPORT

Rep. David Young, R-Iowa

■ Young is a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Congress established the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) – requiring biofuels from corn ethanol and other sources to be blended with transportation fuels – to foster rural economic growth, support a robust domestic renewable-fuels sector, encourage energy independence, promote cleaner air and lower prices at the pump. RFS has been a proven success and has improved the lives of all Americans.

Iowa is home to more than 232,000 veterans, many of whom returned home to go back to work on the family farm. RFS has helped boost rural economies and provided more job opportunities for these brave men and women, enabling them to return and build a life.

Yet opponents try to smear RFS as somehow detrimental to the economy, anti-consumer or, worse, un-American. Nothing could be further from the truth. RFS is intended to create good-paying U.S. jobs and protect families against the wild swings in global oil markets that have plagued the industry for decades.

A 2015 Fuels America study found that the renewable-fuels industry supports more than 850,000 direct and indirect jobs and has generated \$184 billion in economic activity nationwide. Moreover, clean ethanol blends provide consumers across the country with a lower-cost option at the pump and reduce our reliance on foreign oil.

For decades, some of the world's biggest energy producers – from Russia to the Middle East – have posed the biggest threats to our national security. The United States should not now, or ever, retreat from our position as a global leader in energy production. The Renewable Fuel Standard is a vital part of our domestic energy strategy and a pillar of our national defense.



OPPOSE

Rep. Steve Womack, R-Ark.

■ Womack is a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

When first created in 2005, the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) mandated that at least 4 billion gallons of renewable fuel be blended into our gasoline, increasing to 7.5 billion gallons by 2012. However, in 2007, new legislation greatly en-

hanced RFS' already unrealistic targets, requiring at least 9 billion gallons of renewable fuel to be blended in 2008 and ramping up to 36 billion gallons by 2022.

RFS' feasibility relies on many assumptions that have turned out not to be true,

such as the rise in consumption of gasoline, the availability of alternative biofuels to mitigate the use of corn ethanol, and the high demand of E85 blends by drivers of flex-fuel vehicles. As a result, significant challenges to the implementation of RFS have arisen, the most serious being that our fuel supply simply cannot absorb the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) increasing ethanol-blending mandates.

Our gasoline is saturated with the maximum amount of ethanol that a vehicle is warranted and designed to use, and that our infrastructure – pipelines, pumps and storage tanks – can safely accommodate. And that doesn't even account for the harm done by ethanol to small and older motors; the EPA must take note.

That's why I and some fellow representatives have introduced the RFS Reform Act (H.R. 704) to eliminate corn-based ethanol requirements, cap the amount of ethanol that can be blended into our fuel supply at 10 percent, and set cellulosic biofuels to production levels rather than unrealistic, arbitrary numbers. These reforms will provide a long-term solution to this aging problem. When an idea fails, we need to fix it and move on to the next one.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Supporters of the Renewable Fuel Standard claim it reduces oil imports and saves Americans money at the pump. Critics argue that production mandates have resulted in more ethanol than can be safely used in gasoline.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

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VAULT CODE:
AL58-127

Bystander CPR saves lives

Many lives could be saved if more people performed CPR immediately upon seeing someone go into cardiac arrest, HealthDay reports, citing a research study conducted by the Duke Clinical Research Institute.

The study examined a four-year North Carolina program that promotes bystander CPR, along with some 5,000 "out-of-hospital cardiac arrest cases" in 11 of the state's counties.

The program encourages bystanders to perform chest compressions without having to do mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or use automated external defibrillators while waiting for an ambulance. It also suggests the use of portable defibrillators – which are becoming available in more public places and can be used by nonprofessionals – to shock a heart into normal rhythm.

Survival with good brain function increased from 7 to 10 percent for those who received bystander CPR, research showed. Moreover, the study found that North Carolina's awareness, education and training campaign "increased survival with good brain function by 37 percent."

 www.heart.org/HEARTORG, click on the "CPR & EEC" link



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

Screenings checklist, A to Z

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) urges Americans to talk to their care providers about screenings that help detect diseases and other problems before symptoms appear.

For men and women:

- **Colon cancer** For men 50 and older, and those who have a family history of colorectal cancer. For women 50 to 75.
- **Depression**, especially people who have felt "down, sad or hopeless" in the past two weeks or who have little interest or pleasure in activity.
- **Diabetes**, especially those with high blood pressure or who take medication for high blood pressure.
- **Hepatitis C**, especially people born between 1945 and 1965, anyone who has ever injected drugs, and those who received a blood transfusion before 1992.
- **High cholesterol** For men who are 35 or older, use tobacco, are overweight or obese, have diabetes or high blood pressure, have a history of heart disease or blocked arteries, or had a male relative suffer a heart attack before 50. For women who use tobacco, are overweight or obese, have a personal history of heart disease or blocked arteries, or had a male relative suffer a heart attack before 50 or a female relative before 60.
- **High blood pressure**, at least every two years.
- **HIV**, if a doctor or nurse thinks a screening is necessary.
- **Lung cancer** For men with a history of smoking. For women between 55 and 80, those with a 30-year history of a pack or more a day, and those who smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years.

■ **Overweight and obesity** If you are unsure if you are overweight or obese, calculate your body mass index (BMI). Visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/BMI/bmicalc.htm for simple instructions on how to do it.

For men:

■ **Abdominal aortic aneurysm**, especially those between 65 and 75 who have ever been smokers.

For women:

- **Breast cancer**, if a care provider determines that a mammogram is needed.
- **BRCA 1 and 2 genes**, especially those who have a family member with breast, ovarian or peritoneal cancer.
- **Cervical cancer** "Starting at 21, get a Pap smear every three years until you are 65," AHRQ recommends. "Women 30 or older can choose to switch to a combination Pap smear and human papillomavirus (HPV) test every five years until 65. If you are older than 65 or have had a hysterectomy, talk with your doctor or nurse about whether you still need to be screened."
- **Osteoporosis**, especially after 65. Those younger than 65 and at high risk for bone fractures should also be screened.
- **Sexually transmitted infections**, especially those 24 and younger and sexually active. Those older than 24 should talk to a doctor or nurse about whether they should be screened.

Find out more online:

 www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers

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The pros and cons of probiotics

Are bacteria ever beneficial? It may be hard to imagine, because bacteria are usually associated with harmful germs, but the answer is yes. Hundreds of trillions of bacteria make themselves at home in your gut. Researchers have discovered that about 90 percent are “friendly” or “healthy” bacteria.

These good bacteria, known as probiotics, keep the bad bacteria naturally present from multiplying and making you sick. Probiotics (which means “for life”) also help you process food and keep your digestive tract working properly.

Probiotics are found in some fermented foods (kefir, sauerkraut, buttermilk, sourdough bread), aged cheeses (gouda, cheddar), cottage cheese and yogurts, especially those containing live active cultures. Grocery store shelves are lined with all kinds of probiotic-fortified items, even some chocolate. Probiotics are also sold in pill form, suppositories and creams.

Probiotics have received a lot of attention lately, prompting many Americans to wonder if they should add them to their diet. Some evidence supports claims that probiotics can help prevent diarrhea when taking antibiotics, and treat atopic eczema, a skin condition commonly seen in infants. But the scientific evidence for most other claims, including that they promote weight loss and help prevent some cancers, is lacking. The Food and Drug Administration has not approved any health claims for probiotics.

Different probiotic supplements can contain one strain or several, and different strains may offer different health benefits. Most people are able to eat probiotics or take supplements without ill effects. However, if you have underlying health conditions, talk to your doctor before adding them to your daily regimen.

– Beth W. Orenstein



TOO SWEET

Americans are simply eating too much sugar, and it's having an effect on our health. Excess consumption of sugar can lead to obesity, which is linked to heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer.

According to the American Heart Association, we should aim to limit added sugar (sugar in addition to that which occurs naturally in foods such as fruit and vegetables) to six teaspoons daily for women and nine teaspoons for men. Unfortunately, a recent study shows that most Americans eat more than twice that amount – around 20 teaspoons a day.

Yet it's not just sugar added to coffee or sprinkled on breakfast cereal that's the problem. Most added sugar actually comes from processed food, such as bread, salad dressing, ketchup, tinned soup and cakes.

You can quickly assess how much sugar you eat in a day by combining what you add yourself with the sugar that's present in the processed food you eat (labels will tell you how much).

If that tips you over your recommended intake, try cutting back on processed food, switching to diet sodas and swapping sugar in your coffee for sweetener.

– Martin Sayers

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Military leaders call for drafting women

BY TOM PHILPOTT

A few fierce congressional opponents of allowing women to serve in brutal ground combat jobs hoped to slow momentum toward full gender integration by highlighting for fellow lawmakers the next logical step: requiring all young women 18 to 26 to register for the draft.

The strategy failed. Within days of Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., and Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Mont., introducing the Draft America's Daughters Act of 2016 (H.R. 4478), Army and Marine Corps leaders testified that female draft registration was indeed the next logical step after full gender integration.

More surprisingly, they support the idea.

Women not only should be able to compete for any ground combat skill or unit previously closed to them, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Feb. 15, but all eligible young women “should register for the draft,” like their male counterparts.

Milley also warned that full gender integration across skills would sustain readiness “if, and only if, we maintain and enforce rigorous combat-readiness standards, we remain a merits-based, results-oriented organization, and we apply no quotas and no pressure.”

Gen. Robert Neller, commandant of the Marine Corps, wasn't as keen on gender integration of all ground combat skills, telling senators there are still many unknowns as far as implementation.

“I have concerns about retention,” Neller said. “I have concerns about injury rates. I have concerns about propensity to re-enlist (and) career progression. I have concerns about what's going to happen if the (women's) numbers are low, because they probably will be at the beginning.”

Readiness could suffer if standards are ever relaxed so that more women qualify for the most physically demanding jobs and units, Neller added.

But at the hearing he was first of the four-star officers to endorse bolstering Selective Service rolls with women. “Every American physically qualified should register for the draft,” he said.

No senator on the committee said he or she would try to block the Dec. 3 decision by Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to open all combat jobs, without exception, to women who meet gender-neutral standards to be set for every military-skill specialty. But several senators did express concern that he rejected the Marine Corps' request to exempt certain front-line jobs from integration.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus got much of the blame, having publicly criticized the findings of a Corps task force on gender integration a day after receiving the report.

Corps leaders cited results of performance studies of more than 400 female volunteers. They received combat skill training and became part of mixed-gender squads, teams and crews. For five months, the mixed units' performance was tracked against male-only units. By almost every measure –

speed of movement, firing accuracy, incidence of injury – the all-male units performed better. The lone exception was field problem-solving.

The studies “demonstrated that biological differences between men and women can have implications when it comes to the sustained physical activities involved in combat,” said Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., committee chairman.

But several senators defended Mabus for his emphasis on comparing individual skills of the most capable female Marines and criticizing the Corps for failing to take account of the greater experience of male-only units.

Rep. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., who is running for a Senate seat, said it's past time for the military to open all job skills and units to women who qualify, and that she's fine with requiring women to register for the draft. To encourage wider service by both genders, she will introduce a bill to offer education benefits to any young adult who chooses a stint in programs like AmeriCorps, the Red Cross or Habitat for Humanity.

Tom Philpott has been covering military personnel and veterans issues for nearly 40 years.



