

“Taps” or Just Tapped Out

✘ In a recent column by Bill McClellan in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, he suggested, as a way to cut government spending, that we eliminate military funerals for all veterans except for those who died in combat. He states that buglers who play “Taps” make \$24.50 per service and, although, not excessive, the government is just “tapped out” and needs to cut spending.

I saw an interview with Mr. McClellan and Laura Ingraham and he seems like a nice enough fellow. He served his country during the Vietnam War, and for that, I thank him for his service. But, as he wrote in his column, “most veterans did nothing heroic” and, as far as he was concerned, the country paid him back with the college education he derived from the G.I. Bill. His solution for the fiscal problem was that if a veteran wished to have a military funeral, he should join a veterans’ association and let the association provide military honors at the funerals of their members.

I would have to disagree with Mr. McClellan on two points. First, I question his definition of “heroism” and the second, I don’t agree with him about the government expenditure for military funerals.

I don’t know whether Mr. McClellan was drafted or enlisted. If he was drafted, (and if my memory serves me well) he could’ve gone to Canada, he could’ve gotten a student deferment, he could’ve feigned or overstated a medical problem, he could’ve gotten married, or he could’ve applied for a job in an “essential” civilian occupation.

On the other hand, if he enlisted, as our current men and women in the military have done, he made a deliberate decision to serve his country.

In either case, being drafted or having enlisted, anyone who

serves in our military is a hero. Women who enlisted in the Marine Corps during WWII were never in combat but held vital jobs behind the scenes such as radio operators, parachute riggers, drivers, cooks, bakers, auto mechanics, etc., all jobs that would've had to have been filled by men, thereby reducing the number of combat troops. The same probably holds true today. To say that any person who wears a military uniform in this country is not a hero is a misjudgment.

Getting out alive doesn't make one less of a hero than someone who died on the battlefield. The sacrifice is different, but sacrifice, in whatever form, should still be honored and revered.

Anyone who puts on a uniform with the potential of being in harm's way in order to protect the interests of our country and we, its people, is a hero to me, including Mr. McClellan, even if he doesn't see himself as one.

On the second point, fiscal responsibility, anyone who's read my articles knows how crazy I get about government waste. Providing military funerals for all our veterans is not an item I would eliminate from our balance sheet.

Today, when our government is hemorrhaging money in handouts to people who give back absolutely nothing to America and are not required to account for it (e.g., no drug testing required for welfare) or even perform community service or some type of volunteer work in exchange for those handouts, I have a real problem with people who think that our military's men and women should not be accorded a military funeral. Whatever the cost of the bugler, or any other expense attributable to the military funeral, should be gladly paid by the taxpayer with a smile and a big "thank you!"

I'm not at all interested in teaching Moroccans how to make pottery at a cost of \$27 million, or spending \$1.5 million to find out why some women homosexuals are fat while homosexual

males are not, or spending \$325,000 to build a robotic squirrel or \$682,750 to study shrimp on a treadmill. There's plenty of room for government to cut back, including footing a \$585,000 bill for Joe Biden's recent one-night-stay in Paris. Cutting back military honors for our veterans is not one of them.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.