

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN



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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Military Must Do More On Assaults

EXPRESS-NEWS, San Antonio, Texas (Oct. 7): The study was done in Los Angeles, but there is no reason to believe that its findings aren't applicable elsewhere — including Texas.

It pointed to transition problems for returning veterans ranging from joblessness to homelessness to untreated physical and mental illnesses. But it also pointed to just how far the military must still go to address sexual abuse in the ranks.

The study was done by the University of Southern California. An Express-News article by Sig Christenson told of its contents.

Every problem identified in the study warrants attention. Recommendations range from better awareness and outreach programs to veterans programs becoming more holistic in their approach.

But here is one of the more salient shockers in a study chock-full of eyebrow raisers:

Two-thirds of female pre-9/11 veterans (66.2 percent) and 60.4 percent of female post-9/11 veterans reported being sexually harassed while serving in the military, according to the study. Reports of sexual assault for female veterans were equally high, with 56.9 percent of pre-9/11 veterans and 37.8 percent of post-9/11 veterans reporting being sexually assaulted.

The study takes solace in the lower rate for women in the post-9/11 category, saying it might indicate progress in preventing sexual assaults in the military.

But one pertinent question: How many assaults were even reported? A confidential Pentagon study in 2012 placed the number of military sexual assaults at 26,000, with 3,374 reported.

This study should be required reading for veterans support groups but also, especially when it comes to sexual assaults, for military leadership and members of Congress.

SPEAK UP!

Share your thoughts with us. Write to the PRESS & DAKOTAN on a topic of the day or in response to an editorial or story. Write us at: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Oct. 9, the 282nd day of 2014. There are 83 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 9, 1888, the public was first admitted to the Washington Monument.

On this date: In 1514, Mary Tudor, the 18-year-old sister of Henry VIII, became Queen consort of France upon her marriage to 52-year-old King Louis XII, who died less than three months later.

In 1776, a group of Spanish missionaries settled in present-day San Francisco.

In 1813, composer Giuseppe Verdi was born in the Italian village of Le Roncole. (Some sources say Verdi was actually born on Oct. 10.)

In 1914, the Belgian city of Antwerp fell to German forces during World War I.

In 1934, King Alexander I of Yugoslavia was assassinated in Marseille, France, by a Macedonian gunman.

In 1940, rock and roll legend John Lennon was born in Liverpool, England.

In 1946, the Eugene O'Neill drama 'The Iceman Cometh' opened at the Martin Beck Theater in New York.

In 1958, Pope Pius XII died at age 82, ending a 19-year papacy. (He was succeeded by Pope John XXIII.)

In 1967, Latin American guerrilla leader Che Guevara was killed by the Bolivian army a day after he was captured.

In 1974, businessman Oskar Schindler, credited with saving about 1,200 Jews during the Holocaust, died in Frankfurt, West Germany. (At his request, he was buried in Jerusalem.)

In 1985, the hijackers of the Achille Lauro cruise liner surrendered two days after seizing the vessel in the Mediterranean. (Passenger Leon Klinghoffer was killed by the hijackers during the standoff.)

In 1995, a sabotaged section of track caused an Amtrak train, the Sunset Limited, to derail in Arizona; one person was killed and about 80 were injured. (The case remains unsolved.)

Ten years ago: A tour bus from the Chicago area flipped in Arkansas, killing 15 people headed to a Mississippi casino. Afghanistan's first direct presidential election began (interim president Hamid Karzai emerged the winner). Australian Prime Minister John Howard won a historic fourth term in national elections. World-renowned French philosopher Jacques Derrida died in Paris at age 74.

Five years ago: President Barack

Obama won the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize for what the Norwegian Nobel Committee called 'his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.' A suicide car bomb in a busy market area in Peshawar, Pakistan, killed 53. A surveillance plane assigned to the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti crashed into a mountain, killing all 11 peacekeepers on board. Jacques Rogge won re-election as president of the International Olympic Committee for a final four-year term.

