

## DIVERSIONS

## THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

## Semper Fib: Fake military trivia from Week 1132

BY PAT MYERS

In **Week 1132**, in yet another attempt to bring the full, unvarnished untruth to our readers, we asked for bogus trivia about the military, past or present, domestic or foreign. A disturbing number of entrants, however, decided instead to supply their favorite old saws from their Army days, or send in sexist, xenophobic "humor" so lame and archaic that it made "Beetle Bailey" seem like "Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal." A sizable fraction of the rest made a peepee joke about Waterloo. But as always, we're able to muster a scrappy battalion of inkworthy entries.

## 4th place

Despite accusations of less noble aims, the Civil War was actually caused by conflicts over regionalism, states' rights and whether chili should include beans. — Board of Education, State of Texas (Larry McClemons, Annandale)

## 3rd place

Two decorated pairs of brothers — Thomas and Ernest Hall, who fought in the Mexican-American War, and Billy and Eddy Shore, who saw battle in the First Barbary War — are memorialized in the Marines' Hymn. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

## 2nd place and the Pee &amp; Poo stuffed toys:

Union Gen. George McClellan was unable to mount an assault on Richmond because of a huge tactical error: He attempted to move south from Washington through Fairfax County on a Friday evening. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

## And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial

The Congressional Medal of Honor — awarded for gallantry, bravery and willingness to risk personal well-being for the sake of the greater good — was originally intended to be given to members of Congress. They figured out the problem pretty quick, though. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station)

## DODgy stories: honorable mentions

Before Greek soldiers fought at the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C., they had to qualify at the Battle of 10K. (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Freshmen at the U.S. Naval Academy are called plebes — short for plebeians — to reflect their lower status. However, the practice of calling seniors patricians — short for patricians — never caught on. (Amy Harris, Charlottesville)

At Appomattox, Robert E. Lee said to Ulysses S. Grant, "You, General, may have won the war, but I bet you a thousand dollars that in 50 years, I will have way more stuff named after me than you have." In 1915 Grant's descendants paid off the bet with Confederate dollars. (Kel Nagel, Salisbury, Md.)

Not a single rose died in the War of the Roses. (Richard Lempert, Arlington)

Following the order of Gen. Israel Putnam, Revolutionary soldiers did not fire until British troops were well up Bunker Hill because so many of the Redcoats had contracted conjunctivitis. (Mike Gips, Bethesda)



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

When the War Department contracted with a food supplier to supply packaged meals for combat troops, the company used existing stock but changed the packaging from "Ken-L Ration" to "K-ration." (Steve Price, New York)

The word "khaki" comes from the Urdu language, in which it means "always wrinkled." (Larry McClemons)

The pejorative term "surrender monkey" comes from the French *sur rentrer manqué* ("lack of return") and refers to soldiers who mysteriously vanish in battle. (Chris Doyle)

The Swiss Army fights with knives. (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

In response to reports of "Potemkin villages" in Stalinist Russia, the U.S. Army developed a plywood-seeking missile. (Larry McClemons)

The architect of the Air Force Memorial said the design came to him while he was pulling McDonald's french fries out of the bag. (Drew Bennett)

To the dismay of the more conservative members of Congress, the USS Constitution has been repaired 27 times. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Generals on both sides of the Civil War were remarkably sensitive to the need for sanitary facilities for their soldiers, as well as the need for well-cleared areas to park the many wagons that accompanied their battalions. This explains why so many Civil War battles were fought at national parks. (John Baniszewski, Columbia, a First Offender)

The Defense Intelligence Agency softball team is the Rheas. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

Following the disastrous "Charge of the Light Brigade" in the Crimean War, Lord Cardigan was removed from command of the disarmed brigade, and replaced by Lord Sweatervest. (Larry McClemons)

USMA stands for "use scores of mystifying acronyms." (Jeff Hazle, Woodbridge)

During the Siege of Jerusalem in

1099, the defenders ran out of boiling oil to repel the Crusaders, so they switched to boiling vinegar. The tactic failed because vinegar boils at the temperature of a medium-hot shower. (Mike Gips)

The uniform ribbons worn on the chest are called "fruit salad" because each one provides 10 calories of emergency nourishment if held on the tongue for 60 seconds. (Ellen Ryan, Rockville)

The original World War II plans for the War Department's headquarters called for a rectangular building, but congressional hawks insisted that it have an extra side. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

The "Pentagon" actually has an unseen sixth side: That's where stealth soldiers are designed. (Al Fisher, Rockville)

During an inspection, Naval Reserve Lt. Cmdr. Lyndon Johnson was photographed picking up a sailor by the ears. (Kevin Dopart)

William Jefferson Blythe Sr., the grandfather of Bill Clinton, survived a deadly mustard gas attack in World War I because he managed not to inhale. (Frank Mann, Washington)

Military aircraft toilet seats from the 1980s are now available on eBay for \$6.40 each. (Kevin Dopart)

By 2000 B.C., the Sumerians had mostly given up using copper for weapons — not because it did not hold an edge, but because thieves kept selling the spears to scrap dealers. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

