



POST SOLANT AMITY

With the Members of "G" Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment



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Congressional Probe Seeks Accuracy in Death Notices. Why?

Spurred in part by mistakes made in reporting former NFL player Pat Tillman's death to his family, a congressional panel was to hear testimony on 27Jun07 about what the military has done to improve how families are notified about service members killed in action.

Army and Air Force generals, a retired Marine Corps general and a high-ranking Navy officer were expected to testify before a panel of House Armed Services Committee members.

Tillman's case was one impetus for the hearing, but the panel has heard of casualty-notification problems in several other cases. The subcommittee wants to know whether the service branches have learned from their mistakes and implemented changes.

Tillman, a San Jose native, turned down a lucrative contract with the NFL's Arizona Cardinals to join the Army following the 9/11 attacks. He was killed 22Apr04, by friendly fire in Afghanistan.

Although Pentagon investigators determined quickly that he was killed by his own troops, five weeks passed before the circumstances of his death were made public. During that time, the "Army claimed he was killed by enemy fire. Tillman's family has

said they believe it was part of a deliberate Pentagon cover-up.

A review of hundreds of casualty reports from Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere ordered by Army Secretary Francis J. Harvey found that the families of seven soldiers who died, including Tillman's, were given incorrect or misleading information about the deaths.

The subcommittee's next step will depend on its findings at the hearing.

Family members of slain soldiers were not scheduled to testify, because the hearing was meant solely to examine the military's notification processes.

Kevin Arata, a spokesman for the Army's Human Resources Command, said the Army took several steps last year to improve its notification process.

Now, all hostile-fire deaths in combat theaters must be investigated by the soldier's unit.

The Army's Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center must be notified of all suspected friendly fire

Trivia Question 1: The Marine's Hymn is considered a tribute to warriors. In what year did it become the Corps' official hymn? (See answer page 4.)

cases, and both the Criminal Investigation Command and unit commanders in the field must report their hostile-death probes to that center, he said.

In April, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform held an inquiry into official military deception in Tillman's death and the reporting of the capture and rescue in Iraq of former Army private Jessica Lynch, according to wire services and internet service on 22June07.

But, I'm left with a burning question in the back of my mind, "Why?" Why has the accuracy of such, both literally and figuratively *bloody* circumstances, become so damned important?

Some may remember the media circus surrounding the earlier hearing. The sound bites. The angst of Tillman's brother decrying the military's suppression of the "truth." His *despair* at having been lied to. At having been told Pat died a hero. Implying instead, did he, that it would have been more kind, downright pleasing and of greater emotional comfort for him and his family to learn that Pat had died as the by-product of a most common tragic circumstance of war: friendly fire. Go figure.

Then there was Jessica Lynn's

Trivia Question 2 In what year did the President approve the joint military behavioral standards, for times of both war and peace, known as the Code of Conduct? (See answer on page 4.)

testimony taking umbrage with flattering Department of Defense testimonials on her behalf, expressed at the time of her rescue.

Though poignant, what was all this "crying" really about?

Could it be that the Congressional subcommittee hair-bags had an ulterior motive? A motive common to pacifists: Embarrass the military.

And just how accurate should a casualty report be? After all, why have the record provide only the cause of death. What of the method? Hell, neighbor, let's get everything out there. Why not send along a detailed copy of the autopsy and medical examiner's findings:

"The subject showed evidence of multiple traumatic wounds to the torso and scrotum. The head, limbs and genitalia were not recovered."

"It is apparent that following the impacts of numerous small arms projectiles, Lance Corporal John Doe, was ritually, coarsely and slowly dismembered and disemboweled while still alive."

Garish? Hell, yes. But where does the "truthfulness" stop.

Was there malicious intent on the part of those "falsifying" the reports or making recommendations for posthumous awards? I think not. No, instead, it was done in an *effort* to ease the overwhelming horror of losing a son, daughter, father, mother or sibling. There was no malice. There was a concern for the living, only.

That there are some who would USE these events to impugn our nation's efforts to destroy an enemy that would, in a New York minute, rip your throat out, that is the far greater tragedy.

