

## Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday June 4 2023

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### Tardigrade in Moss



*Image Credit & Copyright: Nicole Ottawa & Oliver Meckes / Eye of Science / Science Source Images*

Is this an alien? Probably not, but of all the animals on Earth, the tardigrade might be the best candidate.

That's because tardigrades are known to be able to go for decades without food or water, to survive temperatures from near absolute zero to well above the boiling point of water, to survive pressures from near zero to well above that on ocean floors, and to survive direct exposure to dangerous radiations.

The far-ranging survivability of these extremophiles was tested in 2011 outside an orbiting space shuttle. Tardigrades are so durable partly because they can repair their own DNA and reduce their body water content to a few percent.

Some of these miniature water-bears almost became extraterrestrials in 2011 when they were launched toward to the Martian moon Phobos, and again in 2021 when they were launched toward Earth's own moon, but the former launch failed, and the latter landing crashed.

Tardigrades are more common than humans across most of the Earth. Pictured here in a color-enhanced electron micrograph, a millimeter-long tardigrade crawls on moss.

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## **San Diego Symphony's Andrea Overturf Explains the English Horn**



Andrea Overturf serves as English horn of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra (holding the Dr. William and Evelyn Lamden English Horn Chair), a position she previously held with The Florida Orchestra. Equally adept at the oboe, she received second prize in the 2007 International Double Reed Society Gillet-Fox Solo Oboe Competition.

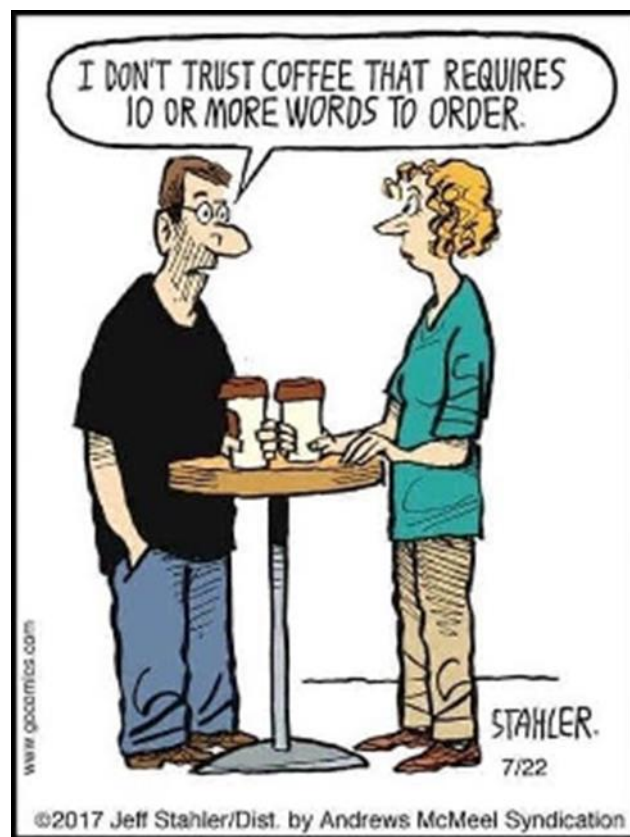
Andrea is the first oboist in the history of The Juilliard School to graduate from the prestigious solo-intensive Artist Diploma Program where she also received her Master's Degree. She received her Bachelor's Degree from the Eastman School of Music, graduating with the Performer's Certificate, the highest performance distinction awarded to undergraduates.

She has appeared as guest English horn with numerous orchestras across the country including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, National and Seattle Symphonies.

Originally from Seattle, Andrea is an avid visual artist and creates mixed media sculpture in her free time..

