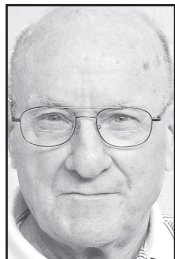


## My military buddies were something else

Good Evening Norton  
Tom Dreiling



I had a phone call this week from an old Air Force friend who lives in the Chicago area. We still exchange Christmas (can I use that word?) cards, and talk on the telephone if there is something we want to pass along quickly. He and I used to see who could get the best of the other during our four years together in the military. I usually lost.

"Well," he related, "while watching Chicago television news a few evenings ago, they showed the pictures of the final two vice presidential candidates for Sen. McCain."

"I didn't know they had chopped the list to two," I said.

"Sure did," he answered.

"Hmm, who are they?" I inquired.

"Didn't catch their names but they certainly made their presence felt in the WaKeeney, Kansas community," he chuckled.

It took a few seconds for me to absorb his comment, then I belted out a loud laugh, to which he said, "Gotcha again, Tommy, didn't I?"

See what I mean?

-td-

I sleep sound. Very sound. When I was in the service and taking basic training at Lackland Air Force Base at San Antonio, a group of us new recruits were talking about all sorts of things one evening when sleeping entered the conversation.

A couple of the guys said they had trouble sleeping. Others mentioned the same concern. I told them I didn't have that problem at all and when I laid my head on the pillow I was out for the night, just like that.

Well, the very next morning, very early — like 5:30 — I heard a familiar voice shout, "Dreiling, what are you doing out here in front of the barracks in your cot?"

It was our DI (drill instructor). He tried to keep his laugh soft enough so I couldn't hear it. He told me to stay right where I was. He went into the barracks and got the troops up in the usual fashion — chaos.

When they were up, he told them to put on their boots and assemble out front — in their shorts and T-shirts, only. "Now, I want to know who assigned Airman Dreiling to sleep in front of the barracks over night," he demanded. It didn't take long for four hands to raise. Our DI told them to come to the front. They did. He then ordered them to run a mile and when they got back to the front of the barracks, to run it one more time.

And from that time on when I woke up I was INSIDE the barracks.

-td-

But when I arrived at Misawa AFB, Japan, the pranksters I was with at Lackland, arrived two weeks before I did at Misawa. They knew my travel schedule so they were there to welcome me with open arms to the barracks. In fact, they helped me with my duffel bag and a few other bags to get settled in.

My room was on the second floor. On each door there was a name tag. Nice looking room as I just briefly glanced around, paying attention to nothing. I was tired from the flight from San Francisco to Hawaii to Midway Island and then Tokyo where I boarded a coal train to Misawa — hours from Tokyo. I was ready to go to bed, which I did.

Along about 3:30 a.m. — yep, 3:30 in the morning — my bedroom door opened and someone walked in and tossed a package onto the bed. He turned on the light when he heard cries of pain as the package zeroed in where it shouldn't have. Oh, that hurt!

It turned out that the room really wasn't mine but it was for the staff sergeant who was assigned to supervise the second floor. I was nothing but an airman with one lonely stripe, he had four. The pranksters, upon hearing the ruckus in what I thought was my room, came running over and started laughing. The sergeant turned out to be one of those understanding guys (he wasn't in on the trick), and even helped the pranksters move me to my real room.

What a way to be introduced to your supervising sergeant.