One year ago: The United States announced it was cutting hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to Egypt in response to the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi and the crackdown by the military-backed government on his supporters. Critic, author and editor Stanley Kauffmann, 97, died in New York.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Fyvush Finkel is 92. Retired MLB All-Star Joe Pepitone is 74. Former Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., is 73. Rhythm-and-blues singer Nona Hendryx is 70. Singer Jackson Browne is 66. Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams is 64. Actor Gary Frank is 64. Actor Richard Chaves is 63. Actor Robert Wuhl is 63. Actress-TV personality Sharon Osbourne is 62. Actor Tony Shalhoub is 61. Actor Scott Bakula is 60. Musician James Fearnley (The Pogues) is 60. Actor John O'Hurley is 60. Writer-producer-director-actor Linwood Boomer is 59. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Mike Singletary is 56. Actor Michael Pare is 56. Jazz musician Kenny Garrett is 54. Rock singer-musician Kurt Neumann (The BoDeans) is 53. Country singer Gary Bennett is 50. Movie director Guillermo del Toro is 50. British Prime Minister David Cameron is 48. Singer P.J. Harvey is 45. Movie director Steve McQueen (Film: '12 Years a Slave') is 45. World Golf Hall of Famer Annika Sorenstam is 44. Actress Cocoa Brown is 42. Country singer Tommy Shane Steiner is 41. Actor Steve Burns is 41. Rock singer Sean Lennon is 39. Actor Randy Spelling is 36. Christian hip-hop artist Lecrae is 35. Actor Brandon Routh is 35. Actor Zachery Ty Bryan is 33. Actress Spencer Grammer is 31. Actor Tyler James Williams is 22. Country singer Scotty McCreery (TV: 'American Idol' winner) is 21.

Thought for Today: 'It is not good for all our wishes to be filled; through sickness we recognize the value of health; through evil, the value of good; through hunger, the value of food; through exertion, the value of rest.' — Dorothy Canfield Fisher, American author and essayist (1879-1958).

FROM THE BIBLE

[Do not neglect] to meet together, as is the habit of some, but [encourage] one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:25. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

YOUR LETTERS

Political Discourse

John Magnuson, Yankton Recently, a local writer wrote that there should be more political discourse reflected in our local newspaper. Quite a few of us can sympathize with this point of view because voting for local candidates can seem like a crap shoot. It is difficult to predict how candidates might perform on given issues if elected. It is easy to get the impression that business interests have more influence than is immediately evident and more so than many voters would find acceptable.

If this writer sounded as if he were voicing a complaint, perhaps he should be listened to

with an eye towards making some changes.

In this same vein, you may have noticed a new website called CROWDPAC. This is an interesting online program which matches campaigns and donors. It has numerous filters which allow voters to match their political leanings on a variety of issues to candidates which come the closest to the voter preference. It also has a mechanism to identify candidates who receive the most money from large corporate donors. This site is free to use and helps identify your flavor of candidate and also to make contributions if desired. Some South Dakota candidates are listed but no one locally. This program is poised to take off and could help us make better decisions.

WE'RE TRYING TO STOP A CONTAGION FROM SPREADING TO OUR COUNTRY.

SAME HERE.



Writer's Block

Lagging Revenue: Just Do The Math

BY WILLIAM KERR

For the Press & Dakotan

It is really depressing to find out that our elected officials, as a group can't figure out why sales tax income, our state government's main source of income, has been dropping slowly for decades and inequality of income has been widening as well.

You would think that any high school student who reads the newspaper and watches the television news would be able to do the math and find the reason for that.

What about you, dear reader? Do you have the same affliction? It's the inability to apply simple math to the problem and see that the major problem is that one third of our total population in our country (and our state) who live either in poverty or near poverty cannot possibly keep buying as much stuff year after year when the cost of living goes up more than their income goes up.

And, neither the 1 percent (super wealthy) nor the top 5 percent (wealthy) can ever buy the amount of taxable stuff that the bottom third would buy if their wages, mainly the minimum wage, were raised the same percentage as the annual rise in the cost of living, as computed annually by the U.S. Congress's Office of Management and Budget. Those responsible, our elected officials, have not been increasing the minimum wage the same percentage as the cost of living rises since about 1968, as required by the original legislation (What do you call that? Robbery? And what do we call those who break laws by robbery? Thieves? Or criminals?)

Did you know that Congress passed legislation to protect themselves from being sued for breaking laws by requiring their consent be-

fore you can legally sue them? They did that in the late 1950s or early '60s. So, it isn't that they can't do the math; it's just intentional that they are not following the laws as originally intended. Does that sound like planning ahead to rob those living on the minimum wage, or in or near poverty?