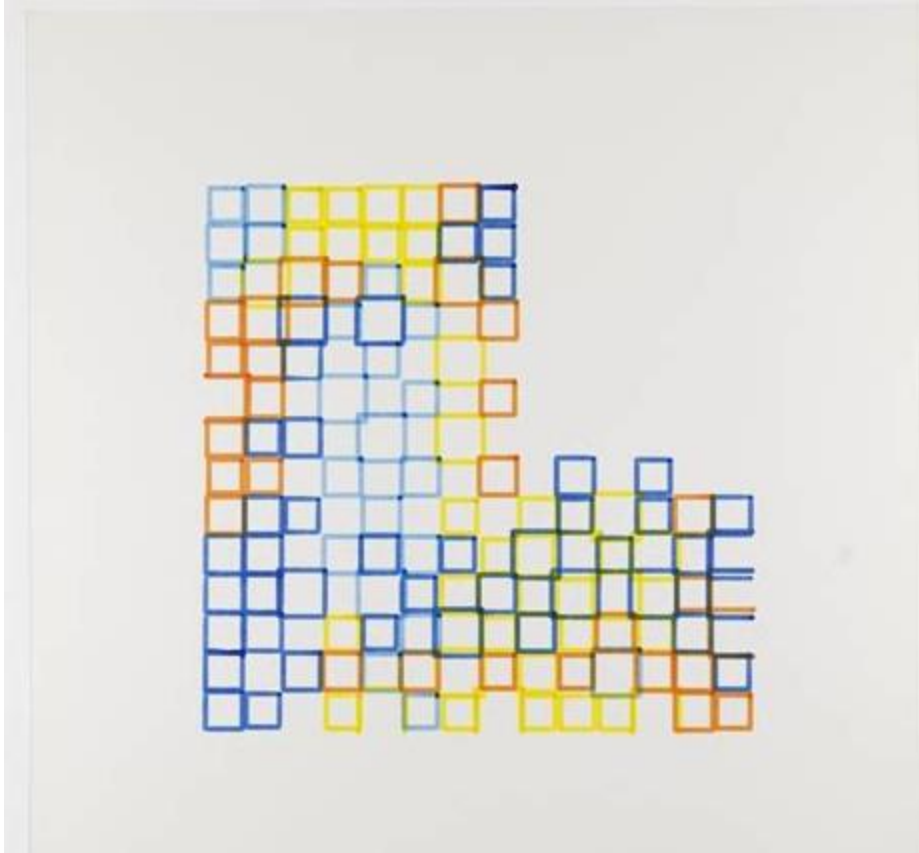
<https://youtu.be/u8gratdijk8>

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## Early Computer Art in the 50's & 60's



Computing and creativity have always been linked. In the early 1800's when Charles Babbage designed the Analytical Engine, his friend Ada Lovelace wrote in a letter that, if music could be expressed to the engine, then it "might compose elaborate and scientific pieces of music of any degree of complexity or extent."

<https://bit.ly/41Qj1HY>

*Some fascinating stuff*

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**Rocking Chair Thoughts**



"To get back to my youth I would do anything in the world, except exercise, get up early, or be respectable."

Oscar Wilde

"The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for."

Will Rogers

"Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you are aboard there is nothing you can do about it."

Golda Meir

"I'm so old that my blood type is discontinued."

Bill Dane

"The older I get, the more clearly I remember things that never happened."

Mark Twain

"Wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age. Sometimes, age just shows up all by itself."

Tom Wilson

"I'm at that age where my back goes out more than I do."

Phyllis Diller

"Nice to be here? At my age it's nice to be anywhere."

George Burns

"Don't let aging get you down. It's too hard to get back up."

John Wagner

"Old people shouldn't eat health foods. They need all the preservatives they can get."

Robert Orben

"I have successfully completed the thirty-year transition from wanting to stay up late to just wanting to go to bed."

Unknown

"The years between 50 and 70 are the hardest. You are always being asked to do things, and yet you are not decrepit enough to turn them down."

T.S. Elliot

"At age 20, we worry about what others think of us, at age 40, we don't care what they think of us, at age 60, we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all."

Ann Landers

"The important thing to remember is that I'm probably going to forget."

Unknown

"As you get older three things happen. The first is your memory goes, and I can't remember the other two."

Sir Norman Wisdom

"It's paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone."

Andy Rooney

"I don't feel old. I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap."

Bob Hope

"I don't do alcohol anymore I get the same effect just standing up fast."

