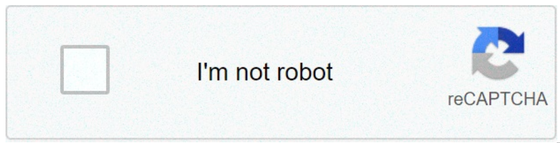

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4 day weekend army

Great discussions are par for the course here on Lifehacker. Each day, we highlight a discussion that is particularly helpful or insightful, along with other great discussions and reader questions you may have missed. Check out these discussions and add your own thoughts to make them even more wonderful!Discussion of the DayIs a two-day weekend enough?Other Great DiscussionsGet InvolvedGreat Discussions Any TimeFor great discussions any time, be sure check out our user-run blog, Hackerspace. And today being Friday, don't forget to check out this week's Open Thread.It's Friday. That means it's time to share what you know, ask what you don't, and generally partake Read moreIf you've got a cool project, inspiration, or just something fun to share, send us a message at tips@lifehacker.com.Happy Lifehacking, everybody! Economist John Maynard Keynes is credited, along with Adam Smith and a few select others, with founding modern economics. Keynes provided the foundation for macroeconomics, the study of economies on the whole, including interest rates, employment, budgets and many other factors. Keynes revolutionized economics and its forecasts, and when he made the predictions in his 1930 essay, "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren," people listened.In "Economic Possibilities," Keynes posits that by 2030, developed societies will be wealthy enough that leisure time, rather than work, will characterize national lifestyles. He uses a realistic estimate for growth -- 2 percent per year -- and pointed out that with that growth the "capital equipment" in the world would increase seven and a half times. With a world as wealthy as this, he said, "We shall do more things for ourselves than is usual with the rich to-day [sic], only too glad to have small duties and tasks and routines" [source: Keynes].While Keynes was correct in his estimate of increasing world wealth, he missed the mark with his prediction of leisure time. With fewer than 23 years before Keynes' 100-year forecast is up, today economists wonder why we don't have the life of leisure Keynes envisioned.In a HowStuffWorks interview, Cornell University economist Robert Frank explained his belief that Keynes' failing was his underestimation of the value of relative needs. Frank has contributed to "Revisiting Keynes," a book of economic essays exploring where Keynes went wrong in his prediction. In contrast to basic needs (like food and health care), relative needs are goods and services that people don't need, but want, and often because of rivalry with others. That could be why you feel that you need a bigger SUV than your neighbor or a better television than your brother.Relative needs don't have to be frivolous, though. Frank says the pursuit of a nicer house in a better school district and a better suit for a job interview are also relative needs. While neither are necessary for survival, both may help people advance in society.Another factor is the growing gap in American economic classes. This, coupled with equal exposure to the media (meaning both rich and poor alike are aware of the value of a good school district), and the ability to increase the chance of purchasing a nicer house by working longer hours, has resulted in more time at work, encouraging 21st-century Americans to put more time in on the job.Harvard University economist Richard Freeman -- also a contributor to "Revisiting Keynes" -- believes Keynes overestimated the human desire for leisure. He says economists generally believe that labor and management reached an optimal arrangement with the establishment of a five-day work week and an eight-hour work day. This would certainly account for the boredom that sometimes comes with a lengthy break from work.He also points out that the modern American workplace is designed to foster more time spent at work. Hard work can lead to promotions, which means more money. This, in turn, inspires them to compete with one another, even after they've left the office.Could a five-day weekend even work? Or would it spell economic catastrophe for the United States? Read about the good (and horrible) economic impacts a five-day weekend would have on the next page. “I had been in the Union army three years; was it not a good time to give the rebels a trial?”My term of service with Hood’s army, in the battles about Atlanta, was a short one; but it was a dreadfully earnest one. I doubt if many Southerners experienced as much in years as I did in the ten days and the ten nights I was under the stars and bars.The way of it was this: I had been a resident of the South nearly a year. Seven months of this time I had spent at the capital of Virginia, where the Confederate