

from our viewpoint...

Time to remember those who serve

Monday will mark the 136th observance of Memorial Day, which traces its history back to the Civil War era. On May 30, 1868, the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery were decorated with flowers.

As we prepare to observe this day of remembrance, we find our servicemen and women in another conflict halfway around the world. This Memorial Day, the message must be that we support what our troops are doing in Iraq.

This support is unwavering, despite the fact there is not a clear plan to extricate them from what is becoming a hostile environment. Fighting the war to topple Saddam Hussein was a plan many approved, and we appeared to have pulled it off without losing a large number of American lives.

That has changed in the past six months. In April, we lost 136 soldiers to suicide bombers and ambush attacks on our troops as they patrolled the cities while an Iraqi government tries to develop and take control.

Reminders of what has gone before abound the closer we get to Memorial Day. Sunday morning was one of those, as the 16th annual Run for the Wall rolled down I-70 on their way east to Washington for the Rolling Thunder parade on Sunday in support of Prisoners of War and Missing in Action for the more than 1,800 Vietnam soldiers who remain unaccounted for.

Over the past 10 years, there have been 50th anniversary celebrations of the milestones of World War II, including this June when they mark the 60th anniversary of the landings at Normandy. This was a war — both in Europe and in the Pacific — that had truly the backing of the American people, and the whole country put their shoulders to the wheels to provide the men, material and sacrifice to carry the mission to victory.

It has been 28 years since America unceremoniously left Saigon as the last helicopter took off from the embassy compound just as the gates fell to the North Vietnamese. The 25th anniversary passed with only a few television and newspaper commentaries on how the country of Vietnam had changed since then.

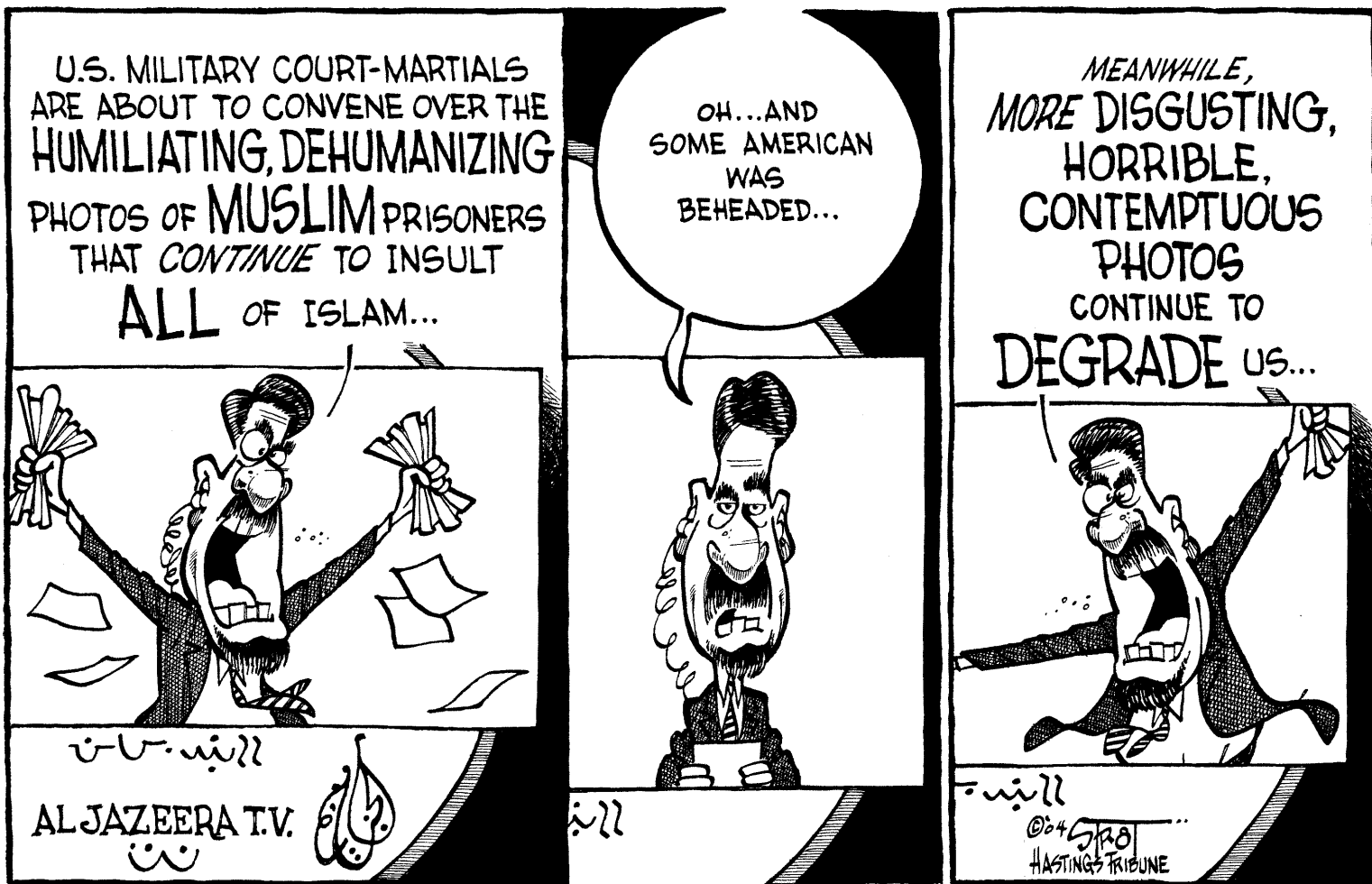
Standing on the Caldwell overpass over I-70 Sunday morning, about 20 Goodland people — some vets, some not — watched and waved as the rows passed by. Goose bumps formed and a chill ran down their spines as the hundreds of motorcycles came over the bridge at the west Goodland exit and rolled east.