Anonymous

"By the time you're 80 years old you've learned everything. You only have to remember it."

George Burns

"You know you are getting old when everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt doesn't work."

Hy Gardner

"You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks."

Joel Plaskett

"There's one advantage to being 102, there's no peer pressure."

Dennis Wolfberg

"I've never known a person who lives to be 110 who is remarkable for anything else."

Josh Billings

"At my age getting lucky means walking into a room and remembering what I came in for."

Unknown

"The idea is to die young as late as possible."

Ashley Montagu

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## **Human-Evolution Story Rewritten by Fresh Data and More Computing Power**

Humans did not emerge from a single region of Africa, suggests a powerful modelling study. Rather, our ancestors moved and intermingled for millennia.



*Slide serve.com*

The widely held idea that modern-day humans originated from a single region of Africa is being challenged. Models using a vast amount of genomic data suggest that humans arose from multiple ancestral populations around the continent. These ancient populations — which lived more than one million years ago — would have all been the same hominin species but genetically slightly different.

The models supporting this theory rely on new software and genomic-sequencing data from current African and Eurasian populations, as well as Neanderthal remains. Researchers published the results on 17 May in [Nature](#).

The study contributes more evidence to the idea that there is “no single birthplace in Africa, and that human evolution is a process with very deep African roots”, says Eleanor Scerri, an evolutionary archaeologist at the Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology in Jena, Germany.

The single-origin theory has been popular for decades, partly on the basis of fossil records. But the theory doesn’t fit the data well, says Scerri. All of the tools and physical

traits attributed to *Homo sapiens* cropped up throughout Africa around a similar time, 300,000 to 100,000 years ago. If humans had radiated from a single location, archaeologists would expect to see more recent fossils farther away from a central point, and older ones closer to it.

## **Ancestral stem**

The ancient hominin species, or 'ancestral stem', had localized populations which are thought to have interbred with each other over millennia, sharing any genetic differences that they had evolved. They also moved around Africa over time. "Our roots lie in a very diverse overall population made up of fragmented local populations," says Scerri. The intertwining of these stems, separated only weakly by their genetic differences, gave rise to a concept of human evolution that the researchers described as a "weakly structured stem" — more like a tangled vine than a 'tree of life'.

Although the idea of multiple origin points isn't new, the weakly structured stem explanation is. Other models exploring multiple origins have not used as many parameters as this study used, says co-author Brenna Henn, a human geneticist at the University of California, Davis.

The team used software developed by co-author Simon Gravel at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, that could coordinate the extensive computing power needed for expanded modelling. Previous work fell short on genetic data, because it focused mainly on West Africa, meaning that not all of the continent's vast genetic diversity was incorporated. That created an incomplete picture of how modern humans' ancestors might have mingled and moved across the landscape and required scientists to make assumptions to fill knowledge gaps.

## **Genomic data**

This study incorporated genome-sequencing data from existing eastern and western African populations and the Nama people of southern Africa. This spread of genomic data helped the researchers to understand and track the historical movement of genes across generations.

"We really wanted to sit down and very systematically evaluate the models in a more creative way," says Henn. "It's a new model for human evolution that is concrete."

The models used variables such as migration and population merging to predict gene flow over the course of thousands of years. Those predictions were then compared with the genetic variation seen today to determine which models matched the data best.

One previously proposed explanation for today's human diversity is that *H. sapiens* mixed with other archaic human species that had branched off and become isolated.



But Henn and her colleagues found that the weakly structured stem model was the better fit, giving a clearer explanation for the variation seen in humans today.

Ultimately, questions still abound about humans' origins. Henn wants to add more DNA from other African regions to the models to see if that changes their results. She also hopes to use the data to make predictions about the fossil record, such as what features would be found in human fossils from a particular area.

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### **Coach's AR Mirror. Is it the Future of Retail?**

Coach installed an 'AR mirror' outside its Soho flagship store as a way to lure customers inside. So far, it's working.



