

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Perception or reality?

Perception is reality when it comes to the public’s understanding of government action.

That’s why we’re glad a standard form and policy of how to handle seeking volunteers for city boards and commissions will be established.

The selection this week of two out of three people to serve as members of the International Falls Economic Advisory Board was at the least mishandled and at the most predetermined. While there may have been no wrongdoing by elected and appointed officials, it has left some people wondering just what happened. That’s not good for a public entity charged with improving this city’s economy.

Elected and appointed officials must do all they can to avoid even the perception of mishandling when it comes to these kinds of issues. We, too, support some of the concerns voiced by candidate George Hnatiuk based on his observations of the process.

What’s key is Hnatiuk came to the conclusion the EDA had ulterior motives for selecting the people it did for board membership because of his experience — what he saw and heard.

The handling or mishandling of the process prompted Bob Anderson to leave the Economic Development

Authority meeting Tuesday. While we wish Anderson would have been more pointed in voicing his concerns about the issue, we’re not sure leaving the meeting was the best response.

The selection of the EDA Advisory Board members may have been a comedy of errors, which began with mistaken forms given to Hnatiuk and ending with the start of Tuesday’s EDA meeting when it was discovered and announced this meeting would not be recorded because of a missing chip.

Was Hnatiuk among the top two of the three candidates? We don’t know.

But we do know comments made by at least two EDA members did nothing to calm the situation. Suggesting, after listening to Hnatiuk’s concerns, he had sour grapes was inappropriate. Informing him people can provide input without being members of the board after taking action to add four seats to the board in just as many months to gain greater input appeared condescending.

When it comes to government, the public’s perception is often the reality people understand. Again, we urge the EDA to right itself by taking a look at how the public may perceive its actions and making appropriate changes.

Bill R... THE COLUMBIAN DISPATCH... CAGLECARTOONS.COM



THANK YOU

GUEST COLUMN

A long thin line of personal anguish

Editor’s Note: The Ernie Pyle World War II Museum and the Scripps Howard Foundation are commemorating D-Day, June 6, by offering newspapers the opportunity to reprint three columns written by Ernie Pyle immediately after the Normandy invasion. These columns share the realities of war from the soldier’s perspective and provide a first-hand look at the sacrifices of war.

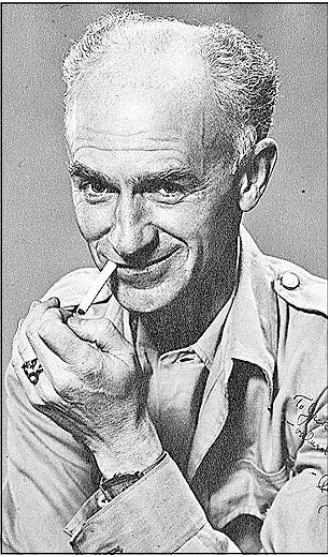
NORMANDY BEACHHEAD, June 17, 1944 – In the preceding column we told about the D-day wreckage among our machines of war that were expended in taking one of the Normandy beaches.

But there is another and more human litter. It extends in a thin little line, just like a high-water mark, for miles along the beach. This is the strewn personal gear, gear that will never be needed again, of those who fought and died to give us our entrance into Europe.

Here in a jumbled row for mile on mile are soldiers’ packs. Here are socks and shoe polish, sewing kits, diaries, Bibles and hand grenades. Here are the latest letters from home, with the address on each one neatly razored out – one of the security precautions enforced before the boys embarked.

Here are toothbrushes and razors, and snapshots of families back home staring up at you from the sand. Here are pocketbooks, metal mirrors, extra trousers, and bloody, abandoned shoes. Here are broken-handled shovels, and portable radios smashed almost beyond recognition, and mine detectors twisted and ruined.

Here are torn pistol belts and canvas water buckets, first-aid kits



Ernie Pyle

and jumbled heaps of lifebelts. I picked up a pocket Bible with a soldier’s name in it, and put it in my jacket. I carried it half a mile or so and then put it back down on the beach. I don’t know why I picked it up, or why I put it back down.

Soldiers carry strange things ashore with them. In every invasion you’ll find at least one soldier hitting the beach at H-hour with a banjo slung over his shoulder. The most ironic piece of equipment marking our beach – this beach of first despair, then victory – is a tennis racket that some soldier had brought along. It lies lonesomely on the sand, clamped in its rack, not a string broken.

Two of the most dominant items in the beach refuse are cigarets and writing paper. Each soldier was issued a carton of cigarets just before he started. Today these cartons by the thousand, water-soaked and spilled out, mark the line of our first savage blow.