U.S. Army photo

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*Over two decades ago,
the end of one empire gave
rise to a new Colombia.*

BY KEITH NIGHTINGALE

*Rosalba de Jesus Varela holds a
framed image of Pablo Escobar cut
out of a newspaper. At one time,
she lived in the neighborhood built
by the Colombian capo.* AP

The Putumayo River drains a significant portion of southern Colombia. Most of the year, it's slow and languorous, like the tribes that inhabit its dense shores. The river meanders beneath a canopy that conveniently conceals any human activities; the jungle floor at its flanks dissolves beneath anyone's steps, rendering it impassable. The air is thick and humid.

This is home to the cocaine industry.

It was also the source of life and wealth for Pablo Escobar, one of cocaine's most prominent imperialists. His successors now tend to the empire.

An attentive observer of the Putumayo will find occasional ribbons of rainbow colors on the water's surface. These are chemical strands, expended after their use in the manufacture of the insidious, addictive white powder. Natives know not to fish under the rainbow because nothing swims beneath it. Any vegetation it touches along the shore is likewise dead. But it is the lifeblood of the drug trade, a poison that does not respond to known methods of removal. In that sense, the colorful chemical waste is much like those responsible for it.

IN MEDELLÍN, COLOMBIA, #45D Carrera 79B is a nondescript middle-class housing area. It has a set-back second floor and a first floor covered in Spanish tile. A little after 1 p.m. on Dec. 2, 1993, one of the edge tiles dripped a slow, dark ochre trail of liquid. This was the lifeblood of Pablo Escobar. He and the Putumayo River were flowing into one.

In short, this is how it happened:

A black four-door sedan pulled to the curb. The door opened, and a Colombian officer in olive drab combat fatigues emerged. Brig. Gen. Hugo Martinez was about to reap the benefits from two years of work.

He went through the door and vaulted up the unlit staircase two steps at a time. Surprised by his presence, the soldiers inside slammed themselves against the wall, the butts of their MP5s echoing against the whitewashed concrete. Martinez arrived at the second floor and immediately saw two soldiers near a window that opened to the first-floor roof. He brushed by them without a word, placed his right leg over the transom and vaulted onto the tile roof.

Walking quickly and carefully, he moved to within 20 feet of the three soldiers kneeling by the large, lifeless body. Escobar was face-down on the tiles barely five feet from the roof's edge. He was dressed in loose pants and a casual shirt that had been twisted in such a way as to expose his large olive-colored back and portions of his broad, hairy

stomach. A bullet wound in the back slowly drained his blood into the tile channel.

His head, half hidden by hair, had been pierced in the ear cavity. A stream of blood trickled from the dime-sized hole, down his neck, onto the tiles, toward the poisoned river.

The general motioned to a soldier to lift Escobar's head by the hair and expose his full face. Identification 100 percent confirmed, Martinez grunted, turned back to the window and reached for his cellular phone. In the hallway, he dialed a number and said, "*Es fin*" ("It's ended"), and hung up. A dozen soldiers stood over the body. One of the men used several cameras to capture the macabre moment on film.

For Martinez, and for Colombia, much work had gone into this moment.

On Aug. 18, 1989, Colombian presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán gave a speech in Medellín, Escobar's home and capital of the cocaine industry. The candidate believed his country's fixation on cocaine was a tragedy. He publicly swore to break the Medellín cartel and bring down Escobar in particular. This was not a popular position in the self-proclaimed City of Perpetual Spring, where Escobar had provided jobs to the poor, put in soccer fields and installed free clinics. Galán's campaign was bound to create some ill will among the locals.

Around 8 p.m., the candidate mounted his stage – an off-white canvas boxing ring – and began to speak. Shots rang out. He slumped to the floor.

With Galán's murder, the battle to control Colombia's destiny was on.

In dozens of Medellín buildings – from simple palm shacks to concrete compounds – cocaine and its byproducts moved northward under Escobar's increasingly violent management. U.S. demand alone was met with approximately 230 metric tons of supply a year. The product was white as snow, Escobar's management style blood-red.

Deep in southernmost Colombia, in the city of Cali, another group of citizens watched the Medellín drama unfold with great anxiety and expectation. These were cattlemen, ranchers and business owners who sensed a potential opportunity at an industry that might just be handed to them by a government barely capable of surviving.

The group had a different business model. Resting in wood-paneled rooms, with the latest technologies at hand and their children away for educations in the best foreign universities, they wore dark suits, drank scotch and began to build the most efficient international business system in the world. They were a universe apart from the street thugs and



The body of Medellín drug cartel leader Pablo Escobar lies on the roof of a house Dec. 2, 1993, moments after he was gunned down by Colombian police while trying to escape authorities. Often called the "king of cocaine," Escobar was one of the wealthiest and most powerful criminals in history. Medellín Police/AFP/Getty

poverty-stricken population Escobar had led and trained to use gunfire and intimidation to achieve business goals, these Cali upper crust would simply buy what they needed. No muss. No fuss. No bad publicity. But they would have to wait.

SOON AFTER GALÁN'S ALTERNATE CANDIDATE, César Gaviria, was elected, a diverse, partially hidden and synthesized collection of U.S. government units began flowing into Colombia. U.S. Special Forces teams began training Colombian military personnel, primarily those dedicated to fighting in the deep jungle. The FBI, DEA and Customs sent beefed-up teams into Colombia to train their counterparts throughout the nation. Some specialized police, CIA and military elements began to focus specific efforts on the newly created counterdrug forces that Martinez commanded. The more secretive elements of the U.S. counterterrorist inventory also arrived to impart their highly specialized capabilities.

To assist in this endeavor, the United States assigned as its ambassador a retired Navy commander, Morris "Buzz" Busby. His task was to apply military-style management to a civil issue and focus U.S. support into a single thrust. One team. One fight. Target Pablo.

Gen. George Joulwan, commander in chief of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), had created a

special task force within his headquarters, DDN, to manage the Joint Interagency Task Force support to the Andean Ridge nations. Stocked with members from all services, as well as Customs and the DEA, NSA and CIA, the task force began to conduct numerous raids and operations using host-nation forces throughout the Andean Ridge. The Air Force sent scheduled AWACS aircraft to Panama, and the Navy dedicated ships to water and air surveillance.

By 1991, the first clear picture of the immense drug industry was becoming visible.

The darkened operations center at Howard Air Force Base, Panama, had an array of radar images. One set reflected the picture from AWACS planes operating over the Caribbean. Another showed the Customs P-3 screen images flying over the Andes. A third reflected the Navy feed from a picket ship off Central American waters. The largest screen, watched by the most senior personnel, was an amalgamation. The black screen was filled with the waxing and waning of dozens of tiny lines, each with a target identifier. These were light aircraft hauling drugs to Mexico and the southeastern United States, flying back with bales of U.S. dollars. Mexico was the interchange.

The primary job of stopping the Escobar empire rested with the government of Colombia and, to a lesser degree, Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, none of which were capable on their own of

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effectively battling the dark force. At this point in time, none with the exception of Colombia had demonstrated the political will to expunge the drug industry. Eventually, that would change.

The Andes chain, along both axes, is climatically ideal for growing coca and marijuana. Throughout the region, on the soft undersoil of the rare plateaus and valleys, farmers learned the unique value of these plants. Escobar and his subordinates would pay huge sums of money for their products. Farmers well below the poverty level in destitute nations were receiving the equivalent of \$55 a hectare for coca production, compared to \$5 a hectare for corn or related crops. Most of the products were grown by Indians, a population traditionally neglected by the national governments and therefore lacking much legal order or infrastructure. Local loyalty was the key to survival.

As for the drugs, the color of cocaine changes over its processing steps. Farmers dissolve the leaves in various chemicals and precipitate the residue into dark gray soccer-ball-size lumps called paste. Midlevel buyers, arriving on planes and vehicles, purchase the lumps at market prices and move them to scattered jungle and village laboratories where a whitish pastel base, usually in the form of a coarse powder, emerges. Further chemical refinement converts the base to pure cocaine, shiny and brilliantly white. The finished product is then usually vacuum-sealed in kilo-size plastic bags, loaded onto aircraft, boats, ships and other conveyances and sent to market in North America. This is how Pablo Escobar's cottage industry became a huge and sophisticated international industrial conglomerate.

ON THE SOUTHCOM SCREENS, two legs of the industry could be seen in small, vivid green and silver streaks. The AWACS and naval radars revealed the northbound cocaine flights into Mexico and the southeast U.S. coast. They also displayed the southbound flights of U.S. dollars, demonstrably smaller numbers but far more valuable.

The feed from the Customs P-3 showed a maze of flights over the Andes. In this region, light aircraft are like pickup trucks in that they pass over roadless land to reach isolated interior ranches and villages. Drug flights can be difficult to distinguish from those that are legitimate. What is known is that a significant number of green and silver streaks were flights within the Andean Ridge to feed the constantly demanding laboratory requirements. It was a simple economic equation: no coke, no cash.

The southern border of Colombia was a favored

laboratory location. Precursor chemicals (the stuff that caused the chemical conversions) were easily transported on myriad waterways and hidden in the dense foliage along the riverbanks. Near each facility, there was usually a grass or marginally paved airstrip, suitable for almost daily light-aircraft flights taking the product, in various stages, to market. Takeoffs and landings were duly noted by radar, and only on the rarest instance would a Colombian air force aircraft attempt an intercept.

In addition to the Medellín cartel's drug subversions, the Colombian government also had a full-blown insurgency to manage, with both Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas assuming control of portions of the interior. Their respective leaderships noted the commercial potential of a drug alliance and quickly became insurgent entrepreneurs. Establishing their own drug labs and supply chains, they converted cocaine profits into arms and equipment to supply their needs. Even though each guerrilla element was essentially in political competition with the other, they formed a commercial brotherhood.

The Medellín industry alternately fought them or used their products, depending on the local situation. Colombia was quickly becoming ungovernable as the insurgency became the best-funded guerrilla enterprise in history. Colombia's president was quickly becoming little more than the mayor of Bogota, and any authority over even that jurisdiction was iffy. Bogota and its population paid more homage to the cartel than to its national infrastructure. Police were loath to stand in the way, in understandable fear of death, and cooperation came with cash bonuses.

RADAR PICTURES AND INTELLIGENCE

ANALYSES similar to those on the SOUTHCOM screens were playing out at JTF-5 in Key West, Fla. JTF-5 was the Joint DoD/law enforcement agency drug-monitoring and intelligence facility that was part of the larger U.S. government effort to monitor and interdict the drugs.

What JTF-5 and SOUTHCOM analysts saw was a lot of white powder flying north and a lot of money flying south. Escobar and the narco-guerrillas had a highly lucrative industry by 1990, when Washington started to take serious note and certain long-range decisions began to take shape.

More than simply training Colombians, some U.S. elements brought with them a highly specialized intelligence aspect that began to unravel hidden aspects of Escobar's mysteries. An important part of



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this work involved several unremarkable vans and a glider plane. The vans possessed unique cell-phone-tracking capabilities, and the glider permitted covert overflight of drug areas. These assets were quickly turned over to the Colombians and were used to initiate effective raids for the first time. The heat was turning up.

Narco leadership greatly feared extradition to the United States, and Gaviria made it clear that that was an option.

As the noose tightened, Escobar offered himself to the government if he could be imprisoned in Medellín and not be extradited.