*Coach*

Over the past few years, dozens of brands from Ikea to Warby Parker to Cartier have started experimenting with variations of AR technology that let customers visualize how a sofa would fit inside their living room, try on a pair of glasses from the comfort of their home, or even see what a \$35,000 Cartier ring would look like on their hand. But in Manhattan, one brand is now using AR as bait to get more people through the door.

<https://bit.ly/3pWx6q1>

*Ahh. Another vote for what you see ain't what you got.*

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**I AM SO OLD THAT,  
WHEN I WAS A KID,  
WE ACTUALLY HAD  
TO WIN TO GET A  
TROPHY!**

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**I'VE BEEN "SOCIAL DISTANCING"  
ALL MY LIFE...**



**IT'S CALLED GOLF**

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## **The Science of Sound and Overland Supersonic Flight**

Understanding sound waves, sonic booms, and the speed of sound are key to understanding how X-59 will quiet the boom.



*private jetfinder*

When an airplane flies at or above the speed of sound, air molecules cannot move out of the way of the airplane fast enough, so the pressure waves combine to generate a large shockwave, which people on the ground hear as a sonic boom.

Speed of sound (a) = $\sqrt{YRT}$  where:  
Y=ratio of specific heats (1.4 for air at SPT)  
R=gas constant (286 m<sup>2</sup>/s<sup>2</sup>/K for air)  
T=absolute temperature (273.15 + °C)

The following URL from NASA presents a series of explanations of the science.

<https://www.nasa.gov/specials/Questt/science-of-sound.html>

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## **Clever Insults for Nearly All Occasions**

Merriam-Webster show how to flummox your foes with the finest vocabulary.



For instance, 'Dunderhead' and Other 'Nicer' Ways to Say Stupid

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/topics/insults>

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## **Why Fake Punches in Movies Look Real**



<https://youtu.be/7DIYBJzAo6k>

*And sometimes it's for real. Yikes!*

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### **More Than 600 Illinois High School Students 'Gradutate.'**



Parents and students of an Illinois high school are upset after the school distributed more than 600 graduation stoles to seniors with an unfortunate misspelling on them.

What makes matters worse is that the mistake wasn't noticed until after some students attended their graduation ceremonies.

"They could have checked before [the ceremony], because they made 600-plus," Bilal said. "And all of them were spelled wrong."

In a letter to community members, RTHS admitted they never checked the stoles beforehand, and said they are trying to make amends by photoshopping the misspelled word from graduation pictures.

"We understand the importance of graduation, a significant milestone that should be celebrated without such mishaps," the letter read. "Regrettably, there was an error in the graduation sashes provided to us by our vendor, Herff Jones. This mistake went unnoticed until the sashes were distributed, and the graduates had already walked the stage, and for that, we sincerely apologize."

The school went on to say that replacement sashes with correct spelling have been received and will be mailed to graduates with their diplomas.

### **No graduation: 8th graders turned away from ceremony; parents furious**

Parents still expressed frustrations, including one who talked to Nexstar's WGN that said the damage is done.

"We're terribly disappointed and appalled about how they would even pass those out to the students," said one parent. "That would embarrass the community, the families, and even the school district should be embarrassed."

The vendor who manufactured and supplied the stoles to RTHS students issued an apology Wednesday, taking full responsibility for the mistake.

"On behalf of the entire Herff Jones team, I want to express our sincere apologies for the

