After the uniform comes off

Rev. Peter Preble

There are many things I remember about my time in the Army. Some are good, some not so good, and a few probably shouldn't be repeated in polite company. But when I think back on those years, what I remember most are the people.

In the military, you live and work alongside people in ways that are difficult to describe to someone who has never experienced it. You share long days, uncomfortable conditions, moments of frustration, and more than a few laughs. You learn to depend on one another, and over time, those relationships become something like family.

And then, one day, your time in uniform comes to an end.

You turn in your equipment, complete the paperwork, and begin the next chapter of your life. The Army continues without you, as it should, but the people who were part of your everyday world are suddenly scattered across the country. A community that once surrounded you becomes something you carry in your memory.

Some experiences can be described but never fully understood by someone who hasn't lived through something similar. You can tell the stories and laugh about what happened, but sometimes the person listening doesn't have the same frame of reference. That doesn't mean they don't care or aren't trying to understand. They just weren't there.

That is part of what makes military camaraderie so difficult to replace. The people you served alongside don't need the entire story explained. Sometimes a few words or a familiar expression are enough.

With Veterans Day approaching, I've also been thinking about another part of military life that has always made me uncomfortable. Every year, someone inevitably says, "Thank you for your service." I know the words are offered sincerely, and I appreciate the kindness behind them, but I have never been entirely sure how to respond.

I have spent much of my adult life wearing my country's uniform, but I have never seen combat. Does that make me less of a veteran than someone who has? I don't believe it does, although I confess that I have sometimes struggled with the question. Combat brings experiences I would never claim as my own, but military service involves many different responsibilities.

Perhaps my discomfort also comes from the fact that I was simply doing my duty. My father served before me, as did countless others. I joined the Army, did the work I was assigned, and eventually returned to civilian life. I wasn't thinking about being thanked someday. I was doing what I had agreed to do.

I also bristle at the suggestion that veterans are somehow more patriotic or more deserving of honor than other citizens. Military service is one way to serve our country, but it is certainly not the only way. Teachers, nurses, firefighters, caregivers, and countless others give their time and energy to their communities. Their contributions are no less meaningful because they never wore a military uniform.

We can honor veterans without placing them on a pedestal. We can recognize their service without suggesting that those who never served have somehow given less to their country. Patriotism is not measured by the uniform we wear, but by the responsibilities we accept toward one another.

When I think about what I miss most from my years in the Army, it isn't the uniform or the recognition that sometimes comes with having worn it. It's the people who shared those years with me, the friendships we formed, and the experiences that bound us together.

Long after the Veterans Day ceremonies have ended and the flags have been put away, those relationships remain part of our lives, even when distance and time have changed them.

The uniform comes off. The people remain part of who we are.

The Rev. Peter Preble is a minister, writer, chaplain, and grief educator whose work explores the intersections of faith, grief, history, and public life. He is the author of Notes from the Threshold, a weekly column about discovering the sacred in ordinary life. Learn more at www.peterpreble.net.

RELIGION CALENDAR

MISC.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH — Every Wednesday at 6 p.m., Bible Study, 410 Pelham Street, Maysville.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH — Choir practice, 7 p.m. on Wednesdays. Bible study, 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. Both at 21 West Third Street in Maysville.

MASON COUNTY MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION — Meeting the second Wednesday of each month, contact any of the new officers: President, Rev. Adam Burton (Central Baptist Church); Vice President, Rev. Elizabeth Smith (Seddon Methodist Church); and Secretary/Treasurer, Marilyn Roades (Wesley Chapel Church).

MOUNT TABOR — Tuesday Bible Study, 6 p.m. Join in the study of Psalms and put a "Psalm in Your Heart." Church located in Ribolt.

SHEPHERD'S HOUSE/COMMUNITY TUESDAY — Every Tuesday, 209 East Third Street,10 a.m.-noon, open to the public, sewing and clothing ministry, free sewing machine adjustments; every third Tuesday food box handout. Text Gordon Jones, pastor, at 606-301-1921.

SHEPHERD'S HOUSE FOOD DRIVE — Donations of non-perishable foods are now being accepted at both church locations at 209 East Third Street.

