

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

ALL PHOTOS BY BASTARDS' ROAD

Marine Corps veteran
Jon Hancock in South Dakota.



Hancock on his 5,800-mile journey.



A still from the documentary "Bastards' Road."



Hancock embraces fellow Marine Chris Macintosh.

Healing and Redemption: A Marine Corps Veteran's 5,800-Mile Walk

ANDREW THOMAS

War scars in more ways than one, and when our veterans come home, it's not always easy to see at first glance. The stigma surrounding mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) makes it even more difficult to address the trauma our men and women in uniform experience. Sometimes it takes bold action and candid conversation to heal.

Marine Corps veteran Jon Hancock was deployed to Ramadi, Iraq, as part of the 2nd Battalion 4th Marines in 2004. The platoon, known as the Magnificent Bastards, fought honorably and experienced many casualties. One in four Marines were wounded or killed in the fighting. Despite the heavy losses and unimaginable trauma, Hancock would return to Iraq for six more deployments. But the brutality of the war, the loss of his brothers, and the questioning of his own humanity all took a toll when he returned.

Hancock hopes veterans learn from his story that they're not alone, and that talking about their traumas doesn't make them weak.

Hancock, now 38, left active duty on Sept. 21, 2009, and immediately began attending college at the University of Maryland. The transition into the student, civilian world wasn't a smooth one.

"Probably then is when I started feeling the derision and the anonymity," Hancock said, "because here I am having worked in all these teams, in these groups, in this really awesome career that I've had up to this point, and then all of a sudden now I'm sitting there listening to some kid try to tell me what Iraq and Afghanistan and war is like."

The Walk

Hancock felt alone, and symptoms of PTSD began to surface. He hated himself and others, and anyone outside of the military community experienced his wrath. He drank to try to cope, and that led to one DUI and then a second. He had a young son with his girlfriend but struggled to be a present father and loving partner. His downward spiral culminated with a suicide attempt in November 2014. Afterward,

he checked himself into the VA and sought treatment. But he found that the agency was inadequate and unwilling to really help him.

That's when he knew he had to do it himself. He decided to embark on a cross-country journey to visit his fellow Marines and the Gold Star families of his fallen brothers. He wanted to share his experience with them, and listen to and try to understand their struggles in return.

When he began his journey, he was uncertain how it would turn out. On Sept. 11, 2016, after two weeks of walking, he nearly turned around.

"I think there was still a little piece of me inside that thought I was going to die on this walk," Hancock said. "I thought I was just going to sink into the darkness, into the background, and fade to black."

Hancock called his mother, and she offered to pick him up. But he had quit everything he had attempted after his service.

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JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES



People watch the Fourth of July parade wind through downtown in Deer Isle, Maine, on July 4, 2019.

Our Sacred Honor: Reflections on the Fourth of July

JEFF MINICK

The place: Philadelphia. The time: June 1776.

The Continental Congress appoints a Committee of Five—Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Robert Livingston of New York, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, and chairman John Adams of Massachusetts—to draw up a declaration of independence from Britain. Though John Adams seems

the natural choice to write the initial draft of this document, he defers to the Virginian for several reasons, telling Jefferson by his own account, "You can write ten times better than I can."

The committee agrees with Adams, and Jefferson takes up his pen.

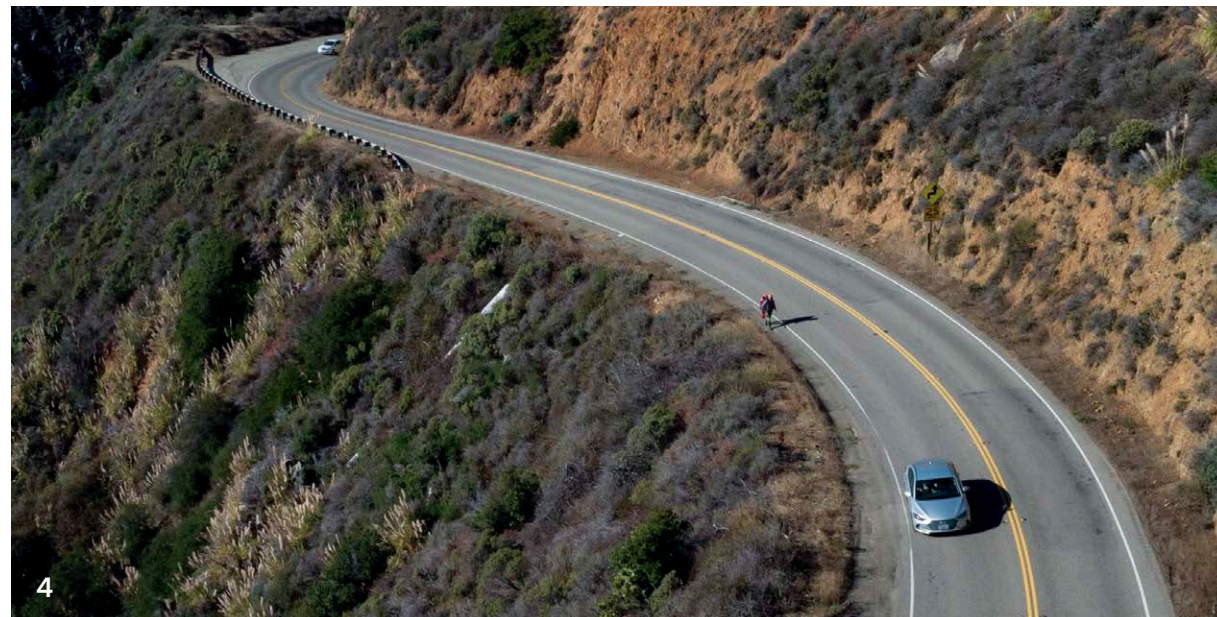
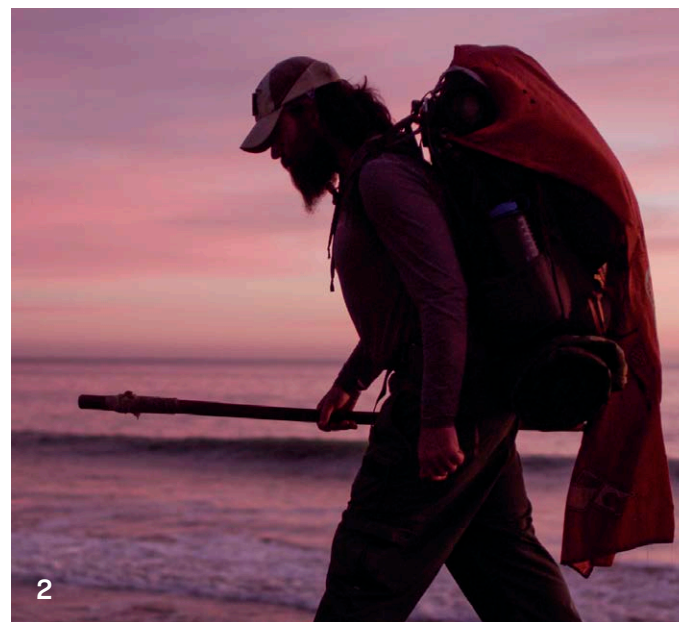
On July 2, Congress votes to declare America's independence from Great Britain, a date that Adams believes will be forever remembered. In a letter written to his wife Abigail on July 3, Adams asserts:

"The second day of July 1776, will be the most memorable Epoch, in the History of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival."

Adams is mistaken.

On July 3 and 4, Congress debates the declaration presented them by the committee, making changes in the wording. To avoid offending some of the Southern

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ALL PHOTOS BY BASTARDS' ROAD

1. The Wyoming landscape rises before Hancock.

2. Hancock decided to create the nonprofit Bastards' Road Project (BastardsRoadProject.org), dedicated to taking veterans on long-distance hikes to heal the wounds of war.

3. Hancock embraces Gold Star mother Lorelei Simons at Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, Calif.

4. Walking along U.S. Highway 101.

Healing and Redemption: A Marine Corps Veteran's 5,800-Mile Walk

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He had quit school and work, and realized at that point that he had to follow through on this journey.

Trying to Understand

During Hancock's nearly 6,000-mile journey, he received both positive and negative reactions from people he encountered along the way. Every military member and veteran he ran into was supportive and congratulatory. Those responses solidified his will to carry on. Others were mean-spirited, and some even threw trash and other debris at him as he walked on the side of the road. In one instance, a woman saw the Marine Corps flag on his back, and screamed at him, calling him a baby killer. But this type of abhorrent behavior only emboldened him. In situations like this, he learned to let these insults roll off of his back.

"It makes no sense to argue with people who are idiots, so I didn't. I just decided that I would agree with anybody that was negative," Hancock said.

While he was on his journey, cinematographer Brian Morrison noticed pieces of Hancock's story on local news outlets. The two had gone to high school together but had never actually met. They were eventually able to connect through mutual friends.

Morrison had always wanted to work on a more profound, longer-term film, and was inspired by Hancock's mission.

"A lot of these stories about veterans coming home, I just feel like they're glossed over, and I wanted to give more attention

to what he was going through. I wanted to hear it from him," Morrison said.

