

commentary

from other pens...

Sept. 17 — America's deadliest day of battle

One hundred forty years ago this week, two armies thrust north through western Maryland's rich farmlands and faced off in a battle so savage that its one-day death toll is unsurpassed in American history.

On Sept. 17, 1862, invading Confederate forces and Union pursuers collided in rolling sheets of fire at Antietam Creek, a shallow ribbon of water ambling through orchards and cornfields not far from the upper stretches of the Potomac River.

The battle near the dusty crossroads of Sharpsburg ended the first Confederate invasion of the North. It raised the stakes of the Civil War for America and the world. Despite last year's horrendous losses in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the one-day casualty toll at Antietam remains unequalled.

Historian James M. McPherson notes in a new book that the 6,300 to 6,500 Union and Confederate soldiers killed and mortally wounded at Antietam were more than twice the 3,044 fatalities, including the 19 hijackers, suffered in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

"Another 15,000 men wounded in the Battle of Antietam would recover, but many of them would never again walk on two legs or work with two arms," McPherson writes in "Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam, The Battle That Changed the Course of the Civil War," published by Oxford University Press.

The casualties at Antietam were four times greater than Americans killed or wounded at the Normandy beaches on June 6, 1944. They were also greater than the combined casualties of all of the nation's 19th century wars, excepting the Civil War itself.

The consequences of the battle were not confined to the butcher's bill, the name some gave to the lists of dead and wounded that flooded newspapers in the North and South.

Although neither army was destroyed, the Confederates were badly hurt. Their commander, Gen. Robert E. Lee, abandoned his invasion of the north and retreated across the Potomac to Virginia.

That gave President Lincoln the circumstance he needed to publish plans to declare free all slaves held in territory controlled by the Confederacy.

"Perhaps no consequence of Antietam was more momentous than this one; it changed the character of the war," McPherson writes.

The battle also altered the way the war was seen across the Atlantic. British and French statesmen, inclined to the Southern cause for commercial and trade reasons, had been waiting for a decisive Confederate victory to intervene, recognize the Confederacy and offer to mediate. McPherson and other historians believe Southern independence would likely have followed.

Reading the reports from America, they shook their heads and continued to wait. Intervention never again became a real possibility.

"When the Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac River into Maryland in September 1862, the Confederacy appeared to be on the brink of victory; Antietam shattered that momentum," McPherson writes. "Never again did Southern armies come so close to conquering a peace as they did in September 1862."

Five days after the battle, Lincoln reminded his Cabinet that he had decided months earlier to postpone emancipation until the right moment.

"I think that time has come now," he said. "I wish it were a better time ... the action of the army against the rebels has not been quite what I should have best liked. But they have been driven out of Maryland."

Now, the war's objective was not only to restore the Union but to end slavery.

EDITOR'S NOTE—Lawrence L. Knutson has reported on Congress, the White House and Washington's history for 35 years.



Honoring Yom Kippur

Today members of the Jewish faith will observe Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). They believe that reflecting upon their sins and taking responsibility for them after the new year has begun gives repentance its true meaning.

During Yom Kippur Jews fast for a full 24 hours (water is not permitted) to pray and reflect on the past year and the year to come. Before the fast a simple meal is eaten low in salt and bland to avoid unnecessary thirst.

The eve and day are spent in synagogue singing prayers and pounding one's chest in repentance. By coming together in community each feels not only the responsibility of their personal sins but a greater responsibility for the sins of the community.

After a long day the fast is broken with some of the foods whose recipes follow.

The explanation of Yom Kippur and the recipes come from 'A Fistful of Lentils' by Jennifer Felicia Abadi.

Sweet Cookies with Orange-Lemon Essence

- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest (about 1 large lemon)
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons grated orange zest (about 1 medium sized orange)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 5 cups flour
- saucer of sugar (about 1/2 cup)
- Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

Break eggs into large bowl and beat with a fork for 1 minute. Add oil and mix well. Stir in sugar, vanilla, lemon and orange zests and lemon juice. Blend well with a wooden spoon. Set aside.

In a medium sized bowl combine baking powder and flour. Add flour to the egg mixture about 1/2 cup at a time and mix until the batter forms an



pat schiefen

• postscript

oily dough (about two minutes). Form dough into a ball and refrigerate, uncovered, for 10 to 15 minutes.

Remove ball of dough from the refrigerator and break into three equal pieces. Keep two of pieces chilled in covered bowl in refrigerator and work with one piece at a time.

Break dough into 1 inch pieces and roll them into balls between palms of hands.

Place each ball on clean work surface and roll into a 4 inch length.

Form cookie into one of two shapes. Either a circle with one end pinched slightly above the other end or into a twist.

Dip each cookie gently in the sugar coating both sides. Place on greased baking sheet about 1 1/2 inches apart.

Bake until golden (not brown) approximately 17 to 20 minutes. Cookies should be fairly crunchy when fully cooked. Makes 6 dozen cookies and serves 15 to 20.

