

OPINION



the Astorian

editor@dailyastorian.com

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGEN
Publisher

JIM VAN NOSTRAND
Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN
Circulation Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

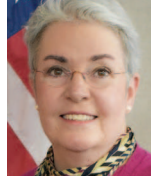
CARL EARL
Systems Manager

GUEST COLUMN

Memorial Day reminds us of our highest ideals — and the price we must sometimes pay for them

Every year, I'm struck by the powerful — and often, opposing — emotions that Memorial Day stirs.

We celebrate our freedoms, and yet, we mourn the cost that they required. We look ahead to a bright future, while we remember the trials and challenges of the past. We honor those who served, but we grieve their loss.



KELLY FITZPATRICK

Celebration, and sadness. Gratitude, and remorse. Hope, and helplessness. Memorial Day is unique in evoking such a broad spectrum of feeling, because it is this holiday that speaks most keenly to our highest ideals, as well as the steep price we are willing to pay for them.

Sadly, it is also a day that, for many, has lost its significance. President George W. Bush would often tell the story of asking schoolchildren what the meaning of Memorial Day is, only to have them respond, "That's the day the pool opens!"

For many Oregonians, Memorial Day is primarily the unofficial start of the summer recreation season, a chance to enjoy our amazing forests and beaches, rivers and lakes and mountain trails.

We should enjoy all that our state has to offer, but we should also keep in mind the words of another president, John F. Kennedy: "A nation reveals itself not only by the citizens it produces but also by the citizens it honors, the citizens it remembers."

We must remember the fallen because the courage, the strength, the selflessness and the sacrifice of each one of these brave warriors is the ideal to which we all should aspire.

On this Memorial Day, I think of Bob Maxwell, a great American and Oregonian whom we lost earlier this month. Bob was a World War II combat soldier, and until his death, the only Medal of Honor recipient still living in our state. While he did not die fighting for our country, he fearlessly faced death in a way few Americans ever have.

He earned that medal — the U.S. military's highest decoration for valor — for the courage he showed during a



Robert 'Bob' Maxwell places a wreath in 2017 in front of the Army flag while taking part in the Wreaths Across America ceremony at First Presbyterian Church in Bend. Maxwell, the nation's oldest Medal of Honor recipient, died May 11 at the age of 98.

battle in September 1944, when a live German hand grenade was tossed in the midst of his squad. Without a second thought, he hurled himself upon it, shielding his comrades from the blast with nothing but a blanket and his unprotected body.

Maxwell cheated death that day, though he carried shrapnel in his body for the rest of his life. It was a life he dedicated in humble service to the veteran community, and to the memories of his brothers in arms, who never got the chance to come home.

We must never forget the true cost of war. It is a price paid not in dollars and cents, but with the blood of our heroes.

They were nothing less than the best America had to offer, those who answered the call when their nation needed them, who paid the ultimate price to protect us and our way of life.

The stories of their sacrifice are for-

ever woven into the fabric of our nation and its history. They gave their lives on the foreign soils of Europe, the black sands of the South Pacific, the frozen reaches of Korea, in the sweltering jungles of Vietnam, the scorching deserts of Afghanistan and Iraq, and in many other places across the globe.

The United States lost more than 400,000 of its sons and daughters in World War II — 2,826 from Oregon. We know that 54,246 American service members gave their lives in Korea (287 Oregonians); and 58,209 in Vietnam (791 from our state).

In Iraq and Afghanistan, we lost 6,713 American service members — 142 Oregonians.

Each one of their names is etched on slabs of granite that form the heart of the Afghan/Iraqi Freedom Memorial, located just a few steps from the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

office building.

Each one of their names is read aloud each year at our Memorial Day ceremony, as we seek to honor and remember their sacrifice.

Each one represents the loss of a bright and shining light in the lives of their families, a pain that they feel each and every day — not just on Memorial Day. We remember and honor their sacrifice as well.