The Colombians, eager to demonstrate progress, agreed. Escobar built himself a palatial prison on high ground overlooking Medellín and checked himself in. The place was dubbed “The Cathedral.” It had all the amenities of home: good food, good drinks, women and other visitors he desired. His management of the cartel continued without interruption. Life was good for Pablo Escobar.

However, publicity about the conditions of his incarceration embarrassed the government.

He began to hear of discussions between the Colombians and the United States suggesting that perhaps his lifestyle could be abruptly changed, and decided it was time to leave. In July 1992, he departed his pleasure prison to the presumed security of his support network in greater Medellín. As Escobar roamed from place to place, Martinez was asked to fix the problem.

While Escobar was running the cartel from his self-made prison, Martinez and his elements had been exercising their newfound competence and intelligence and making progress. Drug labs, money and leadership were slowly eroding. The general’s forces and their families, isolated from general access, became somewhat untouchable. The normal attractions of money and threats were not working. A new Colombia was rising.

On the run, Escobar began to lose control of his empire. Outliers filled the vacuums. The Cali businessmen began to take over parts of it; FARC and ELN filled other gaps. Local vigilantes – probably a pseudo-covert arm of the government called “Los Pepes” – began to replace the secondary leadership. The Medellín cartel was shrinking fast as a power. By early fall 1993, Escobar was a fugitive, moving from house to house in his most supportive neighborhoods. On the afternoon of Dec. 3, he picked up his cellphone to call his son. It would be his last call.

Inside a large, unmarked white van, the dark interior was enhanced by a new and different

light. Bright amber and green streaks crossed the monitor. The operator dialed into the frequency and confirmed the cellular signal was from Escobar. A companion began to monitor the call and gave a thumbs-up, confirming the source.

A message went out on a secure network, and several similarly equipped vans began to locate and monitor the same call. Within a short time, an intersection of diverse communication lines was achieved, and they met at #45D Carrera 79B.

Martinez made some quiet, precise orders and sat down in one of the vans to await the results.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE KILLING OF PABLO ESCOBAR, the Colombian government and several U.S. elements made high-profile public announcements regarding the former kingpin and the demise of the Medellín cartel. This was to be spun as a watershed moment in the drug war, a Gettysburg for the good guys.

Meanwhile, far to the south, the Cali businesspeople in their suits, boots and single-malt scotch assessed Medellín’s losses and initiated actions to begin filling the void. Deep in the sultry green interior, FARC and ELN leadership received the news, shrugged shoulders and assumed management of the infrastructure. The rivers continued to ripple with rainbows of disposed precursor chemicals. And the radar screens at Panama and Key West displayed no reduction of air traffic. The drug industry was now just under new management.

DEA and the Office of National Drug Control Policy had dramatic press conferences heralding the end of a major drug empire. Backs were slapped and congratulations exchanged. Satisfaction lasted only briefly before the good and the bad got back to their usual business.

Today, more than two decades after Pablo Escobar’s blood joined the rainbows of the Putumayo River, 230 metric tons still ship annually to markets north of the border. Radar screens continue to follow the flow of streaks that still represent the soft white powder and a coursing trail that seems to have no end. 🌿

Keith Nightingale is a retired Army colonel and frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine. As deputy director, narcotics (DDN) for U.S. Southern Command in Panama, he was responsible for the interdepartmental coordination and management of the Pablo Escobar issue, including assistance to the Colombian government, the U.S. Embassy and other U.S. elements involved.

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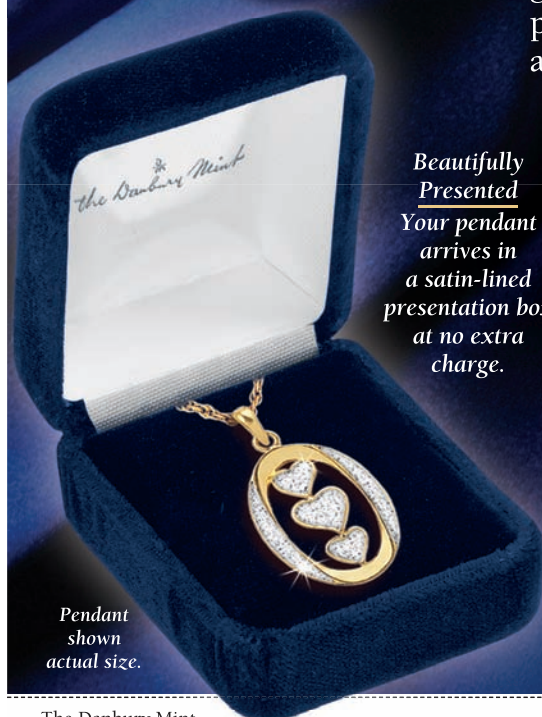
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Mexico's most wanted drug baron, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, faces extradition to the United States following his recapture during a military raid Jan. 8 in Los Mochis. AP

Escobar 2.0

Arguably, Pablo Escobar's heir is the Mexican drug lord named Joaquin Guzman, better known by his nickname/nom de guerre "El Chapo," which, loosely translated, means "Shorty" or "The Short One" – a reference to Guzman's stocky stature.

Born sometime between 1954 and 1957, Guzman rose to power by growing and selling marijuana as a teenager. The drug trade came easy to Guzman, whose father was a small-time pusher, as A&E's Biography.com details.

The younger Guzman took control of a large-scale narcotics operation around 1985, when the head of a Guadalajara-based cartel was arrested for murdering a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent. Guzman soon founded his own cartel: the Sinaloa cartel, named after a Mexican state. This is where the link to Colombia emerges.

Throughout the 1990s, as the U.S. and Colombian governments tried to unravel Escobar's empire, Guzman's cartel steadily grew. "As the power of the Colombian drug cartels like Medellín and Cali began to wane, Sinaloa was among the Mexican organizations filling the void," Biography.com explains. "Under Guzman's direction, it took control of the cocaine trade extending from South America to the United States."

Guzman's narcotics operation moved heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine into the United States. Ultimately, his drug empire reached into five continents – netting \$3 billion annually and emerging as the world's biggest narcotics enterprise in the early 2000s. Responsible for some 1,000

murders, the Sinaloa cartel came to control more than a third of the cocaine exported out of Colombia.

By 2009, Guzman was clearing \$1 billion annually and had earned a place on the *Forbes* list of the world's richest people, according to Biography.com. The DEA set up dedicated Spanish- and English-speaking hotlines to receive tips about Guzman, and the U.S. government offered the sum of \$5 million for information leading to his arrest.

Throughout his rise and fall, Guzman seemingly had nine lives. He was first arrested in 1993 in Guatemala, but his network proved so sophisticated – and its corrupting influence so vast – that he continued to manage his drug empire from prison, just as Escobar had. In 2001, he escaped with inside help, as *Time* reported. He evaded a global manhunt until early 2014, when he was recaptured in west-central Mexico. Within 18 months, Guzman was loose again. Then, after a bloody shootout in January, Guzman was re-recaptured, in his home state of Sinaloa.

Attorney General Loretta Lynch blames Guzman for spreading "violence, suffering and corruption on multiple continents." The DEA describes his arrest as "a significant achievement" in the fight against "transnational organized crime, violence and drug trafficking."

Despite his brutal record, Guzman attracted the interest of U.S. actor Sean Penn, who interviewed the drug thug just before his most recent capture, and Mexican actress Kate del Castillo, who seemed strangely smitten with the warlord.

– Alan W. Dowd

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Veterans, assisted by The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors program, shoot the rapids of the Grand Canyon in an experience they say had more healing power than they expected. Photo by Ryan Groves

SPIRITS ALIGNED

Hopi prayers deep in the Grand Canyon help young veterans wash away the evil.

BY MARK SEAVEY

Marvin Talayumptewa, high priest of the Hopi Tribe from Second Mesa, Ariz., stands before 20 Marines, three Navy corpsmen, three river guides, retired Marine Lt. Col. Hank Detering and me, the token Army veteran representing The American Legion and Operation Comfort Warriors.

We're on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, just north of its confluence with the Little Colorado, a sacred place of origins to the Hopi and other native peoples. The priest explains that when a Hopi youngster would go on a vision quest he would walk from the reservation nearly 17 miles, eschewing all food and water until he reached the canyon whose walls he would mine for salt.

"This is where we came from, all of us, the Hopi," Talayumptewa explains to the veterans and river guides, a semicircle of his fellow Hopis behind him. "When I heard you on the boats yelling to us, it was not just you that I heard, but the voices of all your fallen ancestors and friends. You spoke in one voice, from one group of warriors to another."

He explains his religion, and his status as the elder and One Horn priest who takes "young bucks" to sacred places so they'll better understand their

spiritual heritage. The river represents the spot where the Hopi entered the fourth world, where they live today, Talayumptewa explains. He says it possesses great powers.

"Take all your fears, all your loneliness, anger, all the bad inside you ... and give it to the river. The river will take it from you, wash you of all the evil, and leave you in a better place."

The priest steps into the raft and asks us to hold hands. We do so, in silence. He prays in a language none present except the Hopis understand. Everyone feels the power. Before we push off, he marks each of our sternums with sacred clay (a hematite ochre substance used in Hopi religious rituals) and says a prayer over everyone. "May your journey be safe, and may the river cleanse you."

The 226-mile, 10-day Grand Canyon Warriors Rafting Trip involves camping, hiking to historical sites and waterfalls, and rafting through some of the fiercest rapids in North America. We would, in fact, be safe. And two days later, we would wash away all our negative energy in the Dubendorf Rapids, which are equally capable of drowning us as they are of cleansing any internal demons. But cleanse us the rapids did.

THE GRAND CANYON'S EPIC BEAUTY comes from the various rock strata seen inside it. It is a trip through time, the various geological epochs marking our descent in curving lines of rock.

Amity Collins has been a Grand Canyon river guide for eight years; she works as a substitute teacher during the winter months. As we make our way in, she recites a simple mantra: "Know the canyon's history. Study rocks made by time."

Eventually, even the most geologically uninterested traveler can repeat her words and understand the rock strata represented by each one. In order of appearance, the canyon reveals the **Kaibab Limestone**, **Toroweap Formation**, **Coconino Sandstone** and **Hermit Shale** (*Know The Canyon's History*), followed by the **Supai Formation**, **Redwall Limestone**, **Muav Limestone**, **Bright Angel Shale** and **Tapeats Sandstone** (*Study Rocks Made By Time*).

Along the way, Collins points out local flora (honey mesquite, catclaw acacia and exotic tamarisk, to name a few) and fauna (goats, sheep, eagles, ravens, hundreds of seminocturnal bats and, most frighteningly for me, rattlesnakes).

Leading us is Jon Harned, a guide for Arizona Raft Adventures, which facilitated our trip. Jon has been on the river since he was 19, a span of nearly 27 years, and it's obvious in his casual knowledge of every campsite, hiking trail, ruin and landmark. In a coincidence, Jon's wife was serving as river guide for the Hopis when our groups met on the riverbank.


I ask Jon how often Hopis share their sacred prayers and the protective markings with other travelers. "I've been down this river hundreds of times," he responds with awe in his voice, "and this is the first time I've ever seen such a thing."