And Last: The creation of the rank of "rear admiral (lower half)" was originally an entry by a deputy assistant secretary of the Navy in a humor contest. It was accidentally forwarded to the secretary of defense — and approved. (Jeff Contompasis)

**Still running — deadline Monday night, Aug. 10: our contest to cite situations that need a time limit. See bit.ly/invite1136.**

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**ACROSS**

1 Put in position  
5 Handshake results, maybe  
10 Court notable  
14 Trimmer brand  
15 Deliver a stem-winder  
16 "Terrible" age, it's said  
17 Concur just partially  
20 Sentimentalists, perhaps  
21 Designed  
22 Baylor University's city  
23 "Shake \_\_\_!"  
24 Japanese pearl diver  
26 Cited  
30 Largest artificial body currently in orbit (abbr.)  
33 "Now tell me something I don't know"  
38 Robin of ballads

39 Totally wasted  
40 Herd orphan  
41 Purchases something sight unseen  
44 Milwaukee winter hours (abbr.)  
45 Natural earth colour  
46 Off-contracted word  
47 Cornucopia shape  
50 Wheys, e.g.  
53 Stress, in a way  
56 Court feats  
59 Completely clobber  
61 Prefix meaning "notion"  
62 Honda luxury brand  
63 Stadium rollout  
64 Dissenting votes  
65 Political rival of Pericles  
66 Notable Yankee infielder's nickname

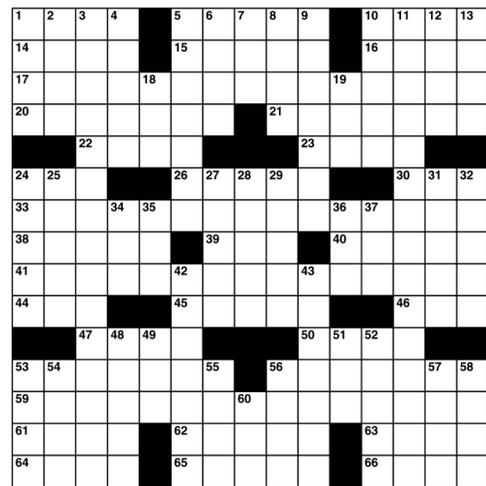
## SUNDAY CHALLENGE

**DOWN**

1 Enjoyed some natatory activity  
2 Plotter in "Othello"  
3 "Jail 'em for life!"  
4 Jimmy Dorsey's "Maria \_\_\_"  
5 Decant  
6 Some Dadaist pieces  
7 Socks, e.g.  
8 Camaro roof option until 2002  
9 Marine corridor  
10 Send a note of apology, perhaps  
11 Winner of the 1944 Best Song Oscar

12 Use a whetstone on  
13 Founded, on cornerstones (abbr.)  
18 Common Market inits.  
19 Homeboy  
24 How easy something might be  
25 \_\_\_ operandi  
27 Dig artifact  
28 1935 Loughton role  
29 Moving about  
31 Bulova competitor  
32 Especially satisfying, as a victory  
34 Celine Dion's "In \_\_\_ Touch"  
35 Neighbor of Scorpius  
36 Turkish mount

37 Small bribe  
42 Ottawa tribe leader  
43 Les \_\_\_ ("WKRK in Cincinnati" role)  
48 Separable snacks  
49 Colorado State athlete  
51 Palindromic dir.  
52 Bit of gaucho gear  
53 Gambler's declaration  
54 "Voilà!"  
55 SASE, say  
56 Onetime Houston hockey player  
57 Creature in a corrida  
58 "Dirty" Harry Callahan's org.  
60 It may help you go on



Answer to last week

R O S T E R S S H R O U D S  
E S T O N I A T U R N S O N  
S H O O T S T H E B R E E Z E  
T A P K I S T T E A  
S P R I N T A L M O N D  
A T H L E T E T R O I  
G R O U P T I M E S L O T  
F O R G O O D N E S S A K E  
A N T S I E S T S U S I E  
I N D C C R E S T E D  
E V E N T S T H E R A P  
M I L N E E D L G A  
C R I T I C A L A C C L A I M  
E A S E D U P T A X I C A B  
E L E N O R E S P L E E N S

## HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY | AUG. 9:** This year you see at least one of your long-term desires become a reality. Understand what is going on within your immediate circle. The tone of your friendships becomes lighter, and you enjoy yourself wherever you go. If you are single, you'll meet many potential sweeties, but don't commit if you are not sure. Wait for the right person. If you are attached, the two of you will enjoy relating to each other more than you have in many years. Communication flourishes between you.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**  
You make a point of explaining recent events in a way that others can identify with. You bring good news wherever you go, but you might be taken aback by others' reactions.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**  
You may be dealing with a friend who can be extremely flaky. Your caring seems to reach this person. Stay close to home if you can; you will relax more. A surprise visitor is a possibility.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**  
You flourish in nearly every way possible, at the moment. You are privy to a wealth of information. Someone might be telling you something important that you are not hearing.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**  
Take your time, and don't allow others to even think of pushing

you. You need to establish stronger boundaries. Sometimes you give too much of yourself.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**  
Zero in on what you want to accomplish. Make sure you do what you want right now, as today could set the tone for the next several days.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**  
You seem to draw in much more of what you want. Initiate a long-overdue chat with a friend that you have been putting off. Use caution with someone you meet today, as he or she might be touchy.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**  
Your mind seems to drift to different vistas and people. You might find that your feelings toward a new friend have become quite intense. Take some time to think things through before taking action.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**

