



The Bugle Call Rag

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COMMANDER'S COLUMN

"THE LONG ROAD HOME"

Its finally time for me to pack up my mobility bag and come home to where I belong, even if its only for a couple of months before heading back out to fight our countries battles. We are a small fighting force and getting smaller in the years to come due to budget constraints. I've seen statics where 10% of our population in WWII were fully involved with military service during those years. Since 9/11, 2.4 million troops have fought in and around Iraq and Afghanistan, exactly 1% of the 240 million Americans over 18 years old.

I'm thankful to have a post that

understands and supports me when I'm gone. But isn't that what the legion is all about? I look forward to seeing all of you again, starting with the February Valentine's Lunch.

Todd

Post 134 Oratorical Contest

Date: Saturday, January 28th

Time: 10:00 am

Location: The Walker School

700 Cobb Parkway Marietta, GA



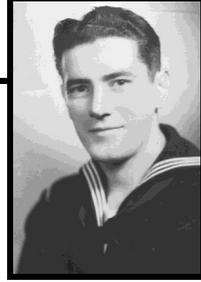
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TAPS



With great sadness we pass along the news of losing one of our own, William George Goodyear. Born in Cordele, GA, in July 1936, raised in Jacksonville, FL, attended DuPont High School and subsequently graduated from the USAF Academy. In the Vietnam era, Bill flew over 50 B-52 bomber missions and many T-39 combat zone missions. In 1972, he received the Bronze Star Medal. Bill retired from service as a full Colonel. After a year as a gold miner in Arizona (really), he went as a civilian to the Pentagon and then to Florida to manage a real estate development. In 1986, he & wife Linda move to California to begin his 15-year career with Northrop-Grumman and its B-2 stealth bomber. Following retirement from Northrup-Grumman in 2001, Bill & Linda moved back to the South. At the time of his death, Bill was working on a biography of Gen. Vogt. He's in your hands now, Lord. Bill was 75 years old.



MY CRIMINAL LIFE

Victor A. Mahoney - Editor Emeritus

My life of crime began when I was about four years old. My twelve year old sister had dragged me to her girlfriend's house. While they gabbed, I snooped. In a bedroom, on a table, I spotted a nifty ring with a big red stone in it. I copped it. When we arrived home, I showed it to my mother. My sister screamed, grabbed me by the neck and hustled me back to the scene of the crime. On the way back home, she yelled at me: "Did you think you'd get away with that?"

When I was about ten years old, I was in the church sanctuary choir. Wednesday was rehearsal time after school, up in the choir loft by the huge organ. On the way up the stairs, I passed a light switch and flipped it. No light showed. The next morning the Principal came into the classroom with his rattan switch. Without a smile he yelled, "Who put on the steeple light yesterday?" Fear gripped me tight. No one stuck up a hand. I knew then what I had done. I got away with one. (Not really, though.)

At age 14, I sneaked a smoke with Iggy. My

mother was in the kitchen when I got home. She looked at me, stepped closer, sniffed and said, "Have you been smoking?" I reeked of the stuff. My breath was an ad for Camels. I lied and said, "No, Ma." She didn't whup me, didn't scold me. She just glared at me and that was hard to take. Of course, I thought I had gotten away with one—again. Thirty years later when I saw the light, I quit smoking!

What's this all about Alfie? Well, this cheating scandal in the Atlanta Public School System reminded me, rather painfully, of the wickedness of trying to get away with something cruelly foolish or harmfully illegal. There is no such arrangement in life. Yes, it sometimes appears that individuals have gotten away with something, but the truth is that decades could pass and the individual conscience will ring the gong. No one can avoid that punishment.

RIGHT ON TARGET

How many young Americans are prepared to serve in the armed forces at a time when combat is a distinct possibility?

Answer: As many as their country needs.

The Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines all hit 100% of their recruitment goals for fiscal 2011, enrolling 150,000-plus men and women.

The Army, Navy and Marines

also made 100% of their goals for retaining active-duty troops.

