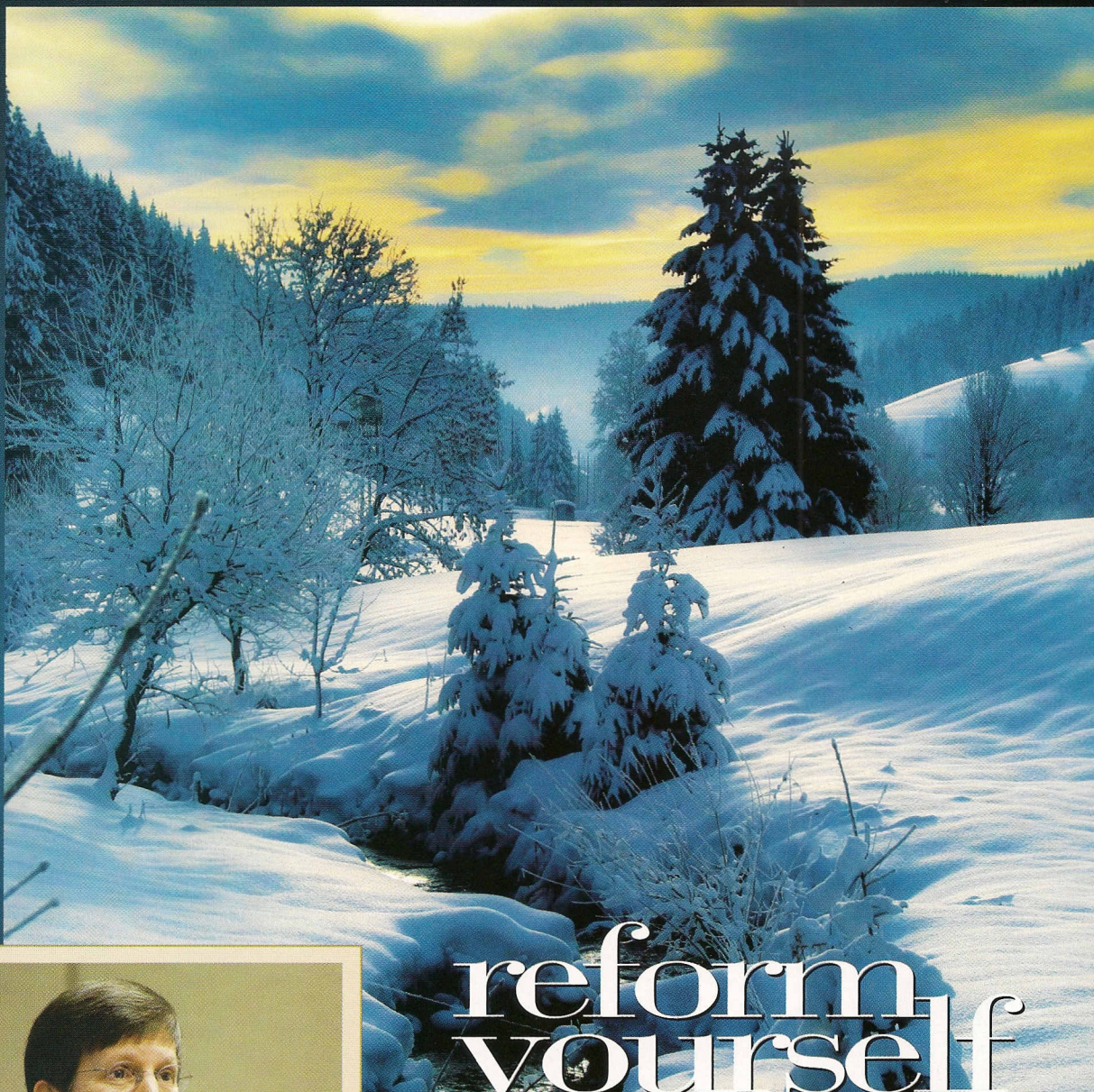


chiropractic care is health care



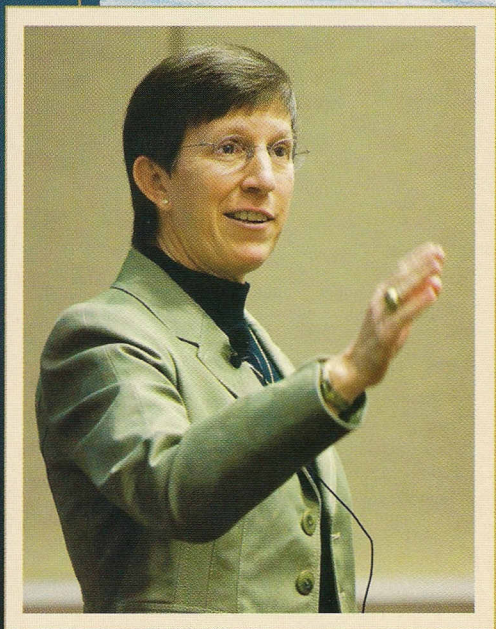
reform yourself

with becky halstead

US Army, Brigadier General, Retired
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Last year I retired after 27 years in the Army. Four years earlier, while serving in Germany and after more than a year of medical tests, hospitalization and seeing a multitude of doctors, I was diagnosed with chronic fibromyalgia.