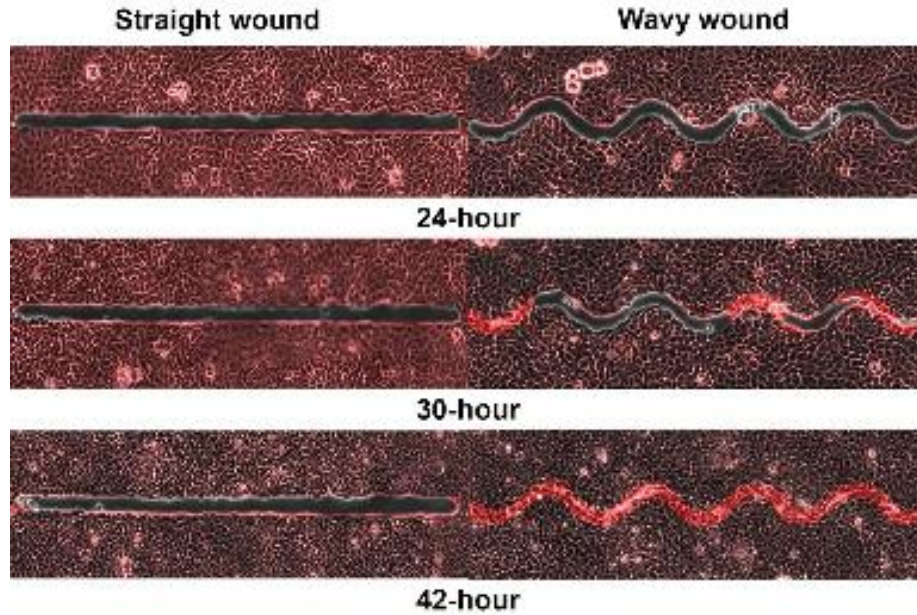
incorrect stoles that may have hindered your graduation experience," Herff Jones president Ron Stoupa, said in the letter. "We understand the disappointment you are experiencing at the culmination of your education and the frustration this created for all involved."

*We certainly hope each of the graduates receive counselling and a 7-digit check.*

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### **"Wavy Wounds" May Make for Faster Post-Op Healing**

For some time now, it has been observed that wounds with a zig-zag pattern heal faster than those which simply form a straight line. Scientists have now determined why this is the case, and their findings could change the ways in which surgical incisions are made.



Wound-healing stages

<https://bit.ly/3MFHyvj>

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## The History of How Earth's Atmosphere Became Breathable

Biology, geology, and chemistry all worked together to make the present atmosphere.



<https://bit.ly/3Ouhbck>

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## Aaron Copland: Our Town Suite



With the threat of impending war, Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town*, with its look back at an America of homespun values, was tremendously appealing. Copland accepted the invitation to compose the musical score for the screen version of life in the small town of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire.

[https://youtu.be/59zmZpx6s\\_0](https://youtu.be/59zmZpx6s_0)

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## **Ten of the Most Beautiful Hikes in the World**





*Plitvice Lakes National Park Croatia*  
*(Photo: susan.k./Getty)*

<https://bit.ly/41gfkv4>

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**John Parr**



*BBC UK*

Parr was born in Worksop, England, in 1952. He first entered the music scene when he was 12 years old and formed a band with two fellow schoolmates, which they named The Silence.

"Naughty Naughty" was Parr's first U.S. top-40 hit record, reaching No. 23 on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1985.

In 1985, David Foster asked Parr to record a song for the film St. Elmo's Fire. Parr and Foster wrote "St. Elmo's Fire" in honor of wheelchair athlete and activist Rick Hansen; it became the theme to St. Elmo's Fire

St. Elmo's Fire <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dx7vNdaB5e4> (John Parr)

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## **Mechanical Nanosurgery Attacks Aggressive Brain Cancer**

Nanosurgery technique uses brute mechanical force to disrupt tumor cellular structures rather than targeting specific bio-signaling pathways.



*Mechanical nanosurgery: artistic rendering of a new approach, developed by SickKids and University of Toronto researchers, that targets cancer cells from inside the tumor, sparing healthy tissue in the process.*

*(Courtesy: Created by The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) research team using Midjourney)*

A new nanosurgery technique could help treat glioblastoma, one of the most common and aggressive of all primary brain cancers. The technique, which relies on injecting nanotubes containing iron particles into a tumor site, could be used against cancers that are resistant to existing therapies and those located at vital and currently inoperable regions of the central nervous system.

Glioblastoma is among the most dangerous types of brain cancer. Although it is currently uncommon, affecting between 0.59 and 5 people per 100 000, its incidence is increasing around the world.

Standard techniques for treating glioblastoma are based on removing the tumor surgically, followed by radiotherapy and chemotherapy using drugs such as temozolomide. The problem is that glioblastoma develops resistance to this and other therapeutics that target the tumor's biomolecule signalling pathways, leading to treatment failure, relapse and – all too often – death for the patient.

