

## Why do we fight in these wars anyway?

Since the nation united to defeat the Axis powers during World War II, the U.S. has had trouble “winning” wars, though the results have not been all bad.

We had to win World War II. The best result otherwise would have left us isolated by hostile powers dominating Europe and Asia; at the low ebb, the idea of a German invasion and takeover of the U.S. – unimaginable as that might seem – was not out of reason.

In Korea, we stopped the invasion of South Korea and drove the invaders back to the Chinese border. We in turn were routed by waves of Chinese “volunteers” and driven back. A truce, still in effect, restored the border between the two Koreas, but the war itself has never ended.

After fighting in Vietnam for more than a decade, we pulled our troops out, leaving our allies to the tender mercies of the communists. Many South Vietnamese friends would end up in labor camps, the lucky ones, anyway.

Today Vietnam is a thriving, developing Third-World country, where merchandise in airport shops is priced in dollars, not “dongs.” Maybe we lost the war, but won the peace.

In the first Gulf War, we “won” by driving Iraq out of Kuwait, losing only about 135 troops in all, but left Saddam Hussein in power. Along the way, we killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, a fact that few Americans seem to remember.

Leaving Saddam set us up for the next round, however, and that may have been a mistake.

Then came the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, which prompted us to invade Afghanistan and suppress the Taliban. Win is now how we would describe the result, however, and now we are pulling out, leaving our allies and especially the women of Afghanistan, to a fate, if anything, worse than that of our Vietnamese friends.

Iraq, if anything, has turned out even worse. It’s degenerating into chaos, anarchy and violence, where the probable winners are the radical Islamists who prompted us to get into the war in the first place. You have to ask, if the goal was to replace Saddam, is that how we wanted things to turn out?

Why do we fight these wars, anyway?

In Iraq and Afghanistan, at least, our casualties have been light – fewer than 8,000 troops killed in 13 years, nothing compared to 58,000 in Vietnam or 36,500 in Korea. The cost to any family that lost a son or daughter is incalculable, of course, and the fiscal cost mounts into the billions.

The cost of total war is far higher – 650,000 dead in the U.S. Civil War, about 405,000 Americans in World War II. But wars that must be fought become total war, as Abraham Lincoln and his contemporaries found a century and a half ago.

“Limited” wars may have lower costs, but it can be hard to assert a victory, harder still to maintain one after we pull out.

What have we gained from 13 years and untold billions of fighting?

We have suppressed the terrorist movement, for a time anyway. But their friends seem likely to dominate both nations, and both will be used to train fighters and stage new attacks. It is hard to say we “won” either war.

Limited wars do not receive total commitment, and without that, it’s difficult to achieve even limited goals. The way we are leaving dishonors those who paid the ultimate price.

Being the world’s superpower and policeman is no easy task. When will we learn either not to get into these adventures, or to bring them quickly and successfully to a conclusion that can be held?

– Steve Haynes



## For the people or for the corporation

Personal freedoms and liberties have been, since our founding, the heart of our country. Always at our core is the need to protect an individual citizen’s rights. Bottom line is this, if the government doesn’t protect the individual, who does it protect? After the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling, the answer might well be, the corporation.

Recently the Court, in a very divided decision, sided with Hobby Lobby and two other privately owned corporations over religious beliefs and employer provided health care. The ruling says Hobby Lobby is exempt from having to provide FDA approved contraception under the Affordable Care Act. This is based on “their” religious beliefs. Should the personal liberties of individuals extend to corporations? Never in our country’s history have for profit corporations been afforded the same status for religious freedoms as an individual.

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



So is “their” the owners or the corporation? No one would argue the personal right, but the corporation right would seem doubtful. The problem with this is where do you draw the line? Today it is contraception, tomorrow mental health or diabetes. It is not difficult to realize this could be an out of control train.

Corporations now have a greater opportunity, based on a variety of rights, to impose further restrictions on their employees. Some will say, “Why not, they own the company?” But is our government for the people or for the

corporation? The Court has said this is a very narrow ruling with limited applications, but this ruling falls closely on the heels of another. In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled on corporate campaign spending using the First Amendment Right of Free Speech. The ruling gave corporations significant flexibility and unleashed spending power for candidates and causes. We might soon be a nation of corporations and corporate powers rather than, “we, the people.”

