

GENERALSHIP

There really is not much left to say at this time in the Guardians Meeting. But, if I were going to say something, I would at least want to mention the category "generalship". I've watched what has gone on this weekend, and I'm trying to get a grasp of what we talk about when we talk about generalship. I know we are not talking about the general that was in the movie "Patton". I don't think we are talking about the general that was in front of 10,000 troops and said, "I don't want to get any messages that we are holding our position. We are going to let somebody else hold their position." The only thing we are going to hold on to is the mission. Now, after saying that, I think generalship has something to do with someone sitting at the side of the room planning a Town Meeting who knows what it means to "move it". Or somebody working in Social Demonstration, not necessarily the prior, just someone who showed up for a week or four weeks and knows how to "move it, move it, move it."

Five weeks ago I had the opportunity to meet with General George S. Patton, who is the son of the other George S. Patton. He is now commander of the Second Armored Division at Ft. Hood, Texas. I met him because I am with the Santa Fe Railroad and we were moving some of their material. I had a meeting with him and I learned one thing about getting to generals. We had a meeting set up for four o'clock in the afternoon, and I found you have to go through all these guys to get there. First, you have a top sargeant who steps out in front of you as you walk in and says, "May I help you, sir?" What he is really asking is, "What the hell are you doing here?" So, very nicely, I said that I had an appointment with General Patton. Then you run into the lieutenant who says, "Could I help you, sir?" I said, "I have a meeting with the General." By the time I ran into the Captain and he asked if he could help me, sir, I said, "I have to talk to George." But that's not my point. The point was, I arrived a little bit early, and the last aide, of course, was a colonel. We were sitting there talking and I told him I had a meeting in regard to the maneuvers we were going to have. Staff officers were coming in and out of the room continuously. I thought, what goes on with generalship that guys run in and out of rooms like that. So I said, "The general must be very busy." And he said, "Yes, he is very busy." Trying to be tactful, and thinking that there is no war going on and no engagement I ask him, "With Viet Nam over, and nothing in the immediate future right now, what would keep a general so busy?" He laughed and said, "Well, what has kept them busy throughout all of history?" I said, "Oh", in such a way that he saw my lack of understanding about what he meant. He said, "A general, if he is a good general, does what every general has done through out history. After the last engagement, they sit down and begin to work out how they are going to win the next war." I said, "Well, how would you be planning now?" The last troop maneuvers I knew about went into the swamps of Louisiana, preparing for Viet Nam. This maneuver that the Santa Fe is handling for them is going to the desert. A-hah, the Middle East, so I asked, "Would we be planning for the Middle East?" He said, "Maneuvers have nothing to do with where the battle is, the battle can be any place." He went on to explain, "There are three ingredients that make up a good general: the first is, perpetual planning and organizing. Plan,

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plan, plan, organize, organize, organize. That is all they do. Second, they are devoted to doing things, they are doers. They are continually acting, continually in training. Training themselves and training others continuously. Third, and most important, they are dedicated to the mission, if they are a good general. That's all it takes."

After he said that I thought, "Why he is talking about Guardians or priors." Then I reflected, no they don't command troops, as such. We aren't engaged in violence like war. So, I came back and consulted my Webster. My dictionary describes generalship: "general officer of rank, general military skill, management or leadership of any sort. Skillfulness of directing or managing--one who moves it." If your dictionary doesn't say that, it should.

Very interesting, these reports about the need for a boat in the Marshall Islands, for Majuro. Coming back from the desert, they took a group of us to dinner at Marina del Rey just south of Santa Monica. We ate in the restaurant out on a balcony overlooking the Marina. All you can see are boats. We got to talking about them and I asked one of the men just how many boats he figured were in this marina. He said it was the largest marina in the world. I don't know if that is true, but that is what he told me, "This is the largest marina in the world, there are 20,000 boats registered here." I thought....just one....it could be a little one. We could make a lagoon boat out of it...just one....could change the whole world. We can make a ferry system. Somewhere out there there is a boat....someone in this room knows someone out there who knows somebody who knows somebody. There is a boat. Now, we can get to the point where 100 of us can throw in \$500.00 a piece and buy a LST and get a bunch of us old World War II veterans and sail it over there. I've been talking to some of you, I know three mechanics and two who can navigate. All we need is a captain, any of you can join us. You drive from the Loop here in Chicago out to Centrum and just look at the boats along the lakeside. Do you know how many boats are registered in Chicago? Do you? I don't either, but there are a lot. Just one boat could change history. We talk about "move it".

I don't know how many of you have met the guardians from Australia who are here this weekend, Merv and Betty Ramage. Now, I'm accused of exaggerating a lot, and I do occasionally, but in my report on Oombulgurri I mentioned a contractor who after the consult decided to go back up there to make sure that those houses got off the ground. Merv is here. That was a true story. I told you about the nurse that had been up there two years and about the doctor that got mad because we didn't have hot water, and her great remark that you have to have water first. That's Betty, that was a true story. You need to talk to them about their wedding in February, the first wedding of a white couple in Oombulgurri in 32 years. And it lasted two days. It was a great happening. Do you know what they sang when they left? Onward Christian Soldiers.

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I don't know how many of you remember the poetry that used to end the study of Roman history when you were a little lad. I suspect it was written by a Roman general. The poetry went like this: "For over a thousand years the Roman legions returning from the conquest of the day enjoyed the honor of the triumph with a tumultuous parade. In the procession came trumpeters, musicians, and strange animals from the conquered territories. The conqueror rode in a golden chariot, the dazed prisoners walking in chains before him. Sometimes his children, robed in white, stood with him, or rode the trace horses. Behind the conqueror stood a slave holding a golden crown, and whispering in his ear a warning that all glory is fleeting." That is true. I don't know what the historians and poets are going to write about guardians. But I suspect that it will be in this vein. "Throughout the years of Social Demonstration and Town Meeting the guardians returning home from the conquests of the day enjoyed the honor of the triumph, a life of profound integrity, a life of knowing what it meant to be a human being."

We are going to win. I personally guarantee that. Do you know how I know that? You look at that guardian assignment board. I just quickly looked at that before we sat down for lunch. Do you know there are enough people signed up to go on the Lapu Lapu Consult without ever calling another person. That many signed up for Lapu Lapu. Funding? There are sixty-five names up there. People who have signed up to get out and raise the money necessary to pull off these Social Demonstrations and Town Meetings. Community Forum? They are up there. That's why I'm so cocky that we are going to win. I want you all to take care of yourselves.

Rodney Wilson