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## **HADITHA: The Sins of Generals: Part Five**

### **Political Equivocation at**

### **LtCol Chessani's Board of Inquiry**

Bob Weimann | December 6, 2009 | [Pdf version](#)

“Moreover, defense attempts to disqualify Brig. Gen. Lewis Craparotta, the President and senior member of the Board, who during pre-hearing questioning expressed a personal view that investigating every civilian death is the right approach because “that’s the way to protect Marines,” also failed. Defense attorney LtCol Shelburne had challenged the fact that he was sitting on the Board of Inquiry with a pre-existing opinion of what to do in a similar situation as LtCol Chessani.”

-- *Press release, Thomas More Law Center (read it at the [link](#))*

**Folks, if the defense wanted to disqualify** General Craparotta at LtCol. Chessani’s Board of Inquiry, they didn’t ask the right questions.

The first follow up question to General Craparotta’s reply of “that’s the way to protect Marines”, should have been a simple “why?”

“Why, general, is it your ‘personal view’ that investigating every civilian death is the way to protect your Marines? Is it because you know that your command authority will be questioned and investigated, if you don’t do an investigation? When you were the Regimental Combat Team 1, Commanding Officer in al Anbar Province Iraq, from Jan 2008 to Jan 2009, did you have standing orders or SOPs that all civilian deaths will be investigated? (*See note at the [link](#)*)”

Now folks, this is where the general would start getting himself into trouble. When he answers yes, the defense should then asked: “Then when you were commanding a regiment in Iraq (2008 – 2009) it was not your ‘personal view’ but rather standing orders that required the investigate all civilian deaths?” The general answers, “Yes.”

The follow-up questions would be, “General, did those same orders and SOPs exist in November 2005 when Lt Col Chessani, Commanded 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 1st Marines in Haditha, Iraq?”

The general answer is “No.” Or, if he wanted to continue his political equivocations, “I was not LtCol. Chessani’s Commanding Officer in 2005, so I have no idea.”

Folks, what the general is really saying is that investigating every civilian death is not the way to protect your Marines, it is the best way to protect my butt.

Now, if the defense really wanted to nail the general with another embarrassing set of follow on questions, here they are.

“General, isn’t true that DOD Directive 5100.77, titled DOD Law of War Program, states that all reportable incidents (of Law of War violations) be promptly reported, thoroughly investigated, and, where appropriate, remedied by corrective action whether committed by or against US or enemy persons?”

Of course, because this is a DOD Directive, the general has to answer yes or else he will look like a dummy for not knowing basic DOD Orders and Directives.

“General, isn’t true when you were the Commanding Officer, Regimental Combat Team 1, in al Anbar Province Iraq from Jan 2008 to Jan 2009, you reported, on 28 December 2008 the KIA, combat causality of Lance Cpl. Thomas J. Reilly, Jr., a rifleman who served with the C Company 1/3?”

The general's answer: "Yes" ([See note at link](#))

"Isn't true that the causality was cause by an RPG fired during an enemy ambush?"

General's answer: "Yes"

"Did you award Lance Cpl Reilly the combat awards of the Purple Heart, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and Combat Action Ribbon for his actions in that ambush?"

General's answer: "Yes."

Now the trap is set, time for the defense to spring it.

"General, it was an enemy combatant that fired that RPG, correct?"

General's answer: "Yes"

"General, is it safe to assume that that the enemy combatant was dressed as an Iraqi civilian?"

General's answer: "Yes"

"General, is it also a good assumption that the reason enemy combatants dress as civilians is to hide within the population thereby using peaceful Iraqis as shields?"

At this point our good general will start to get the feeling he is stepping into an L-shaped ambush, but the general will probably answer, hesitantly, "Yes"

"General, is using civilians as a shield a war crime?"

Now the hair on the back of the general's neck starts to rise, as he answers: "Yes".

Coup de grace! "General, upon LCPL Reilly's death, did you promptly report, thoroughly investigate, and, where appropriate, remedy by corrective action the war crime committed against LCPL Reilly and your command?"

General's answer: "No".

"General, was your failure to follow the established DOD Law of War Program Directive the 'best way to protect' LCPL Reilly?"

At that point I really would not care if he answered either yes, no or gave a politically correct equivocation.

Semper Fi,

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Former Commanding Officer, Kilo Company 3/1



**Bob Weimann, LtCol USMC Ret**

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Read more on the Haditha case by Bob Weimann:

[The Sins of Generals, Part One: An open letter to General Michael Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps \(2003-2006\)](#), October 11, 2008

[The Sins of Generals Part Two: Undue Influence from the Start](#), October 30, 2008.

[The Sins of Generals, Part Three: An open letter to General Peter W. Chiarelli, Commander of the Multi-National Corps in Iraq \(November 2005-February 2006\)](#), February 8, 2009.

[The Sins of Generals Part Four: The Loss of Strategic Legitimacy](#), December 1, 2009.

[The Case for a Squad Leader: SSgt Wuterich in Haditha](#) July 25, 2008.

[Huzzah! Huzzah! HUZZAHHH!](#), June 6, 2008.

[Open Letter to the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps concerning the 3/1 Haditha Marines](#), February 8, 2008.

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