

ASI  
SEE IT



by Robert Koger

Hearts and  
Minds

The Iraqi and Afghanistan wars have been compared to the Viet Nam war but there are very few similarities, although there is one area where they are identical. We went into these new wars, just like in Viet Nam, without an understanding of the people or their culture.

President Lyndon Johnson came up with a program he referred to as winning the "hearts and the minds" of the people. This phrase was first used by him in 1964 and last used in 1968. One of his statements was, "So we must be ready to fight in Viet Nam, but the ultimate victory will depend upon the hearts and minds of the people who actually live there. By helping to bring them hope and electricity you are also striking a very important blow for the cause of freedom throughout the world."

Although it sounds great, it couldn't be further from the truth. President Johnson, like many others looked at the people we are fighting as if they

were Americans. They aren't. They don't think like us, and they weren't raised like us, and they don't hold the same beliefs or ideals as us.

Even when we are in their country, we continue to view them as foreigners, although we are the foreigners. We look at the conflict like we are there to liberate oppressed people from religious theocracies, fascism, or other ideals. We take pride in the fact that we are there to protect them, rebuild schools, and their infrastructures, and expect them to welcome us with open arms. They see us not as liberators, but as armed forces who have occupied their country.

When you couple that lack of understanding with people who are in charge and are not qualified or equipped to handle the situation, it spells disaster. General Stanley McChrystal is just the latest in a long line of people who think they know more than anyone else. He had all the training and background that could have led to success but lacked the tactical ability to pull it off.

McChrystal's oddball antics first made the news when he banned fast-food restaurants and first run movies from the troops fighting the war. It was his opinion it made them soft and distracted from the mission. One of his senior advisors stated, "This is a war zone, not an amusement park."

The General also changed the rules of war to better protect innocent Afghan citizens and prevent collateral damage. This was done to the detriment of his own troops. He obviously believed in the "hearts and minds" concept.

You can't take the best fighting forces in the world and then tie their hands and hope for success. General McChrystal was in over his head and had lost touch with the reality of what it takes to win a war. This could further be demonstrated when he and his staff openly made derogatory comments about the people appointed over him.

The words, "hearts and minds" were first used by John Adams during the Revolutionary War. He stated, "This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people, was the real American Revolution." This was our country, banded together, fighting for our independence, not occupying another country and trying to give them what we think is best for them.

You can't force people to change their hearts and minds, but you can allow the military to eliminate the opposition, and then it's up to the people of that country to decide what they want, and how they want to live. As Americans, we believe that we have the right to determine our own destiny, and we have to accept that others also have that right even if it's not what we would choose.

THE IDLE  
AMERICAN



by Don Newbury

An old story focuses on coffee shop banter of a rabbi, priest and preacher pondering preferred postures for prayer. Prostrate positions, upheld hands and bowed heads are thoroughly discussed.

On an adjacent stool, a repairman hears their animated conversations without even cupping his ear. "I ain't one to argue with clergy," he interrupts. "But I've done some powerful praying hangin' by one leg 30 feet up a utility pole...."

This yarn came to mind with the news of Harry Marlin's death a white hawk. For him, adult life was a bonus. Before age 21, he had survived both the Great Depression and World War II—the latter including 50 combat missions flown over Germany during his 30 months in the U. S. Army Air Force.

Had he overheard the "prayer" discussion, he'd have offered a sobering personal remembrance: "I've done some powerful praying while crammed inside the ball turret of a B-17 bomber."

Marlin, 86, was the kind of man who typified the central figures of newsman Tom Brokaw's best-seller, *The Greatest Generation*...

His hardscrabble growing-up years in the Brown County hamlet of Blanket and the war neither defined him nor defeated him. The war did, however, snuff out dreams of studying journalism at the University of Missouri.

He volunteered for the Army Air Corps in 1943. Barely 18, his feet in stirrups and hands on a pair of .50 caliber machine guns, he took on

what crew members considered to be the toughest assignment. Inside the turret that rotated 360 degrees in the plane's underbelly, there wasn't even room for a parachute. He couldn't "hunker" up or down—but he stayed busy. Ever alert, he watched for enemy aircraft, fired machine guns, maintained radio contact with the crew, turned the turret and wished he had more room....

He mentioned oft-repeated prayers for take-offs and landings to come out even. There were many close calls, including engine losses in the "workhorse" plane Boeing unveiled just three decades after the Wright brothers' aviation milestone.

Marlin won enough awards to weigh down his uniform before the war's end in 1945. Then, a mere half-dozen years later, he and his Army Reserve buddies were activated during the Korean Conflict....

Many lessons learned in the "school of hard knocks" are the best of all. For these, Marlin deserved Ph.D. recognition. Some might guess—albeit incorrectly—that his civilian life was comparatively mundane. He logged time as a police officer and insurance investigator, among other pursuits. His interests ran the gamut, including photography, Big Bend travels, sashays to Luckenbach and gardening.