Owen Ludwig is the third of our guides. A gregarious Mainer with an infectious laugh, he plays guitar every night, talking about previous trips and eating the meals – salmon, steak, pork chops and other delicacies – we prepare. During days on land, Owen leads hikes to see fossilized footprints of prehistoric mammals, or brachiopods embedded in the shale walls. But he seems most at ease leading the paddleboat through rapids larger than any others in the United States.

The last thing most of us hear before facing each of them is, "Oh, this doesn't look good ..." which inevitably trails off into his hallmark giggle.

Detering, a Vietnam veteran, came up with the idea of a Grand Canyon river rafting trip for wounded veterans. He felt the experience could be therapeutic, and the camaraderie a benefit to all.

Watch videos and interviews with Paul and Ryan, and donate through Operation Comfort Warriors to this summer's Grand Canyon Warriors outing:

 www.legion.org/grandcanyonwarriors



"People say the Grand Canyon is like a cathedral without a roof," he told *The Arizona Republic* as he watched a group of veterans check into their hotel. "This can be a life-changing trip. But they're going to come back feeling like they can do a lot of things, probably more than they realize. I wanted them to feel that. And they're going to come back with amazing stories."

Detering joined the Marine Corps at 19 as an aviation cadet and then went on to be a pilot. Today, at 70, he looks 40. During the Vietnam War, he flew 100 missions in A-4 Skyhawks and another 150 in A-6 Intruders. He also spent time on the ground with the troops as a forward air controller. He retired in 1985.

Not long after, Detering took up an offer from his daughter to raft the Colorado; she was the guide. That trip led him to volunteer as an assistant guide or "swamper," helping with everything from setting up camp to preparing food. It was then that he had an epiphany about a trip for Marine Corps veterans.

"Two years ago, I was on a panel that was asked to discuss what we could do for returning veterans," he says. "I came away feeling that I had to do something more than talk about it, so I proposed this trip to the Grand Canyon River Runners Association (GCRRA) board. All the board members know that rafting through the Grand Canyon can be a life-changing experience, and we hoped that this trip would be just that for some of our Marines."

A member of American Legion Post 491 in Kennett Square, Pa., Detering says he's especially grateful for funds provided by the Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program. It paid for pre- and post-trip lodging and dinners while GCRRA covered travel expenses.

"OCW also paid to get some of the guys equipment, something we desperately needed," Detering adds.

For all the aesthetic beauty and grandeur of the Grand Canyon, the spiritual journey is what stuck with the men.

Five months after the trip, I met up with Paul Coppola of Sandown, N.H., and Ryan Groves of Columbus, Ohio, who took the Grand Canyon trip with me last summer. The timing couldn't have been better: our meeting gave Ryan a chance to visit the grave of his best friend, Tim Gibson, a



One Horn priest Marvin Talayumtewa, far left, of the Hopi tribe applies sacred clay to the breastbone of each veteran as river guide Amity Collins looks on from atop a raft. “Take all your fears, all your loneliness, anger, all the bad inside you ... and give it to the river,” Talayumtewa told the group. Photo by Lyle Balenquah

Marine who helped retake Fallujah only to die in a helicopter crash in January 2005. He’s buried near American Legion Post 98 in Merrimack, N.H., which hosts an annual softball tournament in Tim’s memory.

Ryan wears a bracelet engraved with Tim’s name and the Marine Corps emblem. His fallen friend is never far from Ryan’s mind.

We met with other local friends of Tim’s and visited the cemetery together, talking about our physical and emotional journey through the Grand Canyon, one of the planet’s most inspiring places.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF THAT TRIP in late August, we broke into groups of six, each assigned one of four daily tasks to accomplish, with two days off: prepare the water (using various chemicals and a filter), set up latrines, cook food and wash dishes. My group included two Navy corpsmen, Manny Gonzalez (a young Legionnaire from Post 422 in Rialto, Calif., who had astounding stamina despite the 40-pound medical bag he carried at all times) and Jamie Havig, who served with the Marines’ 1st Recon Battalion at Fallujah, Najaf and Ramadi (his running commentary and banter amused everyone). Marine Corps veterans Dave Gill and Levi White rounded out our team.

Paul Coppola is a 27-year-old Legionnaire who served with the 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion in Afghanistan. Nowadays he helps run Ilneva Farm in East Kingston, N.H., which gives him a chance to be outdoors and work with animals (chickens, goats, cows and horses roam the property). Deb Marston, who owns the farm with her husband, Bob, was thrilled to bring Paul aboard. She brags about him, sharing pictures on Facebook of “our beloved Paul, who works every day to overcome the damage from traumatic brain injury.”

Paul’s parents encouraged him to go to college after high school, but he struggled academically. Finally, he got their blessing to enlist in the Marine Corps.

“My desire was to be an EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) tech,” he told me while we were on the river. “I didn’t want a job where I sat in an office. Ever since I was young, I had a desire to be in some combat role.”

In March 2011, Paul got his wish, deploying to Afghanistan’s Sangin province, site of some of the war’s heaviest fighting. Two months later, on May 2, the day Osama bin Laden was killed by Navy SEALs in Pakistan, a suicide bomber on a motorcycle attacked Paul’s unit and detonated explosives just 10 feet away.

Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid Outperforms Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids

Reported by J. Page

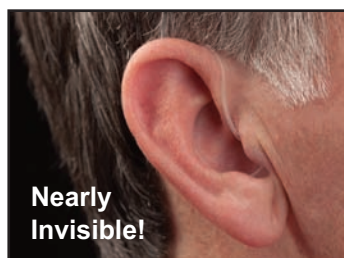
Chicago: Board-certified physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical-grade, **ALL-DIGITAL, affordable hearing aid.**

This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of \$3,500 competitors at a mere fraction of the cost. Now, **most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal clear, natural sound—in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind—without suffering through “whistling” and annoying background noise.**

Digital Hearing Aid Outperforms Expensive Competitors

This sleek, fully programmed, light-weight, hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for “all things digital” caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less), the cost of a digital medical-grade hearing aid remains out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn't afford the expense of these new digital hearing aids. Generally they are not covered by Medicare and most private health insurance plans.



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Sunset casts an eerie glow on the veterans' camp as another day ends in the Grand Canyon – a place that retired Marine Lt. Col. Hank Detering calls “a cathedral without a roof.” He organized last summer’s inaugural Grand Canyon Warriors Rafting Trip, believing the journey and the camaraderie might be therapeutic for veterans. Photo by Dave Gill

“When you were in Sangin, you always knew something could happen,” he says.

Paul and several other Marines were knocked to the ground, and while no one was injured, he soon began suffering crippling headaches and balance problems. He considers himself lucky that the 40 pounds of C-4 explosives in his backpack did not ignite. On June 30, he survived another blast that wounded one Marine and killed another.

Eventually Paul returned to the United States to specialized treatment for traumatic brain injury.

“I wanted to honor my friends who had passed, so I got a hero bracelet for Lance Cpl. (Robert) Greniger, Lance Cpl. (Joshua) McDaniels, Lance Cpl. (Ronald) Freeman,” he says. “It was a way to pay tribute to them and to more or less remind myself what I have to fight for, and why I need to do well, be successful and keep my head straight.

“When Marvin (Talayumptewa) was speaking to us and praying over us, he kept reiterating that whatever trouble we had brought into the canyon we were going to leave in the canyon. For a lot of us there, it was injuries we had sustained or friends we had lost. I immediately started thinking about my friends who had died and people I had seen injured.”

Several days later, guided by Owen, our group’s

raft entered the Dubendorf Rapids. While they didn’t appear right off to be the worst of the rapids we’d faced, random waves struck from nearly every direction. Seconds later, the raft tipped over, and we were thrown into the cold, violent water.

“After I surfaced and got back on one of the larger boats, I looked down and realized I didn’t have my hero bracelet on anymore,” Paul says. “The whole point of us being there was to heal together and to leave our troubles and ailments in the canyon. It just seemed so ironic that my bracelet was lost at what was essentially the most emotional time of the trip for me. It was kind of that feeling of being in combat again, where you are fighting for your life and you don’t know what the outcome will be.

“I didn’t want to lose that bracelet in any other place, because at that moment I was the closest I’ve been to my friends since I lost them. It was almost a relief, in a way, knowing that I could almost reach out and touch them. The fact that I lost my bracelet and now it is sitting, hopefully pristinely, at the bottom of the Grand Canyon is just surreal.”

Ryan, too, was struck by the spiritual power of the canyon. A member of American Legion Post

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A prosthetic leg didn't slow Ryan Groves, a Marine Corps veteran who was wounded at Fallujah. He made nearly every hike with his group, and says the Grand Canyon trip helped him re-evaluate his limits. Photo courtesy Ryan Groves

331 in Ravenna, Ohio, he served as a sergeant with the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, in Iraq.

"I went to college right out of high school and played football for two years at Mount Union," he says. "I studied pre-law. I wanted to be a lawyer."

Then he broke his ankle and felt lost without sports, like he hadn't yet become a man. Belonging to a family that had several who served, the choice of what to do next was easy: join the Marine Corps. He reported to his unit Sept. 11, 2001, and soon realized what was coming. "When I saw the planes hitting the buildings, I knew we were at war," he recalls.

Ryan and his childhood best friend, Carl Dorris, were assigned to the same unit. "Carl and I had a weird feeling inside us that we needed to go do something. Now it made sense. It was almost like we got the message before anybody else."

He hoped to make a career of the Marine Corps, but the First Battle of Fallujah changed his plan.

"I was standing next to the Humvee talking to my driver when a rocket or an RPG landed at my

feet," he says. "At first, I thought I was paralyzed. I couldn't move. Both my arteries were severed, so I was just gushing blood."

Semicoherent, Ryan ordered his men to get a tourniquet on him and get him to the hospital. One of the corpsmen who treated him at the scene was Michael Driver of Oregon, who – by sheer coincidence – was also on the Grand Canyon trip and saw Ryan for the first time since that day.

He underwent surgeries at Fallujah, Baghdad, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and Bethesda Naval Hospital. One leg was amputated, and doctors thought the other would have to go, too. Coming out of a medically induced coma, Ryan remembers feeling afraid and alone. "I'd wake up a lot screaming, thinking we were under attack and looking for my weapon," he says.

Doctors were able to save Ryan's other leg by detaching his ankle from his calf and reattaching it above the knee.

"The medical treatment I received in D.C. and Bethesda was exceptional," he says. "I knew they didn't have a lot to work with, and were seriously trying to convince me to get rid of the other leg, but I wanted to fight for it. You can always get rid of it, but you can't put it back on." He now uses a prosthetic, which works well for him.

Ryan went on to graduate from Georgetown University and Ohio State University Law School.

"THE BIGGEST TAKEAWAY I have from the Grand Canyon trip was me figuring out my limits again," he says, looking back on the adventure. "I've gotten stronger. You know, I couldn't walk great right away, essentially learning to walk again at Georgetown. So I never knew I was even capable of doing the hikes, and the swimming and the rafting. My biggest concern was losing my (prosthetic) leg.

"I can still do some of this stuff. You know, I can't run fast or jump high, but I can still do a lot of this active stuff, and being somewhere that powerful made me powerful, too," he adds. "What was neat about our trip was that it was a bunch of warriors, and we understood each other, and I didn't really have to ask for help."

Of his Grand Canyon journey, the prayer session with the Hopi priest touched Ryan most. "By that time, we understood this was a powerful place," he says. "Up until that point, we'd kind of been warned to steer clear of the Hopi, as you might expect; it's a sacred place for them, and we didn't want to offend them. When we found out that they invited us over to say hi, that was mind-blowing.

