

Opinion



A Kansas Viewpoint

Veterans Day note to our children

By Rep. Jerry Moran

One year ago this week, Kansas experienced a great loss as two Kansans were killed in the War in Iraq. Sergeant First Class Clinton Wisdom and Sergeant Don Clary were the first Kansas Army National Guard soldiers to die in combat since the Vietnam War.

Both were members of the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery based in northeast Kansas. On Nov. 8, 2004, these Kansas Guardsmen were providing protection to a convoy in Baghdad when a suicide bomber sped toward them. Without hesitation, these men placed their own vehicle between the bomber and the convoy. Both were killed in the explosion. Their actions saved many lives that day.

Major Austin Hamner, a soldier who served alongside these men, wrote a letter from Iraq to his three daughters at home. It was published in his hometown newspaper last year during the week of Veterans Day. The soldier wrote:

"Hello girls, I have something very important to tell you about this war and the meaning of Veterans Day. Sometimes on Veterans Day, we lose connection to the real meaning of the day. Sweethearts, I've just returned from the memorial service that was held for two very special soldiers. These two men were taken from this world on Monday of this very week protecting our unit.

Sooner or later all of us will pass on from this life, but those who willingly give their lives for others certainly are true heroes. Jesus once taught the world that, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' That is one way to know that these two men were real-life heroes.

I am so looking forward to seeing you again and being together. I will give you extra hugs and kisses because I know that there are children who will not get them from their dad who was taken away on Monday.

Love you,
Papa"

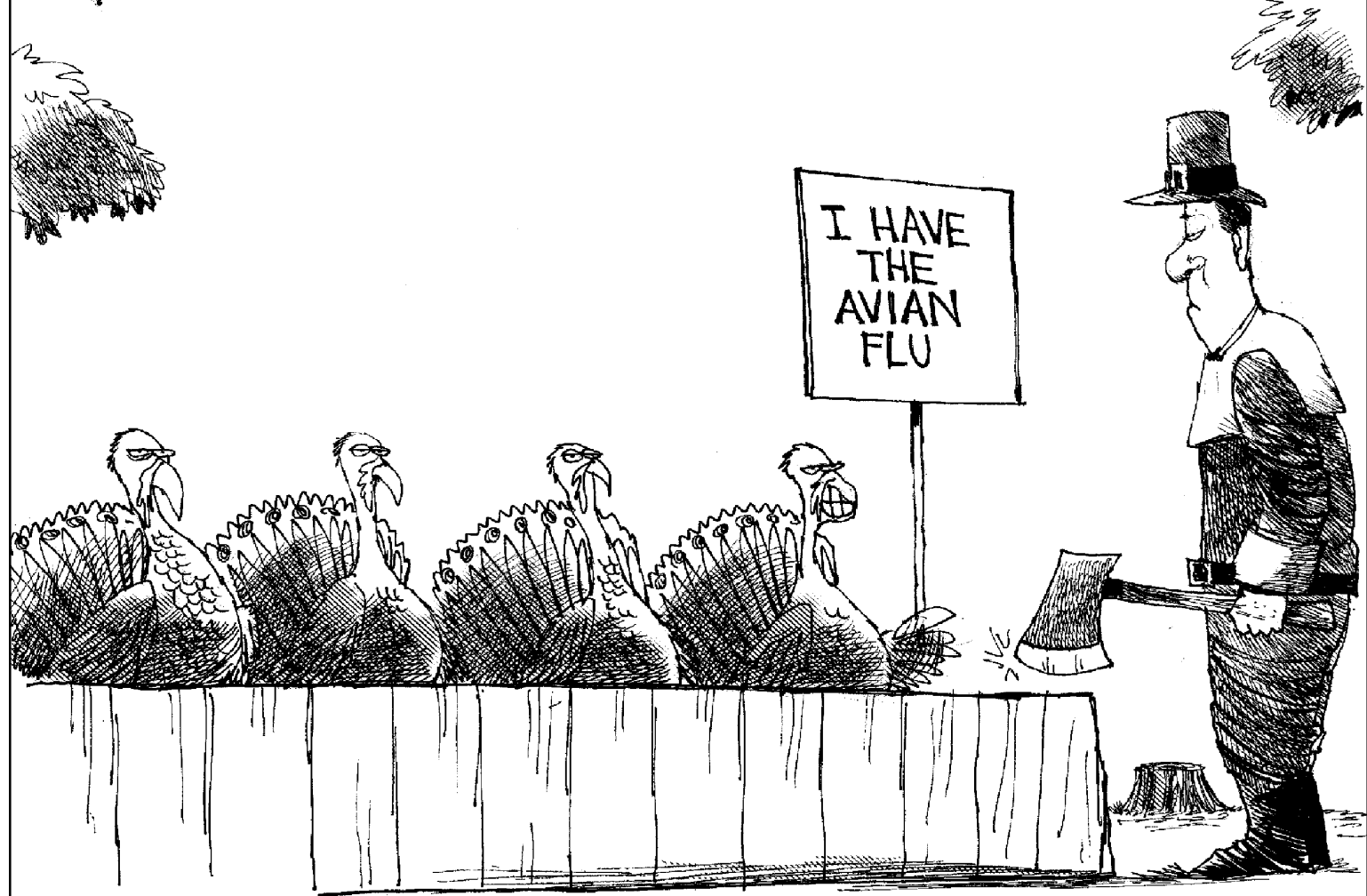
Like the soldier who wrote his daughters, it is our responsibility to ensure that our children and grandchildren appreciate the sacrifices made by those serving our country and never forget these heroes. Each year, as the percentage of our population who has worn a uniform declines, fewer and fewer individuals and families have a personal connection with the military. Instilling in America's youth an awareness of the contributions of veterans past and present becomes even more important.