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH — Mass, 9:30 a.m., Minerva, services every Sunday.

WASHINGTON CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH — Choir practice, 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. Bible study, 5 p.m. on Sundays.

Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corp. approves over $2.8 million in loans

Financing bolsters beef, poultry, and grain farmers across the state

Submitted by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 13, 2026) – The Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corp. (KAFC) approved 15 agricultural loans totaling $2,865,303 for projects across the Commonwealth at its monthly board meeting.

Beginning Farmer Loan Program (BFLP)

Thirteen Beginning Farmer loans were approved. Loan recipients were in the following counties: Allen ($196,500), Barren ($175,000), Bourbon ($250,000), Christian ($250,000), Daviess ($250,000), Garrard ($205,000), Hardin ($250,000), Jessamine ($250,000), McLean ($87,500), Pulaski ($102,800), Shelby ($250,000), and Warren ($202,685.87 and $106,037.50). BFLP is designed to assist individuals with some farming experience who desire to develop, expand, or buy into a farming operation. Beginning farmers may qualify for financing to purchase livestock, equipment, or agriculture facilities; to secure permanent working capital; for the purchase of farm real estate; or to invest in a partnership or LLC.

Diversification through Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness Loan Program (DEALP)

One DEALP loan was approved in Graves County ($89,780). DEALP is designed to assist agri-entrepreneurs with the purchase, establishment, or expansion of a business that sells agricultural products or services to farmers or consumers.

Large/Food Animal Veterinary Loan Program (LFAVLP)

One LFAVLP loan was approved in Ballard Count ($200,000). LFVALP is designed to assist individuals licensed to practice veterinary medicine in Kentucky who desire to construct, expand, equip, or buy into a practice serving large animal producers, including goat, sheep, swine, and other smaller food animals.

For more information on KAFC participation loans, contact your lender or Bill McCloskey at Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy at (502) 382-6093 or email kafc@ky.gov.

Henry Winkler, pilgrims and Thanksgiving

Dr. Glenn Mollette

Henry Winkler recently was interviewed by Tom Llamas of NBC nightly news. In that interview Winkler said his two words are, "Tenacity and gratitude. Tenacity takes you where you want to go and gratitude make the journey more comfortable, more palatable to travel." The segment also covered his parents fleeing Nazi Germany in 1939, his dyslexia diagnosis at 31, and why he keeps writing children's books. He is 81 years old now. You may remember him as the Fonz from the television series, "Happy Days".



GLENN MOLLETTE

As we approach Thanksgiving we should ponder a bit on Winkler's words, tenacity and gratitude. We can think back to the early pilgrims. It was either tenacity or simply giving up. The new world was harsh with no conveniences. The Mayflower landed in 1620 with about 102 passengers. The first winter killed nearly half of them-disease, hunger, and the cold did most of the damage. They arrived in November with no shelter built, so they lived on the ship for months while building homes in freezing weather. Food ran short, and they were dependent on the Wampanoag people, especially Squanto, who taught them how to plant corn and fish. Without that help, the colony probably wouldn't have survived into spring.

In the fall of 1621, Governor William Bradford declared a three day feast to celebrate the harvest and the colony's survival. About 50 pilgrims sat down with roughly 90 Wampanoag native Americans. They ate venison, wild fowl, corn, and shellfish. There was no mashed potatoes or pumpkin pie, those came much later. It wasn't called Thanksgiving at the time; that label came decades later.

Sarah Josepha Hale, a magazine editor, campaigned to make Thanksgiving a national holiday. She wrote Lincoln about it during the Civil War, partly hoping a shared feast might help reunite the country.

Lincoln issued the proclamation in October 1863, setting the last Thursday of November as the day. His secretary, John Nicolay, drafted most of the text, drawing on Hale's language. She had been petitioning since 1849 – Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan, all turned her down. Lincoln was the first to say yes, and historians think the timing mattered: mid- Civil War, Gettysburg had just happened that July, and a unifying national ritual had real political appeal. The proclamation didn't mention food or family or Pilgrims at all. It was framed as gratitude for military victories and for the country's endurance

The cozy version we know came later, through Norman Rockwell and decades of magazine covers that shaped how we celebrate the day.

