

from our viewpoint...

## Veterans get option to salute our flag

Saluting the American flag as a citizen shows our allegiance and loyalty to the principles this symbol of our country represents.

Standing at attention and placing your hand over your heart as Old Glory is raised, lowered or passed by is taken a bit for granted by many citizens.

To those who are serving or who have served in the military, though, the flag takes on extended meaning of brotherhood and the sacrifice of those who have died defending their comrades and preserving the freedom we enjoy.

A bill to change the current law would give veterans and servicemen and women in civilian clothes the option to render the hand salute passed the U.S. Senate (S.1877) at the end of July, and has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) said he introduced the bill to clarify how veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag.

"My legislation will clarify this regulation, allowing veterans and servicemen alike to salute the flag, whether they are in uniform or not," he said.

The law covering the proper salute to the flag is Section 9 of Title 4, United States Code. The new language proposed by Inhofe says: "Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries should stand at attention."

Goodland Navy veteran Ken Baum likes the idea, saying it is something the American Legion has been talking about. He thinks it would be an honor as a veteran to be able to render the hand salute.

There was mixed reaction among other veterans, with some thinking it was a waste of Congress's time, and others feeling like Baum it is an honor to salute the flag showing they are veterans. Reaction across the nation has been split as well. Here's a sampling:

"As a veteran, I am pleased to look forward to permission to salute (once the House passes the bill and the president signs it). I understand the proper procedure as it applies to me and other service members, and I'm glad to have the salute restriction lifted. We should understand, however, that most people are not service members, and do not understand or accept that there is a restriction on their personal display of patriotism. This bill is not a waste of time, but don't get upset with people who copy your salute. They're patriots, too. — John from Virginia

"Not one to follow frivolous rules, I am surprised that there even was a rule against my saluting. I'm a vet and salute pretty much when I think it is appropriate. Congress needs to get back to work." — Charlie Baker, location unknown.

"This will be setting a good example of the expression of patriotism to our civilian friends and neighbors. It always surprises them when they see how many of us (patriotic former military) there really are. Sometimes they are totally shocked, like when Art Buchwald stood at attention at a dinner when they played the Marine Hymn." — Herb Hornung, location unknown.

Changing how one salutes should not change the basic principle that we salute the American flag out of loyalty and dedication to preserving the freedom our flag represents.

Your editor, an old Navy veteran, thinks it would be an honor to have the option to use the hand salute when Old Glory passes by. — Tom Betz



## Patience pays off at Rockies game

We finally got to another Rockies game Friday, just our second of the year. We stayed to the bitter end, which turned out to be a real good idea.

The first game we went to, the Rockies played the hapless Kansas City Royals — and lost.

This time, they faced the hapless Washington Nationals, who had beat them three out of four games in D.C. The Rocks were reeling from losing three out of four to hapless Pittsburgh, suffering a complete meltdown in the pitching staff, but we figured things had to get better.

But for eight innings, it seemed like we were in for another disappointment. Washington had their ace, Shawn Hill, pitching. We had Jeff Francis, our ace, as it were. He's a good young pitcher, but had been struggling along with the rest of the staff.

For eight innings, the Rocks staggered along. Francis pitched well, but a couple of errors in the seventh helped two more runs come in, and there were those two home runs.

Our friends, Bob and Harrison, made their excuses and ducked out in the eighth. It was 5-



**steve haynes**

● along the sappa

1 Nats after the top of the ninth, and even a three-up-and-three-down inning by former closer Brian Fuentes couldn't clear the gloom.

Troy Tulowitzki, the fierce young Rockies shortstop who just might be the National League Rookie of the Year, stepped up to the plate and smacked the first pitch into the outfield for a single. Left fielder Matt Holiday followed, swatting the first pitch over the wall to make the score 5-3.

A single by first baseman Todd Helton, a double by right fielder Brad Hawpe, a single by catcher Yorvit Torrealba (what a name) and a couple of outs left the game tied and everything up to second baseman Kazuo Matsui, who has to talk to reporters through an interpreter but sure can play the game. He came up with runners on second and third, two outs and

maybe the whole season on the line.

With all 25,000 of us — those who hadn't left, anyway — standing, Matsui hit the third pitch to the Nationals' second baseman, who couldn't quite find the handle. By the time he had the ball, Hawpe had scored, the swift Matsui was safe at first and the game was over without a throw.

I've seen better games, but never a better ending.

I've seen comebacks, but nothing quite like that.

It was, in fact, the statisticians said, the best comeback ever for the Rocks in the final inning.

I had to call Harrison, who had caught a street car home. (I'd have called Bob, but he's impossible. If he has his cell phone with him, it's never on).

"I know, I know," he said. "I just got my radio back on. I heard people cheering on the train."

Some days, it seems, it pays to be patient. I don't know if we'll get to another game, but it'd be hard to top that one.

## The other Reagan Doctrine: Keep the lid on

I got thinking about something my dad Ronald Reagan wrote about in his book "An American Life" about the importance of sometimes keeping secrets from Congress.

He recalled certain things he refused to reveal to members of Congress and explained why he would not take them into his confidence.

For example, he recalled that he would not share with Congress the fact that he was about to go into Grenada to prevent a Communist takeover of that island and to rescue endangered American students there.