Congress was sitting. I was not in Congress, however, but in Libby Prison.Once Kilpatrick’s cavalry came very close to Richmond. The rebels became frightened, and removed us all, about six or seven hundred officers whom they had had cooped up in Libby for months, to Macon, in Georgia. Here we were put in a big stockade, or pen, and left in the broiling sun, and it was here that I determined to become a volunteer in the rebel army.The stockade in which we were kept was twelve feet high, with a platform near the top, on which the guards paced constantly. Ten feet inside the stockade was the dead-line, indicated only by a little stake here and there. To cross this, to approach it even, was sufficient to insure being instantly shot. There was but one gate, or door, and it was kept constantly closed and guarded by a sentinel, who stood, gun in hand, immediately above it, while a corporal stood watch below. Once a day, a few guards and officers entered this door, closed it behind them, and formed us into lines for counting. I had studied a small map of the country for days, and by dint of trading tobacco, etc., with an occasional guard who was dying for the weed, I acquired piece by piece a pretty decent rebel uniform, which I had kept buried in the sand where I slept. July 15, 1864, came round. My term of enlistment expired that day. I had been in the Union army three years; was it not a good time to give the rebels a trial? There were a few old sheds not far from the gate, and in one of these I waited with a friend one morning, about nine o’clock, and saw the sergeants and the guards come in to count the prisoners. I had resurrected my rebel uniform, and had quietly slipped it on. It fitted amazingly. My friend was lingering there simply to see what would become of me. He has often declared since then that he expected me to be shot the moment I should approach the dead-line. The prisoners were some way off, in rows, being counted, as I stepped from under cover and quickly walked up to and over the dead-line by the gate. The guard above brought his gun from his shoulder, halted, and looked at me. I paid no attention, but knocked, when the door opened, and the corporal stepped in the opening and asked what I wanted. “The lieutenant misses a roll-list, and I must run out and bring it from head-quarters,” I answered, pushing by him hurriedly. There was no time for questions, and the corporal, before getting over his surprise, had passed me out as a rebel sergeant. I quickly turned the corner, passed a number of Johnnies sitting on the grass drinking coffee, and went straight up to the commandant’s tent, near the edge of the wood, but did not go in. I had not looked behind me once, but expected every moment to hear a bullet whizzing after me. I passed behind the tent, walked slowly into the wood, and then ran my best for an hour.I was outside of prison. How free, how green, how beautiful, all things seemed! I had the joy of years in a few minutes. Of course I was missed at the roll-call directly, and the blood-hounds were soon upon my track. I avoided them, however, by different manoeuvres. I changed my course shortly, repassed the prison pen on the opposite side, and went back and up into the city of Macon. After wandering through its streets for an hour, I again took to the woods. That night I slept in a swamp of the Ocmulgee River. What bedfellows I had! — frogs, lizards, bats, and alligators. But it was better than the inside of a Southern prison. All the next day I lay in a blackberry patch, fearing to move, but feasting on the luscious ripe berries. What a contrast it was to my previous starving! Never in this world shall I enjoy food so again.Near to me was a watering-station for the railway to Atlanta. As I lay in the bushes, I heard trains halting all the day. With night came a glorious moon. Such a flood of heaven’s own light I had never seen before. By ten at night a long, empty train halted, and in two minutes I had sprung from the bushes and was inside of an empty freight car. In ten minutes more I stood in the door of the car watching the fair farms and the hamlets of Georgia sleeping under the glorious moonlight, while I was being hurled along Heaven knows where.That was the strangest ride of my life. The conductor came along when we were near Atlanta, swinging his lantern into the cars, and found a strange passenger. He threatened all sorts of things if my fare were not paid (of course I had no money); but I put myself on my dignity, told him I was a convalescent soldier coming back from furlough, and dared him or any other civilian to put me off the train. That ended the colloquy, and just before daylight the whistle screamed for Atlanta, and I was inside the lines of Hood’s army.I left the train, and in a few moments was tucked away in the