

THE FLAG

On a brutally cold winter morn in Baldwin County -it was Sunday, and my wife and I had just returned from church- I noted my flag was torn and tattered, a final victim of ravaging winds recently. It seemed, too, symbolic of our present time and turmoil in America and the World.

So today, the 21st of January of our new year I brought the old down and put up the new, a ceremony of one but always emotional for me. Ironically, it was Martin Luther King day of national honor and recall. This was not deliberate but coincidental. Yet prescient and appropriate for we are one nation under God.

Just before I had been ruminating about an article and perusing a small book of the quotable Ronald Reagan, one of my heroes. Like John Wayne these two were tough, hard-core Americans whose image reflected strength, character and commitment and many of us looked up to them, despite the fact they had never fought in a war. Training films and war movies had been their lot, but they left a legacy of the real America.

Seemingly my life had been that of a soldier- perhaps inspired by my innocence and youth at Page Military Academy, 'the big school for little boys' in Los Angeles, California. The bugle woke us and put us to sleep, the life captive, full of discipline, honor and memories of prayer in the Chapel....and things to come.

Wrought by a never-ending undeclared 'war' which smacks more of colonial conflicts rather than something of the magnitude of World War II and even the so-called limited wars of Korea and Vietnam, yet with recent relative military successes oft troubled by the cauldron of Islamic ideology and hatred...incessantly.

Victor Hanson reminds, "we are at war and we are winning due more to the courage and superb character of our soldiers than citizens with mixed views and responses." So true then and now..... Civilization does hang in the balance. So what portends?

I just offered my services -perhaps compromised by age and circumstance- to Senator John McCain. I had been privy to a meeting with him in the eighties in Tucson, Arizona where we tried to prevail on him to run for

Senate. With, General George Jones, the hero of the parachute drop on Corregidor in the prelude of the return to the Philippines in WWII, Colonels Laird Gutterson, a fellow VN captive with McCain, and Sam Sharp, a veteran of the St Vith fight in The Bulge. No answer so far, but I think we need a tough, grizzled old warrior of trial and error, one who understands the continuing conflict, to lead us. Throw in a Huckabee as Vice President I see a mix of Duty, Honor, Country and an example of God.

This old soldier says: Secure borders, resolve immigration law, deport criminals, declare English as national language and America, a Christian country, determine loyalty of Muslim, other ethnic groups, consider universal military training and/or other 'peace corps' alternative, mandatory minimum of 2 yrs after high school; consider action against countries harboring terrorists or indoctrination of terrorism in madrassas; place all options on table to counteract rogue nuclear nations to include use of all war weapons.

And to revere and remember our Flag....."When I am torn into strips and used as bandages for my wounded comrades on battlefield..... When I am flown at half-mast to honor my soldier, or when I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving parent at the grave of their fallen son or daughter, I am proud."