Every Marine, 1968 Vietnam: A Battle for Go Noi Island

Written by Robert Simonsen, copyrighted and first published by Heritage Books in 2007, the publisher insists that:

"Few military memoirs are as powerful or moving as *Every Marine*. This book is filled with heroes and our debt to their sacrifices is beautifully understated but never more eloquently expressed.

"Marines that joined up between the years of 1966 and 1970 knew that they were going to war in Vietnam. Their reasons may have varied, but these young

men were, for the most part, ready for the ultimate experience of their lives. The author was one of these Marines.

"Although not technically an island, Go Noi Island is surrounded by rivers, streams and roads. The *Island* traditionally served as a staging area for NVA units preparing for future attacks on the Da Nang area.

"The operations [Allen Brook, Meade River, and Pipestone Canyon] for this prized sector were fought time and again by many units. Allen Brook is representative

of all these battles and serves as a tribute to all Vietnam Marines.

"This book takes the reader from the emergency formation of a Marine battalion at Camp Pendleton, California, to the battlefields of Vietnam where they slowly honed their war skills before joining the battle on Go Noi Island. Individual Marines describe the events and their feelings in their own words."

However flattering the publisher's commentary, my own immediate choice for the text is that *our* Major Skipper was Battalion Commander of 1/27 at the time.

REMEMBER; PLEASE, EVERY DAY, REMEMBER.

(This following occurred at my son's promotion to Master Sergeant ceremony. There was a single Airman, in dress blues and white gloves, standing beside the table as this was read. He motioned to each article as it was mentioned. He put a slice of lemon on the plate, he sprinkled salt on the plate and he turned the glass over, placing it upside down. Lastly, he took a chair and leaned it against the table.

I don't think there was a dry eye in the house.

Jack Oaks, former Engineman, Graham County LST-1176, Solant Amity I)

"As you entered the dining area this evening, you may have noticed a small table in the place of honor near our head table. It is set for one. The military caste is filled with symbolism.

"This table is our way of symbolizing the fact that the members of our profession are missing from our midst. They are commonly called, POW/MIA. We call them brothers. They are unable to be with us this evening and so we remember them because of their incarceration.

"This table set for one is small, symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner alone against his oppressors. REMEMBER!

"The tablecloth is white, symbolizing the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms. REMEMBER!

"The single rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades-in-arms who kept the faith awaiting their return. REMEMBER!

"The red ribbon tied so prominently on the vase is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn upon the lapel and breasts of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting of our nation's

Trivia Question 3: The six articles of the Code of Conduct embrace which of the following?

1. Dedication to the U.S. and its principles of freedom.
2. Conduct on the battle field.
3. Conduct as a prisoner of war.

(See answer on page 4.)



POW/MIA table setting for one

missing. REMEMBER!

"A slice of lemon is on the bread plate to remind us of their bitter fate. REMEMBER!!

"There is salt upon the bread plate symbolic of families' tears as they wait. REMEMBER!

"The glass is inverted, as they cannot toast with us this night. REMEMBER!

"The chair. The chair is empty, they are not here. REMEMBER!

REMEMBER!

A General's PhD does not a warrior make.

"Hearts and minds" is but one of the intellectual concepts initiated during the Vietnam era that had our military believing...via the influence of McNamara's wiz-kids...that it was the most effective way of countering Viet Cong insurgency.

At its root is the idea that *we* have something more to offer than the other guy's ruthless domination, that *we* can win with candy what an enemy seeks through acts of violence.

The problem with that idea in Nam was that after thinking we had taken control of an area (an essential part of the process) and offering "sweets" of one kind or another to the villagers during the day, the Cong pretty well ruled the night: killing village leaders and slaughtering the inhabitants at will. All the while more than 59,000 of our young men were dying. This had been our nation's second run-in with communism, Korea offering the first disaster.

Today, the threat is Wahhabism. And, so long as the product of our *progressive* war colleges and the graduates of Ivy League schools in Congress dominate the military process, we will not win in Iraq or anywhere else. Theirs is the intellect of "compromise," and "limited war" and the use of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to...and this

is important Marines, as they wish *only* to... CONTAIN and ENLIGHTEN as opposed to the more simple "search for, surround and destroy." They fight wars as if they're lawyers wheeling-and-dealing in some corporate boardroom tiff.