Ring Shaped Sesame Anise Pretzels

- 1 1/8 teaspoons active dry yeast (half of a 1/4 ounce packet)
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 cup warm water
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 cups sifted flour
- 1 1/2 tablespoons semolina flour (Coarsely ground outer covering of durum wheat with no bran and no germ. It has high protein content.)

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter or margarine, melted
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons anise seeds
- dish of sesame seeds (about 1/4 cup)
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten and mixed with 1 tablespoon water

In a small bowl combine yeast, sugar and warm water. Set aside in warm place for 10 minutes until top starts to foam.

In a large bowl combine coriander, salt, cumin, flour, semolina, butter and oil. Mix by hand. Add anise seeds and continue to mix.

Add the yeast mixture and knead the dough, turning the bowl and punching it down, until all the ingredients are combined.

Form dough into ball and divide it in half. Knead dough until dough is soft and elastic, about 5 minutes. Repeat with the other piece of dough.

Combine both halves into one big ball and place in large, clean bowl. Cover with dish towel and set in a warm, dry place to rise for 1 1/2 hours.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Punch dough down and shape into a long roll (2 1/2 by 12 inches long).

Slice into 24 equal parts, 1/4 inch wide. Take one piece of dough and roll it into a thin cigar shape about 6 inches long. Try to roll dough from center out to the ends. This will make them more uniform and bake evenly. Attach ends to form a circle and dip one side lightly into beaten egg. Gently press egg covered side of each pretzel into sesame seeds.

Place about 1 1/2 inches apart on greased baking sheet.

Bake on middle rack of oven until pretzel start to rise, barely browned, about 8 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 225 degrees and continue to bake until pretzels are fully crisp about 40 minutes, light golden brown and crispy but not too hard. Cool completely before serving. Can be frozen for up to 2 months. Makes 2 dozen and serves 8 to 10.

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The Bible is a communication from God

My last nine columns have been devoted to counting down the top 10 reasons everyone should read the Bible.

The no. 10 reason is the Bible's account of creation; no. 9 is the Bible moves hearts; no. 8 is the Bible is the only guide to religious truth; no. 7 is it is a guidebook for living and teaches lessons about life; no. 6 is it chronicles the formation of the Christian congregation; no. 5 is its stories of imperfect men and women provide examples for us; no. 4 is Jesus' death in behalf of mankind; no. 3 is the Bible's theme of God's kingdom; and the no. 2 reason is the Bible's prophecies have meaning for us today.

This week, I have finally reached the no. 1 reason everyone should read the Bible — it is a communication from God.

How important is this message? It is a matter of life and death. John 3:17 says, "This means everlasting life their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."

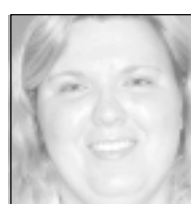
But that is not the only reason to read the Bible. Think of the magnitude of the Almighty God, creator of the universe, our creator, wanting to communicate with us.

Isaiah 40:12 says of Him: "Who has cupped in his hand the waters of the sea, and marked off the heavens with a span? Who has held in a measure the dust of the earth, weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?"

God can hold all the oceans and seas in the palm of his hand and measure the universe with the span of his hand. How awe-inspiring! Can we even imagine his power?

God asked Job in Job 38:34-38, "Can you raise your voice among the clouds, or veil yourself in the waters of the storm? Can you send forth the lightnings on their way, or will they say to you, 'Here we are?' Who counts the clouds in his wisdom? Or who tilts the water jars of heaven so that the dust of earth is fused into a mass and its clods made solid?"

God can command the weather, order the clouds around and control the force of lightning and storms. We just have to sit back and take what we get.



sharon corcoran

• use it or lose it

Isaiah 40:26 says, "Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these: He leads out their army and numbers them, calling them all by name. By his great might and the strength of his power not one of them is missing!"

God can command the stars as an army and even remember all their names. Scientists estimate that there are over 100 billion galaxies in the universe observable by mankind, and each galaxy has from a billion to over a trillion stars. Just the stars we know about amount to a much larger number than we can imagine, and we don't even know how many more are out there.

We humans have trouble remembering the names of a few people we have met, remembering when and where we have appointments and, for parents, keeping a few small children in line. How could we imagine keeping the whole universe in perfect order and calling many trillions of stars by their names?

And the God who is capable of these feats has had the Bible recorded for us to read and study. Shouldn't we be interested in what He has to say? Isaiah 40:15 says, "Behold, the nations count as a drop in the bucket, as dust on the scales; the coastlands weigh no more than powder."

We have all the significance of a film of dust to such an impressive person as the Sovereign of the Universe, yet He takes care of us as Isaiah 40:11 says, "Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, Carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care."

Verses 29-31 go on to tell us He gives us strength when we need it, "He gives strength to the fainting; for the weak he makes vigor abound. Though young men faint and grow weary, and youths stagger and fall, they that hope in the LORD will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles' wings; they will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint."

berry's world



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