The mission of the Run for the Wall is about remembering those unaccounted for, and giving Vietnam Veterans the opportunity to get the welcome home they never had. It is part of the healing process.

Today, the country is behind the troops in Iraq, but American political history shows the longer the conflict, the more restless the country becomes. As the deaths of our troops slide from the top stories and onto the inside pages, we cannot allow them to feel there is any less support at home.

The recent stories and pictures about prisoner abuse make it harder to understand what we are doing in Iraq, and the suicide bombs keep adding to the body count, which makes mothers and fathers nervous.

No matter whether you, a family member or a friend have served or are serving in the military, stop for a moment on Monday morning and remember them. Better yet, attend a Memorial Day service so your support for our troops can be a visible reminder of the freedoms Americans enjoy and must defend — even half way round the world. — Tom Betz



Visiting Fort Sumter a history lesson

A visit to our daughter and son-in-law in Augusta, Ga., turned into a history lesson when we found ourselves on a ferry going from Charleston, S.C., to Fort Sumter.

While most of us don't remember much of what we learned in American history, we do know that the first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter.

South Carolinians have always been a hot-headed bunch. The state was the first to declare its independence from Great Britain and the first to secede from the Union.

In November 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected president as a Republican on a containment-slavery (but not abolitionist) platform. On Dec. 20, South Carolina called it quits.

Charleston was a commercial center and her harbor had several forts, most of them unmanned and in poor repair.

Most of the troops were stationed in Fort Moultrie, which was vulnerable to land attack. The commander, Maj. Robert Anderson, moved his troops to the more defensible island of Fort Sumter in the middle of the night after spiking all the guns left behind at Fort Moultrie on Dec. 26.

At the fort, Major Anderson had about four months of supplies and 85 men, including an eight-man Army band. The fort, under construction since 1829, was unfinished and although there were plenty of cannons, most weren't mounted.

The Confederates took over Fort Moultrie to the northeast, put men at Fort Johnson to the southwest, took over Castle Pickney, a fortification on a small island to the west, fortified Cummings Point to the south and put warships in the harbor, surrounding Fort Sumter.



cynthia haynes

• open season

Maj. Anderson and his men started making the fort more defensible while diplomats in both the North and South squared off. In Charleston, new fortifications were put into place.

On Feb. 18, 1861 Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as president of the Confederate States of America and on March 3, Pierre T.G. Beauregard was appointed commander of Confederate troops in Charleston. The next day, Lincoln was inaugurated in Washington.

The garrison at Fort Sumter had only 40 days of food left and Lincoln sent a relief expedition. On April 11, Gen. Beauregard demanded the fort's surrender but Maj. Anderson refused. The two were friends; Anderson had been Beauregard's artillery instructor at West Point, but such was the Civil War.

At 4:30 a.m. April 12, 1861, the first shot was fired on Fort Sumter from Fort Johnson, an air burst from a mortar to signal the shelling to begin. The fort was caught in a vicious cross fire.

With powder bags in short supply, the fort did not return fire until 7 a.m. when the second-in-command, Capt. Abner Doubleday, who later would invent baseball, fired at the battery on Cummings Point.

The fort was heavily damaged by the shelling. The worst problem was hot shot, heated cannon balls, which set the wooden roofs of the officers' quarters on fire. The powder

magazine were directly under them.

