



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

May 3, 2004

293

Mrs. Patrick D. Tillman

(b)(6)

Dear Mrs. Tillman,

On behalf of all of us at the Department of Defense, I extend our deepest sympathy on the loss of your husband.

Corporal Pat Tillman made a unique decision to serve his country in the Global War on Terror. His valor brought a vivid reminder to all Americans of the valiant service of all our forces fighting in the Global War on Terror. Your husband's commitment to our nation and to the cause of freedom will not be forgotten.

Please know that you and your family are in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

With deepest sympathy,

Sincerely,

3MAY04

OSD 06510-04

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

JUN 28 2002

Mr. Pat Tillman

(b)(6)

335 515

Dear Mr. Tillman:

I heard that you were leaving the National Football League to become an Army Ranger.

It is a proud and patriotic thing you are doing.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

28 Jun 02

U10603 /02

(2)



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

JUN 26 2002

Mr. (b)(6)  
(b)(6)

335 SD

Dear (b)(6)

Thanks so much for sending along the article from the *Tribune*. I had not seen it.

You are quite right—this fellow, Pat Tillman, sounds, like a world-class American. We're lucky to have him.

I hope things are going well for you.

With my best wishes,

Sincerely,

26 JUN 02

U10416 /02

3



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

March 29, 2006

704

The Honorable Michael Honda  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Honda:

Thank you for the letter you signed with your colleagues regarding the investigation into the circumstances surrounding Corporal Patrick Tillman's death.

I share your concern and dismay over how this tragic situation has been handled and look forward to the findings of the comprehensive investigation currently underway. I appreciate your taking the time to write and have shared your letter with Dr. Francis J. Harvey, Secretary of the Army.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

29 Mar-06

23 Mar-06

OSD 04900-06





THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

March 29, 2006

The Honorable Ike Skelton  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ike:

Thank you for the letter you signed with your colleagues regarding the investigation into the circumstances surrounding Corporal Patrick Tillman's death.

I share your concern and dismay over how this tragic situation has been handled and look forward to the findings of the comprehensive investigation currently underway. I appreciate your taking the time to write and have shared your letter with Dr. Francis J. Harvey, Secretary of the Army.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



OSD 04900-06

(B)

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

March 29, 2006

The Honorable Christopher Shays  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Shays:

Thank you for the letter you signed with your colleagues regarding the investigation into the circumstances surrounding Corporal Patrick Tillman's death.

I share your concern and dismay over how this tragic situation has been handled and look forward to the findings of the comprehensive investigation currently underway. I appreciate your taking the time to write and have shared your letter with Dr. Francis J. Harvey, Secretary of the Army.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



OSD 04900-06

(C)

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

March 29, 2006

The Honorable Dennis Kucinich  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kucinich:

Thank you for the letter you signed with your colleagues regarding the investigation into the circumstances surrounding Corporal Patrick Tillman's death.

I share your concern and dismay over how this tragic situation has been handled and look forward to the findings of the comprehensive investigation currently underway. I appreciate your taking the time to write and have shared your letter with Dr. Francis J. Harvey, Secretary of the Army.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



OSD 04900-06

(D)

June 25, 2002 3:39 PM

TO: Tom White

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld *Dr.*

SUBJECT: Pat Tillman

Here is an article on a fellow who is apparently joining the Rangers. He sound like he is world-class. We might want to keep our eye on him.

Thanks.

Attach. Isaacson, Melissa. "Marching to His Own Deals," *Chicago Tribune*, 06/02/02

DHR:dh  
062502-71

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Please respond by \_\_\_\_\_

25 June 2

U16333 02

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340

~~FOUO~~

March 13, 2006

TO: Fran Harvey  
CC: Gordon England  
FROM: Donald Rumsfeld *D.R.*  
SUBJECT: Letter of Apology to the Tillman Family

Attached is an article from the *Arizona Republic* on Tillman. I would think you or Pete would want to call and/or write a letter of apology to the family, and have it published. This situation has been handled very poorly. It is not acceptable, and you may want to say that. If you agree, you will need to set about fixing the system or process that produced this most unfortunate situation.