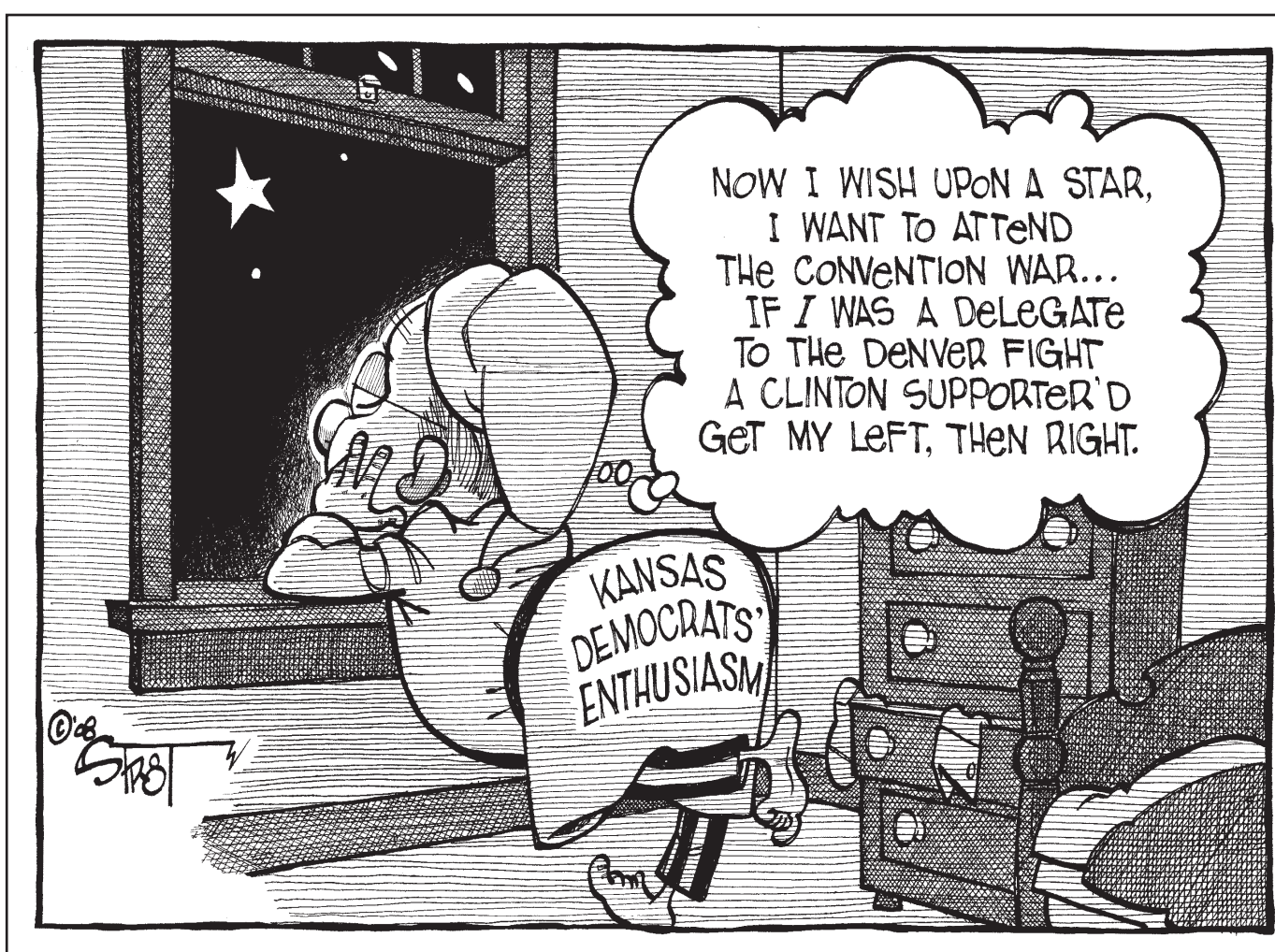
-td-

Nothing like being in the military. The people you serve with generally become lifelong friends. You all have that one thing in common — Air Force blue! As I look back over those years, I feel so fortunate being able to travel to other parts of the globe. And being trained by the USAF Security Service, the mission was so special, so interesting.

In addition to Lackland, I was also at Keesler AFB, Biloxi, Miss., Travis AFB, San Francisco, and Kelly Field, also at San Antonio. They frame unforgettable memories.

-td-

Have a good evening! And as you worship in the church of your choice this weekend, frame some of those memories.



## Farming is a way of life all its own

The hubby did a really nice thing for me a couple of weeks ago. He made an extension on the swather steps so I could get in and out easier. To the cynical mind it might seem a little self serving but I truly did appreciate it.

I got along fairly well with the swather the one day I ran it. None of the little problems that popped up could be remotely blamed on me, just little mechanical things that would have happened no matter who was running the thing. It was a nice spring day, not too hot. The hay was lush. Might have even been "dairy hay" except that before it got baled it got about 10 inches of rain on it!

The joys of farming; I must confess even with the modified steps I was glad to see the eldest daughter show up to be the hired help for the summer.

On the way to the L&E for fried chicken Friday we got to discussing dangerous jobs. After running through some horror stories I pointed out that agriculture is so very dangerous. We around it tend to forget how risky an enterprise it is. Sadly, over the years I have known many farmers seriously injured if not killed in farm

Back Home  
Nancy Hagman



accidents.