There were not enough defenders to fight the rebels and the fire, so after 34 hours of almost continuous shelling, Maj. Anderson surrendered the fort. He, his men and the flag were allowed to leave for New York.

About 2 p.m. on April 14, the 33-star Union flag was lowered with a 100-gun salute. Midway through the salute, a gun misfired and Pvt. Daniel Hough was killed. He became the first casualty of the war, as no one had been killed during the 34-hour bombardment.

The ruined fort was taken over by the Confederate troops, who reinforced its walls with cotton bales, earth and sand.

Federal forces tried to retake the fort in 1863 and 1864, since it caused a hole in the Union blockade of southern ports.

In its first bombardment by Confederate troops, the fort was hit with 3,000 shots and shells but suffered no deaths. By the time Confederate troops abandoned it in 1865, more than 40,000 rounds had been fired at the fort and more than 300 men had died. The fort was reduced to rubble.

Between 1870 and 1876, the Army began rebuilding the fort. It was refortified and new guns put in place over the next century as it protected the harbor at Charleston through the Spanish American War and World Wars I and II.

By the end of World War II, stationary coastal defenses were considered obsolete, and the fort was named a National Monument in 1948. Today it is a popular tourist spot manned by the U.S. Park Service.

Men in uniform have returned to Fort Sumter.

The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

National Newspaper Association

e-mail: star-news@nwkanssas.com

Steve Haynes, President

Tom Betz, Editor

Pat Schiefel, Copy Editor

Sharon Corcoran, Society Editor

Greg E. Stover, Reporter/Sports Editor

Doug Jackson, Advertising Coordinator

Anne Hamilton, Jennifer Arntt, Adv. Sales

Sheila Smith, Office Manager



Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager

Richard Westfahl Ron VanLoenen Judy McKnight Betty Morris

Aaron Hickert Mary Jo Tapparo Kris McCool Lana Westfahl

nwkanssas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(ntbetz@nwkanssas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkanssas.com)

Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkanssas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkanssas.com

The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$20; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. Mailed individually each day: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

Incorporating: The Goodland Daily News

1932-2003

The Sherman County Herald

Founded by Thomas McCants

1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey

1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company

His efforts not to 'close off' discussions

To the Editor:

After being a city commissioner for a little over a year, I've gained some valuable knowledge.

The most important of all is that I have no control over the press. That is totally up to the editor and what he wants to print.

One thing I know is that everyone has a different opinion, none necessarily being more right than the others.

In the May 18 paper, Editor Tom Betz wrote that I was "considering closing some government discussions to the public by wanting to change the quorum at the city meetings from three to four."

Nothing is farther from the truth. He failed to print that I've tried getting the "visitors" slot put back in the agenda, and discussed at a couple meetings having them televised to make the city more accessible to the public.

I want the citizens to feel welcome and be as involved as possible by, making the meetings more open. I also want to do the best that I can for the city by being informed about all the issues and ideas surrounding every subject.

Isn't being informed the only way to make the best decisions?

One of the reasons I ran for this office was there seemed to be a lack of communication between the city commissioners themselves and between them and the citizens.



from our readers

• to the editor

If the commissioners are not able to discuss anything other than for a few hours a month, how is a city suppose to progress and move forward at a pace necessary to keep ahead of other cities fighting to do the same?

Betz seems to think that by having a quorum of four that something underhanded or illegal can take place. Can't that happen even if the quorum is just three?

Betz also states that raising the quorum "might also make it difficult for the commission to hold some meetings. If more than one member is absent..."

The present situation allows just three commissioners to make policy on any issue. I think that if more than one commissioner is absent, there shouldn't be any decisions made. Anytime a decision is made that affects all the people of Goodland, there should be more than three commissioners present.

Is the changing of the quorum, which is allowed by state law, going to help our City move forward?

This commissioner thinks it will, but that's my opinion.

David Daniels, city commissioner
Goodland

To the Editor:

How can you uphold "red-ink-war wimps" — Bush, draft dodger Cheney and Rummy, killing 136 GIs in April.

They didn't enlist to get killed? Plus hundreds more for Bush's personal vendetta.

As long as Schrub is in office, we'll always have terrorism! He can't rule world. Hitler tried, and what happened?

Trillions in debt brought on by wimp Schrub.

\$200 million campaign funds for a idiot for president. What are the world and U.S. coming to?

He got in by crook anyway, and is most unfit idiot I've ever known.

I'm 78, a World War II vet. If I was of service age, I'd be a conscientious objector immediately!

Republican thoughts. "Gut the poor. Fatten the rich."

Robert D. Russell

Goodland

PS: Where's the weapons of mass destruction? Wimp sure suckered a bunch of humans with his vendetta.

garfield