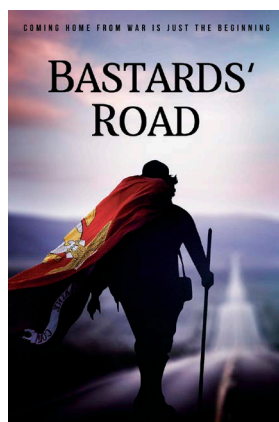
His desire and curiosity to truly understand what veterans endure when they come home motivated him to sit down with Hancock and discuss the prospect of filming a documentary about his walk. Hancock agreed, and his trust in Morrison in turned enabled his Marine brothers and their families to trust him and allow him to capture their story. He learned about the strength and resilience of our veterans and the extraordinary nature of the bonds of trust and loyalty in their community.

A New Beginning

When Hancock finally reached Camp Pendleton, members of the 2nd Battalion 4th Marines stood every 50 feet at attention to welcome him. He still struggles to articulate how he felt that day, but remembers a sense of accomplishment, follow-through, and support.

Hancock was lost before he embarked on his 5,800-mile trek, but by the time he reached the end of his journey, he'd discovered a few critical aspects about himself. He relearned how to be accountable to himself, and that he'd been blaming his PTSD and resulting struggles on other people and external factors. He also found out that while some of his fellow Marines seemed to be doing well, it wasn't until he spoke with them that he realized they were struggling too. But overall, he learned that he had to forgive himself if he wanted to begin to heal.

"You have to forgive yourself for the things you've done in your past, otherwise they haunt you, and to see so many of my



To view "Bastards' Road," see BastardsRoad.com/watchnow or linktr.ee/bastardsroad



Hancock with his son Kolden.

brothers actually do that, it was something that I was missing," Hancock said.

Based on the informal name of his unit, "Bastards' Road" (BastardsRoad.com) chronicles Hancock's cross-country odyssey in a series of road shots, interviews, and candid conversations. Morrison hopes the film gives audiences an intimate look at the lives of veterans, and that the documentary strips away some of the existing stigmas and stereotypes. He wants the film to encourage a conversation to foster understanding and promote healing.

Hancock hopes veterans learn from his story that they're not alone, and that talking about their traumas doesn't make them weak. It's the only way to forgive oneself and heal from combat, and the struggles that follow afterward. For civilians, he hopes the documentary gives them an intimate look into the life of a veteran, which may prevent them from asking some unnecessary questions. He also hopes they get a glimpse of what our service members and veterans have endured for them.

For his son, who is 10, he hopes he takes away the fact that while he wasn't a great man or father early in his life, he's making it up to him now.

"I want to show him the strength in communication, the strength in talking to one another, and that the strength of the military man or woman is unparalleled, and that these are some of the most honored people that I've ever had the chance to work with, and that they're tough, and that if he chooses to go down that road that I'd like for him to understand it's OK to talk about things that he experiences as well," Hancock said.

Our Sacred Honor: Reflections on the Fourth of July

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members of the Congress, for example, they strike out Jefferson's charge blaming the English monarchy for the importation of slaves into the colonies.

On the evening of July 4, Congress approves the document we now call the Declaration of Independence. Over the next days and weeks, members will sign the document, knowing that by doing so they are possibly signing their own death warrants as rebels against King George III.

Despite the alterations made by Congress, one of Jefferson's passages is left untouched: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The Creed

Jefferson's words lie at the heart of the American Creed.

Near the beginning of his latest book, "Facing Reality: Two Truths About Race in America," Charles Murray favorably cites fellow writer Samuel Huntington's definition of this creed: "the political principles of liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, human rights, the rule of law, and private property."

For more than 200 years, these principles have served as the bedrock of our American Republic. We have struggled to live up to these ideals, fighting a Civil War, for instance, to put an end to slavery, and nearly a century later, battling to ensure that the descendants of those slaves achieved equality under the rule of law. Women also fought for and won the right to vote and for other rights as well. Human rights remain paramount concerns both in this country and abroad, and our emphasis on the individual and freedom is demonstrated in a myriad of court actions over the course of our history. It's this creed that has drawn so many immigrants to our shores. The numbers of Europeans who processed through Ellis Island in the late 19th century came not only to enjoy the bountiful gifts of this country and its free enterprise system, but also to follow their dreams and breathe the air of liberty.

Freedom Breeds Prosperity

That creed, first envisioned by Jefferson and which might also go under the name of the American Dream, brought us prosperity and numerous privileges: the right to vote in elections, the right to a fair trial, the right to protest injustices, the right to go our own way for better or for worse. We may forget this Dream and its many benefits in the day-to-day exigencies of life, but it's what has allowed us to live as we do.

And that liberty accounts for the great achievements of some of our citizens. Henry Ford's mass production of the automobile, Thomas Edison's electric lights, Silicon Valley's computers and phones, the writers, painters, musicians, and filmmakers who practice their arts without fear of government censorship, the scientists who have discovered everything from cures for polio



Members of the U.S. military participate in the Fourth of July parade in Washington on July 4, 2019.

to improved methods of agriculture: all of these people accomplished these things because they possessed the freedom to do so.

The same holds true for the rest of us. Here in America, we still possess the wonderful opportunity to make of ourselves what we will, to go as far as we can, to develop our own businesses. Around me, I see young adults operating their own construction companies, running restaurants and website businesses, practicing law, working as nurses and doctors. Others of their own volition enter college or the trades, free to succeed or to fail as they will.

The Price of Liberty

The American Dream comes with a price tag.

On Memorial Day, we remember those who died for their country in our various wars. On Veterans Day, we honor those who served their country in uniform.

On Independence Day, we might do well to remember our predecessors who also sacrificed themselves for our benefit. The wealthy surgeon who sends his children off to the best universities is the son of a successful owner of a car dealership, who, in turn, is the son of an immigrant tailor in Brooklyn. The surgeon's wife grew up in an affluent home, but her great-grandmother lost her father to death when she was 12, dropped out of school, and worked a variety of jobs to help her mother make ends meet.

That liberty accounts for the great achievements of some of our citizens.

Then there are the volunteers who helped forge our country. The Fourth of July is the perfect time to remember with gratitude those who even today give of their time and treasure to help others: the mechanic who finds time on the weekends to work in a food bank, the busy mom who volunteers at her children's school, the retiree who plays the piano twice a week to entertain residents in a nursing home.

Nearly 250 years ago, a small band of prominent men vowed "to pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor." Knowing that the consequences of that pledge might mean death by execution and the ruination of their families, these men did not take this oath lightly. Yet they were willing to give up everything, including their lives, for the cause of liberty.

We should treasure our freedoms and our rights, but if we forget that the foundation stones of these privileges are sacrifice, duty, and self-responsibility, liberty will die.

Patriotism and Celebration

Like the United States, many countries around the world set aside a day to celebrate their country. Canadians, for example, have their Dominion Day, and Australians honor their country on Australia Day.

This patriotism is a positive good. Some equate patriotism with nationalism, but the

two are quite different. The patriot loves and honors his country; the nationalist believes his country is superior to other countries. A patriot values his patch of earth, the people who live there, and the ideals upon which his country was founded. He has little interest in comparisons with other countries, any more than he would put his beloved mother into a competition against other moms.

To celebrate our patriotism here in America, we host backyard barbecues, head for the beach, plant American flags in the front yard, and shoot off fireworks. My wife used to dress our small children and herself in red, white, and blue for the day, and put out small flags along the front sidewalk of our house. Some of us may talk to our children about the American past or the Declaration; others may scarcely think of the holiday itself while they are grilling hamburgers or popping off bottle rockets. Whatever the circumstances, like those patriots of old who rang church bells and lighted bonfires to celebrate the Fourth of July, we are commemorating our liberties and our heritage.

When we celebrate the Fourth of July, we are observing more than our break with the British and the creation of our American nation. We are paying homage to one of the most remarkable documents in human history, to the venerable and universal proclamation of our Declaration of Independence—that human beings are all created equal, that by their very creation they possess certain inviolable rights, and that these truths are "self-evident." To those Founding Fathers such as Jefferson, Adams, and the rest, humanity—not just Americans—owes a debt of gratitude for these words alone.

Let me close with a remarkable story that seems closer to legend than to fact, but which is nonetheless true.

On July 4, 1826, exactly 50 years to the day after Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson and Adams died. That remarkable circumstance brings chills every time I remember it. What are the odds of these two men crossing the bar on the same day and on such an anniversary? What are the chances of that?

And yet it happened. The last words spoken by Adams were "Thomas Jefferson still lives," but Adams was wrong. His friend and sometime opponent Jefferson had taken his last breath five hours earlier at his home in Monticello. But the words of Jefferson lived and should live still in the hearts and minds of patriots everywhere.

As we Americans celebrate Independence Day this year, let's be grateful for the republic those men gave us. More importantly, let's resolve to keep that republic alive.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust on Their Wings," and two works of non-fiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

A Show of Heads

Soldiers shave their heads in solidarity with serviceman's sister, who is undergoing cancer treatment

EMG INSPIRED STAFF

Over a dozen soldiers currently stationed in Kuwait recently shaved their heads in support of a serviceman's sister, who lost her hair during her battle with brain cancer.

Sgt. Brandon Stafford's older sister, Melissa Hjelle, who works as a traffic safety program coordinator in Minnesota, was diagnosed with a brain tumor in her right temporal lobe in late 2020.

