

By Robert S. Dudley

Calamitous

"They had access on everyone who has applied for a security clearance: families, residences and job assignments, bank records." ... If that's not an absolute calamity, I don't know what is."—**Victor Socotra**, pen name for a retired US intelligence official and blogger, commenting on China's cyber theft of data on US service members, *Military Times*, June 17.

Hypersonic World

"X-51 [hypersonic vehicle] was really a proof-of-concept test. It showed that you could get a scram jet engine, launch it off an aircraft, and it could go hypersonic. It was able to go more than Mach 5 until it ran out of fuel. It was a very successful test of an airborne hypersonic weapons system. What they are trying to do now is build the whole system so that it is not just about the engine. You have to have materials that can operate at the kind of temperatures you have when you are going at hypersonic speeds. You have to have guidance systems that will function when you are going at those types of speeds. There are a bunch of technological challenges that have to be addressed to make a functioning system that will work. ... The advantage of hypersonics is not just that something goes very fast—but that it can go great distances at those speeds."—**Air Force Chief Scientist Mica R. Endsley**, commenting on the Air Force hypersonic effort, quoted in *Military.com*, June 1.

Ray the Knife

"If you want to look at real money, 20 percent of the Pentagon budget—20 percent, one dollar out of every five—is spent on the 'fourth estate'—the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the defense agencies, the organizations run by the undersecretaries. Pure overhead. Pure overhead. And they've grown far faster than the services."—**Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus**, remarks to the *American Enterprise Institute*, June 2.

Right, Nothing to It

"There isn't so much to tell. ... I began to get ready. They'd a box of hand grenades there, and I took them out of the box and laid them all in a row where they would be handy. ... The snippin' and

clippin' of the wires sounded near, so I let go with a hand grenade. There was a yell from a lot of surprised Dutchmen [Deutschen, i.e., German troops] and then they started firing. ... Some of the shots got me. One clipped my head, another my lip, another my hand, some in my side, and one smashed my left foot so bad that I have a silver plate holding it up now. The Germans came from all sides. ... When the grenades were all gone I started in with my rifle. ... There was nothing to do but use my rifle as a club and jump into them. I banged them on the dome and the side and everywhere I could land until the butt of my rifle busted. One of the Germans hollered, 'Rush him! Rush him!' I decided to do some rushing myself. I grabbed my French bolo knife and slashed in a million directions. ... They knocked me around [considerably] and whanged me on the head, but I always managed to get back on my feet. ... I was still banging them when my crowd came up and saved me and beat the Germans off. That's about all. There wasn't so much to it."—**US Army Pvt. Henry L. Johnson**, contemporary account of May 14, 1918, battle in France. Johnson, who served in an all-black unit, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, on June 2, for his actions that day, *thedailybeast.com*.

Uniform, Rank, Salute

"Lateral entry [into military services] would make a lot of sense. I think nowadays the essential skills of being a military leader are not to shoot a weapon, they are not even to read a map. They're to make tough decisions in an uncertain environment and to engage with people and build relations. ... Lateral entry, even at a fairly senior level, ... would make them stronger. There's a natural aversion to it, because people in the guild don't want outsiders coming in and taking slots, but I think it would be very, very healthy, for the military and others. ... Someone could say, 'We want you to come into the Army for four years. Here's what you'd do and we're going to make you rank X.' In three months, they could get you the right uniforms, teach you how to salute. You'd walk in and be effective right away. ... I've dealt with a lot of chief executive officers who could walk in and be general officers in

the military tomorrow. All we'd have to do is get them a uniform and a rank."—**Retired Army Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal**, *Washington Post*, May 15.

Dempsey Dumps on ISF

"The ISF [Iraqi Security Forces] was not driven out of Ramadi. They drove out of Ramadi."—**Gen. Martin E. Dempsey**, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the fall of Ramadi to ISIS, remarks to reporters, May 22.

Why Omar Still Breathes

"The first I knew the Predator was [engaged] was when I heard an unknown voice on my radio say, 'You are cleared to fire.' Instead of striking Omar's facility, the Predator targeted and destroyed a vehicle outside, killing several bodyguards. In the chaotic moments that followed, the Taliban leader escaped. ... Mullah Omar and his senior staff piled out of that building, and here we are, 13 years later, and we don't know where he is. What was the rationale of shooting an empty truck when the leadership was in an adjacent building, and where we had, two minutes away, aircraft that could have sent Mullah Omar and the senior Taliban leadership to the nether regions? To this day, there is a degree of uncertainty over just who issued that fire order. We [he and then-USAF Gen. Charles F. Wald] both watched the weapon impact, and both turned to each other simultaneously and said, 'Who the f--- did that?'"—**Retired USAF Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula**, describing a CIA drone attack on the first night of the Afghan War. He is quoted by **Chris Woods**, author of *Sudden Justice: America's Secret Drone Wars*, in an article in *DefenseOne.com*, May 31.

New Apollo

"This is not something we are just approaching on with a relaxed strategy. This is almost an Apollo, getting-to-the-moon sort of approach we are going for. I am very confident in the ability within the United States to get this done."—**Lt. Gen. Samuel A. Greaves**, commander of Air Force Space and Missiles Systems Center, briefing reporters on USAF efforts to build a new generation space launch system without using Russian-made engines, June 2.