He would not share with Congress the fact that he was about to order a fly-by over Khadafy's Libya, and take out one or two of his homes in the process.

He wouldn't share with Congress that he was ordering Ed Meese to shoot down Libyan planes if they locked on to our fighter planes with their missiles. He said if our pilots believed they were locked-on they should not hesitate to shoot them down. And they did.

In his book he explained that he didn't reveal these things because he feared that members of Congress would leak information to the media to try to stop him from carrying out those plans to protect our national security which they opposed.

He knew that such leaks could cause people to lose their lives and be very detrimental to the United States. So he kept his mouth shut.

What got me thinking about this was an article in The Washington Times last week that revealed that the Bush administration was devising a plan to stave off the very serious possibility of a Turkish invasion and military action in northern Iraq.

The story claimed that U.S. Special Forces would work with the Turkish military to locate and capture leaders of a Kurdish rebel group,



**michael reagan**

● making sense

the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Covert action, classified planning, and the utmost secrecy were required if the plan was to succeed in preventing an explosive situation to develop in northern Iraq, which up to now has been the most peaceful area of that troubled country. An invasion by Turkey would upset that apple cart.

It was vital that the plan be kept confidential, and members of Congress were told that fact during Congressional briefings, but unconcerned Capitol Hill blabbermouths chucked security into the trash can when one or more members of Congress present at briefings — conducted in secrecy by Undersecretary of Defense Eric Edelman — leaked the information to columnist Robert Novak, who published it in his column.

The result: the interests of the United State were undermined and the chance of success of a program vital to the United States was scuttled.

Here we go again with members of Congress. They leaked information either because they disagree with a policy or are just excited over being able to show how important they are in having access to classified information they can leak to the media.

It doesn't bother them that the leaks prevented something vital to our national security from happening. In this case, the plan no longer has any chance of success because, thanks to the leakers, everyone knows about it.

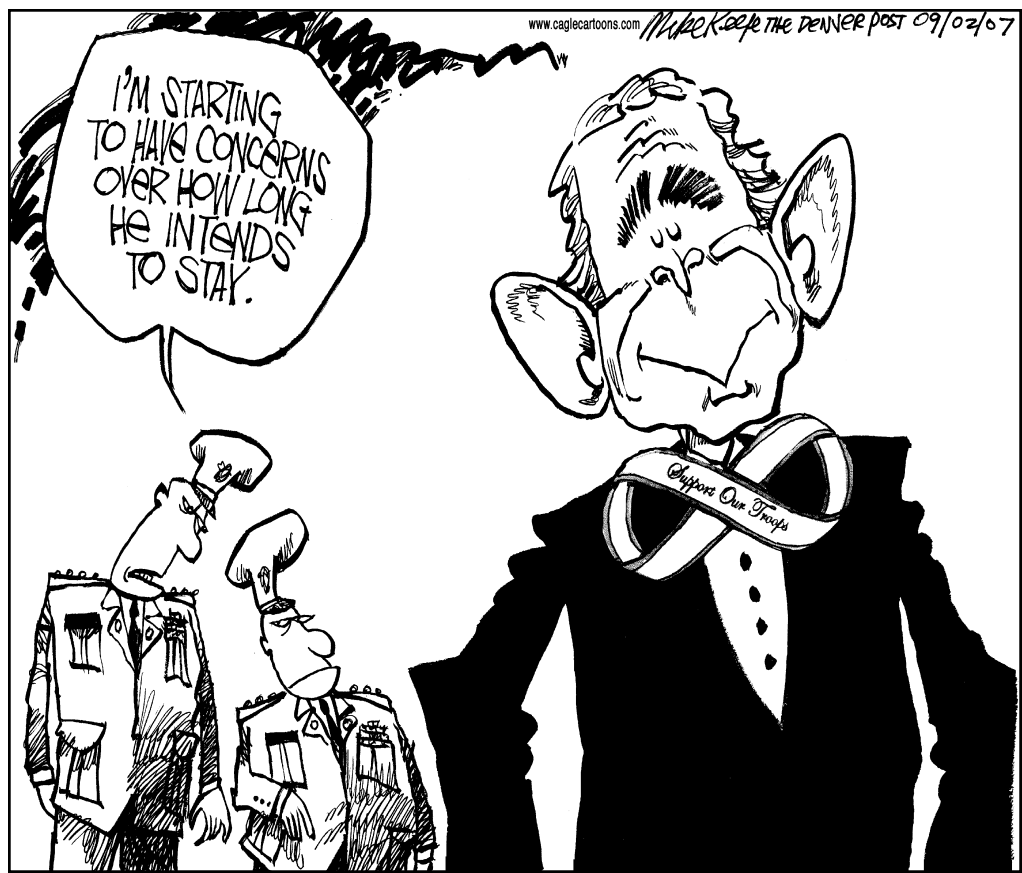
These members of Congress who can't or won't keep a secret need to be held accountable, but they won't because the one piece of information they won't leak is who they are.

These leakers could kill us all someday.

It's a good thing there were no politicians or reporters around when George Washington crossed the Delaware. If they had been the Hessians would have been waiting for them on the other side.

My dad had the right idea: Don't ask, don't tell. Just go ahead and do the right thing and keep quiet about it until it's done.

Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard talk radio stations nationally. E-mail comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com.



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