They, too, paid a great price for the freedoms we now enjoy.

On behalf of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, I urge all Oregonians to take a moment this Memorial Day, to remember our fallen heroes who gave their lives in service to our nation, and say, "Thank you."

Kelly Fitzpatrick is an Army veteran and the director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.



© DAVE GRANLUND.COM
POLITICAL CARTOONS.COM

WHERE TO WRITE

• **State Rep. Tiffany Mitchell** (D): State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE, H-285, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1432. Email: rep.tiffanymitchell@oregonlegislature.gov. Web: oregonlegislature.gov/mitchell

• **State Rep. Brad Witt** (D): State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE, H-374, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1431. Email: Rep. BradWitt@oregonlegislature.gov. Web: oregonlegislature.gov/witt

• **State Sen. Betsy Johnson** (D): State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE, S-209,

Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1716. Email: sen.betsyjohnson@oregonlegislature.gov. Web: oregonlegislature.gov/johnson. District Office: P.O. Box R, Scappoose, OR 97056. Phone: 503-543-4046. Astoria office phone: 503-338-1280

• **U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici** (D): 2231 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515. Phone: 202-225-0855. District office: 12725 SW Millikan Way, Suite 220, Beaverton, OR 97005. Phone: 503-469-6010. Web: bonamici.house.gov

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Seaside schools expensive

Seaside School District voters have chosen their leadership, and I congratulate Sandra Gomez on her election. I hope that the main goal will be improving the results being achieved by our underperforming school district.

It is interesting that voters never made an issue of the high cost of the new hillside campus. Our community is building a school facility that ranks among the top 10 most expensive school projects on a per-pupil-served basis in the U.S.

When discussing my alternative project, the school architect said that he never considered alternatives. The head of the county planning commission said that reducing costs by \$80 million is not important.

Do voters really expect this lack of interest in cost can continue? Do elected leaders not understand that the greatest contributor to the rising cost of housing is increased property taxes? Do leaders not

understand that we cannot keep shuffling off the financing of our communities on increasing visitor bed taxes?

The second home owners who can't vote in our elections — and who provide the bulk of the tax revenues for our schools and local government — will eventually seek less-costly vacation options.

So our mayor is correct: I am too analytical. But keep your eyes peeled, because I now intend to pursue the formation of a public utility district for our area which will reduce our electric bills by 30 percent, provide renewable power and survive a Cascadia event.

JOHN DUNZER
Seaside

Read the report

The Mueller report in the redacted public form is out in paperback. Get your copy. It is easy reading so far, and it cer-

tainly doesn't support what William Barr purports, or the White House purports. Why let someone misrepresent, i.e. lie to you, when you can read it for yourself?

I have some questions. Why do so many liars cluster around the liar-in-chief? Even Russia has been lying for him on social media — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr — in a huge way. Do you want to be influenced by Russia?

Why is said chief so afraid of having his taxes and business records disclosed? Tax evasion? Money laundering? Foreign monetary leverage? Unregistered foreign agent? Emolument violation? Unscrupulous business transactions? Crooked? "Lock him up?" All of the above?

MONICA TAYLOR
Astoria

Storm warning

Why don't we hear of it from our news media? We don't even hear of

the looming disaster from the Democratic Party. The U.S. is a boat loaded to the gunnels with rock, heading into a devastating storm.

The rock is our national debt. The storm is China's intention to become the world's dominant economy. Our course is set directly into this storm with tax cuts, a bloated military and tariffs. The weight of these foolhardy policies will result in a failing economy.

With our economy in recession, it will no longer be advantageous for China to continue supporting our national debt. China need only announce that they will no longer be buying U.S. bonds to weaken the dollar so greatly that it will no longer be an acceptable international currency.

We have alienated the few nations who could come to our economic aid. We will emerge from this storm, afloat but as another second-class world power along with Britain, Japan and Russia.

THEODORE 'TOD' LUNDY
Astoria