Kate observed that so many of these accidents are preventable, we all just get careless, hurry, or take on tasks that we are not capable of handling alone.

Fatigue is oft times a factor also.

Interesting enough when we got to the café the locals were trading stories about their mishaps. Funny stories, when you live to tell them!

I won't reveal any names here (the guilty know who they are) but an incident was related about a broken baler and a hay hook.

Farmer A had stopped by Farmer B's field to visit and give him some advice about unplugging his baler. Nothing was working and Farmer B finally got so exasperated that he threw a hay hook at

the baler. His aim was a little off, the hay hook landed squarely in the middle of Farmer A's windshield, shattering it into a million or so pieces.

Then there was the one about the welding electrode making contact with — no I just can't figure out how to relate that one. Fill in your own details, the story ends with the line "that's why my voice is so high pitched."

We all enjoyed watching "Ice Road Truckers" on The History Channel last summer. A new season has just started. Catch it on Sunday night at 8 p.m. The hubby has also been a big fan of "Ax Men."

As he watched the season finale of "Ax Men" I told the hubby maybe we ought to pitch a new show, "Ag Men" to the History Channel. The challenges loggers face aren't any greater than what farmers face, and the guys at the L&E are every bit as entertaining (though they might get the series an R rating).

Have a safe and productive summer, all you Ag men and women!

## Laughter is still the best medicine

For many years, research in the medical and mental health fields has supported the proverb that "laughter is the best medicine." Not only has science proven the wisdom of this proverb, but has also issued an update. According to a recent report in Science Daily (April 10, 2008), over the last two years scientists have discovered that simply anticipating a good laugh will boost health-protecting hormones and at the same time reduce potentially detrimental stress hormones.

In 2006, researchers found that the anticipation of "mirthful laughter" increases a person's beta-endorphins and human growth hormones.

The first is within the family of chemicals that help alleviate depression, and the other helps stimulate the immune system of the body. So it appears that the physical act of laughing is not only good for you, but also the anticipation of some laugh-out-loud or knee-slapping moments can help you stay healthy.

This year scientists using a similar protocol discovered that the anticipation of laughter also reduced the levels of three stress hormones: cortisol (commonly referred to as "the stress hormone")

Plain Sense  
Ken Loos

decreased 39 percent; epinephrine (also known as adrenaline) decreased 70 percent; and dopac (a brain chemical that helps to produce epinephrine) decreased 38 percent.

Therefore, the significance of anticipating a good laugh (whether looking forward to a funny movie, a favorite comic, or simply a get-together with friends) increases the level of "good" hormones and decreases the level of "negative" hormones. Talk about a "win-win" situation!

Stress and change, both positive and negative, are inherently a part of life and are not going to go away. Previous research has clearly shown the dangers a person may face when under chronic levels of stress.

High stress hormone levels contribute to a general weakening of the immune system, increased risk of heart attack,

sleep disturbances, and digestive problems. Individuals under chronic stress also show an increase in the use of alcohol, drugs, or nicotine. Increases in aggression, moodiness, and ultimately higher rates of depression and anxiety have also been implicated as direct results of long-term stress.

Through the research and studies noted here, science has now provided us with another good reason to "lighten up." Seeking out healthy and humorous situations, and taking the time to anticipate genuine laughter appears to be a relatively easy way to reduce stress and maintain good physical and emotional health.

(Contributed by Ken Loos, MS, LMLP, LCP Prevention, Education, and Outreach Department. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help. Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, Prevention, Education, and Outreach Department, 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 67601. Questions will be formatted and answered in a manner that insures confidentiality. Internet site: www.highplainsmentalhealth.com.)

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## Thumbs Up

To... the Almena community, on your weekend *Antique Machinery, Threshing Power, and Car Show*. (by telephone)

To... Charlene Weskamp, on your 30 years of service to the Farm Service Agency. (e-mail)

To... the Norton Thunder softball team and your coaches, Patty Kleinschmidt and Denny Nickell, on your third-place finish at the Hill City Tournament last weekend! Way to go, girls! (e-mail)

To... Garrett Plumbing, on your 90th anniversary serving the Norton community and surrounding area. (e-mail)

To... Lenora, on your big Jubilee celebration this weekend. (regular mail)

To... Norton's Walk Kansas Teams, on your good performances, as reported by Tranda Watts in the June 6 *Telegram*. (e-mail)

(To submit a name or names, please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, call 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. Your input is appreciated. - td)