haymow of a barn near the station. So far, good; but daylight brought a squad of rebel cavalry into the barn, who, to my dismay, soon commenced climbing up to the mow for hay for their horses. My presence of mind was about leaving me utterly, when I happened to notice an empty sugar hogshead in the corner of the mow. Before the rebels were up I was in it, and there I sat and perspired for six mortal hours. Those hours were days, every one of them. All of this time Sherman’s army, then besieging Atlanta, was throwing shells into our neighborhood. At last, at last, the rebels saddled their horses and rode out of the barn-yard.I was not long in changing my head-quarters. For three days I walked up and down Atlanta, among the troops, to the troops, away from the troops; always moving, always just going to my regiment, the Ninth Alabama, to which I had attached myself as ordnance sergeant. I was very careful, however, to keep far from that particular regiment. I knew its position, its chief officers, knew, in fact, the position of every brigade in Hood’s army. It was to my interest, under the circumstances, to know them well; for I was continually halted with such exclamations as, “Hallo which way? Where s your regiment? and what you doing away over here?” A hundred times I was on the point of being arrested and carried to my alleged command. For every man I met I had a different tale to suit the circumstance. At night I slept where I could, under a tree, behind a dry-goods box, anywhere; it made little difference, as my lying down on the ground, hungry, pillowless, and blanketless, and fearing every moment to be arrested, could not be called sleeping. The life was growing monotonous at last; the more so as, aside from an occasional apple, I had nothing at all to eat.About the fifth day, I overheard an old Irishman, hoeing among his potatoes, bitterly reviling the war to his wife. I made his acquaintance, and discovered our sentiments as to the rebellion to be very nearly identical. Under the most tremendous of oaths as to secrecy, I told him who I was, and that I was absolutely starving. If he would help me, I knew how to save his property when Sherman’s army should enter. That it would enter, and that Atlanta would be razed to the ground and every human being’s throat cut, he had not a doubt. Still, if detected in secreting or feeding me, he would be hung from his own door-post. There was no doubting that, either.However, that night I slept in his cellar, and was fed with more than the crumbs from his table. It was arranged that I should wander about the army day-times, and come to his cellar unknown to him, of course about ten every night, when his family were likely to be in bed. The outside door was to be left unlocked for me. Prisoners did not carry time-pieces in the South. Mine disappeared with my pistols on the battle field of Chattanooga, and, as an unfortunate result, I went to my den in the cellar an hour too early, one evening. None of my protector’s family seemed to be aware of, the guest in the cellar. I was sitting quietly in the corner of the dark, damp place, when the trap-door opened above, and a young lady, bearing a lamp, descended, and seemed to be searching for something. It was a romantic situation, destined to be more so. Groping about the cellar, the young lady approached me. I moved along the wall to avoid her. She unluckily followed. I moved farther, again. She followed, cornered me, screamed at the top of her voice, dropped the lamp, and fainted. In half a minute three soldiers, who had happened to be lunching up-stairs, the old lady, and my friend her husband rushed down the steps, armed and with lights. The old gentleman recognized me, and was in despair. I think I too was in despair; but, rightfully or wrongfully, I took to my heels, and escaped through the door at which I had entered, leaving the fainting girl, the despairing father, and the astonished soldiers to arrange matters as they might. The girl recovered, I learned years afterwards, and her father’s house was one of the few that escaped the flames when Sherman started to the sea.From that night on, I slept again at the roadsides, and as for rations, I might say I did not have any. The weather was terribly hot, but I spent my days wandering from regiment to regiment and from fort to fort, inspecting the positions under the works. I knew that if I did get through, all this would be equal to an army corps for Sherman.Once I crept into a little deserted frame house, and happening to find an old white palmetto hat there I changed it for my own, on account of the heat. I then laid my rebel jacket and cap under the boards, and, fastening my pantaloons up with a piece of broad red calico that happened to be with the hat, sallied out, seeing what I could see. I very soon