Having said all this, there is one issue I didn’t address. Women’s health-care. It is a right, not a political or religious issue. It is a personal issue. If we are going to limit women’s health rights, maybe we should limit men’s too. Considering more than 23 million men have been prescribed Viagra, need we be reminded the surest way to prevent abortions...well, you get it. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

## Letting go...it’s a needed part of life

I’ve eulogized several people in this column over the years. I decided not to do that anymore. Because I don’t want to leave anyone out and the older I get the faster the losses come.

There is a distinction made in old age: “young” old age and “old” old age. “Young” old age are retirees who live in their own homes, have active lives and good physical and mental health. Those who are past 85 and sometimes those who are younger but have failing health are “old” old age.

We Boomers refuse to grow old gracefully. We foolishly tell ourselves 60 is the new 40. The older we get; the older, old is!

Every now and then we get a reality check.

I got one when looking at a photo of a class reunion. It was not my class reunion but apparently those people are my age because I graduated the same year they did! No disrespect to any member of the class of 1969 anywhere but only in a parallel universe would those people be mistaken for people in their 40’s. (Maybe the 60/40 thing refers to attitude, in which case I’m only 21!)

Reality check two: I complained recently of my achy bones and my daughter said, “Must be that weather front!” If I hadn’t been so tired I would have gotten up and laid a whoopin’ on her! Don’t laugh, I could still do it!

I recently viewed a video produced by students in a Digital Ethnography class at Kansas State University. As

### This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



part of their degree work several students lived in a Meadowlark Hills (a nursing home) for a semester.

In the touching video two students act out vignettes as the residents tell their life stories. It ends with a poem by Mary Oliver

“to live in this world you must be able to do three things to love what is mortal; to hold it against your bones knowing your own life depends on it; and, when the time comes to let it go, to let it go”

What struck me was this how great the commitment was in those marriages. I say commitment not love because today those weddings would have us shaking our heads and saying, “that will never last!”

A woman in the video says, “We decided to get married on Sunday, got married on Monday and he shipped out (WWII) on Tuesday.” How well did they know each other prior? And what was it like for this young man to return after WAR to a wife he had not seen in perhaps years? What was it

like for a wife, used to making her own decisions. In those days the balance of power would have returned completely to the man.

Was it love that got them through or commitment? A commitment we are increasingly less and less willing to make: a decision to stay when times are hard, when a child dies, when a job is lost or when health fails. When you look out at the world and what everyone else has seems so much better than what you have.

Mary Oliver said, “Hold it!” “And, when the time comes, let it go.”

I’ve said I would not eulogize anyone again, but this week I am thinking of Jane Kersenbrock. She taught my kids but I knew her best as Pastor’s wife when Jack served the United Parish.

In every picture at the funeral reception I noticed she was smiling!

You did not get religious platitudes with Jane. She was immensely practical. And creative. She understood every day you have to work with what you have been given. She would step in and help with the gentlest of hands when it appeared you were going to make a mess of it!

So many wonderful people in this world! How great the losses!

Not only in marriage but in our friendships: We love and hold, knowing our own lives depend on it. We let go.

We let go.

Call Dana for your next ad. 785-877-3361!

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X  
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654  
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor’ West Newspapers  
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd  
Publishers, 1970-2002

OFFICE HOURS:  
8 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.  
8 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday  
Phone: (785) 877-3361  
Fax: (785) 877-3732

STAFF

- Dana Paxton..... General Manager  
Advertising Director  
dpaxton@nwkansas.com
- Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay Sports  
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com
- Michael Stephens..... Reporter  
Managing Editor  
mstephens@nwkansas.com
- Shylo Paxton..... Society Editor  
spaxton@nwkansas.com
- Vicki Henderson..... Computer Production
- Marcia Shelton..... Office Manager



Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:  
e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com  
or write to 215 S. Kansas Ave.



Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.