The Air Force came close, at 96%. And they did so at a time when there is much talk that the demands of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have been beyond what humans could be expected to endure.\

Reserve outfits, too, scored 100% or better in recruitment, with the exception of the Army

National Guard, which can't be blamed. The Guard had to quit at 95% of its goal because it reached a congressionally mandated level of troop strength.

If you are having trouble finding young Americans to be proud of, that may be because they have already shipped out. You'd better believe there are plenty of them.

STOLEN VALOR ACT SHOULD STAND

AIR FORCE TIMES EDITORIAL

A growing army of veterans advocates and legal experts is urging the Supreme Court to affirm that lying about receiving military medals is a crime.

The high court in early 2012 will hear an appeal from Xavier Alvarez, a California man who, while seeking a seat on a local board, falsely claimed he had served in the Marines and been awarded the Medal of Honor.

Alvarez was convicted of violating the 2005 Stolen Valor Act and given three years' probation. Now he wants his conviction overturned because, he claims, the law denies free-speech rights and is unconstitutional.

In other words, he claims a First Amendment right to lie about being a war hero.

That is as baseless as his claim to military valor. Falsely portraying oneself as a war hero to gain an edge in an election is a fraud on unsuspecting voters.

"This case is about theft," 25 military associations wrote in a "friend of the court" brief. "Alvarez and others like him have misappropriated for their own benefit an unearned share of the two centuries' worth of goodwill and prestige associated with American military awards."

That goodwill and prestige have roots in the earliest days of the republic. In fact, they were succinctly defined by no less a military hero than Gen. George Washington.

In an order issued in the waning days of the Revolutionary War establishing the "Honorary Badge or Military Merit," Washington prominently included this passage: "Should any who are not entitled to these honors have the insolence to assume the badges of them, they shall be severely punished."

When the Supreme Court hears this case Feb. 22 – Washington's 280th birthday – it should heed the words of the original commander in chief and uphold the constitutionality of the Stolen Valor Act.

Vets groups urge court to uphold Stolen Valor

By Rick Maze, Air Force Times Staff Writer

Twenty-five organizations representing millions of veterans have asked the U.S. Supreme Court to

uphold a federal law making it a crime to falsely claim receiving a military award for valor.

The case pits First Amendment rights of free speech against allowing impersonators to erode the meaning and prestige of military medals. Oral arguments are planned for sometime in 2012.

"Imposters, who have included state and federal officials as well as many other successful, prominent people, have enjoyed undeserved praise, honors and other intangible and non-pecuniary benefits by wrongfully taking advantage of the goodwill associated with those awards," the groups say in a briefing filed in the case involving the constitutionality of the Stolen Valor Act, a 2006 law that makes it a federal crime to falsely claim to have received military medals.

Two federal courts, one in Colorado and one in California, have ruled the law is unconstitutional because it restricts the right of free speech. The case before the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. vs. Xavier Alvarez, involves a man who claimed he was a Marine retiree who had received the Medal of Honor but had, in fact, never even served in the military. Alvarez was convicted by a lower court, but the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decided this summer in a split decision that while his lies were "deliberate and despicable," the First Amendment's free speech protection applied even to lies.

The 25 organizations, led by Veterans of Foreign Wars, the nation's largest organization for combat veterans, say in their brief that lying about military service has become common, making it difficult for the public to know who has rightly earned an honor.

"Whether a person is masquerading as a decorated general at a veterans' celebration or a braggart whose false claims of receiving prestigious decorations move a neighbor to write a school essay about him entitled The Hero Next Door, lies about military honors take advantage of the public's trust. They allow con men to benefit in innumerable tangible and intangible ways from the virtually inexhaustible reservoir of goodwill, admiration and honor that military heroes have earned over the past 235 years," the brief says.

WANTED: A GOOD JOB AND SOME UNDERSTANDING

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The American Legion is doing their best to ensure our vets return home to jobs through events such as the RecruitMilitary Career Fair at Turner Field, on Feb 9th, 11:00—15:00. It should also be noted that President Obama signed into law, VOW to Hire Heros Act, which gives tax credits for employers who hire unemployed veterans and veterans with service-connected disabilities.*

By [JONATHAN RAAB](#)

From the New York Times

My father and I don't talk much about my time in the war. I've told him a little about my frustrations with the experience and about my contradictory feelings of pride and humbleness. During dinner one evening, when we were discussing my difficulties with juggling my civilian job and National Guard responsibilities, my father finished chewing his food and placed his fork down on the table.