Even though many Americans will not serve, knowledge of those who have served is essential. The traits we learn from veterans — courage, honor, duty, sacrifice, patriotism, heroism — are characteristics that make us better citizens. Their everyday acts inspire us to reach beyond our limits. Their losses remind us to live a life worthy of their sacrifice. And through their service on our behalf, we remember the obligations we owe. These are important lessons only a veteran can teach us.

It is our task to share with our children that Veterans Day is more than a day off school or a department store sale. It's a day to honor the more than 250,000 veterans in Kansas and the 25 million nationwide, as well as their families, who stepped forward to defend our country. It's a day to pay tribute to those who have given so much, to those who continue to give and to those who gave all so that we may live in the greatest country in the world.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com.

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GARY MARKSTEIN



Who is more truthful men or women?

About two years ago, an article in the Reader's Digest caught my eye. The subject was about honesty and who was more truthful — men or women.

Before I even started reading, I had already made up my mind that my gender was the more honest.

Actually, I almost dismissed the story thinking I knew what the author was going to write about before I even read it. I was surprised, though.

The gist of the article had nothing to do with what I had initially thought would be its focus — meaning honesty of politicians or national public figures — that sort of thing.

The article ended up being a survey and it was more about the average person and how lenient we can be on ourselves.

For example, some people believe that being honest with family and friends should be No. 1.

As one group said, "if you lie to them, it's like lying to yourself."

I cringed when I read that part. As many in the survey, it would be hard for me to be totally honest with friends, family and even co-workers on some issues.

However, I do know some co-workers who would disagree with me. I can remember one in particular who believed in total "cash-register" honesty. In other words, no matter how much something might hurt someone, this employee would tell it like it was every single time.

Personally, it would be hard being that "truthful" about everything. I might let someone know



Patty Decker

● Deep Thoughts

if they had seeds between their teeth after lunch, but to say they were looking bad that day or a hurtful comment just isn't me. Still, I consider myself to be a honest person overall.

But, I am veering off from the article. Getting back to the point, it was fascinating to read about how others in this survey responded.

Just for fun, here are some of the questions that were asked. Maybe it might surprise others like it did me. I guess I learned I am not the "saint" I thought I was.

In one portion of the survey, the questions were "Have you ever..."

— Called in sick at work when not ill?

— Taken office supplies from your company for personal use?

— Taken anything valuable from your company for personal use?

— Misstated facts on a resume or job application?

— Shifted blame to a co-worker for something you did?

— Been undercharged/received too much

from a cashier and not told him?

— Downloaded music from an Internet site without paying for it?

— "Cheated" on your tax return by not declaring income or over-reported deductions?

— Lied to friends or family members about their appearances? (oops...I have already confessed to that).

— Knowing you had little chance of getting caught, driven more than 20 mph over the speed limit or gone through a red light?

— Lied to your spouse or partner about the cost of a recent purchase?

— Lied to your spouse or partner about your relationship with another person?

Of the 3,000 people surveyed on the above questions, respondents said "yes" to at least five questions.

As for who is more honest — men or women — the results, according to the Readers's Digest survey, indicated that "both sexes tend to be equally culpable."

However, each gender suggests that men and women fib in different ways. Men's dishonesty surfaces more around impersonal objects — taking office supplies, fudging on taxes, etc. As for women, we tend to lie more about being sick, fibbing on the cost of items, or sparing another person's feelings.

I suppose I knew this all along, but still it was fun to review the survey and check on my honesty. How about you?

Patty Decker is editor of the Free Press.

Your turn

We must stand behind our troops

Today is a special day that all Americans can be proud of their own veterans, celebrating Veterans Day.

Today we are going through one of our nation's most difficult times. It's a time that all Americans have pulled together from New York to Los Angeles and Seattle to Tampa Bay. All Americans can be very proud of a lot of things.

Sept. 11, 2001, will change America as well as the rest of the world. It will never be the same as it was before Sept. 11. It has been a wake-up call for every citizen of this, the greatest nation in the world, the United States of America.