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“Marvin explained why they were welcoming us ... it’s because we are warriors like they are warriors, and our spirits are aligned,” Ryan says. “Marvin had us lift up our shirts and put the sacred clay on our hearts and said a little prayer for each of us. When we got blessed by Marvin, I felt like it was somewhat of a new beginning ... like I was supposed to be on this trip. To say that I respect the native people and their faith is an understatement.”

As the Marines’ boat neared the Hopi on the river, Jon taught them a Hopi war yell, and at the count of three, they all bellowed it out.

“When we were all in a circle holding hands before the prayer, Marvin told us that when we did the yell he didn’t just hear us yell – he heard all our fallen brothers at the same time,” Paul recalls. “For a lot of us who are carrying baggage – especially me, with the memory of four of my friends who died and a friend who lost his leg, and the memories and nightmares, and just dealing with that on a daily basis – to hear someone who didn’t know a single one of us but respected us enough that he wanted to bring us into their purpose for being on the river ... it was just unbelievable. After the blessing, it was like a weight was lifted off everybody’s shoulders. We were able to open up after that and talk about our own personal baggage, and we did just that.”

As for Ryan, the trip showed him just how much he can do. “I was really sad seeing the Grand Canyon getting further and further away in the rearview mirror,” he says. “So I contacted another river guide and went back a month later.”

The first time we flipped the boat, in the Dubendorf Rapids, Ryan had taken off his prosthetic leg because he knew he’d lose it if we went over. “Right after we were blessed, something inside me just told me to chill out. Chill out and swim. When we were with Marvin, he referenced (the Hopi) belief that the river essentially washes away the bad things in your life. That’s why they go down there. It’s spiritual for them, and they come out stronger. So when we started to flip, I accepted the fact that I would go in the water, and all I thought was, ‘Relax, we’ve been blessed.’”

The hikes were long and grueling in the canyon. With one leg, Ryan was concerned he might hold up the rest of us. Paul viewed it differently.

“Almost immediately, we started looking up to Ryan,” he explains. “Everyone was there dealing with some type of injury, but none of us were

dealing with an injury as physical as Ryan’s. When you are on the verge of passing out on a seven-mile hike, on a ledge 300 feet over the water, and you look behind you, and here’s this guy missing one leg, and his other leg is fused at the knee so it can’t even bend, and he’s not even breaking a sweat – this guy’s unbelievable.

“That, most of all, carried other people to be able to say they would do a certain hike or make it to a waterfall. We all decided that if we were going to go do something,

Ryan was going to do it with us. We were all going to do whatever we could to make sure that Ryan was going to experience every part of the trip that we could possibly let him.”

Paul and Ryan say they’re grateful to The American Legion for helping make the trip possible. “Being a married man and having a newborn, paying for a trip out to the Grand Canyon wasn’t necessarily in my budget,” Paul says. “We were very fortunate that The American Legion had set up to pay for other things and allow other funds to be used for all our flights.”

Ryan, who came from a Legion family, agrees.

“My grandfather and all my uncles were members of The American Legion, and that’s how I became a fan,” he says. “I went into my first post when I was probably 12 years old. I hope they continue to help veterans (with the Grand Canyon trip), because until you go down and see it and meet 24 new brothers, words can’t do the trip justice. If you are thinking about donating to a cause, I don’t know if there is anything better (than Operation Comfort Warriors). Once you get through this, you feel like you can do more than you did before, and you have several new friends to help you through it.”

Jon, our guide, won’t forget the group’s last night on the river together.

“Everyone was anxious,” he says. “We were regretting that the trip was ending. Some guys were singing at the top of their lungs into the canyon night. Others were crying as they shared the gruesome realities of things they had experienced. No one was untouched. The Grand Canyon has this effect on people. It opens us up like a can opener. Our heads, hearts and souls are open and exposed.” 🌿

Mark Seavey is a writer, editor and blogger for The American Legion National Headquarters, and a combat veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom.

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Mission Statements

From Washington to Obama, a president's foreign policy doctrine has conveyed to the world what the United States stands for.

BY ALAN W. DOWD



Foreign policy doctrines run the gamut from the unforgettable to the unremarkable. Some have meaning and force long after their architect leaves office, while others float away like pieces of driftwood. Some presidents are known for theirs, while some never articulate one.

In fact, most presidents don't plan on announcing a foreign policy doctrine. Rather, events have a way of forcing a president to react: a revolution or debt crisis, the collapse of a great power, the rise of a nascent power, the emergence of a new threat, the end of an old order. That reaction sets the parameters for a policy. And that policy can evolve into a doctrine.

Like mission statements, these doctrines help presidents define their vision for the American people and declare to the world, "This is America's purpose. This is what we believe in, what we stand for, what we will fight against."

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President James Monroe issued the most famous U.S. foreign policy doctrine, putting Europe on notice that “the American continents” are “not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.”

BEGINNINGS Although the history books don't record a “Washington Doctrine,” America's first commander in chief definitely had a vision for U.S. foreign policy.

Perhaps the words that best describe President George Washington's doctrine are independence and preparedness.

“It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world,” Washington explained as he neared the end of his second term in office. “Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition?” he asked, adding, “Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course.”

Indeed, Washington used his farewell address – first published in the *American Daily Advertiser* on Sept. 19, 1796 – to argue for independence from Europe and against “foreign alliances, attachments and intrigues.”

To maintain America's independence, Washington advocated military preparedness: “There is nothing so likely to produce peace,” he counseled, “as to be well prepared to meet an enemy.”

“A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined ... their safety and interest require that they should promote such manufactories as tend to render them independent of others for essential, particularly military, supplies,” he said. “Timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it,” he observed.

Traces of Washington's doctrine can be seen in the United States' reluctance to enter World War I and World War II, and in the post-World War II consensus supporting peace through strength. We can also see hints of it in recent polling that reveals that a majority of Americans believe the United States “should mind its own business internationally,” and in the noninterventionist impulses of policymakers like President Barack Obama and Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky.

KEEPING THE PEACE As the Russian Empire eyed parts of North America and the Spanish Empire reeled from revolutions in South America, President James Monroe issued the most famous U.S. foreign-policy doctrine, putting Europe on notice that “the American continents” are “not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.” The United States would view such interference as a hostile act.

He arrived at that conclusion because Europe's “political system” was “essentially different ... from that of America.” He concluded, “It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness.”

Monroe – and the doctrine's chief architect, then-Secretary of State John Quincy Adams – clearly built on Washington's notion of independence from Europe. In fact, the British proposed a joint Anglo-American declaration to warn continental Europe against encroachment in the Americas. But Adams and Monroe thought this would highlight U.S. weakness.

To get a sense of the Monroe Doctrine's reach, consider that:

■ President Ronald Reagan lamented how Moscow “had violated the Monroe Doctrine and gotten away with it twice, first in Cuba, then in Nicaragua.” His secretary of defense, Caspar Weinberger, cited the Monroe Doctrine to argue, “There should be no interference, no sponsorship of any kind of military activity in this hemisphere by countries in other hemispheres.”

■ As the crisis in Cuba heated up, President John Kennedy explained, “The Monroe Doctrine means what it has meant since President Monroe and John Quincy Adams enunciated it, and that is that we would oppose a foreign power extending its power to the Western Hemisphere.”

■ President Franklin Roosevelt, on the eve of U.S. entry into World War II, cited “the obligation that we have under the Monroe Doctrine for the protection” of the Americas.



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In a break from America's past, Theodore Roosevelt noted that there are times to act "in the interest of humanity at large" and "to show our disapproval."

■ President Theodore Roosevelt urged that the final settlement of World War I include "formal recognition of the Monroe Doctrine" to promote regional stability.

The latter used Monroe's mission statement as a jumping-off point for what came to be called the "Roosevelt Corollary." But it was essentially his own doctrine.

A debt crisis in Venezuela – and Germany's and Britain's menacing response to it – prompted Roosevelt to declare that the United States would intervene as a "last resort" to ensure that nations in the Americas did not invite "foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations."

Declaring "all that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly and prosperous," Roosevelt warned that "chronic wrongdoing or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society ... may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power."

So, while the Monroe Doctrine sought to keep Europe out of Latin America, Roosevelt's doctrine would be used as an excuse to get the United States in, which created its own problems.

Even so, Roosevelt offered ahead-of-his-time views on why and when the United States should intervene overseas.

In a break from America's past, he noted that there are times to act "in the interest of humanity at large" and "to show our disapproval." And in a foreshadowing of its future, he argued that "there are occasional crimes committed on so vast a scale and of such peculiar horror" that "action may be justifiable and proper."

In Roosevelt's day, it was "intolerable conditions in Cuba," "the massacre of the Jews in Kishinev," and "cruelty and oppression" against Armenians. In our day, it's Bashar Assad's barrel bombs, North Korea's vast prison state, Beijing's forced-labor camps and the Islamic State's mass murders.

COLD WAR CONTINUITY President Harry Truman's initial postwar plan was simply to bring the troops home. But in 1947, an exhausted Britain informed Washington that it could no longer fulfill its commitments in Turkey and Greece. Both countries were under assault by communist elements.

In response, Truman sketched the outlines of a doctrine that would guide U.S. foreign policy for the next four decades: "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."

Truman estimated that Turkey and Greece needed \$400 million – more than 1 percent of the federal budget in 1947 – and that was only the beginning. Three months later, the administration unveiled the Marshall Plan to rebuild Western Europe. A year later, the U.S. military was leading the Berlin Airlift to sustain and save West Berlin. Two years later, NATO was formed to defend Western Europe, contain the Soviet Empire and deter Moscow. Three years later, Americans were fighting for South Korea.

"The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms," Truman intoned. The U.S. public agreed, ratifying the Truman Doctrine for nearly half a century.

Although President Dwight Eisenhower didn't invoke the words "Truman Doctrine" – after all, he was bitterly critical of Truman's approach to Korea – he continued the twin goals of containment and deterrence. In an echo of the Truman Doctrine, the Eisenhower Doctrine pledged U.S. support to "protect the territorial integrity and political independence" of nations in the Middle East "against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism."

Eisenhower reinforced his doctrine – and Truman's – with a series of national-security directives that outlined a policy of muscular nuclear deterrence, promising "massive retaliatory damage by offensive strategic striking power," threatening



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The post-9/11 doctrine of President George W. Bush, like the Truman Doctrine, was a reaction to a radically changed threat environment.

the use of “military force against any aggression by Soviet bloc armed forces,” and declaring that nuclear weapons would be “as available for use as other munitions.” Indeed, when Nikita Khrushchev boasted about the Red Army’s overwhelming conventional edge in Germany, Eisenhower fired back, “If you attack us in Germany, there will be nothing conventional about our response.”

By the early 1970s, Washington dialed back the rhetoric and began to pursue a policy of detente. But what Washington saw as a chance for East-West accommodation, Moscow saw as a window of opportunity. By 1979, Moscow had increased military spending, enlarged its military, grown less accommodating and expanded its global footprint.

After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Jimmy Carter abandoned detente, increased defense spending and declared, “An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”

The Carter Doctrine is a classic example of a president being forced to change strategy in reaction to events. So dramatic was the reversal that the “Reagan buildup” arguably began under Carter.