He loved his family, one that spanned four generations, and his dog, Bitsy.

For a dozen years late in life, he tackled writing, authoring five books, all of them after age 76. His column was a "must read" weekly feature in the *Brownwood Bulletin*....

Bernell Dewees, his companion of 32 years, assisted with editing—when invited—and encouraged Marlin to maintain his writing regimen into his 84th year.

He used simple, unvarnished words, recounting common experi-

ences. He is remembered for hundreds of classic lines, some of them gleaned for tributes written by Bulletin colleagues Gene Deason, Candace Cooksey Fulton and John Kliebenstein.

Marlin was called, most deservedly, the "Will Rogers of Central Texas" and "a gifted prairie philosopher...."

His writing would have lacked its "soul and substance" had his been a traditional education. Surviving life's most jagged edges trumps "book-learning" every time.

He took life as it came, even "humorizing" one of his final visits to the doctor's office. "I'm having no trouble 'hunkering down,'" he drawled. "Hunkering up" is a whole 'nuther story."

Among the cast of characters in Marlin's life is Richard Hetzel, an unorthodox minister whose life has taken many tangents. He could, for example, fill in as an auctioneer or circus barker with short notice....

Marlin, once noting Hetzel's "propensity for embellishment" at a funeral service, made an "on-the-spot" request: "I want you to 'embellish me' at my funeral."

Hetzel came through, "in spades" as Harry might have said. There was a mixture of smiles and tears. In Marlin's printed funeral program were lines lifted from a 1950 column response to Jesus' promise of many mansions in His Father's house. "But I don't want a mansion—just make a place for me where I can see the beauty of wildflowers, the green of the grass, the blue of the sky and the majesty of the mountains, and all of the glory of Heaven will be mine," Marlin penned.

On the roadside en route to Rock Church Cemetery near Blanket, wildflowers nodded in the breeze. Friends took note of the colorful countryside and wished for their cameras. There would have been nothing wrong in stopping for pictures; Harry would have....

LETTERS

Grave experience becomes good one

Over the past few weeks I have had a very trying time that most would desire to avoid. However, in the position I am now I am grateful for the experience and all it has brought to my life. Because of the accident I have had the opportunity to experience how our community as a whole really cares for its members and their families. From hospital visits, donations, meals, and simple words of encouragement I have been the recipient of an overwhelming amount of care and love. I would just like to thank everyone involved for the experience they have given me and the great job everyone has done in making what appeared to be such a grave experience, a good one.

Have an opinion? Tell it to the editor. Best wishes to all,  
See letter policy on the bottom of page 2: Caleb Daugherty

ANIMAL  
THOUGHTS...



Subscribe to the Courier!  
Just \$23 for a year.  
Subscribe now and get  
ONE MONTH FREE!  
Call 458-7429

**ANIMAL HOSPITAL ON MILAM ROAD**  
SHERRI SWANTON, D.V.M. • EANN B. STUCKY, D.V.M.  
490-458-3351  
2490 MILAM RD. EAST SANGER, TX 76266

**CURTIS INSURANCE SERVICES**  
Pam Curtis  
pam@curtisinsurance.com  
103 S. Stemmons Fwy Sanger, TX 76266  
Phone: 940-458-5413 Fax: 940-458-5876

**IES** Independent Environmental Services, Inc.  
1-(800) 909-9061

**COUPON**  
**\$500**  
**DOLLARS OFF**  
towards the purchase of your next vehicle  
Offer valid only at James Wood Neighborhood Autos in downtown Denton. Coupon not valid with any other offer.  
If you are looking for a car, truck, or SUV, and a FREE warranty, I can help!  
~ Ken Smith

**BUY HERE, PAY HERE!**  
**www.buyheretexas.com**  
With currently over 4000 Buy Here, Pay Here Customers and millions to loan... Give us a chance to give YOU a chance!  
All Applications Accepted!  
**JAMES WOOD**  
940-243-5449  
DOWNTOWN LOCATION • 317 N. Locust St. • Denton

**PLATO'S CLOSET**  
**Grab Bag Event!**  
All day long! Put as many clearance items as possible in one bag for just \$10.00. YEAH! Only \$10.00!!!! Everything else in store is 10% off. ONE DAY ONLY.  
**Saturday, July 17, 2010**  
**10:00am - 6:00pm**  
1719 S. Loop 288, Ste. 150 Denton, Texas 940-566-6096  
don't miss out!

better together  
The Companion Discount...  
John North Agent  
129 N. 2nd St., Ste A Krum, TX 76249 940.482.0034  
FARM BUREAU  
Auto, Home - Life  
"Moments worth covering are never accidents."