This time the call has come after our nation has been attacked. The world cannot live with terrorism. We live in a nation that has a lot of freedoms. It all started out many years ago by our colonists. They put their lives on the line by signing the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. That is where our freedom comes

from. We have freedom of speech, press and the right to assemble.

We also have the right to bear arms, as well as the right choose the religion of our choice and many more not to mention. We must stand by our flag even more now on what has happened here on Sept. 11. We must be proud Americans and get our flags and fly them everywhere and show the world that we are the United States of America. God bless America and it's people.

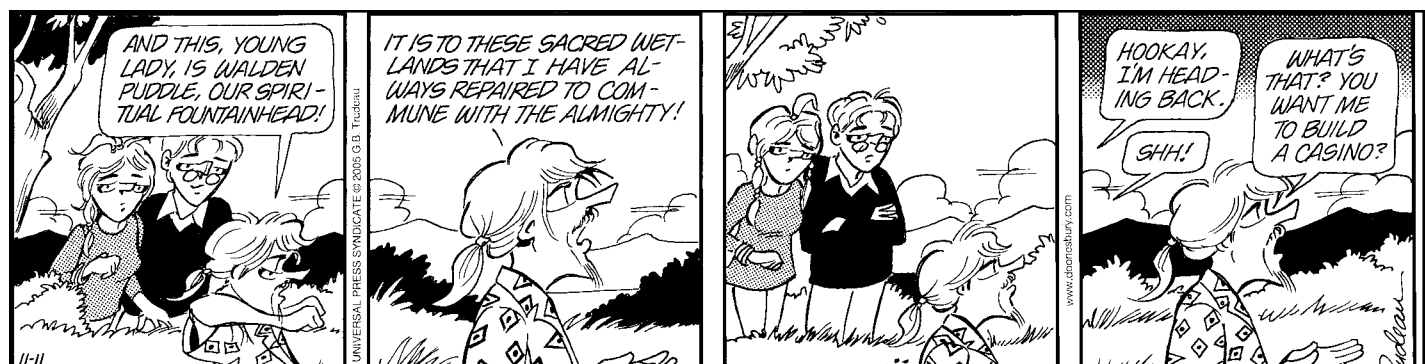
We also have an elite group of people in our nation. They are dads, moms, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, grandparents and neighbors. These people care called veterans of the United States. They have gone to war not knowing if they would make it home alive. Making the call of duty for our country defending our freedom that we have now and for the future. They have defeated Hitler in World War II, Communism in Korea, Vietnam and now the start of the war on

terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq. Veterans make up 10 percent of the population.

We must thank all our vets in America. There are veterans that died for us in battle and gave the ultimate price. They should not be forgotten. Also, the POW and MIA should not be forgotten.

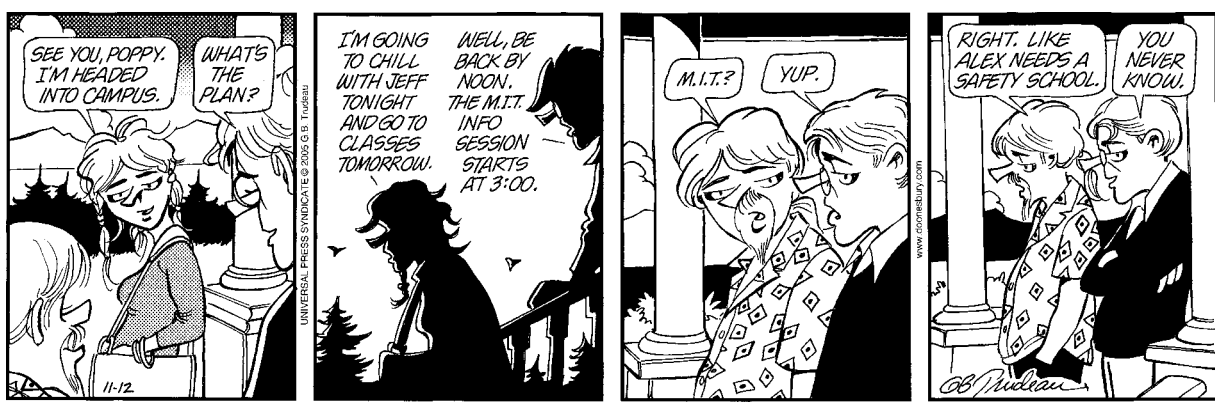
We are proud of them all, may God bless their souls. We must stand united and stand behind our troops. The war on terrorism is far from over. We must stop it to make the world a better place to live in the 21st century. What would the world be like today if we hadn't stopped Hitler in World War II? American veterans are the best people we can have. They have given us all our freedoms we now have today as well as guarding our nation. I salute all of the veterans.

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Colby



Doonesbury

● Gary Trudeau



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