saw more than I had calculated on. I had wandered well off to the right of the army, and was quietly looking about, when a squad of cavalry dashed in, shouting, “The Yankees are on us!” There was a regiment of infantry close by, which sprang to its feet, and every man in sight was ordered to seize a gun and hurry to the front. I, too, was picked up, and before I had time to explain that I was just going over to my division a gun was in my hands, and I was pushed into the line. The whole force ran for a quarter of an hour into the woods, firing as they ran, and shouting. Suddenly, as a few shots were fired into us, we stopped, and formed line of battle. The rebels near me were much excited, but not so much so as to leave the new recruit unnoticed. I knew I was watched, but was determined not to be suspected.“Fire!” the captain shouted; and how we all fired! I was used to the gun in my hands. My own regiment had been armed with this same kind of rifle. How I loaded and banged! I was a picturesque sight, too, among the trim, uniformed company, gray breeches, shirt sleeves unbuttoned and flowing to the elbows, red calico waist-band, and a white palmetto hat! John Burns at Gettysburg was nothing compared to me in appearance. I was a prominent target. What a wonder some Yankee did not pick me off!“Go it, Alabama! Give em h——! Bully for you!” met my ears, as I rammed down the cartridges and blazed away. I aimed high, however, and unless Sherman’s army were roosting in the tree-tops my hands are free from Northern blood.The skirmish was soon over. Some cavalry had flanked the Yanks and brought them in, and while their pockets were being gone through with by my fellow-soldiers I slipped to the rear, and was glad to get back into my own cap and jacket.I lay in the little empty house that night. Sherman’s army had been banging at the city fearfully, and setting houses on fire, all the night. It was a little revenge, I presume, for the losses in the skirmish, in which I had taken so picturesque a part. These shelled houses had emptied their occupants into the street, and a little after daylight I noticed a family, with its worldly baggage piled on a one-mule wagon, stop in front of my residence. “Here’s a house out of range of bullets. Why not move in?” I heard a manly voice call to the women and children following with the traps. “Move in,” I thought to myself. “Well, they can stand it if I can.” The house consisted of but one large room, unceiled and reaching to the rafters, with the exception of a small compartment, finished off and ceiled, in one corner. On top of this little compartment were my head-quarters.In they moved, bag and baggage, and the women folks soon commenced preparing a meal outside, and under the shadow of the front door. This half-finished room had been used as a butcher shop in the past, it seemed, and the meat hooks in the corner had served me as a ladder to mount to my perch on the ceiling. “Now, Johnny,” chirped the wife, “do you run up town and buy some red and white muslin. We will make a Union flag, and when Sherman gits in, as he’s bound to, we’re jest as good Union folks as he is. You know I’m dyin’ for real coffee. I’m tired of chicory and injun bread, and I don’t keer if Sherman’s folks is in to-morrow. We’ll draw government rations, and be Union.”These good people were probably “poor trash” of the South, not keering much which way the war went, provided they could get rations. Their general talk, however, was of the real rebel character, and it was an unsafe place for me to stop in. In an hour the banquet before the front door was prepared, and all hands went out to partake. Soon they were joined by a rebel soldier, who seemed to be on a half-hour’s furlough to visit the young lady of the party, whom I took to be his sweetheart. Sherman’s army, I was sorry to learn from this soldier, was being simply mowed out of existence. “All the woods above Atlanta was as a reeking corpse.” “Sherman himself was in flight northwards.”By looking more closely through a chink in the weather-boarding of my villa, I discovered that he was reading all this dreadful information from a copperhead newspaper, and then I felt easier. Again, there was the talk about money purses made of Yankees scalps, and finger rings from Yankee bones; and, during the dinner, I was no little astonished to see this valiant Southerner exhibit to his eager listeners a veritable ring, rough and yellow, made, as he said, from the bones of one of Sherman’s cavalrymen. This was not the only time, however, that I heard such talk from Southern soldiers. My ears became accustomed to it during the wanderings in disguise about the army there. I recall having heard, one day, the most diabolical and dastardly statement ever made by a civilized man. I was standing at the roadside, watching some Federal prisoners march by who had just been captured.