Writing paper and air-mail envelopes come second. The boys had intended to do a lot of writing in France. Letters that would have filled those blank, abandoned pages.

Always there are dogs in every invasion. There is a dog still on the beach today, still pitifully

looking for his masters.

He stays at the water’s edge, near a boat that lies twisted and half sunk at the water line. He barks appealingly to every soldier who approaches, trots eagerly along with him for a few feet, and then, sensing himself unwanted in all this haste, runs back to wait in vain for his own people at his own empty boat.

Over and around this long thin line of personal anguish, fresh men today are rushing vast supplies to keep our armies pushing on into France. Other squads of men pick amidst the wreckage to salvage ammunition and equipment that are still usable.

Men worked and slept on the beach for days before the last D-day victim was taken away for burial.

I stepped over the form of one youngster whom I thought dead. But when I looked down I saw he was only sleeping. He was very young, and very tired. He lay on one elbow, his hand suspended in the air about six inches from the ground. And in the palm of his hand he held a large, smooth rock.

I stood and looked at him a long time. He seemed in his sleep to hold that rock lovingly, as though it were his last link with a vanishing world. I have no idea at all why he went to sleep with the rock in his hand, or what kept him from dropping it once he was asleep. It was just one of those little things without explanation that a person remembers for a long time.

The strong, swirling tides of the Normandy coastline shift the contours of the sandy beach as they move in and out. They carry soldiers’ bodies out to sea, and later they return them. They cover the corpses of heroes with sand, and then in their whims they uncover them.

As I plowed out over the wet sand of the beach on that first day ashore,

I walked around what seemed to be a couple of pieces of driftwood sticking out of the sand. But they weren’t driftwood.

They were a soldier’s two feet. He was completely covered by the shifting sands except for his feet. The toes of his GI shoes pointed toward the land he had come so far to see, and which he saw so briefly.

Ernie Pyle biography

The son of a tenant farming parents in west-central Indiana, Ernie Pyle became history’s greatest war correspondent. When Pyle was killed by a Japanese machine gun bullet on the tiny Pacific island of Ie Shima in 1945, his columns were being delivered to more than 14 million homes, according to his New York Times obituary.

During the war, Pyle wrote about the hardships and bravery of the common soldier, not grand strategy. His description of the G.I.’s life was more important to families on the home front than battlefield tactics of Gens. Dwight Eisenhower, Douglas MacArthur, George Patton or Omar Bradley.

Prior to the United States’ entry into World War II, Pyle traveled to England and wrote about the Nazi’s continual bombing of London. His columns helped move the mood of America from isolationism to sympathy for the stubborn refusal of Great Britain to succumb to the will of Adolf Hitler.

The Pulitzer Prize winning journalist’s legacy rests in his words and the impact they had on Americans before and during a war that threatened to take the world behind a curtain of fascism. His columns open a window to the hardships endured by the common U.S. soldier during World War II and serve today to honor what has been called “The Greatest Generation.”

How to contact your lawmakers

FEDERAL OFFICES

President Barack Obama
Democrat
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20500
202-456-1111
Website:
www.whitehouse.gov
E-mail:
president@whitehouse.gov

U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515
202-225-6211
Website: www.nolan.house.gov
Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan
Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

Duluth Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
11 East Superior Street Suite 125
Duluth, MN 55802
Phone: 218-464-5095
Fax: 218-464-5098

Brainerd Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
Brainerd City Hall
501 Laurel Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-454-4078

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar
Democrat
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-3244

Minnesota Office:
1200 Washington Avenue

South, Suite 250
Minneapolis, MN 55415
612-727-5220
Website:
www.klobuchar.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Al Franken
Democrat
Senate Hart Building 320
Washington DC 20510
202-224-5641
Website:
www.alfranken.com
E-Mail:
info@franken.senate.gov

STATE OFFICES

Gov. Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN, 55155
800-657-3717
E-mail:
Mark.Dayton@state.mn.us

Rep. David Dill
571 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2190
800-339-0466
rep.david.dill@house.mn
Assistant: Joan Harrison

Sen. Tom Bakk
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol, Room 226
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
Capitol Office phone:
(651) 296-8881
Email:
www.senate.mn/senatorbakkemail

Share your point of view

Make a difference by writing a letter to the editor or contributing to our online discussions. The Journal’s Opinion page is where meaningful community discussions take place.

The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author’s city address will be published. Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifallsjournal.com.