On March 4, 2021, she underwent craniotomy surgery, which removed a large portion of the tumor—with the remaining cancer requiring radiation and chemotherapy.

She managed to recover from surgery with some success, but then she endured the side effects of the treatment that followed.

"I am experiencing fatigue and consistent nausea from radiation and chemotherapy, along with some other nuisance side effects," she said.

Melissa was certain that she would eventually lose her hair because of the chemo; soon enough, her hair started falling out by the handful.



Sgt. Brandon Stafford poses for a picture with his sister Melissa Hjelle.



Soldiers from the 1st Battalion 171st Aviation Regiment shaved their heads and posed for a picture at North Fort Hood, Texas.

"However, the morning that I began brushing my hair and it literally fell out in clumps left me an emotional mess," she said. "I shared with my family that the time had come, and I was making plans to shave the rest soon."

Stafford was in North Fort Hood in Texas on a pre-deployment training exercise at the time. And his sister's condition bothered him often.

After she decided to shave her head, her older brother Sean, a retired Army National Guard master sergeant, organized a shaving party on a group video call.

Sean and his two sons, Jack and Marty, along with Brandon, all shaved their heads in solidarity with Melissa as she underwent her treatment.

Then, when Stafford's fellow battalion members kept asking him why he'd shaved his head clean, he explained the reason. In support of Melissa, 15 of his comrades in arms, without any prompting, followed suit.

"I just kind of wanted to do my part to show her that it is alright and we are one big family," said Cpl. Justin Huberty, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter crew chief.

The decision was a big step for Derek Vollmer, another soldier, who said that, as he's fair-skinned, his red hair helps him avoid sunburn, but he went ahead and shaved it all off anyway.

Then, the band of soldiers took a group photo and it was posted on Facebook, to Melissa's astonishment.

"At first, I thought it was a regular crew photo and then quickly realized there was an unusual amount of bald heads!" she said.

She was left in shock and disbelief that they'd do such a thing for her sake.

"The timing could not have been more perfect; I was having my worst week of feeling ill yet and was experiencing a full-blown crying session to cope with it all when that photo arrived," she added.

The show of love gave Melissa the much-needed encouragement and motivation to keep pushing forward toward a hopeful recovery.

Young Man With Autism Starts Successful Shredding Company

LOUISE BEVAN

A Canadian man with autism turned his passion into profit by starting a paper shredding company while in college. Fifteen years later, he has his own workspace, an employee, and he's even buying his own home.

Aaron Grimm, of Wetaskiwin, Alberta, was diagnosed with autism at the age of 5. Throughout his life, Aaron was encouraged by his parents, Vanessa and Ken, who firmly believe their son shouldn't be singled out for his disability.

Being practically nonverbal, Aaron received educational support and attended mainstream school—his parents got the

school district's initial refusal overturned at grade 7.

"We never entertained pity," Vanessa told The Epoch Times. "We never allowed Aaron to feel sorry for himself. We raised Aaron the same as we raised his brother, to work hard, to do his best, and behave."

Growing up, both Aaron and his older brother, Jonathan, attended church, watched hockey, shopped, patronized restaurants, and went to camp—just like their peers.

While developmental delays caused many of Aaron's friends to socially outgrow him, Aaron was taught to make the most of his situation.

"I look back now, and I can't even begin



to imagine how hard that was for him," Vanessa reflected. "But he has, he's risen to the expectations every time."

Her son's journey to becoming a business owner began in 2007, while he was on summer break from college. He had a support worker who'd been looking into a summer job for him and had shortlisted paper shredding as a potential fit.

Aaron is geared toward tactile, sensory-oriented work. He'd been shredding paper for his father for years and loved the idea



1. Aaron Grimm's journey to owning his own shredding business started in 2007.

2. Vanessa Grimm with her son Aaron Grimm.

3. Grimm bought a house this year.



of that job. But he was adamant he should start his own business.

So, his mom encouraged him to take it seriously and come up with a name for the business, as well as cards, equipment, and advertising. Aaron rose to the occasion and conceived his company: AG Shredding & Recycling Services.

Five days after placing a local paper ad, he got his first job: 70 boxes for a Tim Hortons franchise. He started shredding in his kitchen, but his first shredder burned out

the first day. His second shredder cost \$750 and with a warranty, while his third cost \$3,000 and lasted 10 years.

Thanks to word of mouth, ads, and Facebook, Aaron's business soon took off.

Today, Aaron rents a workspace of his own and has even hired a part-time employee.

Still enchanted by the sensory stimulation of shredding, Aaron sings while he works.

In 2021, Aaron's support worker helped him fulfill a longtime dream: buying a home. With his parents in tow, Aaron viewed 15 properties, eventually settling on a modern, four-bedroom house with enough room for friends and support staff.

Touring the property, Vanessa had overheard him whispering to himself, "This is beautiful," and she knew he'd found his place.

Aaron pitched in 50 percent for the down payment—from his disability savings—while his parents covered the rest.

Aaron's successes in business—and in life—garnered international interest: The mother and son duo were invited to Ukraine to share how inclusion made such a big difference for him.

Vanessa now tells parents whose children are disabled to "dream big."

"If you look at the disability, all you see is fear and impossibilities," she said. "But if you look at the person, the fear goes away."

Inclusion, she noted, means that the disabled are as much entitled to the world as anyone else is.

"This is his world too, right?" she said. "Not just yours and mine, and not just all the people that don't have disabilities."

"It's Aaron's world, too."

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A Boy Scout places miniature American flags at graves ahead of Memorial Day in the Los Angeles National Cemetery on May 29, 2021.

TIMELESS WISDOM

Reflections on Flag and Country

JOSHUA CHARLES

Whenever Memorial Day, D-Day, and July 4 come around, I often think of the words of John Adams: “Be it remembered, however, that liberty must at all hazards be supported. We have a right to it, derived from our Maker. But if we had not, our fathers have earned, and bought it for us, at the expense of their ease, their estates, their pleasure, and their blood.”

Every time I remember the men and women who have shed their blood for the freedom and security of my family, my friends, and myself, I’m likewise reminded of Jesus’s powerful words: “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

So as we Americans officially begin the summer season, it can be easy to forget the cost that was paid by so few for the sake of so many, enabling us to enjoy such privileges, even in the midst of these troubling times. Amid the joy and relief that comes with the beginning of summer 2021—especially after a long pandemic—I wanted to share a powerful story I recently discovered about the historical origins of Memorial Day.

Memorial Day became an official federal holiday in 1971. But its origins go back to the aftermath of the Civil War, which to this day remains our nation’s bloodiest conflict.

That’s where I learned about a remarkable event that took place at a racetrack in Charleston, South Carolina, in April 1865. Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee had just surrendered weeks before. The war would be officially and completely over in June, but for all intents and purposes, it was done.

The racetrack was called the Washington Race Course and Jockey Club. During the war, the Confederacy had used it to imprison Union captives. Nearly 300 of them died of diseases and exposure in the open-air prison. None of them received a proper burial—instead, their bodies were thrown into a nearby mass grave.

Once the war had ended, however, some people—former slaves—found this to be totally unacceptable. Many of them went to the racetrack, exhumed the bodies, and gave them a proper burial in a new cemetery on the same site. They put a whitewashed fence around the cemetery and inscribed the words “Martyrs of the Race Course” on it. These former slaves knew that these men had died for their liberation, and they honored their sacrifices just miles away from the very spot where the Civil War had begun.

As reported in The New York Tribune and The Charleston Courier, just a week later, on May 1, 1865, more people came—about 10,000 of them. Almost all of them were African Americans, mostly freed slaves, while some were white missionaries. Three thousand black children brought bouquets of flowers to honor those who had died, singing “John Brown’s Body”—a popular Union war song about the famous abolitionist John Brown—while doing so. Black ministers were present and recited portions of Scripture. Veterans of various black regiments that served during the war were also present and performed double-time marches in honor of their fallen comrades.

This event was the first-ever “Memorial Day” commemoration in our country’s history. Freed slaves organized this and similar events at least a year before other American cities, and three years before it was observed on a national level.

In 1966, the federal government officially recognized Waterloo, New York, as the official birthplace of Memorial Day. But thanks to historians who discovered this earlier story, many now recognize that this annual “holy day” started not in northern cities among mostly white Americans, but among black Americans who had never lived in chains to never be duped by the lie that hating one’s country is the way to make it better.

Joshua Charles is a former White House speechwriter for Vice President Mike Pence, a No. 1 New York Times best-selling author, historian, columnist, writer/ghostwriter, and public speaker.

chains, who are rich by world and historical standards, who have enjoyed more freedom than any generation in history, lecture the rest of us on why America is so unworthy of respect and admiration. All the while, it was former slaves who honored the sacrifices and the flag they dishonor as a matter of course. Those who lived in chains knew the value of our country, its flag, and the men and women who have died under its colors for our freedom—not because it was perfect, but because of what it stood for and because of what it was striving to become. Those who enslaved them were the ones who fled the star-spangled banner and the principles of 1776, while those who liberated them fought for that flag and those principles. It’s no wonder they honored the ones who were true to America’s founding principles and ideals.