“Where will they take them to?” I innocently inquired of a well-dressed man standing near me, who, like myself, was watching the unfortunate men pass.“I suppose to Andersonville,” was the answer.After some little conversation on the subject of prisoners in general, I added, “It is all stuff, of course, what the Northerners say about the Yankees dying off so at Andersonville.”“Stuff! No,” he interrupted; “they do die like rats, and it’s a good thing. If the North won’t exchange them, why not kill them?” Seeing that I was interested, he went on: “I tell you how it is. I was down there the other day. The commander is a relative of mine, and I was visiting him. The whole thing is easily done. The trenches, etc., of the guards are usually above the stockade, and the filth and corruption that flow down the dirty brook, from which the Yankees drink, would kill all the abolitionists in the world. And then there are other ways. If the Yankees don’t want their slum, we certainly can’t afford, and it is the intention not to afford, to feed them. If they starve, let them starve, — the more the better. Andersonville is the best general we’ve got, and does more good than any army at the front.” This was the deliberate utterance of a well-dressed, intelligent Atlanta merchant. To the everlasting credit of the rebels in arms, he wore no uniform; but it was to what he supposed to be a Confederate soldier that these dastardly sentiments were uttered. Of course, when Sherman’s army entered he probably drew rations as a good Unionist.But I am getting away from my story. The banquet of cucumbers, chicory, and injun bread was about terminating. My soldier with the ring had used up his furlough, and was gone. The house was still empty, and it was now or never if I proposed getting down from my perch without an alarm. My plan was silently to climb down the meat hooks which I had ascended, and to slip out at the still open back door of the house. On peeping over the edge of the ceiling, however, what was my amazement to see a bull-dog of immense proportions tied to one of my hooks!Here was a “situation”! He was sound asleep, but had an amiable countenance. I dropped a bit of plaster on his nose. He looked up amazed, and smiled. Then I smiled, and then he smiled again; and then I carefully crept down, patted him on the head, said good-by in a whisper, and in a twinkling was out at the back door. My gratitude to this dog is boundless.I had found it unsafe now to be about houses, and again I took my lodgings in the field. Again I was busy, just going to my division, but never getting there. My pocket was full of passes, prepared before leaving prison, taking me anywhere, almost, on all kinds of business connected with supplying Loring’s division with ordnance. Once, near the sacred quarters of a brigadier, the guard arrested me. I protested, and our loud talk brought the brigadier to the rescue. I explained how I was just going to my regiment, and how my pass had been lost, and the necessity of my going on at once. The brigadier took in the situation at a glance, and with a pencil wrote me a pass, good for that day. Fighting was going on about Atlanta constantly, but with so many apparent reverses to our arms that I feared I should never get away.The memorable 22d of July came, and with it the most terrific fighting on Hood’s right, and in fact all round the semicircle about the city. Loring’s division, with my Alabama regiment, entered the battle on Hood’s right wing, and I followed, at a safe distance, as an ordnance sergeant. Everybody was too busy and excited to ask me questions, and in the hope that Hood would be defeated, and an opportunity for getting through be at last presented, I was feeling well. hundreds, thousands possibly, of wounded men fell back by me, but all shouting, “The Yankees are beaten, and McPherson is killed!”It was too true! McPherson had fallen, and, if reports were correct, Sherman’s army had met with an awful disaster. For me, there was nothing left but to get back to the rear, and try another direction. I knew that Sherman’s advance was at the ford, at Sandtown, on the Chattahoochee River, at our left. Could I only get there, I might still be saved. I had now been seen among the rebel forts and troops so much that there was the greatest danger of my being recaptured, and shot as a spy. On the night of the 22d I lay under a hedge, near to a field hospital.No food and no sleep for days was killing me.Still, there was no rest; for all the night long I heard the groans of the poor fellows whose arms and legs were being chopped off by the surgeons. The whole night was simply horrible. I might have died there, myself, — I wonder that I did not. The hope of escape only was keeping