Still, it is important for us to remember the tenacity of those who came before us and that they stopped to give thanks.

The U.S. Constitution does not give us rights

Van Yandell

The Constitution of the United States of America does not give us rights. Instead, it regards certain privileges/rights as being "unalienable" and common to mankind.

The Constitution prohibits the government from taking away those rights. It was written for the citizen's protection from an oppressive government.

The framers must have known that over a period of time, power hungry individuals would try to block those fundamental rights and saw it necessary to write a document that would keep that from ever happening.

Article one of the Bill of Rights states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Article one explicitly states "Congress shall make no law." This is to keep the lawmakers from establishing a religious state or prohibiting the establishment of a religion.

Article one also gives American citizens the freedom of speech. The freedom to lie, confuse or mislead concerning the truth was apparently not foreseen by those framers.

Many in America have come to a point of mistrust of any information to which we may be exposed. Sad to say, trust in our world is on the chopping block and in many locations, the axe has fallen.

A very precious right is the right to peaceful assembly. I was working a church construction and maintenance project in Cuba in 2011. One night I met with the deacons/elders of the church.

Being in a tropical climate there were openings in the outer walls but no glass in those windows. A watchman was placed outside to be sure no government official would stand and listen to our meeting. A typical church meeting as it was, the government would not have seen it as such.

The communist government there (as in many communist countries) is constantly fearful of a rebellion/coup. Consequently group meetings are strongly discouraged and in many cases strictly prohibited.

Whereas there are several countries that have determined to be a religious state, prohibiting the presence of other religions, that is not to happen in the U.S.

If you have been in a church, local government meeting or even a motorcycle club group meeting, you may be assured; in many countries you would be breaking the law. A few countries require a permit to assemble the then those assemblies are monitored.

The second amendment is the right to bear arms. "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

One estimate is that one-third of Americans own guns with a total number of around 107 million. Those are estimated to possess up to one-trillion rounds of ammunition. If legitimate gun owners were the problem, we would know it!

Freedoms are not to be taken lightly. Many lately have been observed sitting during the National Anthem. This practice is disgraceful for anyone enjoying the freedoms that thousands of service men and women have died to protect those rights.

Being "Ungrateful" and "entitled" may be an accepted practice by some but the mothers of deceased soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen would be devastated in seeing anyone disrespecting their sons and daughters that had died to secure those rights.

Religions numbering around 4000 exist in our world. All have one thing in common. That is the opinion, "I'm right and everyone else is wrong."

That being the case, where is the evidence of reality. Christianity offers through the Holy Bible, extensive evidence. In the minds of many, enough evidence leads to proof. As a policeman friend once told me, "Follow the evidence and it will lead you to the truth."

Through prophesy and the science in the Bible, the God of the Bible verifies His existence. Containing information no human could have known when the scrolls were penned, the Bible proves itself from within itself.

Information such as dietary (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14), modern science and nutrition has proven its correctness.

Whereas most religions are seeking a better life or an eternal life, the establishment of those religions is simply fulfilling a human need. It certainly appears people are not prepared to accept the finality of death and have created a God for comfort and peace.

That peace has been interrupted by such horrific disagreements and hostilities, religions have led to many wars and deaths.

All in all, the question we ask is, "which religion has the highest credibility?" Realizing some religions have questionable beliefs and actions, Christianity appears to be the most sustainable.

Offering believers a faith based belief in a Savior, Christianity has grown from a few believers nearly 2000 years ago to a number equaling over one-fourth of the world's population.

The United States Constitution does not give us rights; it protects those natural rights to which all mankind is entitled by our Creator. We should be thankful for those that determined and penned those rights and wrote them in such a way, if obeyed, protect us from tyranny.

The Bible teaches there is only one eternal salvation. That is by a faith based belief (Ephesians 2: 8) that Christ Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27: 35) for the remission of sin (Romans 4: 25) and resurrected (Matthew 28: 6).

Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and commissioned missionary. His email is vmy3451@gmail.com