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## Letters to the Editor for June 15, 2007

By STARS AND STRIPES  
Stars and Stripes  
Published: June 15, 2007

### European and Mideast editions

(EDITOR'S NOTE: These are the letters that appeared in each edition of Stripes on this publication date. [Click here](#) to jump ahead to the Pacific edition letters)

#### Motivated by 'fat paychecks'?

"Mom seeks honor for son, contractors' contributions" (article, May 29) told the tale of a mother of a killed military contractor's quest to gain recognition for him. Sorry, mom. I don't agree.

While his loss was a tragedy for the family, it had nothing to do with the military.

She commented money did not influence his decision to take the job. Rather, it was a desire to serve. Rubbish. The fat paychecks are exactly the motivation to leave the true service of the military for the mercenary rewards of the contractor. If he had wanted to continue his service he would not have left the military.

The money is recognition enough.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Tom Murphy  
Camp Arifjan, Kuwait

#### Manhart did disservice to AF

First I would like to say I appreciate Stars and Stripes, but it offends me when you portray an individual who has brought discredit upon herself and the Air Force as a hero ("Playmate airman bares it all to help wounded troops," article, June 6). I'm sure there are many other servicemembers who are serving our country with dignity, honor and respect who agree.

The article about the Playboy airman, Michelle Manhart, is a waste of ink and is a discredit to the Air Force. She is not an airman. She was discharged; therefore, she does not represent this great service anymore.

Stars and Stripes should apologize to the Air Force community for publishing this story. In the future if you are going to glorify discharged members of any service, please state it in the headline, such as "former Playboy airman."

Master Sgt. Garcia Johnson  
Kadena Air Base, Okinawa

#### In defense of cook

In response to "[Where are cooks' gloves?](#)" (letter, May 29), where a master sergeant in Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, complained about a picture where the cook wasn't wearing gloves and a hair net: That cook is living in an outpost in the middle of what must look like the foothills of hell, feeding infantry and artillery troops who go out for a couple days or more to engage the enemy in brutal ground combat.

Here in Baghdad, we do have the luxury of foreign workers to prepare our food, while that camp in Afghanistan does not. I bet that cook takes cover several times a day when mortars drop in, which was stated in that article. The mortars arrive daily on our camp

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##### STRIPES CENTRAL

#### Obama taps Navy secretary for Gulf of Mexico recovery

Ray Mabus, secretary of the Navy and former Mississippi governor, will lead the "long-term" recovery, President Obama announced Tuesday night.

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Report: Decade of Navy personnel cuts hinders current readiness [03:08 June 16, 2010](#)

It's still unbecoming conduct [13:04 June 15, 2010](#)

Ramstein major gets 4 months for drug use [16:30 June 12, 2010](#)

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No ogling allowed [11:21 June 15, 2010](#)

Petraeus falls ill during tense Afghanistan hearing on the Hill [21:41 June 15, 2010](#)

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To U.S. troops, German soldiers' plight was 'very personal for us' [15:23 June 15, 2010](#)

To U.S. troops, German soldiers' plight was 'very personal for us' [15:23 June 15, 2010](#)

Ramstein major gets 4 months for drug use [16:30 June 12, 2010](#)

Housing concerns may delay move from Germany to Italy [16:33 June 12, 2010](#)

Women stare, too [11:20 June 15, 2010](#)

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Debate lingers over how to protect deployed troops' custody rights [13:21 June 14, 2010](#)

German government stops Americans from registering firearms [08:28 June 15, 2010](#)

Germany-based Strykers will deploy to Zabul, rather than aid Kandahar campaign [11:41 June 7, 2010](#)

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Women stare, too

Hail to Kadena's Schrock, Falcons' Gleaves, Pacific Athletes of the Year

Bristol Palin offers little

It's still unbecoming conduct

Are new recruits secretly given saltpeper?

here in Baghdad as well. How often does the letter writer take cover from rockets and mortars where he is? How many troops in his unit have been killed my bombs, mortars and gunfire where he is?

There are many things to be aware of in combat in Iraq and in Afghanistan. [The letter writer should] do a reality check, and search his soul. Many of us are going to be lucky to go home alive.

[He should] come up here and do a patrol with me in "al-Qaida Central"; see all of these dead torture victims we get to pick up daily; see an American soldier who was mutilated in an IED attack; be part of an ambush and be on the business end of automatic weapons; feel the suffering of combat stress, loss, extreme danger and seeming helplessness that go along with all I have mentioned; and face the terrorists with all that attention to detail that he must have.

Sgt. Dustan Johnson  
Baghdad

### Information for the enemy

The June 12 Mideast and Italy editions of Stars and Stripes have emblazoned across the front page "Report: New vehicle can withstand EFPs."