me alive. I had not eaten a pound of food in days.Daylight of the 23d came. It was my birthday. Auspicious day, I thought, and again my hopes gave me strength and courage to work my way past lines of infantry and cavalry.All day, till nearly sunset, I had crept around in the woods, avoiding sentinels, and now I was almost in sight of the longed-for goal. It was not a mile to the ford. When dark set in, I should swim the river, and be a free man. More, I had news that would help Sherman’s army to capture Atlanta. A thousand pictures of home, of freedom, peace, were painting themselves in my mind. One hour more, and all would be well. Hark! a shot, and then a call to halt and hold up my arms. I was surrounded in a moment by fifty cavalrymen who had been secreted in the bushes, how or where I know not. We were in sight of the river, and the Union flag was just beyond. It was no use here to talk about being a Confederate. I was arrested as a spy, and the great danger was of being shot then and there, without a hearing. I was partly stripped, searched thoroughly, and then marched between two cavalrymen to General Ross, of Texas, who, with his staff, was also at a hidden point in the woods. General Ross treated me kindly, and gave me lunch and a blanket to rest on. It was his duty, however, to send me to the division head-quarters, to be tried. I was again marched till nine at night, when I was turned over to General Hume. He was sitting by a fire, in the wood, roasting potatoes and reviling the Yankees. As I was arrested as a spy, and to be tried, I deemed it best to say nothing. “Try to escape from me, tonight,” shouted General Hume, as if he were commanding an army corps, “and I’ll put you where there’s no more escaping!” Through the whole night a soldier sat at my head, with a cocked pistol; but, for the first time in days, I slept soundly. Why not? The worst had happened. By daylight a guard marched me up to the city, where Hood had head-quarters in the yard of a private residence.On the way there my guard was communicative, and I persuaded him to show me the paper that was being sent around with me, from one head-quarter to another. I read it. Sure enough, I was considered a spy, and was being forwarded for trial. The paper gave the hour and place of my capture, with the statement that one of those capturing me had seen me inspecting a fort on the previous Sunday.When we reached Hood’s tents, I was turned over to a new guard, and the document brought with me was carelessly thrown into an open pigeon-hole by a clerk who seemed too much disturbed about other matters to ask where the guard came from, or what I was accused of. I, at least, noticed where that paper was put. There was the most tremendous excitement at head-quarters. Orderlies and officers were dashing everywhere at once. Fighting was constantly going on, and an immediate retreat seemed to be determined. I was left that night with a few other prisoners, against whom there were no charges, in a tent almost joining the one where the clerk had deposited my paper. Our guard was very accommodating, or very negligent, for he allowed different persons to go in and out from our tent at all hours during the night. Daylight brought the provost-marshal general to the tent, to dispose of the prisoners. The name of each was called, and all but myself were taken out, heard, and sent off.“And who are you?” he said pleasantly enough to me. I stepped forward; the clerk was asked for the paper, but it was gone. It certainly had been misplaced, said the clerk, in embarrassment. He had put it in that particular pigeon-hole. I testified to that, myself, arid added that it was of little consequence, as it was from an officer, I didn’t know whom, who had simply picked me up as an escaped prisoner. The provost-marshal took me aside, and asked me if I had been about the works or the troops any. I told him my name, that I was really an escaped prisoner, and that I had just walked up from Macon and had hoped to get away. “You have had a hard time of it,” he said, “and I almost wish you had got away. I hope you will soon be free,” he added, “and that the cruel war is almost over.”It was his duty, though, to return me to prison, and I was sent to Charleston, and with many others was placed under range of our own guns, as a weak effort to stop the Federal fire on that doomed city. Months afterward I did get away and when Sherman’s army entered the city of Columbia I was one of the escaped prisoners who welcomed it.The kind provost will smile if he ever reads this narrative, and will forgive me, I know, for the stories I told him. They were necessities. I hope, too, that that young clerk was not punished for the loss of that paper. I know that he was not to blame.

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