### **A new “Trojan horse” approach**

Researchers at the University of Toronto and The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) recently made an intriguing discovery: glioblastoma cells respond to external mechanical forces. Led by Yu Sun and Xi Huang, the researchers have now used this

insight to develop a new “Trojan horse” approach for treating glioblastoma using magnetic carbon nanotubes (mCNTs). These nanotubes are rolled-up sheets of carbon filled with iron nanoparticles that can be magnetized by applying an external magnetic field.

Sun, Huang and colleagues coated the mCNTs with an antibody that recognizes a specific protein (CD44) on glioblastoma tumor cells. When they inject these coated mCNTs into glioblastoma tumors in mice, the nanostructures “seek out” these proteins and attach to the cells. At this point, the researchers apply a rotating magnetic field that precisely targets the tumor region. This magnetic field mobilizes mCNTs to damage the internal structures of glioblastoma cells and destroy them.

“Our nanomaterials function as swarms of ‘nano-scalpels’ to physically treat tumors by applying mechanical torque and force to the structures of cancer cells,” says study lead author Xian Wang. “These nano-scalpels are precisely controlled to mobilize through the application of a tumor-targeting rotating magnetic field.”

This “mechanical nanosurgery” technique, as the researchers call it, is completely different from conventional approaches. Because it uses brute mechanical force to disrupt tumor cellular structures rather than targeting specific bio-signaling pathways, it could help overcome therapy resistance of this biologically plastic disease, the researchers write in *Science Advances*.

According to the team, the technique could be adapted for treating brain tumors not usually accessible to resection. “Such tumors not only include primary glioblastoma,” explains Wang, “but also recurrent glioblastoma, multifocal brain tumors, and tumors situated at vital and inoperable central nervous regions – for example, diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG) in the brainstem.”

In the present work, the researchers employed mCNTs with iron oxide particles inside the tubes. Their next aim is to tune the percentage of iron in the nanotubes and optimize their protocol to improve treatment efficacy. “Another advantage of mechanically mobilizing mCNTs is that besides physically disrupting cellular structures, they can modulate specific biochemical pathways, based on which we are developing combination therapy to tackle untreatable brain tumors,” Wang concludes.

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Unfriending -- the early years

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## Memories Help Brains Recognize New Events Worth Remembering

Memories may affect how well the brain will learn about future events by shifting our perceptions of the world.



*lexboxd*

Human and animal studies have shown that memories can alter our perceptions of future events and the attention we give them.

"We know that past experience changes stuff," said Loren Frank, a neuroscientist at the University of California, San Francisco. "How exactly that happens isn't always clear."

*By Yasemin Saplakoglu, Staff Writer for Quanta Magazine*

<https://bit.ly/3OBzZXG>

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## State Farm Won't Insure Any More CA Homes.



*Flipboard*

State Farm has stopped selling new home insurance policies in California because of the financial toll of paying out fire damage claims.

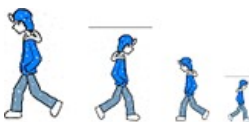
Citing rising construction costs and a rapidly worsening wildfire season (fire-related building damage rose 246% between the 2000s and 2010s, according to The Conversation), State Farm said this was a "necessary" decision to "improve the company's financial strength."

But, like a goodish neighbor, State Farm is still somewhat there: Existing customers won't lose their coverage, and personal auto insurance won't be affected, either.

*Who's next do you think?*

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## My Walking Thoughts



**For Sunday May 28 2023**

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## Normandy Beach June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944 -- The Fallen 9,000!



<https://bit.ly/3Hw0t9K>

A large percentage of our country doesn't know of or care about Normandy.

Last year, British artist Jamie, accompanied by numerous volunteers, took to the beaches of Normandy with rakes and stencils to etch 9,000 silhouettes into the sand, representing fallen people.

There's a temptation in our country, particularly among university students to splatter what other generations of young men and women have done in and for others in the world with beliefs that are both cynical and untested.