What a stinging rebuke to those whose pride and narcissism are daily compounded by their even more deplorable ignorance—a brew so toxic that many have abandoned that noble and just love of country that even those who suffered actual oppression in actual chains never forgot. It was they who started Memorial Day, after all.

May their example inspire those of us who have never lived in chains to never be duped by the lie that hating one’s country is the way to make it better.

Joshua Charles is a former White House speechwriter for Vice President Mike Pence, a No. 1 New York Times best-selling author, historian, columnist, writer/ghostwriter, and public speaker.



A volunteer places flowers along a row of headstones ahead of Memorial Day in Arlington, Va., on May 26, 2019.

HISTORY

The Undeniable Importance of the Korean War and Its Lessons

DUSTIN BASS

Whether Americans or citizens the world over wish to remember or not, the Korean War is the symbol of the 70-plus-year war of attrition between two ideas: communism and democracy. June 25, 1950, moved the world from modern warfare into the existential warfare of the modern age, introducing the first hot war of the Cold War.

The Korean peninsula provides the world a precise cross-comparison of the effects of freedom or tyranny. She is, ironically enough, geographically split in half.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a republic in name only. This nation, led by the Kim Dynasty, promised freedom and equality but was founded on force and subjugation. Any new nation arising from the chaos of revolution often forgets what it has promised, or, at times, simply cannot fulfill its promises until opportunity allows. In the past 75 years, however, North Korea’s rule has passed from one son to the next.

It took decades for the Republic of Korea (ROK) to find its footing and fulfill the promise of what a republic should be. On paper, when it comes to leaders, North Korea is the symbol of stability, averaging one every 25 years. Between 1948 and 1987, not one South Korean president left office voluntarily. They were either exiled, kicked out, or assassinated. The people, from the top down, however, continued to believe in the promise of democracy—that people could be free to decide their own fate.

The 38th parallel should not be a symbol solely for Koreans of what could be—for better or for worse—but should be a symbol for Americans and yes, even the world. The modern-day American perhaps knows little to nothing about the Korean War, for it’s a moment abandoned by the history books. Despite that, aside from World War II, the Korean War is quite possibly the most important war fought in the past 100 years.

A Brief History of Korea

Korea is a nation with a rich history, founded over a millennium ago. Though a long-time tributary state of China, it remained an autonomous, self-sustaining, and peaceful country. Even during the reign of the Mongol empire, while remaining defiant, it simply transferred its tribute from the Chinese to the Mongols. It had one war with Japan in the 16th century.

As the world continued its push toward a global economic system, isolationism was coming to an end. Nations of the Far East were being broken open by the Western powers. Japan would use American methods with extreme discretion to break open Korea. It established unfair treaties, infiltrated the culture, cut off other competing powers through the Sino-Japanese

and Russo-Japanese wars, annexed, and eventually colonized Korea in 1910. By 1939, two years after the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War, Korea was installed as part of the empire of Japan.

It wasn’t until the end of World War II in 1945 that Korea became free. But in practicality, this freedom was in name only. The peninsula had been haphazardly split along its 38th parallel by the Americans and Soviets, ultimately establishing two separate countries. The leaders, South Korea’s Syngman Rhee and North Korea’s Kim Il Sung, were authoritarians who craved unification by any means necessary. Those means came to their ends when the communists of the North attacked in the early Sunday morning hours of June 25, 1950.

The United Nations, perhaps because of its newness or the absence of Soviet representation, fully advocated military action.

The Lessons of War and War Preparedness

The Korean People’s Army (KPA) had the element of surprise, but more importantly, the Soviets, led by Joseph Stalin, continued to provide training and military equipment, including jets and tanks.

The South was stunned and ill-prepared, not just because of the surprise attack, but because the Americans, concerned about an invasion by the South Koreans, limited their military provisions. By June 28, Seoul was in the hands of the KPA, and the mass evacuation of civilians and retreat of soldiers had begun.

Despite intelligence from the ROK and the CIA pointing toward an imminent attack, it was disregarded out of hand as an impossibility. Far East Commander (FE-COM) Gen. Douglas MacArthur categorized the intelligence as F6—the lowest threat possible.

Furthermore, the Truman Administration, under the direction of Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, shrank the military from its 1945 levels of 12 million to 1.6 million, and its budget from \$82 billion to \$13 billion. American leadership seemed to view the rest of the world as just as unwilling to engage in a war as it was. It ignored, at least for a short period, the universal truth long established by the Romans that “he who desires peace, should prepare for war.”

Until the U.S. could deploy troops from Ja-

United Nations troops fighting in the streets of Seoul, South Korea, on Sept. 20, 1950.



pan and America, all its tactical maneuvers were delaying actions. The first American force to confront the KPA on July 5 was a battalion of the 21st Infantry totaling 404 men. This battalion, as well as most of the U.S. military at that time, was ill-equipped and ill-prepared to fight. Many soldiers had never seen combat, and the weapons were not on par with what the Soviets had provided. They possessed limited amounts of ammunition, their rocket launchers were incapable of piercing the T-34 tanks, and they had no anti-tank mines. Of the 404 soldiers, nearly half were killed or went missing.

The United Nations Unite Against Communism

As the KPA continued its push to the sea, the nations of the world rose up in defiance of the invading army, but also in defiance of the invading ideology. The free nations—long free and recently freed—feared the encroachment of communism on their own shores and had been fighting a Cold War for five years to keep it from spreading. President Harry S. Truman had vowed to assist democratic nations by every means possible to resist the spread of communism.

The Korean conflict was the physical altercation the world needed to prove how far it would go to stop its spread. The United Nations, perhaps because of its newness or the absence of Soviet representation, fully advocated military action. It was the first time troops were sent to fight under the flag of the U.N. The U.N. had adopted the Truman Doctrine, and it was America—as would become commonplace—that would lead the fight.

Nearing annihilation, the ROK, American troops, and soon the U.N. troops, held off the communist invaders for six weeks at the

Pusan Perimeter. When MacArthur’s brilliant Inchon Invasion succeeded, the war turned. The KPA began its massive retreat north of the 38th parallel.

The pursuit of the enemy combatants was understandable, yet proved fatal. MacArthur, looking back on Task Force Smith, called it an “arrogant display of strength.” Ignoring the Chinese threat along the Yalu River was just as arrogant, if not more. The Chinese attacked by the hundreds of thousands, pushing the U.N. troops south of the 38th Parallel. Within the span of three months, the ebb and flow of the war placed the KPA and the U.N. at the threshold of ultimate victory. A stalemate would then occur for the next two years.

Dwight D. Eisenhower would become president on Jan. 20, 1953. Stalin would die March 5. The armistice would be signed July 27. And the two Korean countries would return to their previous line of demarcation.

The two nations continue their standoff, often fighting skirmishes or suffering assassinations, but ultimately keeping an eye on each other across the 38th parallel.

The standoff between democracy and communism is no different. The proverbial line in the sand and threat of encroachment remains. The Cold War never ended; it simply changed hands from the Soviets to the Chinese. If one wonders what it will take to fend off communism, the Korean War is the prime example. It may not end in victory—ideas are rarely eradicated—but it will be worth the fight, even if few remember it.

Dustin Bass is co-host of the podcast *The Sons of History* and the creator of the channel *Thinking It Through on YouTube*. He is also an author.

FOR FURTHER READING:

On the subject of the Korean War, I recommend the following books:

- “The Korean War” by Max Hastings
- “This Kind of War” by T. R. Fehrenbach
- “The Darkest Summer” by Bill Sloan
- “The Coldest Winter” by David Halberstam
- “The Korean War” by Bruce Cumings
- “The Last Stand of Fox Company” by Bob Drury and Tom Clavin

A Bucket of Old Baseballs—and Memories

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ETHAN ANDERSON



Randy Long (C) with his grandson Ethan Anderson (L) and son (R).

LOUISE BEVAN

Grandfather Randy Long, 72, found a bucket of old baseballs while cleaning out his garage. Moved by the memories of pitching for his son and grandson, Long decided the time had come to give the baseballs a new lease on life.

“We’d just go out and throw, and they’d hit in that batting cage, and I’d get behind the screen and dodge them, and it was just hours on hours,” Long, of Montgomery, Alabama, told WSFA.

Long took his bucket of baseballs to his local batting cage and left it there, labeled “Free,” with a heartfelt note attached.

“My son is now 46 and my grandson is 23,” he wrote. “I am 72 and what I won’t give to pitch a couple of buckets to them.”

Both his son and grandson had moved away, Long said.

“If you are a father, cherish these times. You won’t believe how quickly they will be gone,” he wrote.

“Give them a hug and tell them you love them every chance you get!”

Speaking to ESPN, Long’s grandson, Ethan Anderson, said that back then, he didn’t always want to go, but that his patient granddad always wanted him to “be the best player” he could be. Long’s wife sent a photo of the note to Anderson, who decided to share his

grandfather’s words with the world. He posted the photo on Twitter, amassing hundreds of thousands of likes.

“I’m not crying, you’re crying,” read his caption.

Anderson told ABC News that the note moved him as his grandfather isn’t usually an emotional person.

“When I saw that side of him, it made me a little emotional as well,” he said. “So that was special for me, and that’s really why I decided to post it.”

Both Long and Anderson were delighted that the note has encouraged others to cherish family togetherness.