"When I look at a guy who has to report to drill every month, as a manager and as a hirer, I have to think about that," he said. "I know he's gonna be asking for a lot of days off, and that isn't easy to give. Some guys come back from the war with all sorts of issues, which is understandable, but I have to deal with that. Honestly, I think about it twice before I hire them."

My mom snapped at him for being insensitive. I sensed an argument brewing, so I intervened. "No, Mom. It's O.K.," I said. "He's just being honest."

Whatever a veteran's experience — that of an Air Force postal clerk on a F.O.B. outside of Kabul, a Navy engineer developing construction plans for local security forces, a Marine fighting through Falluja, or an Army grunt living atop a ridgeline with a number for a name — we all share the unsharable. When we leave active duty, or our reserve or National Guard units release us from federal orders, we return to our families and our homes. And we are alone. Our families and our friends did not come with us, and they cannot follow us back when we think and re-think of our time away as part of the military machine and culture.

We keep in touch with comrades from the deployment, but they are not always around. Some are lucky enough to discover new friends — veterans from other units or branches or deployments who, though they

may not have served alongside us, served with us, and speak the common language of slang, memories and symbols.

Usually though, we have to walk the paths of memory and experience alone. Some people are scared to ask questions, because they don't want to sound insensitive or uninformed.

I've decided that it's better to remain cryptic and silent in most situations, because being honest with people is like a magician revealing the secret to his tricks — you lose any semblance of honor or professionalism that the other person may have projected onto you, and you are left feeling pretty foolish about putting on the little show in the first place.

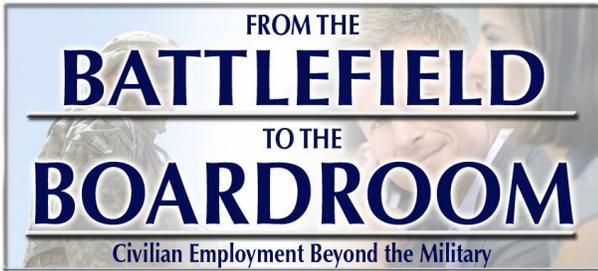
When I came back from Afghanistan in 2008, I set about trying to reconnect with my family and friends. When I saw my civilian peers advancing in their careers or personal lives, I felt as if I had been left behind — that the year I spent serving my country was a waste, because I could have stayed home to improve my education or résumé.

Very quickly I discovered that my anxiety about getting blown up in unfamiliar places with alien-sounding names like Baraki Barak or Kharwar (yes, those are real names) was replaced with anxiety about not getting into school, finding a job, or meeting new (or reconnecting with old) friends in once-familiar places like Buffalo or Rochester.

When I interviewed to get into the University of Rochester's graduate program for teaching, my second interview was with a younger professor who had instructed and advised hopeful social studies teachers for several years.

With my shaved head and crisp "... sir" tacked on to the end of every sentence, I no doubt came across as ridiculous to the young jeans-wearing academic with a Che Guevara poster on his office wall and plastic toy soldiers next to his Howard Zinn histories.

"So, why did you get out of the Army?" he asked, again and again. I kept giving nonanswers like, "I wasn't totally happy," or "It was time to move on," but he wouldn't let it go. I did not feel like talking with a complete stranger about some of my more difficult experiences. I felt like he had a political diatribe lined up for lunch in the staff lounge about our interview. I figured he wanted something cutting to tell his friends, and I didn't want to give it to him.



Finally, feeling nervous and with a sheen of sweat beading along my forehead, I looked him square in the eye and gave him an honest answer.

“I didn’t feel like we were fighting to win.”

When I received an acceptance letter to the school, I was pleasantly surprised. I became one of only two veterans attending the entire school of education.

After I finished the program, I interviewed for several teaching jobs. The questions about my military experience could be uncomfortable, and prospective employers didn’t always understand how serving in the infantry could relate to teaching. One principal even joked that if I had dodged grenades, I could handle a few kids.