Reagan would resuscitate America’s demoralized military, arm anti-communists, challenge the legitimacy of the Soviet state and, as he explained in 1981, “threaten the Soviets with our ability to outbuild them.”

He also employed rhetoric as a weapon – calling the USSR “an evil empire,” dismissing communism as “a sad, bizarre chapter in human history” and explaining that it was time to move beyond the make-believe notion that the Soviet and Western systems were somehow equivalent. “The West will not contain communism,” he said with impatient disdain in 1981. “It will transcend communism.”

A 1983 policy directive declared that the United States “must rebuild the credibility of its commitment to resist Soviet encroachment on U.S.

interests and those of its allies,” support “Third World states that are willing to resist Soviet pressures,” and “contain and over time reverse Soviet expansionism by competing ... with the Soviet Union in all international arenas.”

In various ways and to varying degrees – technological assistance, covert support, weapons shipments, direct U.S. military intervention – the Reagan Doctrine aided anti-communist forces and democratic movements in Central America, the Caribbean, Poland, Africa and, of course, Afghanistan.

Taking his cues from Reagan, CIA Director William Casey told his deputies to “go out and kill me 10,000 Russians until they give up.” Working with the mujahedeen, the CIA did that and then some. The Red Army’s losses included 15,000 dead and 35,000 injured. “The CIA went so far as to work with Pakistan’s Inter-services Intelligence agency to help the resistance carry out strikes ... into Tajikistan, still a Soviet republic,” historian Derek Leebaert notes in “The Fifty-Year Wound,” adding, “nothing like this had been done against Moscow” since the beginning of the Cold War.

Indeed, the Reagan Doctrine blended the Truman Doctrine’s containment strategy with elements of the more aggressive “rollback” strategy that had lain largely dormant since Gen. Douglas MacArthur tried to sweep the entire Korean Peninsula of communism. The communist bloc’s ferocious response effectively ended the debate between containment and rollback – until Reagan.

By the end of Reagan’s presidency, the Cold War had been won. Nine months later, the Berlin Wall was gone – two years later, so was the Soviet Union.

REACTION AND PREVENTION The post-9/11 doctrine of President George W. Bush, like the Truman Doctrine, was a reaction to a radically changed threat environment – and like the Truman Doctrine, much of it has been embraced, albeit tacitly, by a highly critical successor.

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Like a pendulum, U.S. foreign policy swung back from the hyperactivity of the immediate post-9/11 era. But has the pendulum swung too far in the opposite direction?

elements. The first holds that “any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.”

Bush employed this element of his doctrine by toppling the Taliban regime of Afghanistan, which made common cause with al-Qaida. Obama has employed it by attacking terrorist organizations in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan – states that are either unable or unwilling to adequately confront terrorism inside their borders.

The second element of the Bush Doctrine proved far more controversial than simply confronting terrorist groups and the states that harbor them. “The United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons,” Bush declared in 2002. “As a matter of common sense and self-defense,” his national security strategy added, “America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.”

In a sense, Bush was arguing that 9/11 had changed the DNA of U.S. foreign policy: deterrence and containment, maintaining the status quo and promoting stability, giving repeat offenders like Saddam Hussein the benefit of the doubt, were no longer enough to protect the nation. Congress overwhelmingly agreed. And the United States launched a preventive war against Iraq.

A U.S.-led coalition ended Saddam’s regime, eliminated a persistent threat to U.S. interests and paved the way for a democratic government, but at a high cost: 4,489 Americans killed and 30,000 wounded.

Although Obama officially jettisoned preventive war, the cyberwar against Iran’s possible nuclear-weapons program – which Gen. Michael Hayden, former director of the CIA and NSA, calls the first cyberattack “used to effect physical destruction” – and the drone war against possible terrorist threats in Pakistan and Yemen – which, according to reports counts all military-age males in a strike zone as combatants regardless of what they are doing or planning – are examples of preventive war.

To be sure, Obama’s war on terrorism is more constrained than Bush’s. However, it’s shaped and shadowed by the deep imprint of his predecessor’s doctrine.

If there is an Obama Doctrine, according to people within the administration, it boils down to “Don’t do stupid stuff” – with an emphasis on “don’t.” Don’t encourage Iran’s Twitter revolution. Don’t follow through on NATO’s missile defense plans in Poland. Don’t lead NATO in Libya. Don’t make long-term commitments to Iraq or Afghanistan. Don’t stand by Egypt’s pro-U.S. autocracy in 2011 or anti-U.S. democracy in 2013. Don’t send defensive weapons to Ukraine. Don’t punish Assad for using weapons of mass destruction. Don’t get involved in Syria or backslide into Iraq.

This shift away from intervention was predictable, perhaps even necessary. Like a pendulum, U.S. foreign policy swung back from the hyperactivity of the immediate post-9/11 era. But has the pendulum swung too far in the opposite direction?

It appears that Obama was so intent on avoiding the mistakes Bush made by intervening in Iraq that he made the mistake of not staying in Iraq and then not returning to Iraq until it was almost too late. An unintended consequence of the “Don’t do stupid stuff” doctrine surely was the rise of ISIS, which benefited from Washington’s hands-off approach to the symbiotic chaos of Syria and Iraq.

“The failure to help build up a credible fighting force of the people who were the originators of the protests against Assad,” former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton concludes, “left a big vacuum which the jihadists have now filled.”

According to Clinton, “Great nations need organizing principles” – mission statements – “and ‘Don’t do stupid stuff’ is not an organizing principle.” 🌿

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.



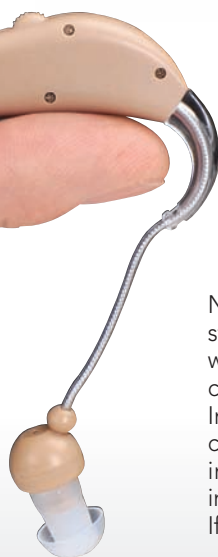
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BIG DECISIONS

BY J.J. MONTANARO

Stay put or opt in? The military's new retirement plan has troops considering their financial futures.

There are some big changes coming to military retirement planning.

The 2016 National Defense Authorization Act will transform the military's traditional 20-year retirement system to a new blended system. The blend mixes the old (a defined pension) with the new: a Department of Defense (DoD) matching contribution to the military's version of a 401(k), the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

What does that mean? Servicemembers will need to take a more active role in deciding how they finance their retirement, and those in the gap between the old and new plans have to decide which plan suits them better.

The blended plan begins in 2018 and has these changes:

■ **Retirement pay (pension)** Servicemembers will be eligible for a retirement benefit after 20 years of service. Smaller than the current benefit, it will be calculated using a 2-percent multiplier instead of the current 2.5 percent. (Multiply your years of service by 2 percent. That number is the percentage of your high-36 average base pay that you'll receive in retirement.)

■ **Matching contributions** Servicemembers will receive an automatic 1-percent DoD contribution to their TSP after 60 days of service. At the beginning of their third year of service, servicemembers who contribute at least 5 percent on their own will receive up to 4 percent in matching TSP contributions.

■ **Continuation pay** After 12 years in the military, servicemembers will receive continuation pay if they commit to serving four more years. This one-time retention bonus will be worth at least two-and-a-half months' basic pay for active-duty personnel and at least a half-month's basic pay for reservists. The amount could be higher for in-demand positions.

■ **Partial lump-sum option** Retirees can choose to receive a full retirement annuity each month, or they can opt for a smaller pension along with a lump-sum payment. Details are still being worked out, so it's unclear what this would mean from a tax standpoint.

With any change, there are positives and negatives. On one hand, the new plan will benefit more servicemembers. The overhaul aims to



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provide some retirement funding to about 85 percent of servicemembers. Plus, the design should encourage them to save for retirement on their own since they'll need to make a personal contribution of 5 percent to get the full match. Being better prepared for retirement is always a positive.

On the other hand, retirees will probably get less. Under the new system, that could equate to a six-figure difference over their lifetimes. This is based on someone entering the service in 2016, opting for the new system and serving 20 years. However, it's worth noting that today less than 20 percent serve long enough to qualify for full military retirement.

The new plan doesn't take effect for two years, so what should you do now?

■ **If you entered the military before 2006,** carry on. You're locked into the current retirement plan.

■ **If you're entering service in 2018 or later,** you automatically fall under the new plan. Make sure you contribute enough to your TSP to get the match, and put in more if you can.

■ **If you entered between 2006 and 2017,** you'll have a choice to make in 2018: the old plan or the new one. Crunch the numbers and consult your financial adviser. If you're committed to serving at least 20 years, opting to stay in the old system may make sense. If you're uncertain about your plans in the military or have only served a few years, the new blended plan could be best.

Either way, retirement should be top of mind. Contributing as much as possible to your TSP will boost your efforts. If you're not contributing already, go to myPay and start. 🌿

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA Financial Planning Services, one of the USAA family of companies. USAA is The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services.

HAVE QUESTIONS? CALL USAA

For each new USAA member who purchases any product, the company contributes funds to American Legion programs. Join online at www.usaa.com/legion or call toll-free **1-877-699-2654**.



Air Force Col. Fred Cherry, center, poses with his sons, Don, 19, right, and Fred, 17, at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Feb. 16, 1973, following his release after more than seven years of captivity in Vietnam. AP

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

‘Those seven and a half years was his duty’

BY TRACY AGNEW

A Suffolk, Va., native who was held prisoner of war in Vietnam for more than seven years died Feb. 16.

Retired Air Force Col. Fred Vann Cherry was 87 years old. He was a member of American Legion Post 41 in Silver Spring, Md.

His son, Fred Cherry Jr., said his father viewed the time in captivity as part of what he had signed up for.

“He knew what to expect,” Fred said. “To dad, those seven and a half years was his duty.”

Cherry was the first and highest-ranking black officer to become a prisoner in Vietnam. He was shot down Oct. 22, 1965,

at the age of 37. His wife and children were living in Japan at the time.

In a talk at the U.S. Naval War College in 2012, the elder Cherry candidly discussed his imprisonment.

He took off from Thailand about 10 a.m. that day to target a missile installation, Cherry told the audience. He flew about 600 miles an hour for 32 minutes and was hit by ground fire just prior to arriving at his target.

He was so close to the ground he could see the Vietnamese firing on him, he said.



U.S. Air Force photo

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

No more hugs

NATO Commander Gen. Philip Breedlove of the U.S. Air Force says the alliance has “hugged the bear” long enough, and it’s time to strengthen NATO’s conventional deterrent capabilities and return to “high-end kinetic fighting capability.”

“We have changed our force structure ... we’ve downsized the forces in all the media here in Europe,” he explains. Yet Russia in recent years has not responded to NATO’s friendly embrace. “If you look at Russia’s actions all the way back to ‘08 – in Georgia, in Nagorno-Karabakh, in Crimea, in the Donbass and now down in Syria – we see what most call a revanchist Russia that has put force back on the table as an instrument of national power to meet their objectives,” he says.

After years of counterinsurgency and stability operations in Afghanistan, the NATO alliance needs to return to “high-end skills to ensure we have the depth of bench for that fight,” Breedlove argues.

Toward that end, NATO exercises are returning to division and corps level, DoD News reports.

"I saw them start to shoot," he said. "The muzzle flashes got my attention. I felt my aircraft take a very definite hit."