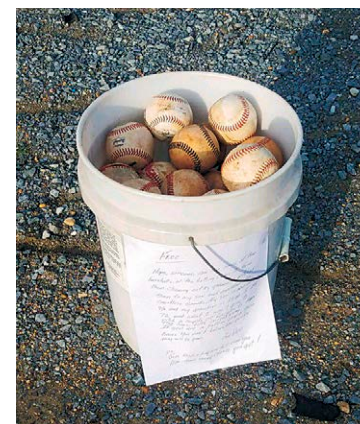
Just 10 days after the tweet went viral, Anderson, his father, and his grandfather fulfilled a long-held ambition: to return to the batting cage together.

Anderson shared a photo of the trio on Twitter.

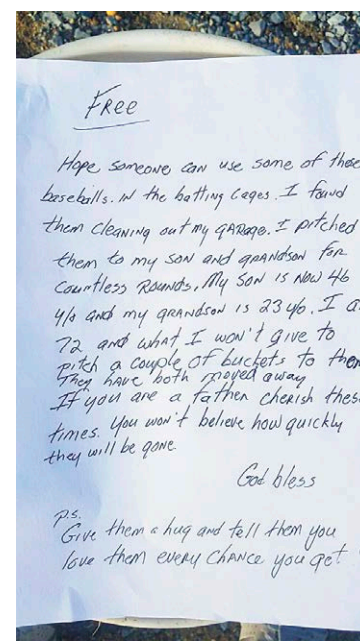
“Made the trip back and I have to say ... the old man still got it,” he wrote.

As for Long’s bucket of baseballs, WSFA reported that a young boy found the bucket and note, and his family reached out to Anderson on Facebook. Anderson and his grandfather have made plans to meet them.

Share your stories with us at emg.inspired@epochtimes.com, and get your daily dose of inspiration by signing up for the Epoch Inspired newsletter at TheEpochTimes.com/newsletter



Rather than getting rid of the old baseballs he found in his garage, Long decided to give them away.



The note that Long left with the bucket of baseballs.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION

Be Curious, Expand Your Horizons

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

Dear Next Generation,

I am an 81-year-old retired pharmacist. As a pharmacist, I have held many different positions, both within the realm of pharmacy and other fields (e.g., licensed insurance agent, V.P. of pharmacy services for a public company). I helped design the first electronic claims processing system for pharmacy claims and established an electronic network of 54,000 pharmacies nationwide to process those claims. I was the first director of pharmacy for one of the providers for the Arizona AHCCCS system.

I am not relaying this to brag. As I was thinking back about all the interactions I have had through the years, I wondered about all of the people that I have had the pleasure of working for and with, and I realized how little I really knew about each of them AND how little they really knew about me.

How does this happen? Sure, life is busy, with dating, marriage, kids, et al. I think the missing connection was a lack of being curious. Why didn't I ask questions of the hundreds of people I came in contact with? Certainly, that surely would have led them to ask me questions. That would have sparked a great exchange of ideas and friendly conversation.

So, folks, be curious—ask questions—expand your horizons.

Spending the time to write this led me to remember some people and circumstances I have experienced, which at the time, led to my meeting or working with some very interesting people:

Teddy Hayes. Entrepreneur extraordinaire. Boxer, boxing promoter, Jack Dempsey's manager, manufactured Tommy Guns for USA in World War II. He was active in politics, Hollywood, etc.

Ginny (Mrs. Teddy) Hayes: Former Ziegfeld Girl.

Jamie Farr. TV personality, "MASH." Mark Letendre. At the time, the youngest ever head trainer in Major League Baseball.

Dr. Jim Ph.D. He was my pharmacy customer, and he used to buy anti-fungal powder that he used on the orchids he raised as a hobby in retirement. I read his obituary, which is when

I once picked up Buddy Hackett, who was hitchhiking for a ride near Fort Lee, N.J. He really was a funny guy.

Baseball player Joe DiMaggio

-/APP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Actor and comedian Buddy Hackett.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



A general view of the crowds in Candlestick Park after an earthquake, measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale, rocked game three of the World Series between the Oakland A's and San Francisco Giants, at Candlestick Park in San Francisco on Oct. 17, 1989.

I learned he held 19 patents in electronics. See, you'll never know if you do not ask.

Some situations I have encountered in the past:

Lunch with Joe DiMaggio (as a Little Leaguer).

My friends David and Eddie Brigati helped start the singing group The Rascals.

The 1989 earthquake in San Francisco: I was in the dugout at 5:05 when it hit. Pictures of me on the field helping bring order to chaos on the Front Page of the Sporting News and Sports Illustrated. Note: I was the team pharmacist for the San Francisco Giants at the time, and also for the Arizona Cardinals football team and the old Phoenix Firebirds Minor League team of the Giants.

Spending a weekend at the Jersey Shore when a major hurricane hit. Moved our beach house back four feet; we survived, but just barely. Frightening time.

I once picked up Buddy Hackett, who was hitchhiking for a ride near Fort Lee, N.J. He really was a funny guy.

Stevie Nicks shopped in Lute's Pharmacy Scottsdale (mine) as did Maureen O'Sullivan, Laraine Day, Leo Durocher, Art Buchwald, Willie Mays, and Minnesota Fats.

Robert Redford stopped in to buy a Wall Street Journal at Lute's.

Through serving clients of the world-famous Main Chance Salon (owned by Elizabeth Arden), I served some very prominent women, all of whom registered with aliases for privacy, but I knew their names if they needed prescriptions. Names like Rockefeller, Astor, etc.

It has been a fantastic run, and to think I almost did not go to Rutgers College of Pharmacy '62. It was a last-minute decision.

Curiously yours,
Ray Toronto, R.Ph.

What advice would you like to give to the younger generations?

We call on all of our readers to share the timeless values that define right and wrong, and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time, and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to:

Next Generation, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001

From a Reader: Remembering and Honoring a Veteran

Hailing from a small Amish town, Andy Smith gave his all, for his country and for the men he served with

This is a story about a young man from a small Amish town willing to serve in a war far away. Andy grew up on a farm overlooking Cedar Creek in Leo, Indiana, with a devoted mother and father and sister. Despite ambitions beyond college, a full slate of activities resulted in less than stellar grades. Andy knew he would be drafted, so he volunteered for the Army. He was lucky enough to be assigned to the 199th Light Infantry Brigade.

After boot camp and a quick visit to family, friends, and sweetheart, he arrived in Vietnam in September 1967. Earning a Bronze Star with Valor within three months, he joined his sweetheart for R and R in Hawaii, where they were married. Back to Vietnam, and the most intense fighting and toughest battle were before him.

Andy sustained a traumatic head injury from a grenade blast. Quick thinking from his brother-in-arms, Jim Choquette, resulted in Andy being air evacuated to the nearby Army Hospital, then to Japan, then to Walter Reed Army Hospital. All the while, his life hung in the balance and he was in a deep coma. Twenty-eight days later, after a third craniotomy, Andy was awake ... despite partial right paralysis, a left eye removed, and an inability to talk, Andy was alive!

Fast forward 20 years, Andy had relearned to talk after five years, been divorced from his first wife, moved to Tampa on his own, had his own apartment, remarried, reconnected with his family in Indiana, participated in the first of many sessions of testing through the massive Vietnam Head Injury Study, participated in the VA Brain Injury Rehab Program in Palo Alto, California, traveled extensively with his second wife, and reconnected with his brothers-in-arms, the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, which held its reunions in D.C., where



Andy Smith arrived in Vietnam in September 1967.

the Vietnam War was located.

There were significant and divine connections all along the way in Andy's journey of recovery. The Vietnam War and the group that supports it and the veterans whose names are engraved there were instrumental ... I will come back back to that. The significant and instrumental connections along the way that allowed Andy to live and to recover are the following folks ... Andy's significant head injury was considered non-survivable, but the love connection and prayer of Andy's first wife provided the golden thread to life. Dr. McKinney from Chicago and Dr. Tucker from the Tampa VA helped reconstruct Andy's very handsome previous appearance. The Mainstream Program, located in Martinsburg VA, enabled Andy to regain social skills. One of the most strategic participants in Andy's life was his brigade, the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, whose soldier, Jan Scruggs, created the idea of having a wall with the names of those lost in the war engraved on it.

The United States began to heal and

their attitudes toward Vietnam veterans began to change because of the Wall. The celebration of 1982 marked a 180-degree change in attitude. Andy began attending the reunions there in the early '90s. The men went out of their way to reach out to him ... most folks from Andy's former life had a very difficult time connecting with Andy because he was so different from in his previous life. Popular, athletic, humorous, fun-loving, and devoted to family and country, Andy was still fun-loving, athletic, humorous, and devoted to family and country, but with a temper and prone to outbursts. However, most people could sense Andy was an endearing and caring guy ... with an edge.

On Memorial Day 2021, Andy's name was celebrated, along with six other names that were recently engraved on the Wall.

Fast forward 20 years, despite careful medical monitoring, Andy was losing ground mobility-wise. Hitting the bucket list hard was the goal of Andy and his wife, Gwen. They saw a lot of this country until traveling was no longer possible. He was accepted into the Bay Pines VA Community Living Center (a nursing home). He had a great experience with a wide variety of activities, great care, community outings, musical visits from locals, and the great honor and respect provided by staff to their veterans in care.

