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## Letters to the Editor for Monday, May 1, 2006

Stars and Stripes

### European and Mideast editions

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: These are the letters that appeared in each edition of Stripes on this publication date. [Click here](#) to jump ahead to the Pacific edition letters)*

### Struggling with loss of son

" ['I think you point the finger at everybody'](#); Anguished father of son who died at parade wants someone to be held responsible" (article, Stars and Stripes, April 23) failed to mention all the support our family has received since the death of our son, Maurice Long.

We have received excellent support from friends and strangers and many others have shown our family compassion. My unit, Headquarters V Corps, and its senior leaders reached out to our family in ways I would have never imagined. I can't thank my unit enough for all its support, especially V Corps G-4. A man we never knew donated a generous amount of money to the American Red Cross in honor of our son.

The death of our son has shattered our lives and I do not blame the Army, the organization that has taken care of my family for the past 20 years. There have been plenty of caring people who have told us they are praying for us and [expressed their] love.

We can't sue the Army, school or the U.S. Army garrison; that is not allowed under law. No amount of money will ever bring the happiness my wife and three children once had. Our family is going through intense counseling to try to come to [grips with] reality.

Many people have questions, how are we able to hold up? We are sleepless and our children have become withdrawn; we know it's only by the grace of God we are holding on. When people avoid us, I don't hold that against them. I, too, would be at a loss as to what to say to someone who has lost what is precious to all of us, and that's our children.

*Chief Warrant Officer 3 James A. Long Jr.*

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## More on weapons lubrication

I read with concern "[Facts on lubrication](#)" (letter, April 12), from the weapon system manager at the Small Arms Support Center in Iraq regarding the Afghanistan-based sergeant who challenged the use of "excessive lubricant in a desert environment."

The logic of the sergeant is consistent with the 25,000-plus e-mails we have received from troops in Afghanistan, Kuwait and Iraq regarding "overlubing" and "wet" lubrication in a desert environment. Putting more "wet" lubricant on a weapon remains counterintuitive and inherently dangerous.

The sergeant and the weapon system manager referred to Militec-1 for a reason. It works. It is designed to be applied minimally and the more you fire the weapon, the better it lubricates, and in a "dry" fashion. Militec-1 has proved its worth in combat operations time and time again.

The Army analysis process is, unfortunately, too reliant on artificial tests instead of performance-based analysis. Ask the Army snipers who have used Militec-1. Ask any squad automatic weapon gunner, MK19 gunner, or 50.-caliber gunner whether Militec-1 leaves a "gummy substance" on a weapon. Militec is confident that the answer will be "No, and my weapon no longer jams."

*Russ Logan, Militec Inc.  
Waldorf, Md.*

## Too many deployment details

As 20- and 21-year veterans, respectively, and now a civilian employee, my wife and I are proud of our servicemembers. We recently visited Ramstein Air Base, Germany, and then Vogelweh Army installation and were treated well by all we encountered. However, one problem occurred to both of us.

As we stood in line at the Vogelweh food court, we were amazed at the amount of information concerning troop deployments we received without asking. We used to call these bits of information "essential elements of friendly information," and, although we may have been on a military installation, these pieces of data are still something that should be guarded.

One airman declared to his friend that they would be hitting the ground hard on (I'll leave the date out) when they arrived in Iraq. Another talked of how long he would be away from his family and when he would be getting home.

This information should be guarded for many reasons, including the safety of our families left in Europe. I certainly wouldn't want all of Germany knowing when my family would be left alone in the house and for how long.

Soldiers and airmen are fighting a hard war and with less and less gratitude, and we appreciate your efforts. Keep yourselves safe and your families safe. Keep the information to yourselves.

*Ralph D. Moore  
SHAPE, Belgium*

## **A 'ludicrous' punishment**

I've been stewing over the punishment for the unauthorized-entry incidents mentioned in "[Air Force policy reinforces base gate security](#)" (article, Stars and Stripes, April 13).

[A driver] was running late, didn't pay attention, and she left her identification card with the gate guard.

I've heard senior commanders say these are people being "stupid." The person made a choice of obeying the rules or not, and she chose not to — a great role model for her students.

Then, an airman just drove through the gate and fled the base. These perpetrators violated rules. These rules were put in place for the protection of schoolteachers, military members, Department of Defense civilians, civilian contractors, family members, the teachers' students. The part that is ludicrous is the punishment for this flagrant and blatant disobedience of these sensitive rules ... loss of driving privileges for up to 15 days?

Are our commanders not able to say, "You knowingly violated my orders and endangered the lives of others. Your base driving privileges are revoked for one year. You no longer have to worry about [not paying attention to the gate guard] or [fleeing the base] or [being stupid] because you no longer have the privilege of driving a car on this installation for one year"?

The entire community is extremely inconvenienced with the stringent security measures instituted to prevent people "from being stupid" and they lose their driving privileges for up to 15 days.

Punishment is also used as a warning to others. This punishment, coupled with appropriate advertising of its application, would be a solid deterrent.

*Norman T. Raynal  
Kapaun Air Station, Germany*

## **Let GI bill help others**

Why do "we the soldier" have to die on active duty, be totally disabled or be a prisoner of war or missing in action to allow our spouse or child to use our education benefits?

When will a soldier be authorized to use his Montgomery GI Bill to allow his child or spouse to attend college or university?

I paid in to the GI bill fund 20 years ago, and my initial \$1,200 has been accruing interest for 20 years. One might think a soldier may have some say in the matter.

Is it the hope of the powers that be that most of the old retirees who are beat up or shot up will not use the fund, creating more opportunity to use higher dollar amounts to entice future soldiers?

Why should we not be offered an option?

When I get done fighting this war in Iraq, get released from this involuntary extension called stop-loss, and am allowed to retire, I might not want to use, or be able to use, the fund. Why am I being excluded from allowing my child, of whom I have missed most of the first 10 years of her life, to have the option to draw from the fund, or at least my portion, as I see fit?

I hope someone will respond to the "why I have to die" question. I may be missing the "big picture" perspective from here in my foxhole.

*Master Sgt. George M. Shumaker III  
Talafar region, Iraq*

## **Pacific edition**

### **'Race-related is not racist'**

I don't understand the uproar about the "racist" content of "Boondocks."

I still remember a time when every comic strip in the paper was funny; now there are only a few gems, and one of my favorites is being attacked. I think what people don't understand is that just because something is race-related does not make it racist.

In every joke there is the butt, the idea or the person being made fun of. In "Boondocks" the butt is racial tension and stereotypes. The American Film Institute rated the top 100 funniest movies of all time in June 2000. Among other classics, sitting at No.5 was my all-time favorite, "Blazing Saddles." In this film there is hardly a scene where the "N-word" isn't used. While the abusive language in the film is primarily aimed at the black characters, the white characters' incompetence is ridiculed more than any aspect in the film.

The comic strip is mostly one-sided because the main characters are black. In the [TV] cartoon version of "Boondocks," both white and black idiosyncrasies are brought to light. Such delicate topics as white upper class American greed, Uncle Tomism and prejudicial police treatment are touched upon — just to name a few. My favorite episode was how Dr. Martin Luther King would react to the current state of black America if he were alive today. The cartoon is very subjective and definitely not one-sided.

The same goes for the comic strip. There are inequalities on both sides of the coin, and "Boondocks" strives, sometimes painfully, to bring these issues to light.

"Boondocks" is like any other comic strip. Where some make fun of marital problems or English language structure, "Boondocks" makes fun of racial and social taboos. Race-related is not racist.

*Gary Harmon  
Camp Carroll, South Korea*

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