I was given a laundry list of prescriptions to help me manage my pain, and I dutifully read the fine print about each of them. Much to my surprise, several were for depression.





This upset me and I confronted my doctor about why he had given me prescriptions for depression. "Anyone who knows me, doc, knows I am not depressed." "I understand," he said, "But, with fibromyalgia you will be depressed. The more you ache, the less you will want to do, and the less you do, the more you will withdraw and you will become depressed."

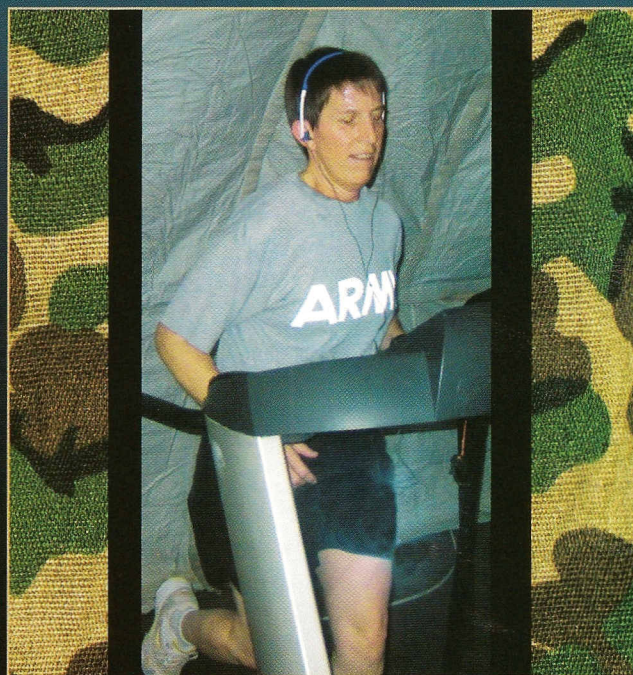
At the time this was happening, I was at a critical time in my military career. I was a Commanding General of a large logistics unit in Germany, and I was preparing myself and my unit for our deployment to Iraq. I had been to combat before when I deployed to Afghanistan, but it was for a very short period of time and I did not have nearly the same level of responsibility. This time I would be deploying as a Commander, and the level of responsibility was significantly more complex, as I had over two hundred units in my command.

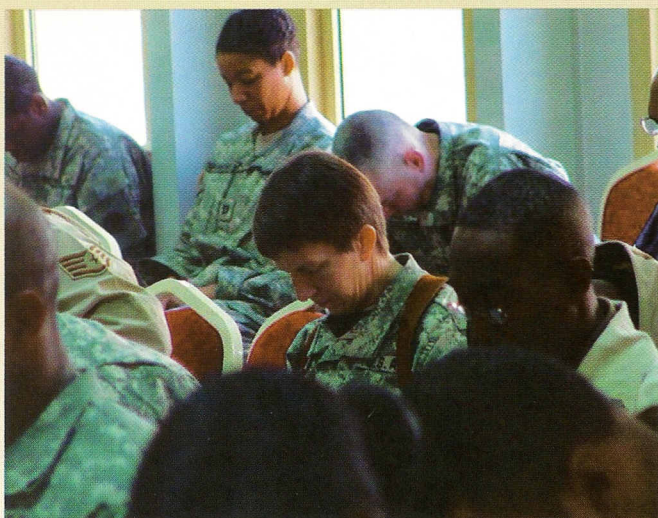
As I prepared myself for war, I had concern about all the medications I was taking and I had some fear about being able to endure the deployment physically. Only those closest to me knew about my struggle with pain and the inability to

get any quality sleep. While still in Germany, I took the prescribed drugs, but even with the pain medicine and sleep aids, I had very restful nights and even fewer days without chronic pain. The drugs negatively affected my energy levels and my ability to focus. So, once deployed to Iraq, I stopped taking the pain medicines. I wanted nothing to impede my ability to think clearly. My unit was depending on my leadership, and I could not afford my judgment to be clouded.

As a commander and a leader, it was extremely important to me to fulfill my responsibilities and accomplish the mission downrange with my team. I defined success as completing my deployment with my team, and leading my unit home, and I was determined to push myself towards that end. It was not easy, and my body took a beating, but I never had to look far to see others who sacrificed and suffered far more than I. In September 2006, we successfully completed our mission in Iraq, and returned, together as a team, to our home station in Germany.

