

Thousands of mementos have been left at the Arlington National Cemetery graves of those lost to post-9/11 wars. The collection needs a new home.



**Miniature shoes** left at the grave of Army Sgt. Alexander “Alex” Van Aalten. “They were probably left by one of the many Dutch military that regularly visits Alex,” his mother, Susan, said. “Alex lost his life while attempting to rescue a Dutch soldier.”



**A stuffed toy** left at the grave of Army Cpl. Jessica Ann Ellis. Her family said they typically visit Arlington Cemetery at least once a year, preferring to do so on Mother’s Day, the day she was killed in 2008.



**An Iron Man action figure** was left at Air Force Airman 1st Class LeeBernard Emmanuel Chavis’s grave. “A Christian’s job is to make sure that everyone you meet, that they are better off for having met you, and LeeBernard personified that,” said his father, Michael Chavis, a former minister.



**A football helmet** left at the grave of Cpl. Joseph John Anzack Jr., who played football at South High School in Torrance, Calif. “When others were intimidated and scared, Joseph was more determined and dedicated to the cause,” said his father, Joseph Sr.



**A quilt** left at the grave of Army 1st Lt. Colby J. Umbrell. When Umbrell died in 2007, that year became the deadliest of the Iraq War, with 901 U.S. fatalities. In all, the nine-year-long war claimed nearly 4,420 American lives and killed an estimated 300,000 Iraqi civilians.



**This Combat Infantryman’s Badge, awarded to soldiers who fought in active combat**, was left at the grave of Army Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Kilian Dozier. “I wish I knew who left that CIB,” said his widow, Amy. “The one that came back from Iraq was charred from the blast.”



Mementos like a **leather motorcycle jacket**, left on an unknown grave, can show how a nation grieves, said Steve Garney, Arlington Cemetery’s command historian. “People call it the saddest sore in America. But if you expand that out, it tells us the history of our nation through its military.”



**A diver badge** left at the grave of Marine Gunnery Sgt. Javier Obleas. “Javier was an outstanding man, Marine and family man,” the Obleas family said. “Never forgotten by family, friends and Marines.”



**A Halloween mask of the Incredible Hulk** was left at the grave of Army Staff Sgt. Ryan F. Coyer. “Ryan loved Halloween [and] superheroes,” said his sister, Leslie Dean. “We always said that no matter what we would make it down on Halloween to decorate [his grave], and we did for the first few years.”

## An uncertain future for items left to honor America’s fallen

BY KELSEY BAKER WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT MCCLAIN

During one of their winter visits to Arlington National Cemetery, Mark and Nancy Umbrell placed a colorful patchwork quilt beside their son Colby’s grave. It had arrived in the mail years earlier from a sender they did not know after the 26-year-old’s 2007 death in Iraq. They had observed other visitors leaving mementos, a gesture that felt to them like a fitting way to both honor the fallen Army officer and thank the quilt maker whose kindness meant so much in their moment of grief, Nancy Umbrell said.

Days later, Rod Gainer set out on his weekly walk through Section 60, the cemetery’s 14-acre parcel where Colby Umbrell and other U.S. service members lost to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and counterterrorism missions elsewhere. As Gainer, the cemetery’s historical curator, surveyed the thousands of snow-dusted headstones, he spotted the quilt and approached, gently tucking it under his arm while tagging it with the plot number and date, Feb. 2, 2019. Today, the Umbrells’ quilt belongs to a collection of more than 3,250 keepsakes

gathered over the past 15 years from Section 60. Each is packed in a transparent red plastic bag, placed inside a white corrugated cardboard box, like the kind that holds printer paper, and locked out of sight in a climate-controlled underground corridor not far from the Tomb of the Unknowns. Among them is a wooden plaque bearing the names of two Marines killed in 2005. A diamond cross necklace. There are letters, photographs, patches and pins. A high school football helmet. Even

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## In Montana, a real estate bonanza turns political as property taxes soar

BY KARIN BRULLIARD

GLEN, MONT. — The pastoral expanse that Art Mangels has called home for 10 years comes with views of snowy peaks, banks on the trout-rich Big Hole River and acres of grasslands traversed by bears, moose and muskrats. These days, it also comes with a property tax bill 35 percent higher than in 2022. The spike is one effect of a western Montana pandemic real estate boom that has transformed Bozeman, two hours away, into what Mangels calls “Bozeangeles,” and

is reverberating here in Beaverhead County, where cows far outnumber people. The ripples are threatening to cross from personal into political. Like other longtime residents, Mangels has soured on the state’s crimson-red legislature and governor. “What’s happened is the real rich people have bought up a lot of acreage, a lot of big ranches,” the retired potato farmer, who now runs struggling fishing cabin rentals, said as he sat at the kitchen table in the cozy home he shares with his wife. “We’re farmers over

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HOLLY PICKETT FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Art Mangels on his 72-acre property in Glen, Mont., taxes on which have spiked as the pandemic fueled a real estate boom in the state.**

## As heat waves move north, districts face high cost to cool classrooms

BY ANNA PHILLIPS AND VERONICA PENNEY

Nearly 40 percent of schools in the United States were built before the 1970s, when temperatures were cooler and fewer buildings needed air conditioning. That has changed. In recent decades, heat has crept northward, increasing the number of school days with temperatures above 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Large parts of the country, where temperatures were previously cooler, experience at least

one month of school days with temperatures above 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Many schools in these places still don’t have air conditioning. America’s aging school buildings are on a collision course with a rapidly warming climate. Last fall, school officials were forced to send students home across the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic — just as many were returning from summer break — because of extreme heat and schools lacking air conditioning. In Baltimore and Detroit, high

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## IN THE NEWS

**Strikes in Rafah** Dozens of Palestinians were feared killed and wounded after Israeli munitions hit a camp for the displaced, eyewitnesses and first responders said. A11  
**Deadly tornadoes** Severe storms tore through the south-central United States overnight Saturday, killing several people. A4

**THE NATION** Legal experts explain the moments in Donald Trump’s trial in New York in which prosecutors, defense lawyers and even the judge have faltered or been caught off guard. A2

**THE WORLD** Musicians are bringing their talents to Ukraine’s military as members of the Cultural Forces. A10  
**Papua New Guinea** is struggling to locate the hundreds assumed dead after a landslide. A16

**THE ECONOMY** When using AI bots, assume they’re wrong until proved otherwise, Shira Ovide writes. A13  
**THE REGION** Five Republicans are vying to unseat Sen. Tim Kaine (D) in Virginia, where the GOP nominee is expected to face an uphill battle. B1

**A doctor** was released from a Virginia prison last week, more than two years after being pardoned for a murder conviction in a case involving a neurological disorder. B1  
**Thousands of bikers** took to the nation’s capital for the annual Rolling to Remember event. B1

**STYLE** Women are stripping down for hyper-realist molds of their bodies — especially belly and torso casts while pregnant. C1  
**Dozens of World Central Kitchen** staffers and volunteers are pushing for it to call for a ceasefire in Gaza despite neutrality rules. C1

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