Cherry kept flying, attempting to gain control of the aircraft. However, he ejected before it exploded. As he was falling, people on the ground continued to shoot at him.

"They missed. That was the important thing," he told the audience, prompting laughter.

His parachute opened just 200 feet from the ground. The impact broke his left shoulder, left ankle and left wrist. Field workers took his weapons and imprisoned him.

He eventually arrived at "The Zoo," a prisoner-of-war camp southwest of Hanoi.

"We were severely punished as new arrivals," Cherry said.

Prisoners were beaten, made to kneel on rocks and other sharp objects, subjected to solitary confinement and more.

Cherry's injuries from his fall were not treated until another prisoner of war, Lt. j.g. Porter Halyburton, was confined with him. Halyburton, who spoke alongside Cherry, said he pushed the Vietnamese to get treatment for Cherry by telling them he would die otherwise.

"I knew they didn't want that, because we were valuable property," Halyburton said.

A botched surgery on Cherry's shoulder left him with more open wounds, which the Vietnamese did not treat adequately. Cherry remained unable to lift his left arm above his head for the rest of his life.

"Fred never complained about anything, in spite of this incredible pain and discomfort he went through," Halyburton said in 2012.

The friendship between the two men – whom the Vietnamese put together, mistakenly thinking that racial tension would break them – became the subject of a book, "Two Souls Indivisible: The Friendship that Saved Two POWs in Vietnam," by James S. Hirsch.

Back home, Cherry's family was worried.

"We knew he was shot down," Fred said. "It took months before they could confirm he was alive and being held captive."

Communication between Cherry and his family was scarce, but a few letters did manage to get through. So Cherry knew, by the time he got out of imprisonment, that two of his sons had joined the military. A third son later enlisted.

The younger Cherry was stationed in Germany when he learned, through a list of POWs being released that was published in the *Air Force Times*, that his father would be freed Feb. 12, 1973.

"I said, 'Man, you have to send me home,'" Fred recalled telling his supervisor at the time. "About an hour later, they had packed all my stuff up, and they had a jeep and my airplane tickets."

Cherry arrived at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland just before his father's plane touched down. He was surprised to find that he was now the same height as his father.

"As a kid, your dad is big, bigger than life," he said. "He gets off the plane and he's my height."

Fred and his brother, who greeted their father in uniform, soon found that the fact they were outranked by their father was not lost on him.

"He was telling us where to walk," Fred said. "He was still an officer, and we were peons."

Cherry retired Sept. 1, 1981, after attending the National War College and being assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency, and having served more than 30 years in the Air Force. He started his own engineering company.

"I've never, ever, ever heard any ill will against my father," Fred said. "Everybody that met him adored him, respected him and loved him."

Cherry's awards and decorations include two Purple Hearts, the Silver Star, the Air Force Cross, the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars with combat "V," the Prisoner of War Medal and more.

A scholarship in Cherry's name is given annually by the Suffolk Foundation.

This article originally appeared in the Suffolk News-Herald of Suffolk, Va.

BY THE NUMBERS

ISIS targets the homeland

- 20** American ISIS recruits killed in action as of January
- 71** Americans who have been arrested, indicted or convicted for joining or supporting ISIS
- 56** Americans arrested in 2015 for connections to ISIS
- 250** Americans who have attempted to travel to the Middle East to join ISIS
- 900** Active FBI investigations against stateside terrorists (most are linked to ISIS)

Source: Foreign Policy Initiative

TECHNOLOGY

Bring on the X-Wings

Air Force leaders predict that laser weapons will be mounted onto existing airframes by 2020, *Military Times* reports. Specifically, the Air Force and its industry partners are exploring the use of laser weapons on AC-130s, MQ-1 drones, F-22s and F-35s.

"This is a reality," Gen. Hawk Carlisle, commander of Air Combat Command, reports. He envisions "directed energy capability" being grafted onto existing airframes in retrofit pods. The technology is coming "very soon," according to Carlisle, who predicts that the addition of laser weapons will "change the game."



Army Sgt. 1st Class Norberto Badillo, right, serves a Thanksgiving meal to U.S. Maj. Gen. Darryl Williams, commander of U.S. Army Africa, during a celebration in Vicenza, Italy. U.S. Army photo

ACTIVE DUTY

Enough to feed an army, and then some

The numbers are in, and the Pentagon's 2015 Thanksgiving dinner for troops deployed abroad included:

51,699	pounds of turkey
25,970	pounds of beef
17,130	pounds of ham
706	gallons of eggnog
3,360	pounds of marshmallows

As the website Foxtrot Alpha observes, "Although these numbers are bewildering, imagine how much larger they were at the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan."

The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) begins planning for the DoD Thanksgiving feast in May – almost seven months before Turkey Day. That's when DLA "asks each service how many people they will need to feed and where. Then the agency has to figure out how much each location already has in the way of ingredients, so that shipping is maximized to just what they need."

TECHNOLOGY

Travel times

The website Gizmodo has published on its website a pair of maps illustrating the stunning difference in travel times between 1914 and today. The maps use London as the point of departure, and plot the travel times to scores of destinations in 144 different countries.

In 1914, it took a person more than 10 days to travel from London to Seattle, 40 days to travel from London to Yakutsk, Russia (considered the coldest major city on earth), and 40 days to travel to Tokyo.

In 2016, a person can travel from London to Seattle in less than 12 hours, from London to Yakutsk in 18 hours and from London to Tokyo in less than 24 hours.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Islamic State's toll on Iraq

A U.N. report concludes that at least 18,802 civilians were killed in Iraq, and another 36,245 wounded, between January 2014 and October 2015. In addition, some 3.2 million people have been internally displaced. The U.N. News Center adds that "the actual figures could be much higher than those documented."

"The violence suffered by civilians in Iraq remains staggering," according to the report. "The so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continues to commit systematic and widespread violence and abuses of international human-rights law and humanitarian law. These acts may, in some instances, amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide."

As *The New York Times* reports, January 2014 is "roughly when the Islamic State began seizing territory."

VERBATIM

“He was a jurist of captivating brilliance and wit, with a rare talent to make even the most sober judge laugh He was eminently quotable, his pungent opinions so clearly stated that his words never slipped from the reader’s grasp.”

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, on fellow Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia, who died from a heart attack Feb. 13. Though ideological opposites, the two were close friends, having served together on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

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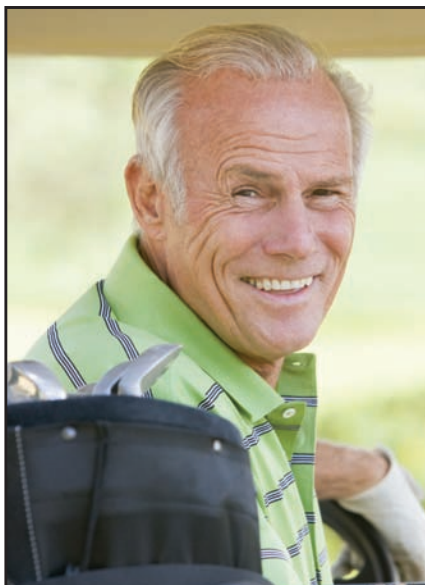


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NATIONAL CONVENTION

Where to stay in Cincinnati

The following is a list of department assignments for hotels during the 98th National Convention in Cincinnati, Aug. 26 to Sept. 1. Legionnaires planning to attend should consult their department adjutants about hotel accommodations.

Embassy Suites RiverCenter

10 E. RiverCenter Blvd., Covington, Ky.
Ohio, Texas

Hampton Inn & Suites/Homewood Suites

617 Vine St.

Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, American Legion
National Headquarters

Hilton Cincinnati Airport

7373 Turfway Road, Florence, Ky.

California, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Hampshire

Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza

35 W. Fifth St.

Colorado, Indiana, Nebraska, American Legion National Headquarters

Holiday Inn Cincinnati Airport

1717 Airport Exchange Blvd., Erlanger, Ky.

New York

Holiday Inn Riverfront

600 W. Third St., Covington, Ky.

Kansas, Tennessee

Hyatt Regency, 151 W. Fifth St.

Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania,
Sons of The American Legion, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Wyoming,
American Legion National Headquarters

Marriott RiverCenter

10 W. RiverCenter Blvd., Covington, Ky.

Arkansas, Connecticut, Missouri, Rhode Island, Virginia

Millennium Hotel, 150 W. Fifth St.

Alaska, Arizona, District of Columbia, Florida, France, Hawaii, Idaho,
Illinois, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Philippines, Puerto
Rico, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, American Legion Auxiliary
National Headquarters, American Legion National Headquarters

Radisson Hotel Cincinnati Riverfront

668 W. Fifth St., Covington, Ky.

Massachusetts, New Jersey, Utah

Westin Cincinnati, 21 E. Fifth St.

Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, West Virginia



HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

National Desert Storm memorial steams ahead

With this year marking the 25th anniversary of the Persian Gulf War, the campaign for a national memorial is charging forward.

In January, the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association (NDSWM) announced that former President George H.W. Bush, commander in chief during Desert Shield and Desert Storm, will serve as honorary chairman.

"I can think of no more dogged advocate for our Desert Storm veterans than President Bush," said Scott Stump, NDSWM president and CEO. "His leadership will surely guide us to mission success."

NDSWM has a goal of raising \$25 million toward construction of the memorial during this anniversary year; the current estimated budget is \$40 million, with an estimated completion date of 2018.

On Jan. 28, the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission – which oversees commemorative works in the District of Columbia – recommended the Desert Storm memorial be located in Area I in Washington, D.C., close to other national war memorials, the Mall and the White House. According to U.S. Code, Area I is approved only if "the subject of the commemorative work is of preeminent historical and lasting significance to the United States."

In 2013, The American Legion passed a resolution supporting the memorial.

Read more about the National Desert Storm War Memorial online:

 www.nationaldesertstormwarmemorial.org

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Register now for 2016 Legacy Run

Online registration for the 2016 Legacy Run is now open. Riders can register through August at www.legion.org/riders, or via mail with a printable registration form.

This year's run will leave Indianapolis on Aug. 21 and go through surrounding states before arriving in Cincinnati on Aug. 25 for the national convention. Registration is \$50 for riders, and \$25 for passengers and non-riding "supporters." Registrants will receive souvenir map books and patches.

The Legacy Run raises funds for the Legion's Legacy Scholarship Fund, which provides college scholarships for the children of U.S. servicemembers killed on active duty on or after 9/11.

 www.legion.org/riders



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CAREERS



Modernize your résumé design

Content is undeniably the most important component of résumés. If you can write strong content that is rich with

keywords and well targeted to the jobs you're pursuing, you'll do well in your search.

Another critical component of powerful résumés is the visual design, since so much of a job search is now conducted online. Design elements we would never have considered just a few years ago are now well accepted and give your résumé a distinctive and memorable appearance.

Here are four guiding principles to help you design a winning résumé:

■ **Capture attention in a flash.** Consider tables, charts and graphs to display measurable achievements; company and product logos if they're well-recognized and aligned with your objective; and images, photographs and illustrations that demonstrate your capabilities.

■ **Follow the practices of good page design.** Include a few focal points that draw readers' eyes to your name, headline or graphic element. Balance your résumé on the page and screen with equal margins and line spacing throughout. Use white space to enhance readability. Always remember that the top third of the page is prime real estate and use it wisely.

