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Wednesday, December 29, 2010



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The best New Year's resolution is to say thanks to U.S. military

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By: [Hugh Hewitt](#) 12/27/10 1:43 AM
Examiner Columnist

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Of the 310 million Americans, 1,445,000 are on active duty in the uniformed services of the military, and another 833,000 are in the reserves.

Less than 1 percent of the country protects the rest of us against every threat across the globe, whether North Korean nutters, Somali pirates, Islamists in Afghanistan and Iraq, fanatics in Iran, drug cartels in Mexico, or old-fashioned near-peer powers with nukes, fleets and air forces.

This past week, my path crossed those of a Navy chaplain, a Navy SEAL, a Marine 2nd lieutenant just graduated from the Basic School, and a naval aviator. (I also chatted with the father of an Army Ranger, so my world these seven days wasn't completely confined to conversations with representatives of the sea services.)

Each individual I spoke with is an extraordinary man, in love with his high calling and eager to be about the missions he was trained for. All are good humored and humble, and also very clear-eyed about the difficulty of the work they do and the tasks ahead.

When the calendar turns this week, most Americans will realize that we are in the 10th year of a long war, but fewer and fewer of them will make the connection between that war and their ability to live the lives they have chosen in near complete freedom.

When the various enemies of the country break in upon our awareness, it isn't for very long and it is only rarely with any sense of personal threat. Since that terrible day the 10th anniversary of which we will mark in less than nine months, the war has been pushed steadily back by our military and held far off by their courage and sacrifice.

Of the approximately 2 million Americans who have served in Afghanistan, Iraq or other combat operations in the past decade, nearly 6,000 have been killed and more than 30,000 wounded.

Each month of the war brings more sacrifice and more pain for families and friends, but, of all the members of the military and their families that I meet, I do not hear complaints about that cost, though I do hear resigned recognition that the war just doesn't matter much to the average American.

The networks will do cutaways to far-off bases during big holiday football games, and media will carry front-page reports of distant battles or of suddenly explosive standoffs on the Korean peninsula, but rarely does the focus clarify the real men and women in uniform on that front line or their families praying for their safety far away.

President Obama's finest moment in 2010 was his trip to Afghanistan at Thanksgiving to celebrate with the troops he commands, and his Christmas Day visit to the Marines in Hawaii was another welcome exercise in example for every American.

There will be about a half-billion resolutions made in the week ahead, and most of them will be discarded by midmonth. The best resolutions will follow the president's lead and commit to at least an occasional recognition of and thanks offered to the troops who have, for a decade, been the country's shield.



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There are numerous ways to mark this resolution — a monthly contribution to the Injured Marines Semper Fi Fund, Soldiers Angels or Ficher House, or a daily visit to Blackfive.net, MudvilleGazette.com or some other military blog or Web site are easy enough commitments to keep.

Expressed gratitude to the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines and their families is probably the most important expression of such a resolution. After a decade of war, that is the one New Year's goal that the vast majority of Americans ought to be able to agree upon.

Examiner Columnist Hugh Hewitt is a law professor at Chapman University Law School and a nationally syndicated radio talk show host who blogs daily at HughHewitt.com.

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By: MISS HURLEY
DEC 27, 2010 8:02 AM

Something I learned and am always reminded of during training, is as you said... 1% of our population protects the rest. 1% are the sheep dogs, the rest are the sheep who go about their daily lives unaware of what is going on outside of their immediate grazing area. 10 years is a long time and the citizens of this Country are war weary. Someone has to protect this great Nation from an Enemy that Hates America. They keep coming like roaches out of the darkness. Sadly it falls on the shoulders of our young men and women. I have 2 sons serving. One is in Iraq as I type this. Everyone is entitled to their opinion about this war and the Administration. It is a hard fought freedom that you continue to have because of our men and women in uniform. Feel what you feel about the war. Write you letters to your Government. Do NOT protest at funerals of the fallen. Do NOT protest where our soldiers can see your lack of support. Their job is hot, hard, exhausting, maddening, saddening. They need to know it is NOT done in vain. That the sacrifice they make to be away from loved ones for months on end, to risk life and limb has not been done in vain. Take your blinders off, put your opinions away, put your hand out, wrap your arms around a Soldier and thank them for the freedom and safety you have in this great land of ours.

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By: Phillyfanatic
DEC 27, 2010 5:27 PM

As your friend Pastor Glenn from LB, I will thank God for our blessings and one of them, you hit on the nose, our great military. We should list our blessings each and every day but a good resolution list should begin with just being born in America. I believe in the Reagan-Mass. pre-revolutionary Guv. who thought America was God's City set on a Hill and I know you do too. I do not thank the Lord Jesus for our present leadership however in spite of Romans. So, we shall see how we as individual Americans, blessed to be citizens of this nation, and are Christians, citizens of Heaven, will aid other Americans who are hurting et al. Happy New Year Hugh and to America.

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By: akw

I was recently travelling through SE Virginia, in the area where the Navy would like to build a new airfield for training. I saw several signs nailed to trees or staked in the ground proclaiming "NO OLF" (outlying landing field). Mixed in was a sign thanking returning troops. As a Navy vet the gratitude rings hollow. It is easy to

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...making returning troops. As a Navy vet, the gratitude rings hollow. It is easy to put up a thank you sign or write an editorial, but doing something of substance like supporting an airfield that would affect your quality of life was out of the question. Save your paint, plywood and yellow ribbons for something useful.

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