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My squadronmate, Holly Clayson, sent me an email this past week that I'd like to share with you.

*I participated in a flag folding ceremony at Freedom Pointe on Memorial Day. As I folded the flag, a narrator read the script describing the meaning of each of the 13 folds. Our complex had requested an honor guard from the American Legion, a bugler played Taps and this was followed by a 3-gun salute.*

*The ceremony was held in front of our flagpole with Old Glory flying at half-mast. Nicely done Freedom Pointe.*

There are two actions that I'd like to share, one of which –the thirteen folds of the flag—I once knew but had forgotten. The story behind Taps is better known but worth repeating.



## **The Flag**

The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing states our veterans served in uniform. The field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted only when draped as a funeral cloth over the casket of a veteran who has served our country honorably in uniform.

In the U.S. Armed Forces, at the ceremony of retreat, the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning it is brought out and, at a ceremony of reveille, flown high as a symbol of belief in the resurrection of the body.

## **Meaning Behind the 13 Folds**

The flag-folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our great country was originally founded.

1. The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.
2. The second fold is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.



3. The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks, and who gave a portion of his or her life for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.
4. The fourth fold represents our weaker nature; as American citizens trusting in God, it is Him we turn to in times of peace, as well as in times of war, for His divine guidance.
5. The fifth fold is a tribute to our country. In the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right, but it is still our country, right or wrong."
6. The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.
7. The seventh fold is a tribute to our armed forces, for it is through the armed forces that we protect our country and our flag against all enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.
8. The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor our mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.
9. The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood. It has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that has molded the character of the men and women who have made this country great.
10. The 10th fold is a tribute to father, who has also given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since he or she was first born.
11. The 11th fold represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
12. The 12th fold represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies God the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost.
13. The 13th and last fold, when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God We Trust."

### **After the Folding Ceremony**

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it has the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under Gen. George Washington and the sailors and Marines who served under Capt. John Paul Jones and were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the U.S. Armed Forces, preserving for us the rights, privileges and freedoms we enjoy today.

The source and the date of origin of this Flag Folding Procedure is unknown. However, some sources attribute it to the Gold Star Mothers of America while others to an Air Force chaplain stationed at the United States Air Force Academy. Some sources also

indicate that the 13 folds are a nod to the original first 13 colonies. The flag folding ceremony is provided as a patriotic service.

### **VA Policy on Flag-Folding Recitation of "13-Fold" Ceremony**

To ensure burial services at the 143 national cemeteries operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs reflect the wishes of veterans and their families, VA officials have clarified the department's policy about recitations made while the U.S. flag is folded at the grave site of a veteran.

"Honoring the burial wishes of veterans is one of the highest commitments for the men and women of VA," said William F. Tuerk, VA's undersecretary for Memorial Affairs. "A family may request the recitation of words to accompany the meaningful presentation of the American flag as we honor the dedication and sacrifice of their loved ones."

Traditional grave site military funeral honors include the silent folding and presentation of a U.S. flag, three rifle volleys and the playing of "Taps."

### **Taps**

The history of Taps is somewhat clouded by myth and legend, but the importance of this iconic bugle call cannot be argued. The twenty-four notes of Taps compose, arguably, the most recognizable and emotionally charged music ever played on a bugle. Although we usually associate Taps with military funerals (right), that was not always the case.

Originally, Taps was intended to signal lights out, but it was not long before it was co-opted as an important part of military funerals in America. According to most accounts of the history of Taps, soon after the tune was written in 1862, it was first used in a funeral ceremony:

"During the Peninsula Campaign in 1862, a soldier of Tidball's Battery A of the 2nd Artillery was buried at a time when the battery occupied an advanced position concealed in the woods. It was unsafe to fire the customary three volleys over the grave, on account of the proximity of the enemy, and it occurred to Capt. Tidball that the sounding of Taps would be the most appropriate ceremony that could be substituted."

Despite being widely used during military funerals for many years, Taps was not made an official part of the military funeral service until 1891. So, we know what Taps is, and how it came to be used as a part of military funeral honors... ..but where does the tune itself come from? Good question! To find out, read on...