Today is the perfect day to isolate the apple of your eye and initiate a long-overdue conversation. Try not to be distracted by others. Listen to a friend's suggestion.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**

Listen to what others are sharing. If you decide to put in your two cents' worth, hope that you will be heard. Others seem a bit self-involved.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**

You may be very preoccupied with thinking of someone you care about. Others will notice that you are distracted. Try to clear your mind.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**

You finally have the time you desire with a loved one. You might find this person to be unusually appealing. The day may be filled with surprises, so be ready for anything.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**

Tension builds because of your expectations. You might not realize how critical you are of your actions and thoughts. Be more aware of this tendency to self-doubt. You'll see some changes ahead.

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## It's August. Give that little brain of yours a rest. Or ...

Four weeks from now, the Empress will be spending a few days surveying her overseas dominions (and marrying off the Little Prince). And so for that week, she'll be putting together an Invitational that can be finished in advance — probably featuring sundry Great Stuff That Was Robbed of Ink Some Time Ago. To keep the other weeks' contests on schedule, there's a new contest this week: You and your fellow Losers get a week off to dust off your cranial synapses, write cranky letters to the editor, think of limericks featuring words beginning with ga-, whatever it is you people do.

The headline for this week's results is by Tom Witte; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jeff Contompasis. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://www.facebook.com/on.fb.me/invdev). "Like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofday](https://www.facebook.com/bit.ly/inkofday).



PAT MYERS/THE WASHINGTON POST

Before the Inkin' Memorial, there was the Inker — half a pair of "Thinker" bookends with a paper bag (labeled "Winning Loser") to cover its shamed head. Inkers were given to first-place winners from 2004 to 2012. Bigshot Loser Christopher Lamora, who's getting ready to move, regifted his six Inkers back to the Empress; future winners may opt for one of these until they're gone.

## Failing to acknowledge sister's cancer

## Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

at an initial stage. We in the family all found out about this a few weeks ago.

I have messaged her and her husband a few times since then to chitchat, but never asked them about the cancer. I feel like if they want to talk about it or need my help, I will be there. It is understood by everyone in my family that we will help each other if asked.

My sister and I haven't spoken for a week, and I found out from my other sister that my brother-in-law called me rude and not supportive because I didn't offer to help.

I have two young children, and the younger one was constantly sick. I also work full time and am dealing with a dying father-in-law. I don't have the memory capacity or time to follow up on them all the time. Was I being rude?

Hurt

**You were** being rude, and you ARE being rude.

Even if yours is a family that considers illness to be a private matter — your sister has cancer. It is incomprehensible that you would learn of this, initiate contact with her to "chitchat," and

then never mention it.

Your sister and her husband also did not bring it up, but they knew you had an awareness of their situation and were no doubt expecting you to at least inquire.

You say you can't be supportive because her cancer is trumped by other family issues. This is even more baffling, because if you have experience dealing with illness, surely you realize that the comfort doesn't come from offers of "help," but from having people at least acknowledge the challenging situation illness presents.

In the course of your messaging, what does it cost you to type: "Oh, Sis, I heard about your cancer. Thank goodness it was caught early. I'm thinking of you ...?"

All of your reasons for not doing this come off as justifications after the fact. You should apologize and offer some sisterly support.

**Dear Amy: I read the letter** from "Stuck," about his wife, who picked on him and their kids and belittled and verbally abused them. That was my mother. A small thing would set her off, and then it would turn into hours of tirade. When I tried to go into my room to do homework or get a moment's peace, she followed me and called me a coward.

My mother was bipolar and this behavior was how her illness manifested, so sitting down calmly and reasoning did no good. She was unwilling to get help, until legal action was threatened by her landlord, whom she verbally threatened.

It took until her 70s to get help and now, in her 80s and with proper medication, she is able to have relationships she couldn't have before.

If the mom won't get help, the husband and kids should leave. I wish that every time my father threatened to take us and leave, he had followed through.

Been There

**This is a devastating** account of what it is like for a spouse and children to live in a household with an abuser. There are many reasons people become abusive, but the point I want to emphasize (and the point you raise so well) is that parents must protect their children. I hope the man who described himself as "Stuck" in a family with a verbally abusive spouse is inspired to act on behalf of himself and his children.

Amy's column appears seven days a week at [www.washingtonpost.com/advice](http://www.washingtonpost.com/advice). Write to Amy Dickinson at [askamy@tribpub.com](mailto:askamy@tribpub.com) or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

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