During Andy's time there, it was discovered that he had not received many

medals due him, so on Oct. 13, 2018, a medal ceremony was held ... 50 years late, but on time for Andy. He died eight months later on May 24, 2018, of a diagnosis that was later attributed (in part) to his original injury in Vietnam. Andy was buried in Arlington on his 75th birthday, May 7, 2019.

In May 2021, Andy's name was engraved in a perfect spot between Smiths in the year in which he experienced the catastrophic injury that should have ended his life but did not. On Memorial Day 2021, Andy's name was celebrated, along with six other names that were recently engraved on the Wall. Who else was there to honor, celebrate, and remember Andy and all the other veterans from their Brigade? The 199th Light Infantry Brigade was there. To place cards of remembrance on the 746 names, to place a wreath at the Vietnam Wall, to provide support and care to Andy's widow, to share their memories of their brother-in-arms, and to continue to provide help and support to make sure Andy received all the honors due him. Come to find out he should have received an Oak Cluster to mark two Purple Hearts, add a Good Conduct Medal, and remove a medal Andy was not eligible for because he was off the roster and in Walter Reed.

Thanks to Richard Masters, Lauri Ruffino, and Hugh Foster for their constant vigilance and quick response to any of their men, their families, or those veterans who have passed on to eternity. This is what they do ... here today to protect, support, and defend their guys. Andy gave his all, willingly. He loved his country wholeheartedly, Andy enjoyed life and loved being married (mostly!), but he never hesitated to say he would do it all again in a minute, as he loved the men he served with.

— Gwen Burchard Smith



(Above left) The building's form is quadrangular, with a large courtyard and turrets at each corner. The convex-curved Mansard roof, made of slate, with large dormer windows, defines the building in a distinctive French style. (Above middle) This portal stairwell is made of limestone walls, with granite for the steps, columns, and base, and limestone for the heavy carved railings. The stairwell provides access to the upper levels while allowing natural light to penetrate deep into the building. (Above right) One of the staircases in the north and south portals. The grand scale is felt upon looking up at the coffered ceiling, seven stories above the ground.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

Philadelphia City Hall Graces the City's Center

JAMES HOWARD SMITH

The Philadelphia City Hall is like a distinguished gentleman, who is noble in his contribution to the city, has integrity in material and structural elements, and who possesses a refined and cultured disposition.

The location of City Hall was originally outlined in the 1682 city plan by William

Penn, the founder of the Province of Pennsylvania. It is centrally located at the crossing of two major streets in the city's center. Construction of the building began in 1871 and was completed in 1901, realizing the plan's original intention to hold a commanding position in the city.

The architects John McArthur Jr. and Thomas Ustick Walter designed the build-

ing in the French Second Empire Style, originating under Napoleon III in mid- to late-19th-century France. The style drew on those preceding it, including French Renaissance and Baroque, and produces a graceful composition that transcends time. It continues to arouse delight and fittingly reflects the cultured and finely adorned Penn.

City Hall is still a fully functioning mu-

nicipal building with close to 700 rooms, housing three branches of government: the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch, and the Judicial Branch's Civil Courts.

James Howard Smith, an architectural photographer, designer, and founder of Cartio, aims to inspire an appreciation of classical architecture.

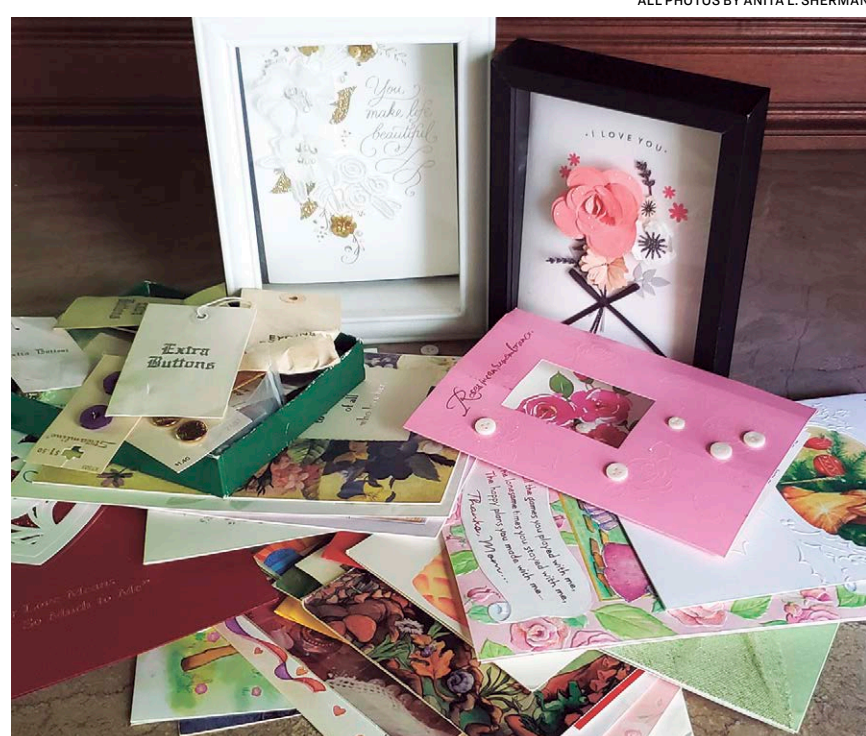
1. Views of City Hall can be seen from any of the four approaching streets, and the tower from even farther away. The building is one of the world's tallest and largest all-masonry, load-bearing structures without a steel or iron frame. 2. The enormous yet refined statue of William Penn, measuring 37 feet high, stood in the courtyard before taking its position at the top of the tower. The statue's size provides perspective on just how grand the building is. The top of Penn's hat stands at 547 feet 11.25 inches above ground level. 3. The most striking feature of the building is the large tower that rises high above the city floor. The body of the tower is restrained in comparison with the rest of the building. This leads the eye to the upper portions of the tower, where the columns, the large clocks, and an elongated dome form the pedestal for the statue of William Penn. 4. The courtyard is open to the public, giving the people of Philadelphia space for events and daily enjoyment. The courtyard design also serves to open the interior rooms to air and natural light. A large compass marks the center point of Philadelphia and orients one in the city. 5. Large arched entryways open at the center of each façade, welcoming visitors and leading inward to the open courtyard. This view looks toward the outer streets.



William Penn presides over Philadelphia. The City Hall was the tallest building in Philadelphia for 86 years, due to the respect afforded Penn: One should not build higher than Penn's hat. Times have changed. Although no longer the tallest in the city, the building now has an observation deck below the statue that offers visitors a chance to nearly join Penn and enjoy an expansive view of the city he founded, Philadelphia.

Summertime Thoughts: Storing Salutations, Ironing Shirts, and Saving Buttons

ANITA L. SHERMAN



ALL PHOTOS BY ANITA L. SHERMAN

It's officially summer, and in Virginia, this sultry season started off in typical Southern style—hot, hot, and hotter.

For several seasons, I've been in decluttering mode. Summer is no different, except that the heat seems to make it more challenging. Somehow, there's now a hazy mirage hovering over my piles.

Over the years, I have accumulated what I refer to as "memory boxes." These containers are filled with greeting cards from all manner of occasion—Christmases, anniversaries, birthdays, Mother's Days, and the list goes on. I've tried sifting through them, only to put them back. Somehow my mother's letter from when my first child was born, or a birthday card from a faraway friend, is just too painful to part with.

And then, there are the decades of anniversary cards from my husband, who has a talent (and perhaps stock in Hallmark) for, without fail, finding the sweetest and most endearing sentiments to bestow upon me.

Card marketers have taken their skills to steroid level in creating exquisitely designed cards. Their entrepreneurial and engineering expertise is beyond mind-boggling, with cards that blossom into trees with swings, flowers that sway, or animals layered in precise paper perfection.

I can't throw them away. They're now more than cards: They're works of art! I've actually saved some to be displayed year after year. That's the height of my obsession.

I suspect my grandchildren would relish cutting them up for craft projects or to create books of their own making, but, to date, I've not given them up.

So, my mountains of memory boxes get shuffled around from room to closet or pushed under a bed.

Smoothing Out the Wrinkles

These warm summer days remind me of my childhood and memories of my mama deftly handling a steaming and sizzling device that seemed to glide effortlessly in her care.

I have distinct memories of a mother

▲ Greeting cards from over the years, full of memories, now being displayed in shadow boxes.

who ironed. We didn't have a dryer, so the wet clothes would go outside to be pinched on lines strewn across one part of the backyard. She would carry a large basket out there, reaching and clipping with wooden clothespins. Usually flapping in the breeze, the clothes, once dried, would return to the house heady with the scent of sun and fresh air.

At some point, the ironing board would come out from its folded position between the refrigerator and the kitchen wall. Heavy and cumbersome, she would pull it up until it clicked in place if she elected to stand. Often though, she would jerk it up just far enough so that she could pull up a chair and do her ironing from a sitting position.

It seemed that she ironed everything, from sheets and pillowcases to my father's white T-shirts and handkerchiefs, not to mention his dress shirts, which he used daily when he headed off to work. She ironed dresses, blouses, slacks, and skirts. Soon, the room next to the kitchen, where she set up her ironing shop, would be draped with crisply ironed garments hanging from the curtain rods or doorknobs. My mother's ironing ritual, which I observed on a weekly basis—if not more—went on for many years.