We need a great deal more of a Machiavellian management approach and far less of the thinking man's Sun Tzu technique. Not a single enemy should remain standing to put a knife in our back. Not one.

Some years ago, Joseph Wambaugh, the author of numerous police novels wrote briefly about "the black gloved cop." Wambaugh, in doing so, was alluding to street cops that bend, even break, both police procedural processes and the law. His theory suggested that police departments pushing for ever more educated cops would one day find themselves with an army of personnel incapable of truly protecting the public. To make his point, Wambaugh provided the example of a patrolman responding to the report of alleged child abuse.

Arriving at the scene, the officer while talking to the adult occupant at the door hears a child whimpering somewhere in the apartment. He suggests that the educated cop would ask questions of the occupant, but not having sufficient *constitutional* grounds to search the apartment, would but take notes and a *mark* for having responded and then leave the scene. The "black gloved cop" on the other hand, Wambaugh then suggested, would push passed the adult and searched for the child. In other words: "f**k the rules, f**k the law, f**k constitutional rights, f**k public relations. I'm here for the kid."

In short, suggested Wambaugh, education may dull the response circuitry of the brain. It puts obsta-

Trivia Question 4: Are the six articles of the Code of Conduct a mandate of expected personal behavior or a part of the military's UCMJ? (Answer on Page 4)

cles in the path of reaction time. One thinks of options instead of reacting.

Sadly, while generals and their brain-dead brothers-in-Congress think of the many options available in Iraq and in their own lives, the roof is falling on OUR shoulders and those of our nation's servicemen and women in harms-way.

Who was that guy?

Born Donald James Yarmy in New York, he later changed his name to the maiden name of his first wife, because those called at auditions usually went in alphabetical order.

In 1941 and at the age of 18, he dropped out of school to join the Marines. He was the only member of his platoon to survive the battle of Guadalcanal, but nearly died of blackwater fever after contracting malaria. He returned to CONUS as a drill instructor, acquiring the clipped delivery that he adapted for his work as a stand-up comedian in nightclubs. His career took off in 1954, when he became a winner on Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts.

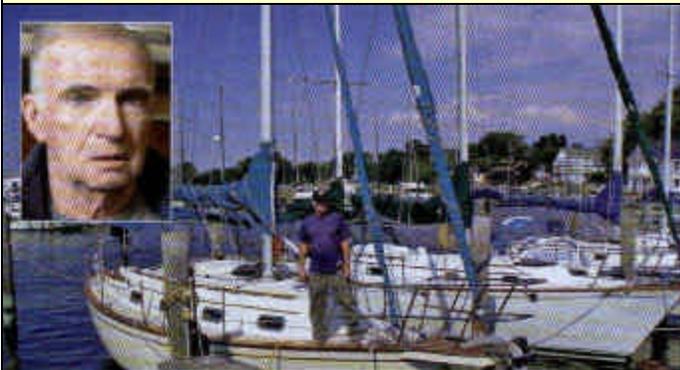
At first, he passed up \$12,500-a-week for a piece of his show's profit and won Best Comedian Emmys, three years in a row.

The antithesis of his clumsy alter-ego, he was introverted, well-read, organized and wrote poetry. He married and divorced three times, and is survived by six children.

Born on April 13 1923; this actor-comedian died 25 September 2005.

So, by what name did you know the man? The answer can be found on page four.

Ed Hart: Subject of Soundings Magazine Article, June '07



Scary Golfing Rules Released

The Montana State Department of Fish and Wildlife is advising golfers to take extra precautions and be on the alert for bears while playing on Gallatin, Helena, and the Lewis and Clark National Forests Golf Courses.

They advise golfers to wear noise-producing devices such as little bells on their clothing to only alert but not startle the bears unexpectedly.

They also suggest that you carry pepper spray in case of an encounter with a bear. And, that you remain alert for signs of bear activity.

Golfers should be able to recognize the difference between black bear and grizzly bear droppings on the golf course.

Black bear droppings are smaller and contain berries and possibly squirrel fur.

Grizzly bear droppings have bells in them and smell like pepper spray.