A false smile through gritted teeth was the best that I could offer in response.

When I landed a long-term substitute job, things were beginning to look up. The principal, after seeing me sub for several different grade levels, committed to hiring me as a teacher’s aide for the rest of the school year.

Because I was not working as a full, independent teacher, most of my day was spent assisting another teacher. When I had conflicts with her, however small, I didn’t want to come across as an angry, self-righteous, or “crazy” veteran. So I kept my mouth shut.

When I informed the principal that I intended to re-enlist and deploy to Afghanistan at the beginning of the next school year, I thought that he would appreciate my honesty.

A few days before coming home from my three-week National Guard pre-mobilization training session, I received a call from him.

“I wanted to let you know that the woman who’s been subbing for you has really worked out, and I have decided to keep her on for the rest of the year. We all think it would be best for the kids because she’s going to be around next year, and you’re not. You can still come in every day, of course, but we’re going to move you around from room to room where we need you ...”

His voice faded away as I withdrew into myself. I was exhausted. I hadn’t showered in days, and my uniform was caked with dirt and sweat. Three weeks was all it took to replace me. Was I that bad at my job, or was I that much of a burden on the school?

When I finished training, I went to the school to meet with the principal. I told him that no thank you, I wouldn’t be available to sub for the rest of the year. I had developed a relationship with the kids and did not want to have to start all over again. We talked politely and with respect, but it took every ounce of self-control not to burn that bridge.

The veteran unemployment level is currently four percentage points higher than the national average. Although most people are not paying attention to the wars, their legacies are filtering back into our communities, one veteran at a time. Most of these men and women are just glad to be home and are ready to work. Some have many problems, some have just a few. What we all share is the desire to be respected and appreciated for our service — whether completed or ongoing in a reserve capacity — and to be seen as a benefit to the employer, or an opportunity by the employer to directly support a military that is all too often cleaved from the civilian world it fights to protect.

Back at the dinner table, my father looked off into the autumn hills before speaking again. I followed his gaze but didn’t see the colorful foliage. I saw jagged peaks and swirling sand.

“The reality is that training and weekends off costs us money and time, and I gotta track down someone to fill in, or I get calls from his unit telling me that I can’t put him to work some days. It’s a hardship.”

“That doesn’t make it right,” my mom said. “They are serving their country.”

“No, I didn’t say that it was right,” he answered.

“I know a lot of employers think this,” I cut in. “They won’t admit it — they can’t, not legally — but they think it on some level.”

Both of my parents stared hard into their dinner plates. “Everybody wants to support the troops until they have to share in the hardship and sacrifice,” I said. “Then all of a sudden that bumper sticker or that flag pin doesn’t mean anything anymore.”

Jonathan Raab is a spokesman for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America who is currently preparing for his second deployment to Afghanistan with the New York Army National Guard. He is a certified Social Studies and Special Education teacher, and will be looking for a job when he comes home.

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Todd Copley - Commander
tcopley220@yahoo.com 404-395-6077

John Kapsaroff - SVC
kapsaroj@comcast.net 770-980-0886

Norman Harbaugh - JVC
nrharb@parksprings.net 678-684-3701

George Hooten
Victor Mahoney
FOUNDING EDITORS OF THIS NEWSLETTER

Next Meeting — Feb 9, 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	EC	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	♥	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

VALENTINE LUNCHEON GUEST SPEAKER

Charles R. Knox, Adjutant for The American Legion, Department of Georgia has been a Legionnaire for the past 38 years, serving as American Legion Post 35 Adjutant, Junior Vice-Commander and Commander for the Third District.

During the 1991-1992 Legion year, he served as Commander for the Department of Georgia. He has also served as Senior Vice-Commander (1990-1991) and as Junior Vice-Commander (1989-1990), for the Department.

He is a member of The American Legion Post 35, Veteran's of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veteran's (DAV), and American Veterans (AMVETS).

A former non-commissioned officer, Charlie served 26 years in the United States Army. His experiences in the military service were diverse and had culminated with his promotion to Sergeant Major, specializing in the personnel administration field. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit along with many others.

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