Please report back to me on what action you decide to take.

Thanks.

Attach: 3/9/06 Arizona Republic article by E.J. Montini "If Tillman Were Your Son, Would You "Let This Thing Go?"

DHR.ss  
031306-14

.....  
*Please Respond By 03/30/06*

~~FOUO~~

OSD 05173-06

*B2*

In Tillman's case, Mary said that the family has known for some time about the inspector general's reports about those incidents describe how the families of both soldiers had difficulty in getting the truth from the military.

And there is the story of Spec. Jesse Bury of Ohio, whose parents were told that he died in a car accident when in fact he was killed by friendly fire, perhaps by troops from one of our allies. News reports about those incidents describe how the families of both soldiers had difficulty in getting the truth from the military.

For example, there is the story of Lt. Kenneth Ballard of the San Francisco area. More than a year after his mother was told that her son was killed during a vicious firefight with insurgents in Iraq, she learned that he died after the machine gun on his own tank misfired.

Young people with a sense of honor and patriotism have lost their lives in service to their country only to have representatives of that country denigrate its ideals by misrepresenting what happened to them.

We don't want to believe that such things happen, but they do.

"I really object to people who say things like that," she told me. "If it were their child, they would not let it go. At least I hope not. And the fact that the government and the military have used Pat ever since he died is really a tragedy. Every family deserves the right to get the truth. Pat, more than any other soldier has been exploited. No other soldier has been used the way Pat has been used. He was a very honorable person. He was very humble. He had an opportunity to leave the military for millions to play football. But he stayed. Pat has a right and we have the right to know the truth. If they are lying about Pat, then they are lying about other soldiers."

Even after all of that, people say that we in the media should let it go. So I asked Mary Tillman what she thought.

It had been announced over the weekend that the Defense Department's inspector general had ordered the Army to open a criminal inquiry into the death of Cpl. Tillman.

Tillman was killed by friendly fire in Afghanistan in 2004. There have been several military investigations into his death. None has satisfied his family. To them, too many unanswered questions remain, not just about Tillman's death but the possible cover-up that followed. We know now that the Army at first kept the fact that Tillman was killed by friendly fire from his own brother, who was a part of the same unit. Then the Army kept the news from his family. Then it kept the news from all of us, allowing Tillman's nationally televised funeral to go forward based on a lie.

Each time there is a new development in the Tillman case I hear from people like the man who telephoned. He said, "I see that you idiots in the news are going to make a big deal over Tillman's death - again. Why don't you just let this thing go? Let the poor guy rest in peace."

Earlier this week a guy left a question on my voice mail that I am not qualified to answer, so I contacted one of the few people who is: Mary Tillman, Pat's mother.

By B.J. Mounini

## If Tillman Were Your Son, Would You Let This Thing Go?

Arizona Republic (Phoenix)  
March 9, 2006

investigation. They were surprised when news leaked about the criminal probe.

She said that the family was trying not to speak publicly about the case until it was concluded, but she felt compelled at least to comment on the latest news.

"For anybody who knows Pat this has been heartwrenching," she said. "He was an extremely honest person. I don't think the kid ever lied. He would have wanted all of the truth to come out. The bad and the good. He deserves that much."

Until that happens, none of us should be willing to "just let this thing go."

~~FOUO~~

MAR 15 2006

TO: Fran Harvey  
FROM: Donald Rumsfeld *DR*  
SUBJECT: Response to Death of Corporal Tillman

Here is an article on the death of Corporal Tillman . How in the world can that be explained?

Attach. Bookman, Jay. "Tillman Death: Army Still Trips Over Cover-Up,"  
*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 13, 2006, p. 11.