Lastly, in an unrelated yet important golfing incident:

On the 2nd tee of a game played



Never take candy from a stranger.

a sex change operation; I was a man before I met you. I hope you can forgive me."

The husband froze at the top of his back swing and threw a fit! He slammed the driver into the ground,



with his wife, a husband announced that, "Twenty years ago I had a brief affair. It meant nothing. I hope you can forgive me."

His wife was hurt but said only, "Those days are long gone, honey. What we have now is far more valuable. I forgive you." They embraced and kissed.

Then, on the 17th tee, the husband was starting his back swing when the wife blurted out, "I'm sorry darling but I've been conscience-stricken since you told me of your affair. As we're being honest with one another, I have something of an admission of my own. Thirty-two years ago I had

kicked the ball into the woods, stormed off the tee, pushed the golf cart over on its side, broke the rest of his clubs one by one, then started on hers.

He screamed and ranted, "You liar! You cheat! You despicable deceiver! How could you? I trusted you with all my heart and soul...and all these years you've been playing off the ladies' tees!"

Some things are sacred.

From the Male Perspective

We ALWAYS hear from the gals side about our bridging the emotional, communication and economic gaps between the sexes. Well, here are some ideas from the guys. And, the first thing to take note of is that there is no number one. These points are equally important:

Men are NOT mind readers.

Learn to work the toilet seat. You're a big girl. If it's up, put it down.

We need it up, you need it down.

You don't hear us complaining about you leaving it down.

Sunday sports: It's like the full moon or the changing of the tides. Let it be.

Shopping is NOT a sport. And no, we are never going to think of it that way.

Crying is blackmail.

Ask for what you want. Let us be clear on this one:

Subtle hints do not work!

Strong hints do not work!

Obvious hints do not work!

Just say it!

Yes and No are acceptable answers to almost every question.

Come to us with a problem only if you want help solving it. That's

Trivia Question 7. The Code, in part, reads "I will make [no] statements disloyal to my country or...harmful to [its] cause." What recent Presidential candidate violated the Code? (Answer page 4.)

Anything we said six months ago is absolutely inadmissible in an argument. In fact, all comments become null and void after seven days.

If you don't look or dress like one of Victoria Secret's showroom models, don't expect us to look or act like romantic soap opera lotharios.

If you think you're fat, you probably are. Don't ask us.

If something we said can be interpreted two ways and one of the ways makes you sad or angry, we meant the other one.

You can either ask us to do something or tell us how you want it done. Not both. If you already know best how to do it, do it yourself.

Whenever possible, Please say whatever you have to say during commercials.

ALL men see in only sixteen colors. Peach, for example, is a fruit, not a color. Pumpkin is also a fruit and we have no idea what mauve is.

If it itches, it will be scratched. We do that.

If we ask what is wrong and you say "nothing," we will act like nothing's wrong. We know you are lying, but it is just not worth the hassle.

If you ask a question you don't want an answer to, well, expect an (Continued on page 4, column 3)

Wicked Witch of the Left Coast: Comrade Pilosi



Trivia Question 6: The military Code of Conduct requires that, "If in command, I will never surrender the members of my command..." while they still have what? (Answer on page 4.)

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See the whole story at
SolantAmity.com

The First Marines to *Land* in Monrovia

Not everything in life is about you; think about it.

A nurse took the tired, anxious serviceman to the bedside. "Your son is here," she said to the old man.

She had to repeat the words several times before the patient's eyes opened.

Heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack, he dimly saw the young uniformed Marine standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand. The Marine wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man's limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement.

The nurse brought a chair so that the Marine could sit beside the bed. All through the night the young Marine sat there in the poorly lighted ward, holding the old man's hand and offering him words of love and strength. Occasionally, the nurse suggested that

the Marine move away and rest awhile.

He refused. Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the Marine was oblivious of her and of the night noises of the hospital - the clanking of the oxygen tank, the laughter of the night staff members exchanging greetings the cries and moans of the other patients.

Now and then she heard him say a few gentle words. The dying man said nothing, only held tightly to his son all through the night.

