How to Bury a Hero by HM3 James Pell, USN

Description

Iâ€™ve not been posting too much the last few days, for I was â€œteaching historyâ€• to those who want to equate the â€œWHERE are the WMDs?!?!?!?â€• discussion to the moral equivalent of â€œhateâ€• crimes against the transgendered. It really wore me out. I was a little discouraged, realizing the emotional toll that occurred trying to have an actual discussion with a bunch of animated Democratic talking points.

In a few moments of surfing this afternoon, I found the following comments just a few minutes ago. I was chasing links to read about a young Marine, LCpl Antoine Smith. He was killed by hostile fire at Fallujah. I chased the links to Pull on Supermanâ€™s Cape and under this post, titled The Heros of India Company, I found the words of a junior enlisted Navy Corpsman who had been at the side of LCpl Smith when he was
killed. He recalled that moment like this:

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> â€œForgive my spelling. I was next to Lcpl Smith as he took his last breath. As a US Navy Corpsman I am there to help trasition heroes into the next life. I was flipping through the TV Sunday night and came across â€œHeroes of India Companyâ€•. I wasnâ€™t aware that this documentary existed. I paused and watched as I relived the fight. I was with 3/5 untill I was shot Nov 15, 2004. I am the Sniper platoon Cormpsman. After Smith went down and the bombs were dropped we pushed on. We engaged in a fierce fight with five insurgents across the street. It was roof top to roof top. Then out of no were the house next to us opened up and pinned us down. My Sniper partner and myself stormed the third story roof killing two insurgents. Once ontop of the third story the Marines started moving across to the second deck. First over was Shane. No sooner had he crossed over the wall I heard him scream for help.
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> I looked over the edge and saw him holding his head, still screaming. I did what any true Marine loving Corpsman would do, I went after him to pull him out of the line of fire and treat his wound. I never made it to Shane though. I hung my feet over the third deck to jump to the second were Shane was no lying motionless. As I started to slide off It felt like a sledge hammer smashed into my right thigh, and it went limp. No sooner the same feeling in my right calf. It hit me, Iâ€™m being shot! I looked for a way to get out of the insurgents path and chose to jump off the side of the building. Before I could make the move My left leg went limp as more AK-47 rounds went through the upper thigh, calf and foot. As I was falling the insurgents rounds found target again, two round to the lower right abdomin and two round to the upper groin. I fell two stories and dislocated my right shoulder. Because of the medical training I gave my Snipers every day, Lcpl James Powers saved my life. He prompty stopped the massive bleeding from my legs. From the beginning to the end I was with both Smith and Shane. Everything medicaly possiable was done to preserve life. I am now training others that are heading to combat, awaiting my Marine Corps family to return

from Fallujah this month.

EMCEE: James, I cannot express in words just how much brave Marines like you mean to me. Everything I can think of just fails to say to you what I feel. Let me just say: Thank you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. On behalf of the American people I thank you. On behalf of the brave men and women that you serve I thank you. Your courage and valor inspire me. I thank God for patriots like you sir. God Bless You!

Posted by: HM3 Pell, James at March 1, 2005 09:36 AMâ€•

That was powerful to read the after action report of a comrade in arms.

A few comments down, here was something that speaks with even great power about the bond that combat forges between warriors by the same young man. This was not said by a Marine General, or a Pentagon Press Briefer, but by one who has been â€œthere:â€•

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â€œHow to bury a hero.
Andrew Keeler was one of the best SS [Scout Sniper] I ever knew. He was dedicated to his country and his brother in arms. He died outside of of the capital in early April. Killed while participating in convoy operations. We, his military brothers, flew to the funeral to be the his honor guard. Once at the cemetary the uligy was read and flowers placed on the casket. The five of us wated until all the public had left the site and we, the people that knew more about Andrew than his own family, opened his casket and pinned on the medals he earned in combat. We closed the casket and together lowered it into the ground. Before we landed for the funeral we all agreed that no minumum wage cemtary worker was going to touch this heros coffin, or the dirt that was to cover it. So the five of us picked up our shovels and burried Andrew shovel by shovel. We tamped the dirt and relaid the sod, then stood over the sight silently for a few minutes to honor Andrews life. Then we got smashed on the plane ride home. This is how I wanna go when the time comesâ€¦

Posted by: HM3 Pell James at April 12, 2005 01:59 PMâ€™

As HM3 James Pell is now forever a part of the brotherhood of the USMC, despite his beginnings at a Navy Boot Camp, Iâ€™m sure his brethern will honor his wishes.

I hope you find it in you to pass these words along to those who havenâ€™t yet comprehended what the real meaning of friendship is. Please make sure the credit to Hospital Corpsman Third Class James Pell, USN of the Fleet Marine Force, is always included with this quote.

To reconnect with my opening remarks, while the subject matter above is sad, knowing these young men have passed from our presense, I am overjoyed to see that there are those in the younger generation who truly â€œget it.â€• More amazing still that HM3 Pell shows wisdom beyond his years. Iâ€™m hopeful for the future of the US and the western world as a result.

Email HM3 James Pell here

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1. History

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