

# “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.

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## **Signed 'Seal'-ed Delivered Straight to Hell**

✘ I'm so very proud of our military but words can't express the admiration and deep gratitude I feel towards the Navy Seals who, with razor-sharp precision, infiltrated Bin Laden's compound and killed him. I say, "good riddance UBL and may you rot in hell with the rest of your cohorts."

So while I'm reading today that these brave men will have to be honored in private for their clandestine achievement to ensure their own safety, I'm also reminded of some recent stupid comments and conclusions from some really clueless individuals who know nothing about what it takes to defend our country.

Rosie O'Donnell was bemoaning the fact that her teenaged son had shown an interest in the military. Lamenting the idea that here she is, a "peace-loving anti-war Mom" and her son's been interested in the military since he was a "little baby," she was hoping he'd grow out of it but hasn't.

I can't imagine a nobler calling. Without a draft in this country, we still have young men and women who voluntarily

join the military and believe in it so strongly that they're willing to sacrifice their lives for their belief. They're actually ready to die to defend Miss O'Donnell's right to stay stupid stuff like 9/11 was an inside job.

It made me sick to my stomach to read that Anthony Maschek, a Columbia freshman and former Army staff sergeant awarded the Purple Heart after being shot 11 times in a firefight in Iraq, was heckled and called a racist during a town-hall meeting at the University to discuss whether ROTC should be allowed back on campus. So, here's this 28-year old veteran being hissed and booed by a bunch of snotty-nosed little twerps who probably cry over a hangnail and are too afraid to walk through Central Park at dusk.

Whatever your position on the ROTC issue (I say if Columbia receives any federal funding, it should be defunded until the ROTC is back on campus), there's no excuse for "laughing and jeering" this American hero who spent two years at Walter Reed Army Medical Center recovering from his wounds. (When the story broke, I hadn't heard a word from the President how he felt about this disrespectful display at his alma mater – has anyone heard a word from him?)

The only thing worse than these useless twits is the University of Washington assistant professor Amy Hagopian, an author of a report which compared the behavior of military recruiters with the behaviors of sexual predators. In my decades-long career in child abuse and neglect, I've dealt with dozens of sexual predators and to make any comparison between them and our military is disgusting and offensive. To compare sexual predators that groom and psychologically manipulate a vulnerable and weak child to the actions of a military recruiter is sickening and moronic.

I would suggest Miss O'Donnell and Professor Hagopian learn about the training a man must go through before he becomes a Navy Seal or spend some time watching one of the best shows on

television, Lifetime's Coming Home, an uplifting show which reflects the nobility, strength, bravery, and dedication of our military's men and women.

At Christmas, I wrote an article Sacrifice Is Not Faceless about my Goddaughter, Jeannine (an Iraq War veteran herself), and her husband, Jeremy, now serving in Afghanistan. Having a first-hand glimpse into the lives of these two strong and courageous people, I tried to convey the enormous sacrifice our military families make every day. Coming Home brings this dedication into our living rooms every Sunday by showing the mutual love and admiration of our fighting men and women and their children, fathers, mothers, and parents.

Instead of hoping your child's interest in such an honorable career would wane or conclude that our military men and women are the equivalent of defenseless children susceptible to outside influence, we should see our military men and women as the strong, dedicated and brave fighting force they are and that they're worthy of our deepest and sincerest gratitude and respect.

For all the Rosie O'Donnells and Amy Hagopians in this country, thank God for people like Bill O'Reilly who raised \$1 million for the Fisher House, a truly worthy charity, by selling his notes for the Super Bowl Sunday interview with President Obama. There's also Dennis Miller, who is the national spokesman for USA Cares, an organization that assists post 9/11 military service members and their families. And there's also Kaziah Hancock who paints portraits of fallen soldiers free of charge for their families as part of Project Compassion.

Organizations such as the Wounded Warrior Project and TAPS support our veterans and their families and recognize the sacrifice they've made for all of us – are you hearing me Miss O'Donnell and Miss Hagopian?

I don't get people who cloak their idiotic statements in the First Amendment but denigrate the system that protects that right, but if you do, God bless you.