Can someone explain to me why it was necessary to tip off our enemies that they now might need to change their bomb tactics?

Whose side is the American media on?

Del W. Wilber  
Camp Victory, Iraq

### No need to cover Paris Hilton

I think it is very sad that we have any news or information on the cover of Stars and Stripes, or any newspaper for that matter, about the goings-on of Paris Hilton.

As I am writing this and throughout the time I've thought about writing this letter I fail to find one movie, song, show or venture that has been worth watching or hearing.

What exactly does she do? She's the Enron of entertainment. It's hard to say exactly what she does, but she makes killer money doing it. I understand that papers need to be sold, entertainment and movie stars are a fact of life, but if it comes down to plastering this sort of garbage on the front page of a newspaper, what exactly are we saying about ourselves? This is all it takes to entertain people?! Are you serious? Read a book.

Senior Airman Jack Crish  
Balad Air Base, Iraq

### ACLU does good work

I've seen my fair share of ridiculous letters in Stripes, but the paranoid rantings from "[ACLU an oxymoron](#)" (June 5) takes the cake. I'm no huge fan of the American Civil Liberties Union, but I'm all for separation of church and state. Public schools are not the places to be handing out religious literature. If you want your kids to be indoctrinated according to your beliefs and taught that life came from a giant man in the sky, then by all means send them to a private religious school.

The letter writer goes on to say that handing out condoms in school is causing teens to have abortions. Isn't the entire point of handing out condoms in schools to ensure teens don't get pregnant?

The ACLU isn't trying to "impose [its] Godless beliefs" on anyone, it's trying to prevent religious fundamentalists from turning the USA from the beacon of democracy it is to the Christian version of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

And as far as the letter writer comparing the lawsuit the ACLU filed to Nazi Germany, until the ACLU president starts calling for the "final solution to the Christian question," his letter will be pure paranoia so common with the religious right.

Senior Airman Casey Leavings  
Yokota Air Base, Japan

- New kids on the blog
- Numbers argue against repeal
- Too many nationals at AAFES
- Definitions of heroism

### Your Photos on Stripes Spotted



STARS & STRIPES Father's Day Messages

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### Europe Classifieds

- Professional Big Band  
Fri, 18 Jun 2010 14:24:21 GMT
- Beautiful Single Family House  
Thu, 17 Jun 2010 08:00:46 GMT
- Home for rent in Steinbach  
Wed, 16 Jun 2010 12:00:20 GMT
- Wiesbaden  
Tue, 15 Jun 2010 20:52:13 GMT
- BMW, 335I, 2009 - \$37,000.00  
Tue, 15 Jun 2010 20:30:36 GMT

### Autos

- BMW, 335I, 2009 - \$37,000.00  
Tue, 15 Jun 2010 20:30:36 GMT
- Toyota, Camry, 2002 - \$5,400.00  
Tue, 15 Jun 2010 19:32:57 GMT
- Mitsubishi, Mirage, 2001  
Tue, 15 Jun 2010 17:30:24 GMT
- Volkswagen, Jetta VR6, 2003 - \$9,500.00  
Tue, 15 Jun 2010 17:06:45 GMT
- Toyota, FJ Cruiser, 2008 - \$26,000.00  
Tue, 15 Jun 2010 15:06:13 GMT

### Electronics

- xbox 360, tv, lamp, misc cables  
Tue, 15 Jun 2010 15:07:56 GMT
- VCR - \$15.00  
Mon, 14 Jun 2010 21:56:04 GMT
- 20 inch Flat Screen TV - \$50.00  
Mon, 14 Jun 2010 21:49:26 GMT
- TV/DVD Combo - \$40.00  
Mon, 14 Jun 2010 21:13:17 GMT
- 42in LCD TV For Sale - \$700.00  
Mon, 14 Jun 2010 15:06:56 GMT

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## Soldiers more than their tattoos

In regard to the June 6 letter "[Tattooed soldiers look silly](#)" advising "first-line supervisors, snap link in your Ranger buddies and let them know how stupid they look": I've had the privilege and honor to serve beside soldiers with far more tattoos than I have. I serve with most of them today. They serve the same great nation that gives others the right to make fun of their tattoos and they do so willingly. Serving in the Army has its costs for everyone. Some of my tattooed friends have paid in blood; some have paid with their lives. They certainly are not lesser men for having tattoos. They're great Americans.

It's my understanding the Army revised its policy on tattoos in an effort to bolster [recruitment of highly qualified great Americans who might otherwise have been](#) excluded from joining. Tattoos are now permitted on the hands and back of the neck if they are not "extremist, indecent, sexist or racist."