As I got older, she would instruct me on the proper sequence of ironing a man's shirt. Oftentimes, she would use starch, but keep in mind these were the days before spray starches. So, she would mix up some concoction that she sprinkled generously on the item to be stiffened, let it sit damply for a bit, and then press it meticulously into place.

I admit that I have these ironing skills. I will also admit that I can't recall the last time I ever ironed anything. Dry cleaners have taken care of that.

Added to my memory boxes is a collection of perhaps a bygone era.

Button Binging

Another domestic ritual that I inherited from my mother—and no doubt legions of wives and mothers before her—is the practice of cutting off buttons, particularly the tiny, white variety found on many dress shirts. When the shirts had been washed and ironed so many times, the fabric would grow thin, and they would be headed to the ragpile. But not before all the buttons had been cut off and saved, usually in repurposed Gerber baby food jars.

Over the years, these jars of buttons grew. There were rare occasions when one of these orphaned buttons would be needed, but, in the meantime, drawers and sewing baskets were ripe with jars and jars of small buttons.

When my kids were young, I found myself doing the same thing—saving buttons from going down with a tossed garment and amassing a collection of "extra buttons." I'm confident that many of you have these. And I'm fairly confident that, like life or auto insurance, you hesitate to get rid of them for fear that you may actually need to replace a lost button from a coat, a tiny baggie of sequins from a glittering dress, covered buttons to a jacket, sweater buttons or slack buttons—and the list goes on, as does your collection of "extra buttons."

I have boxes of them. I came upon one of them the other day, and after a quick glance through, I realized that some of those "extra buttons" were to garments that I haven't worn or had for years. That's how sick this button obsession can become.

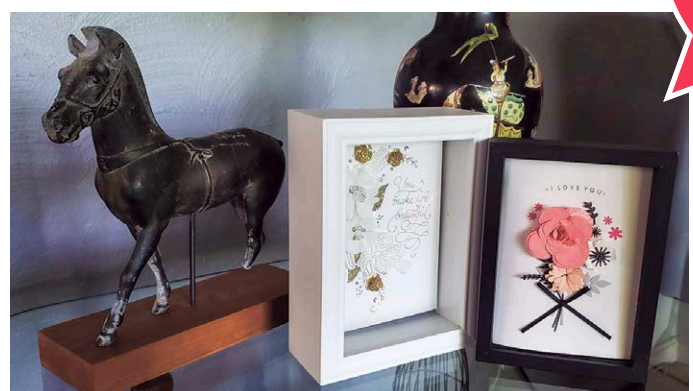
A couple of times when my children were toddlers, they discovered this treasure trove of buttons and found great delight in spreading them across the kitchen floor, like so many stars in the heavens. Rather than sweeping them up, I picked them all up and replaced them in their respective jars and boxes.

Many of these buttons I still have, but the saving grace has been finding two perfectly matched ones to become the eyes of a teddy bear or a string of matched ones for the smile of a puppet. Those occasions have made this collection invaluable.

As far as ironing, it's just too hot. And those anniversary cards? I've taken to framing them in shadow boxes.

Anita L. Sherman is an award-winning journalist who has more than 20 years of experience as a writer/editor for local papers and regional publications in Virginia. She now works as a freelance writer and is working on her first novel. She's the mother of three grown children and grandmother to four and resides in Warrenton, Va. Reach her at anitajustwrite@gmail.com

More than cards, these greetings and wishes have become art that have found homes in displays like these.



FAMILY

The Power of Consistency

BARBARA DANZA

Parents sometimes find themselves wishing for a magic wand or a supernatural power to make things go more smoothly and get everything done. Great news! There's a magical power we all possess and that should be a part of every parents' toolbox.

This power: consistency.

Consider for a moment just how many aspects of life can be improved by simply acting consistently. From the cleanliness of our homes, to the character of our children, to the level of our fitness—consistency is key. By focusing on the ability to be consistent, you can improve everything.

A common roadblock on the journey to productivity is perfectionism.

Productivity

A common roadblock on the journey to productivity is perfectionism. While trying to be "perfect" sounds lofty, it usually means that if it seems something can't be done perfectly, it's avoided altogether. If you're a chronic procrastinator, this may sound familiar.

Focusing on consistency rather than a perfect outcome changes the requirements of the task at hand. Instead of focusing on the end result, focus on the work itself—show-

ing up consistently, again and again, until it's done. The outcome takes care of itself.

So, whatever your to-do list entails or whatever projects you're trying to get off the ground, commit yourself to showing up for them consistently and see what happens.

Discipline

Consistency may be the most important aspect of disciplining and teaching children. If you outline the consequences, then you need to follow through accordingly. Being clear and consistent about the standards and expectations of the household will provide predictability and security for your children. What's more, you can model consistency to your children by living by the values you espouse. If you're a good example, the message will be consistent as well.

Home

You know that feeling when you've been busy with other things so the house cleaning has taken a back seat and then you get a call from a relative you haven't seen in a while, saying they're in town and thinking of stopping by in 10 minutes? Time to panic clean!

Consistency can help solve this problem. Rather than caring for your home infrequently in an emergency or when it's gotten totally out of hand, consistently taking on small cleaning tasks every day is so much easier. Make daily tasks small and doable, pair them with enjoyable activities such as listening to a podcast or audiobook, or coupling them with a fresh cup of coffee or



▲ Taking on small cleaning tasks every day is easier than "panic cleaning" when a visitor is due to drop by.



▲ Consistency is key to good health.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

tea. The key is to show up each day and do the things that will make your home a more peaceful and enjoyable place to be—and one that can welcome guests at any time.

Health

Perhaps the most obvious aspect of life that consistent behavior affects is our health. You can't just eat really well once in a while and expect to remain in top shape. You need to consistently nurture your mind and body with a clean environment, nutritious foods, plenty of sunshine, and regular movement. To maintain a healthy state, consistency is key.

Finance

Perhaps less obvious is the impact consistency can have on your personal finances. Tracking what you spend, regularly saving and investing, maintaining a budget, and paying down debt all require consistent attention and action. If you're not where you want to be financially, see if you can improve your consistency in that area.

Goals

Big goals don't just achieve themselves. They call for consistent review and action to bring them to fruition. If you're not consistently reviewing your biggest goals in life and consistently taking small actions to move them forward, you're selling yourself short.

Spirituality

We're all on a spiritual journey, whether we realize it or not. Consistently engaging in your spiritual practice or allowing yourself the time and space to ponder life's biggest questions will enrich your life in unimaginable ways. The most profound benefits of consistency may come from consistently nurturing your inner spirit.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 26, 2021

The Concord Hymn

by Ralph Waldo Emerson
Sung at the completion of the Concord Monument, April 19, 1836

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set today a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

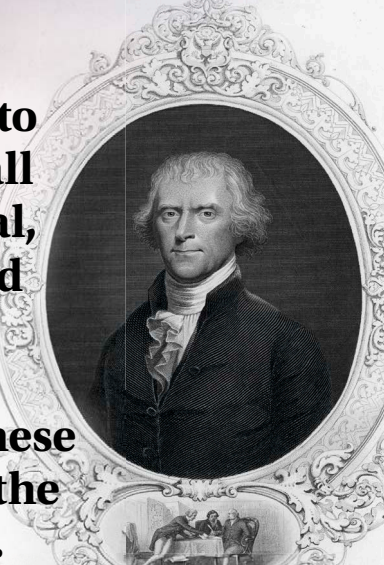
Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

WHY AREN'T THERE ANY KNOCK-KNOCK JOKES ABOUT INDEPENDENCE DAY?



BECAUSE FREEDOM RINGS. YUGANOV KONSTANTIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”



THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826), THIRD PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

By Aidan Danza, age 15

THE OTHER EAGLES

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

While the bald eagle is arguably most renowned bird in America,

there are many other species of eagles in the world.

GOLDEN EAGLE

The golden eagle is the bald eagle's larger and less-often-seen neighbor. They like open country all across the Northern Hemisphere, from America to Scotland, Scandinavia, Russia, Tibet, and the Himalayas.

Golden eagles are around three feet long and have varying shades of brown across their body. Younger birds have white in the wings and the tail. In the United States, they are mainly western birds, but in winter they venture east.

Golden eagles are masters of speed and agility while hunting or displaying and have been clocked at close to 200 mph.

STELLER'S SEA EAGLE

Steller's sea eagles are the largest eagle in terms of length. While little is known about them they are believed to breed only in the Far East of Russia, on coasts and islands in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Sea.

They migrate to Japan each winter to feast on cod, while in their breeding ground they eat mostly salmon during the annual salmon runs.

They look almost as if they are wearing a military uniform, with shades of brown and white patches on the wings that look like epaulets.

HARPY EAGLE

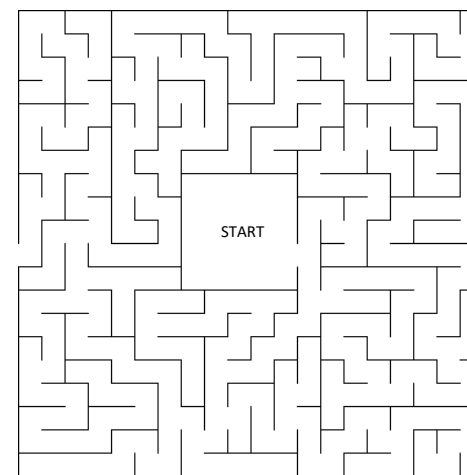
The harpy eagle lives in the rain forests of South and Central America. They are gray, with a light face and underbody, and dark wings.