The twelve months in Iraq did take a toll on my overall health. With erratic sleep, long days, high





stress, wearing heavy equipment, working in extreme heat, having a poor diet, and doing less daily exercise, my fibromyalgia spun out of control and my health spiraled downward. I quickly moved from Iraq to Germany and then back to the states because the army had selected me for another command in Maryland. My hope was that I could slowly recover and get myself back to an operating level where I could tolerate the pain and effectively perform.

Intellectually, however, I knew it was going to be a tough road ahead and with each month I could see my ability to fulfill my passion for continued service as a senior leader in the military slipping away. I had reasonably and successfully masked my struggle from others, but I had to face reality—I needed time to recover and to figure out how I live with fibromyalgia. For the next 20 months I continued to push myself professionally. I was increasingly given more prescribed drugs, and I became quite discouraged.

Then, one Sunday night as I sat at my kitchen table counting out all my pills for the week ahead, I had a defining moment. I was only 48 years old and with great family genes I planned on living to 100 years old, but not if I kept this cycle of wearing myself down without any opportunity to recover,

and certainly not if I kept taking all these pills.

So, I decided it was time to make a lifestyle change, and allow myself the time and focus to rebuild and recover. Fortunately for me, I was blessed to be in a position where I was eligible to retire, and where I had a caring Doctor of Chiropractic in the wings willing to educate, encourage, and empower me to try alternative medicines, acupuncture, massage therapy and routine adjustments. I was also blessed, and I am forever grateful, to have had unconditional support from my family and close friends during those extremely hard days—they knew I was wrestling with my health, and provided me great strength, especially as I decided to retire from a profession I loved.



For a time I actually believed there was no possibility of having physically good days anymore because I had gone so many years with daily chronic pain. Then, a very passionate Doctor of Chiropractic, Dr. Carol Ann Malizia, whom I had met a few years prior and stayed in touch with, contacted me because she found out I was retiring. She told me, with great enthusiasm, passion and commitment, "Becky, I promise, you do not have to live in chronic pain."

Over the years I had tried to take advantage of seeing our local chiropractor when I visited my family in upstate New York. He always provided me physical relief with his adjustments, and gave me hope with his encouragement. Unfortunately, chiropractic care was not available to me in the

military, so receiving the care of a Chiropractor was sporadic at best. Moving so often in the military (18 times in 27 years in my case) meant constantly trying to find a new Doctor of Chiropractic, and some of my assignments were overseas where it was simply impossible.

This past year since retiring I have seen remarkable progress with my health. Although sometimes I put the progress in the category of miracle work, in reality it is not. Frankly, it is actually better than a miracle because a miracle denotes only a few will be the beneficiary. The great news of what I have experienced is this care, chiropractic care, is available to everyone. As Dr. Carol Ann often reminds me, the patient has to be willing to be part of the solution. I especially have to remember this when she is telling me to "drink my greens!"

My lifestyle change meant incorporating a new diet of more fresh vegetables and fruits, preferably organic, and less chicken (unless organic) and more turkey to avoid the high levels of hormones often used in raising chicken. As a result of other health issues I have endured, supplements became critical, and she provided me great guidance and resources to ensure I was taking the right supplements. Every visit is an uplifting, positive experience which motivates me to take even better care of myself between visits.

I must confess, though, I had to reform myself as I traveled this new path to wellness—reform my thinking, reform my daily eating habits, reform my activities before going to bed each night and reform my physical training. Looking back it may seem like drastic changes, but it was

really a series of small changes and "little victories" which in the aggregate improved my wellness, and has radically improved my quality of life.

The military ingrained discipline in me, self-discipline—physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. The rigors of military life demanded it. So, I possessed the attitude to reform my lifestyle, but I just did not have all the right tools, resources and wellness education to live with my fibromyalgia. Now I do, thanks to my Dr. of Chiropractic. As my t-shirts say, "Life is Good." **CW**



Becky Halstead served 27 years with the U.S. Army and retired as a General Officer. Her career culminated as the Commanding General of the Army's Ordnance Center and Schools (equivalent to President of a University). She is an experienced leader and logistician, effective communicator, and strategic planner with exceptional organizational skills. Graduating from West Point in 1981 as a U.S. Army Ordnance Officer, she was the first female graduate of West Point to be promoted to General Officer. She was also the first female in U.S. history to command in combat at the strategic level. Becky has a B.S. in Engineering from West Point, an M.S. in National Resource Strategy (Advanced Manufacturing) from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, and an M.S. in Advanced Military Studies (Visionary Leadership) from the Army Command and General Staff College. She is a lifetime member of the Association of the United States Army and the Ordnance Corps Association. Becky is also a recipient of the 2007 National Women's History Project (Generations of Women Moving History Forward). She currently is the Executive Director for Leader Development with The Praevius Group. Keep an eye out for her upcoming book on her memoirs and how faith, family and freedom have impacted her life.