### **Legend of the Origin of Taps**

Such a moving and iconic piece of music is bound to have a great story attached to it isn't it? Yes it is, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the story is true...

There is a common legend surrounding the history of Taps that has been around for years, and has taken on a new life in the internet age. It goes something like this...

In 1862, Union Captain Robert Ellicombe was hunkered down with his men near Harrison's Landing, Virginia. The Union army was being pressed by the Confederates after having been routed during the Seven Days Battles.

One night, Captain Ellicombe heard a wounded soldier moaning in the no-man's-land between the two armies. Risking his own life, the Captain moved out between the lines to carry the wounded man to safety.

When he was finally back behind his own lines, Captain Elliscombe discovered that the young soldier he had carried was actually a Confederate and had died just as they reached the hospital tent.

Upon further inspection, the face of the Confederate soldier looked somewhat familiar. Suddenly, the Captain came to the shocking realization that the young man was his own son.

Consumed by grief, Captain Elliscombe asked to be able to bury his boy with military honors, but he was denied, because, his son was a Confederate. However, he was allowed to have a bugler to play as his son was lowered into his grave.

When asked what he would like the bugler to play, the Captain provided a piece of paper that his son had been carrying. On the paper was written a series of twenty-four notes. It is said that this haunting scene was the first time that Taps was ever played.

This story originated with Ripley's Believe it or Not, and seems to fall into the Not category. The largest flaw in the story is the fact that there is no record of a Captain Elliscombe having ever served in the Army of the Potomac. Unfortunately, this legend has obscured the true history of Taps and how it was originally written...

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The true history of Taps is much less romantic, but there was one kernel of truth in the Captain Elliscombe story. Taps was, in fact, written at Harrison's Landing, after the Seven Days Battles, in 1862.

...but as we already know, it did not originate as a piece of funeral music. It originated as a call for lights out...

At that time, the call for lights out was a French tune called Extinguish Lights, but Union General Daniel Butterfield (left) felt this was too formal. Instead, he wanted a more

soothing call to tell his men that the day was over, so he turned to an old, unused tune called Scott's Tattoo.

The term tattoo was derived from an old Dutch military word which meant it was time to turn off the beer taps and return to camp. Tattoo was usually played about an hour before lights out, to give soldiers time to prepare to end the day.

Scott's Tattoo had been replaced by a newer tattoo in the Union Army, and Butterfield felt it was a good starting place for his new call to lights out. He called for his brigade's bugler, Oliver Wilcox Norton, and the two worked together to write Taps. Here is Norton's account of how that meeting went:

"One day, soon after the seven days' battles on the Peninsular, when the Army of the Potomac was lying in camp at Harrison's Landing, General Daniel Butterfield sent for me, and showing me some notes on a staff written in pencil on the back of an envelope, asked me to sound them on my bugle. I did this several times, playing the music as written.

He changed it somewhat, lengthening some notes and shortening others, but retaining the melody as he first gave it to me. After getting it to his satisfaction, he directed me to sound that call for "Taps" thereafter in place of the regulation call.

The music was beautiful on that still summer night and was heard far beyond the limits of our Brigade. The next day I was visited by several buglers from neighboring brigades, asking for copies of the music which I gladly furnished. I think no general order was issued from army headquarters authorizing the substitution of this for the regulation call, but as each brigade commander exercised his own discretion in such minor matters, the call was gradually taken up through the Army of the Potomac."

As Norton suggested, Taps spread quickly within the Army of the Potomac, and soon saw widespread use as the call to lights out. Within a few months, it had become common to use Taps during funeral services (thanks to Captain Tidball).

The tune also quickly gained widespread use for lights out in the Confederate Armies, and roughly ten months after Butterfield and Norton put the finishing touches on Taps, it was played at the funeral service of Confederate General Stonewall Jackson.

Here is an interesting History Channel video about the history of Taps, and it also includes the famous "broken note" from President John F. Kennedy's funeral...

<https://youtu.be/ImeNKft0WaI>

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