Along towards dawn, the old man died. The Marine released the now lifeless hand he had been holding and went to tell the nurse. While she did what she had to do, he waited. Finally, she returned. She started to offer words of sympathy, but the Marine interrupted her.

"Who was that man?" he asked. The nurse was startled, "He was your

father," she answered. "No, he wasn't," the Marine replied. "I never saw him before in my life."

"Then why didn't you say something when I took you to him?"

"I knew right away there had been a mistake, but I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here. When I realized that he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, knowing how much he needed me, I stayed."

The next time someone needs you ... just be there. Stay.

Male Perspective *(from page 3)*

answer you don't want to hear.

When we have to go somewhere, absolutely anything you wear is fine...really.

Don't ask us our thoughts unless you're prepared to discuss such topics as baseball, how to disassemble a shotgun, or golf, or sex.

You have enough clothes.

You have too many shoes.

I am in shape. Round IS a shape!

Pass this to as many men as you can to give them a laugh. Pass it to as many women as you can to give them a bigger laugh.

Now, if we could only get the gals to understand that these things are true beyond any reasonable doubt. Well, then and only then will both sexes have made real progress.

Trivia Question 8 The Code of Conduct emerged as the result of the poor behavior of American military personnel as Prisoners of War during what conflict? (See answer below.)

Gearing's Association & Reunion

Recently, I received a phone call from a former Gearing "shipmate."

Some of you may not realize that all members of the 3rd Platoon had been carried on the ships roster as crew, during our six week interlude in early 1961.

Thus, all 3rd Platoon members are eligible for membership in the USS Gearing Association. To join, contact:

Bob Witkowski
2812 Barkley Avenue
Bronx, New York 10465
(718) 824-3733

Membership also provides a semi-annual newsletter.

The crews' last reunion was attended by retired naval Captain and former "Ensign Benson."

In 2008, a reunion of the Gearing's members and significant others is to occur at the Holiday Inn in Albany, New York from Wednesday, 28May until Sunday 1June. The hotel cost is to be \$89.00 a night.

For tickets to the reunion contact:

Gerald L. Casey
4 Maple Street
Rensselaer, New York 12144
(518) 479-7974

"Reach out" and call someone.



Maxwell Smart — Don Adams

Mailed as a black on white copy, a fully colorized version can be found at our website, where on page one you'll find a link to a downloadable version.

I hope you've enjoyed this latest effort. Send in your stories by e-or-snail mail to make for an even better next issue.

Semper Fi; *Ed Shea*

Enlightening Odds and Ends for your reading pleasure:

Kenneth J. Skipper, Major (USMC-Retired), ever remembered by an apparent redundancy in title as Captain Skipper, was found by Ed Hart.

The Major, retired since June of 1972, lives in Mobile, Alabama. His biography and contact information can be found on the website.

George Bitsoli is still actively engaged with all things political and more recently helped spread the word about the *Gathering of Eagles* and the ANTI-anti-war rally of March 17th.

Is there nothing sacrosanct? An anti-war rally on St. Patty's Day!

Ken Brinlee says "hello to ya'll." He and his wife are well and I owe the latter an apology. I incorrectly identified her in the last issue. Her name is Sherry. Oops!

Bill Frentz remains well given his ongoing battle with cancer. Keep those prayers coming.

Ed Hart, aside from finding our esteemed former Company Commander, appears to be buying all the quality sailboats on the east coast. After each purchase, he'd find a still greater gem. By early June, he was to close on the sale of one, was seeking a buyer for the second and was awaiting the early July closing on the last.

Wheew! And you thought his sailing around the globe was tough.

Ed Shea will soon be flying south to package his home in Florida against the much heralded and upcoming hurricane season.

It is with regret that we announce the deaths of former Marine Lieutenants:

John C. Thompson, of the 3rd Pla-

toon, who died of cancer about eighteen years ago, in Gulfport, Mississippi.

K. R. Maloney, of the 1st Platoon, who died during the mid-1960's, after leaving the Corps

May their souls rest in peace.

Trivia Answers:

- 1929.
- 1955.
- All three.
- A mandate of personal behavior expected of each member. The Code is not part of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.
- Get Smart's* Don Adams.
- "...the means to resist."
- Senator John F. Kerry.
- The Korean War.