Maybe instead of worrying about soldiers' tattoos, leaders should train their soldiers to fight the real enemy they face on the battlefield — an enemy who with their waking thought is hell-bent on the violent death and maiming of U.S. soldiers; an enemy who waves as your convoy drives by and throws an RKG-3 anti-tank grenade onto your truck; an enemy trained in shooting around a soldier's body armor; an enemy who watches and waits for opportunity.

I'm glad my brothers in arms care enough to tell me to "avoid that pothole" and "watch those guys on the roadside," instead of making fun of my tattoos.

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Albrecht  
Fort Carson, Colo.

## Pacific edition

### Pagans don't belong in chapel

I'm very shocked to read that Pagans are allowed to use one of the rooms in the Misawa Air Base chapel ("[Pagans resist keeping the faith to themselves](#)," article, June 10). If I was attending church in Misawa, I would be outraged.

This is not a matter of discrimination, but a matter of spiritual warfare. Many good things have come from respecting and valuing the differences of our military members. I am proud of the way the military integrates different religions compared to the civilian world. When you go to a military chapel, you might notice many different religious symbols on its door. However, you cannot turn a house of worship of the one true God into a house of worship for many different gods. Just as we have separation of church and state for important reasons, we also need to keep the worship of worldly things separate from the worship of heavenly things.

C.S. Lewis puts it in easy terms, "Aim at heaven and you get thrown in. Aim at the earth and you get neither."

I can respect Pagans' religious views and outlooks on life. History is full of examples of the created being worshipped instead of the Creator. However, it is one thing to support them by giving them their own place of worship, but a whole different topic when you give Pagans access to a place in which God is served.

Your article can spin this any way it likes, but this is not a "woe is me" piece, but an attack on Christianity itself. Frankly, I am fed up with all this politically correct nonsense. Either support the Pagans by providing them their own separate place of worship and an ability to advertise or don't support them at all. Quit sacrificing our foundation of absolute and irrefutable truth for man's or woman's futile attempt at wisdom. It is doomed to fail.

Kendra Miranda  
Okinawa

## No need to write about Knight

There is a war going on. Many sailors are forward deployed, performing duties well outside the realm of their normal occupations. Instead of writing multiple meaningless stories about a homosexual sailor who is being discharged for his sexual orientation ("[Navy bars outed gay sailor from return to service](#)," June 11), could you please write



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stories about sailors who are serving honorably in harm's way? They deserve it. Petty Officer 2nd Class Jason Knight does not.

Capt. Mike McCoy  
Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan

### **Series not meant to be real**

In response to "Army Wives' does a disservice" (letter, June 8). I'm sure that all TV viewers who watch this new series "Army Wives" look at it as just another soap opera. If these shows were of actual events, no one would watch them because they would be boring. Not to say that an Army wife's life is boring, it's just to say that what they do is nothing like what is portrayed in these soaps. The producers juice up the scenes so they will appeal to a large audience.

After 30 years of Army service, which included countless moves, I never came across 1) a female lieutenant commander who stayed drunk most of the time, 2) a wife who could go to the PX and buy a protective mask filter, 3) twins being born in a military hospital and then the mother stating they died during birth (no birth certificate) and 4) a colonel's wife who let her son beat the hell out of her and nothing being done.

I don't think most people who watch TV series really believe what they see in these types of shows, regardless if they have any connections to the military or not. The show is for entertainment only. I would suggest that the letter writer just not tune in this show and watch something else. It is funny to me. I have the opportunity to point out the mistakes and laugh about them.

Sgt. Maj. James R. Ratcliff Sr. (retired)  
Lacey, Wash.

### **Onus on grads to have skills**

Brian Hill, a Haverford College student, wrote a pessimistic column regarding job prospects for him and the rest of his peers ("Dim job prospects for bright futures," June 11). Hill is wrong about his perspective that the United States has failed his generation. His rationale is that because college students do not enroll in programs that provide lucrative professional advancement, America is denying them prosperity. Hill and the rest of these disgruntled youths simply need to retrain into fields in which employers are hiring and paying high salaries.

American corporations bring thousands of foreign workers to our country each year to fill the void left by the lack of skilled candidates in the United States. If Hill visits a technical college, I am sure he will determine there are plenty of wonderful careers available to him. We live in a global economy, and workers must adjust accordingly to be competitive.

Tyrone D. Scott  
Yokota Air Base, Japan

### **In defense of cook**

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in an IED attack; be part of an ambush and be on the business end of automatic weapons; feel the suffering of combat stress, loss, extreme danger and seeming helplessness that go along with all I have mentioned; and face the terrorists with all that attention to detail that he must have.

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Senior Airman Jack Crish  
Balad Air Base, Iraq

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