■ **Match design elements to the industry and profession.** Résumés for budget analysts should be relatively conservative in appearance, yet a chart of cost savings is a great addition. Leaders should consider tables, arrows or other images to show upward performance of your organizations. People in more creative fields – PR, communications, graphics – can add more design enhancements that align with your job. For all others, consider your audience and select elements that will resonate with them.

■ **Embrace color.** When used appropriately and not overdone, color can add a real kick to your résumé. Try anything from subtle light tints to an entire palette of diverse shades and deep hues. You can use color for your name, headline and headings, boxes, graphics, symbols and other elements to make it pop.

Integrate the right design elements into your résumé, and you will stand above the crowd.

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



Photo courtesy Deb Davis

CENTENNIAL

Post 206, Aurora, Colo.

Chartered in 1957, the all-female Women's Metropolitan Post 206 had 28 veterans from World War I, World War II and Korea present at its early meetings. From the start, Post 206 was active in American Legion programs, especially those pertaining to youth – from child welfare to the Oratorical Contest, Boys State and Legion Baseball. The post's 1962 team, pictured above, won the state championship. After nearly three decades of little activity, the post was stood up again in 2013 by a new generation of female veterans, who changed its name to Helen K. Osmundson Post 206.

Share your post's legacy

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

 www.legion.org/centennial

EDUCATION



The GI Bill and housing allowance

Q: *I plan to enroll in college this fall using my Chapter 33 Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. However, I will not be able to be a full-time student since I am currently employed. If I attend less than full time, how does VA determine my basic housing allowance?*

A: Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, a veteran enrolled at more than one-half time can qualify for a monthly housing allowance based on DoD's Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rate for an E-5 with dependents. VA determines eligibility for a housing allowance by calculating the rate of pursuit, expressed in a percentage calculated by dividing the number of credits in which the student is enrolled by the number of credits considered to be full time. A student with a rate of pursuit greater than 50 percent can qualify for the housing allowance.

Generally, for undergraduate enrollments, 12 semester/quarter hours are required for full-time training. The school submits the term dates and credit hours of the enrollment to VA.

Once the rate is determined, the monthly housing allowance is paid at the nearest 10-percent level. For instance, if your rate is determined to be 58 percent, you will be paid 60 percent of the housing allowance. If your training time is calculated to be 84 percent, you will be paid 80 percent.

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

PERSONAL FINANCE



Five things to know about inheriting an IRA

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

I received a lot of emails after my recent article on required minimum distributions (RMDs), the IRS-mandated withdrawals you normally must make from a traditional IRA once you turn 70½. While that kind of feedback isn't unusual, it was a surprise that so many asked about the rules for someone who inherits an IRA.

This can certainly be a financial boost, but it also presents opportunities for costly missteps. Given these, your first step should be to talk with a tax professional or your financial adviser to review your options.

Although not an exhaustive list, here are five things you should understand if you inherit an IRA.

■ **Both Roth and traditional IRA beneficiaries are subject to RMD rules.** A Roth IRA account owner doesn't have to take RMDs; however, if you're a beneficiary of a Roth IRA, you do.

■ **"Stretching" can extend tax benefits.** The IRS allows a beneficiary to set up an inherited IRA and take distributions based on life expectancy. If you want to take advantage of this option, the first distribution must be made by Dec. 31 of the year following the owner's death. It doesn't limit how much you could take out; the beneficiary could later decide to withdraw 100 percent. This option provides the most flexibility for non-spouse beneficiaries.

■ **Be aware of the five-year rule.** If you miss the deadline noted above and the original owner was younger than 70½, you'll default to the five-year rule. Under this scenario, you're not required to take distributions each year, but you must withdraw the entire account by Dec. 31 of the year in which the fifth anniversary of the account owner's death occurs.

■ **A spouse has more options.** A spouse beneficiary can take the proceeds as his or her own IRA or set up an inherited IRA. If they treat it as their own, the proceeds would be subject to the normal RMD rules. With an inherited IRA, you would need to begin life expectancy distributions Dec. 31 of the year after your spouse's death or Dec. 31 of the year when your spouse would have turned 70½, whichever comes later.

■ **The rules for moving an inherited IRA are different.** Unlike an owner who can normally withdraw money and move it to a new IRA within a 60-day period as a rollover, inherited IRAs can only be transferred directly from one custodian to another.

These scenarios should help you consider the options if inheriting an IRA, but before pursuing any of them, talk with a financial or tax professional to map out the plan that best fits your situation.

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

BY THE NUMBERS

The Army's dwindling presence in Europe

26,000

U.S. soldiers permanently stationed in Europe in 2015

40,000

U.S. soldiers permanently stationed in Europe in 2012

63,000

U.S. soldiers permanently stationed in Europe in 2000

213,000

U.S. soldiers permanently stationed in Europe in 1990

Source: The New York Times

VERBATIM

“People are afraid that we're going to put snakes in a place of public use and that they are going to breed like rabbits and spread over the countryside and kill everybody.”

Tom French of Massachusetts' Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, on concerns about the state's plan to establish a colony of endangered venomous timber rattlesnakes on an off-limits island in Quabbin Reservoir. He says that fears they'll escape are unfounded, and that the island gives the snakes a place free from human interference. Source: AP



Wikimedia Commons

How to submit a reunion

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

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573rd Eng Pontoon Bridge Co (Sing Kong Dok, Korea, 1952-1953), Guy Sillay, (470) 297-8367, gguys31@att.net
590th Trans Co (Flak Kaserne, Ludwigsburg, Germany), Robert Bandi, (815) 633-2181, r.band@comcast.net

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A Co 1st & 15th Inf 3rd Inf Div (Kitzingen, Germany, Aug 1984-Dec 1987), Ricky White, (978) 320-8277, ricky.white.sr59@gmail.com
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C Co 27th Eng Bn (Cbt) (Phu Bai, Vietnam, 1968-1970), Dave Burger, (563) 855-4195, burgerld@iowatelecom.net
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Plt 2037 (San Diego, June-Aug 1966), Greg Gerrits, (360) 951-1340
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TAPS

Glenn H. Ainslie, Dept. of Michigan. Dept. Cmdr. 1980-1981, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1983-1985, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1990-1993, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Region

5 Memb. 1977-1979 and 1981-1985, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Region 5 Vice Chmn. 1979-1980, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Region 5 Chmn. 1980-1981, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1985-1987, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1985-1987, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1975-1977 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 1988-1989.

Elmer H. Fuhrhop, Dept. of Ohio. Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Midwest Area Memb. 1964-1965, 1967-1971, 1973-1974 and 1976-1977, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Midwest Area Vice Chmn. 1965-1966, 1971-1972 and 1974-1975, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Midwest Area Chmn. 1966-1967, 1972-1973 and 1975-1976, Nat'l Cmte. on Children & Youth Cmsn. Emeritus 2013-2016, Child Welfare Foundation Board Memb. 1991-2016, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Vice Chmn. 1984-1995, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Memb. 1977-1981, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Chmn. 1995-2006, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Chmn. Emeritus 2006-2013 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1982-1984.

William P. McLaughlin, Dept. of New York. Dept. Cmdr. 1983-1984, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1984-1985, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1971-1972 and 1987-2001, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1985-1987, Nat'l Military Affairs Cmte. Memb. 1972-1984, Nat'l Security Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1985-1987 and Nat'l Conv. Resolutions Assignments Cmte. Memb. 1970-1971.

Robert R. "Bob" Williams, Dept. of Montana. Dept. Cmdr. 1970-1971, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1977-1979, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1974-1976, Nat'l Economic Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1979-1980, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1979-1981, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Consultant 1972-1974, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1976-1979 and Nat'l Public Relations Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1980-1981.

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Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.

EVERYBODY takes me for 40, except Las Vegas. It took me for \$400.

A ROUGHNECK called as a witness in court was asked, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

The witness replied coolly, "I'll try anything once."

TWO HUNTERS had been out for several hours, and one of them was growing uneasy. Panic finally overtook him.

"We're lost!" he cried to his buddy. "Whatever shall we do?"

"Keep your shirt on!" the other hunter said. "Shoot an extra deer. The game warden will be here in a minute and a half."

WHAT IF the fish goes home and lies about the size of the bait it stole?

AN ANGRY MAN stormed into the postmaster's office, waving pieces of mail.

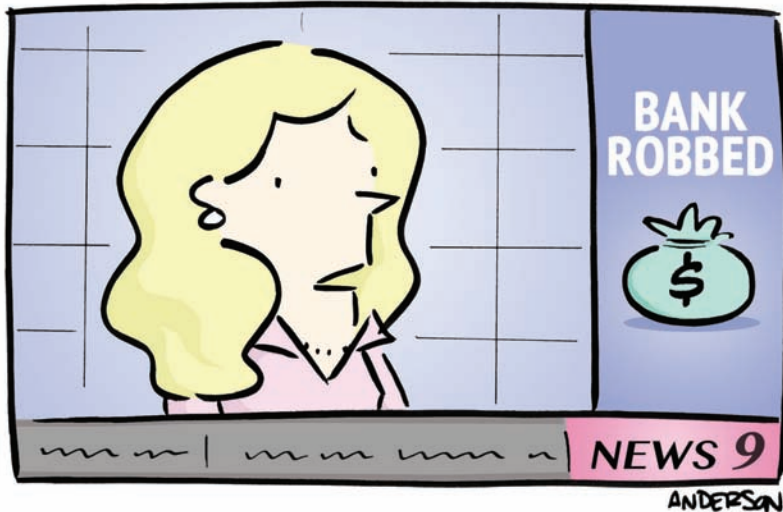
"For weeks I've been pestered with threatening letters," he shouted, "and I want something done about it!"

"I'm sure we can help," the postmaster said soothingly. "That's against the law. Have you any idea who is sending you these letters?"

"I certainly do," the man snapped. "It's those darned income-tax people!"



"We're all just numbers here - but I'm a big number."



"Police are offering \$5,000 to anyone with information. The criminals are offering \$10,000 to anyone with information and the sense to keep their mouth shut."



"Would I mind taking a survey? Sure, if that's the only question on the survey."

A FOURSOME of senior golfers hit the course with waning enthusiasm for the sport.

"These fairways seem to be getting longer and longer," one said.

"And these hills are getting steeper as the years go by," another complained.

"You know, the sand traps seem to be bigger than I remember them, too," the third said.

After hearing enough from his buddies, the oldest and wisest of the four men piped up and said, "Oh, just be thankful we're still on this side of the grass!"

"PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN said that Russia has invented the world's most effective drug to fight Ebola. Yeah. When asked if he tested it on rats, Putin said, 'You could call them that. Sure, yeah, yeah. They're rats.'" – Jimmy Fallon

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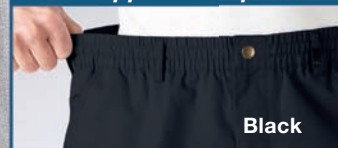
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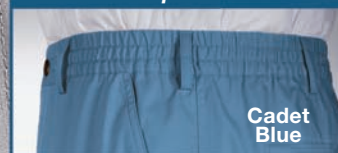
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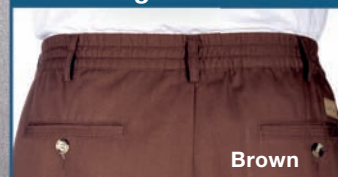
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