DHR:dh  
031406-02

.....  
*Please Respond By March 23, 2006*

~~FOUO~~

OSD 05174-06

B3

Atlanta Journal-Constitution  
March 13, 2006  
Pg. 11

## **Tillman Death: Army Still Trips Over Cover-Up**

By Jay Bookman

The honor code is carved into stone at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point: "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do."

The words express the integrity expected of those who lead our men and women into battle, and they have a purpose: Officers who cannot be trusted have no place in positions of responsibility, not when the consequences of such a character flaw can be death, not when the American people put such confidence in those in uniform.

But somehow, it is hard to square that admirable code of honor with the Army's behavior in the Pat Tillman case. It is not merely individual officers -- from lowly captains to three-star generals -- who apparently failed to tell the truth about what happened to the former NFL star in the hills of Afghanistan. The deception is so broad that it implicates the Army as an institution.

Tillman's story is heartbreaking. After the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, he rejected a \$3.6 million contract from the NFL's Arizona Cardinals to enlist, along with his brother, as an Army Ranger. And while his decision drew widespread media attention, Tillman refused all interview requests. To him, it wasn't about the spotlight, it was about doing his duty.

But on April 22, 2004, Tillman was killed while on patrol with his unit near the Pakistan border. Immediately, the Army put out the word that he had died heroically, protecting his fellow soldiers in a firefight.

A week later, Lt. Gen. John Abizaid, the head of U.S. Central Command, told the press that a day earlier he had discussed "that firefight where Pat Tillman lost his life" with Tillman's platoon leader.

On April 30, the Army posthumously awarded Tillman the Silver Star for bravery, stating that Tillman died in a heroic charge up an enemy-held hill. "Corporal Tillman put himself in the line of devastating enemy fire. . . . While mortally wounded, his audacious leadership and courageous example under fire inspired his men to fight with great risk to their own personal safety, resulting in the enemy's withdrawal and his platoon's safe passage from the ambush kill zone."

The truth, though, was that Tillman had been killed by three bullets to the forehead fired by American soldiers in a friendly fire accident, and Army officials knew it immediately. Officers on the scene knew it, which may be why they ordered that Tillman's body armor and uniform be burned. Abizaid knew it when he made those comments to the press a week after Tillman's death. The officers who drafted the false Silver Star citation knew it, too.

The truth, or at least some version of it, finally began to emerge on May 28, 2004. It's unlikely the concession came voluntarily, given the elaborate lies the Army had spread earlier. Army officials probably realized that the jig was up, that too many people knew the facts. Tillman's brother, for example, had been nearby when Tillman died, although he, too, had been lied to about what happened.

Eventually, seven soldiers in Tillman's unit were mildly punished for their role in his death. No one has been punished for lying to the American people. But last week, the Army inspector general recommended the launching of a fourth investigation into the tragedy. The goal is to explore possible charges of gross negligence leading to Tillman's death, and to determine how the public was so misled.

Mistakes made in the heat of battle, out in the field, are a serious thing. But they are also part of war. Calculated lies by military bureaucrats, aimed at the American public, are something else entirely.

And unfortunately, the Tillman case is just one of several cases raising questions about the credibility of senior military officials.

For example, Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, the former commander at the Guantanamo Bay prison camp, has repeatedly denied that he exported Guantanamo-style torture to Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. But now that two enlisted men at that facility are being tried for prisoner abuse, Miller refuses to repeat that claim under oath, citing his right not to incriminate himself.

In a related case, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez denied to Congress that he had authorized abusive interrogation techniques at Abu Ghraib. But later, a document surfaced signed by Sanchez directly contradicting that testimony.

In both cases, deception by general officers may be leaving their subordinates unfairly exposed to prosecution. That's a far more serious breach of military honor than the Tillman affair, a breach that strikes at the foundation of military discipline.

*Jay Bookman is the deputy editorial page editor. His column appears Mondays and Thursdays.*