A pair of harpy eagles will build a nest high up in the canopy of the rain forest. Their nests, just like all eagles', are very large and made of sticks. The female will raise one chick, which will fledge in 6 or 7 months. For a few months afterward, it will still be fed by its parents.

The harpy eagle is at the top of the food chain in their forest, and the only risk for a harpy is when they are young, and other harpy eagles might try to eat it. Harpies eat mostly primates and sloths, but they will eat other birds, rodents, and even small deer. They use their five-inch talons to their great advantage while hunting.



AMAZING ESCAPES!



USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1

8	8		
7	8		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1
8 - 9 - 4 = 8

Medium puzzle 1

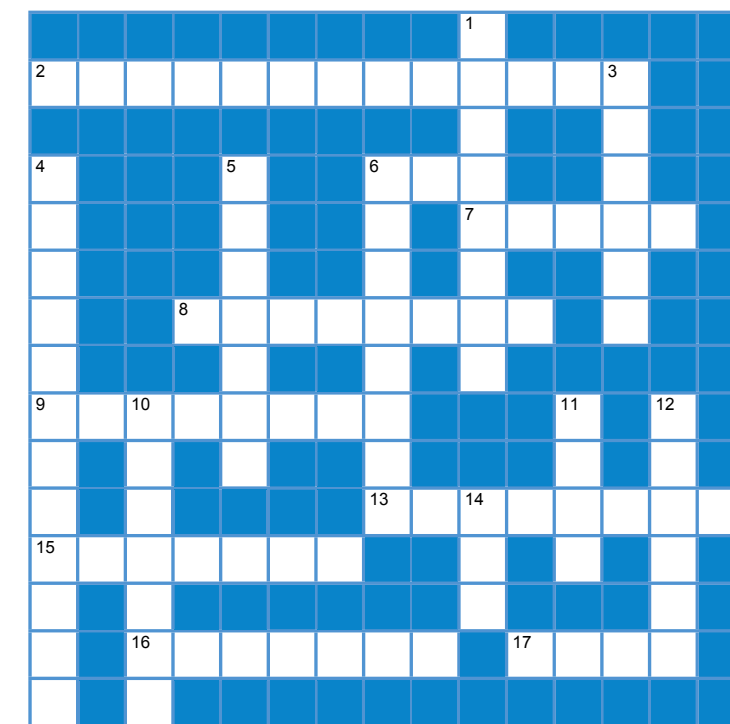
15	20		
2	18		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1
2 - 02 * (91 - 81)

Hard puzzle 1

11	23		
6	22		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Hard 1
22 - 9 * (11 - 82)
9 - 11 + 22 + 82



Across

- 2 Boston ____ (13)
- 6 "Born in the ____" (Springsteen song) (3)
- 7 The color for "Purity" in the flag (5)
- 8 American flag (3,5)
- 9 Some states started as ____ (8)

Down

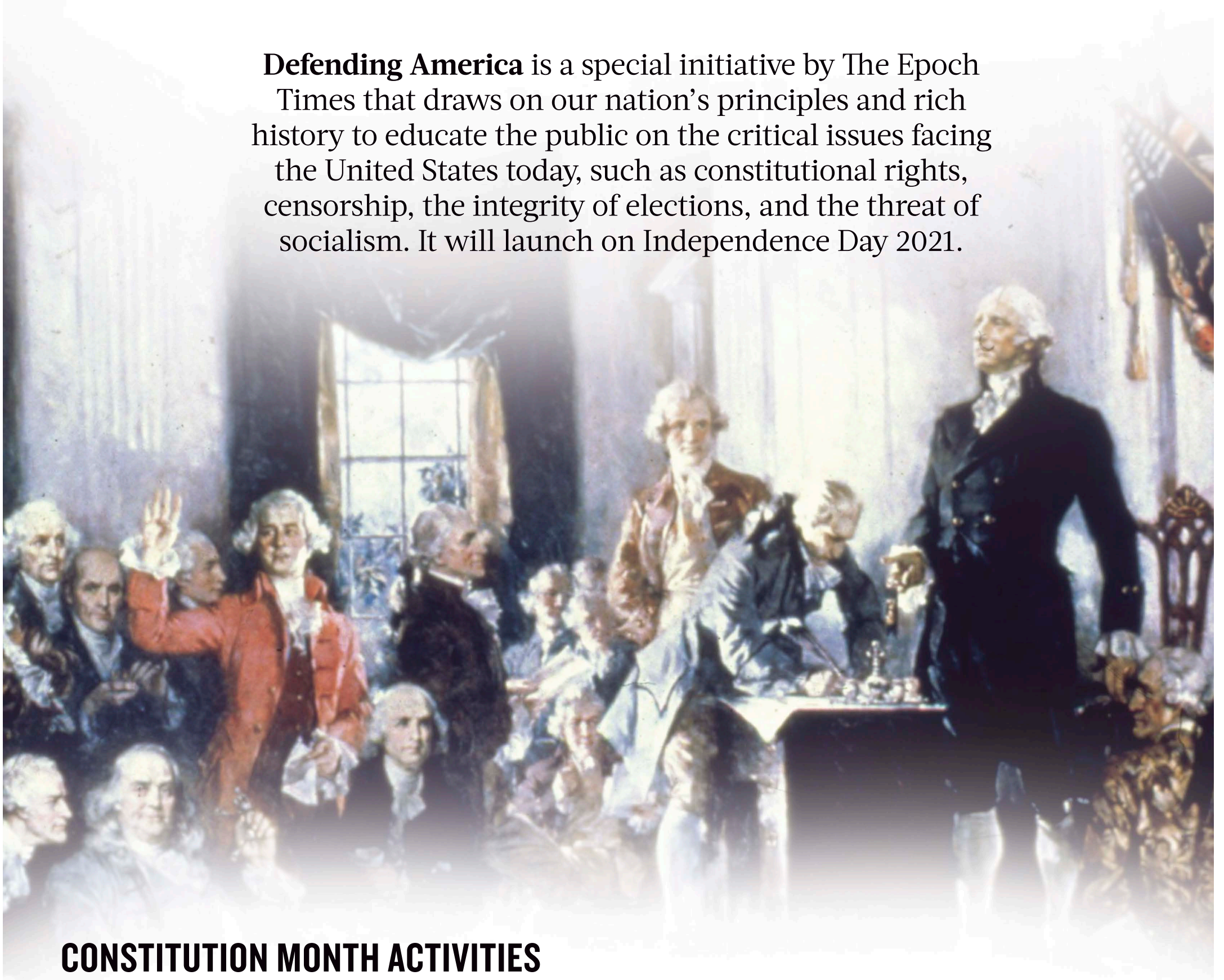
- 1 "The First State" (8)
- 3 Union members (6)
- 4 "Glorious" sight (8,4)
- 5 Who America won their independence from (7)
- 6 He wants you (5,3)
- 10 Patrick Henry's goal: 1775 (7)
- 11 Independence Day is in this month (4)
- 12 The "upper house" (6)
- 14 This color in the flag represents the blood shed for America's freedom (3)

- 13 Lord Baltimore sent colonists here (8)
- 15 Not enslaved (7)
- 16 Benedict Arnold's crime (7)
- 17 The color of the stars' field in the flag (4)

RESTORING THE PROMISE OF AMERICA

Defending America

Defending America is a special initiative by The Epoch Times that draws on our nation's principles and rich history to educate the public on the critical issues facing the United States today, such as constitutional rights, censorship, the integrity of elections, and the threat of socialism. It will launch on Independence Day 2021.



CONSTITUTION MONTH ACTIVITIES

As part of our Defending America initiative, we're focusing on a critical issue every month for our conversations. America is a nation governed by the consent of the governed. And so our first topic will focus on our great U.S. Constitution. A number of activities this month have been organized to educate the public on the significance of the Constitution, how current events are threatening our constitutional rights, and what the world would lose if the U.S. Constitution were lost.

DOCUMENTARY: 'AMERICA REWRITTEN'

In "America Rewritten," an exclusive special feature from The Epoch Times, Joshua Philipp, award-winning senior investigative reporter speaks with leading experts on how history is being falsified. The documentary premieres on July 6, 2021.

PANEL DISCUSSION: DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTION

Our first in-person panel discussion this year, **Defending the Constitution: Why It Matters Now More Than Ever**, will be held on July 19, 2021, in New York City. The event will also be live-streamed on Epoch TV.

SPECIAL EDITION: DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTION

A broadsheet special issue of The Epoch Times will be published on July 7, 2021 containing a series of nine essays defending our Constitution against unfair accusations from political "progressives."

CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE CERTIFICATION

In order to promote more education about the importance of the Constitution, The Epoch Times is also offering Certificates of Completion* for participating in and completing various quizzes and activities. It launches on July 1, 2021.

*For entertainment purposes only



Please visit
epochinitiative.com
for more information.