Is that the kind of legislating you want our elected officials to practice? If not you had better pay a lot more attention to how individual legislators vote and quit voting for the party instead of individual candidates. It seems that the majority of voters have been voting just for the party instead of individual candidates for decades. That makes it more difficult to dump legislators who aren't doing what the majority of voters want. And, if the one-third of us living in poverty or near poverty would all take the time to watch for candidates who want to raise the minimum wage to where it should be (about \$12.10) and vote for them, we could see a big improvement in our economy that is only being held back by a bunch of greedy people who don't care about your problems.

It appears that a lot of our citizens seem to think it is not necessary to vote, and another lot who think it is not necessary to follow what our elected officials vote for, or against, once elected. If you like what we have now you have voted correctly, if not you have failed the most important part of citizenship in a democracy.

If you are citizen and are not a registered voter, you owe it to your country, your fellow citizens and yourself to register. Run, don't walk, to the county auditor's office to register. It is in the County Government Center on the first floor and open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.



William KERR

Point Of View

New EPA Rule Goes Too Far

BY RICHARD VASGAARD

Centerville

I appreciate the opportunity to share from a farmer's perspective how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposed 'Waters of the U.S.' rule is going to impact agriculture here in South Dakota, and all across the country. The EPA is attempting to regulate nearly every drop of water, even 'waters' that are dry most of the year. They are simply taking this too far.

Friends in agriculture, get ready to be blundered with heavy and unnecessary new regulations never intended by Congress. When Congress passed the Clean Water Act in 1972, they specifically said that only 'navigable' waters are under federal jurisdiction. But now EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have taken it upon themselves to expand the Clean Water Act to cover every stream, slough, creek, draw, gully, puddle or ditch.

Between the proposed rule and an interpretive rule that accompanies it, there are more than 600 pages of new regulation. The way it's all worded, the water doesn't have to be permanent or navigable to qualify. Any area with any amount of flow at any time will now be under EPA control. If there's water in an area for a week, a day, an hour or a minute, the EPA has made it so they can probably call it 'Waters of the U.S.'

What the EPA is doing goes against congressional intent, and it also goes against two decisions by the Supreme Court. Two cases — Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2001, and Rapanos v. United States in 2006 — reaffirmed the Clean Water Act's limit on federal jurisdiction, reminding agencies that Congress used the word 'navigable' for a reason.

People who support this rule are telling us not to worry because agriculture is exempted. But if you read the fine print, the only exemptions for agriculture are in the section 404 'dredge and fill' permit program, for activities that move dirt around, like digging a ditch or installing drainage tile. Any of the regular activities we as farmers need to do in our fields and pastures are not exempt from this rule, things like tillage, spraying for weeds, applying fertilizer, mowing ditches, baling hay and so

on. Can you imagine having to apply for a permit from the EPA to do regular field work? This will be a bureaucratic nightmare, and will do nothing to impact water quality, which they say is their intent.

If the EPA can find cause to call any spots on my farm 'Waters of the U.S.,' then I am subject to Clean Water Act liability, which is no small matter. Fines can be levied of up to \$37,500 per discharge per day. The Clean Water Act is what they call a 'strict liability' statute, which means the largest of waters and the smallest of waters are regulated equally. So, if this 'Waters of the U.S.' rule goes through as printed, an irrigation ditch or a small slough on my farm will be regulated as strictly as the Florida Everglades.

Some people are saying they doubt the EPA will have enough manpower to regulate this new rule. One of my fellow Farm Bureau members who recently traveled to Washington, D.C. was told directly by an EPA employee that the agency intends to use satellite imagery to monitor these farming activities from above. It seems modern technology is making the job of regulators very easy — even when what they're attempting to regulate is a complete overreach of their jurisdiction.

Farm Bureau estimates that more than 100 million acres will now come under EPA jurisdiction and the rule will impact nearly every farmer and rancher in the nation. This is a vast expansion of federal power that was not passed by Congress. This should bother not only us in agriculture, but everyone who is concerned about the role of the federal government in private property rights.

Clean water is important, but the EPA's new rule isn't the way to go about it. As farmers, we care for our land and water because it is literally the foundation for everything we do. If we take care of it, it takes care of us and our families. What good does it do for the EPA to regulate areas that are dry most of the time, or not interconnected to a navigable waterway? If they do this, what will be next? I hope you'll all consider sending your comments to the EPA by the Oct. 21 deadline.

Richard Vasgaard farms near Centerville and serves on the South Dakota Farm Bureau board of directors.

WRITE US

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