

COPY OF E-MAIL TO MATT SCHUDEL REGARDING HIS OBITUARY ON
GENERAL CARL MUNDY, AND PUBLISHED IN *THE WASHINGTON*
POST ON APRIL 5, 2014

+++++

April 10, 2014

Dear Matt Schudel:

The obituary you wrote on General Carl Mundy is a great disappointment to those of us who knew Carl Mundy. Actually, it is inaccurate in facts and, frankly, mean-spirited. I know well that Carl Mundy, were he here, would just ignore your writing and carry on as he always did when misinformed people in the media would attempt to disparage him. I believe, however, that you need to be aware of some of the errors you have made in his obituary.

As the senior lawyer (staff judge advocate to the Commandant) in the Marine Corps, I worked directly for Carl Mundy for two years. A lawyer who works closely with a client gets to know the client's temperament, foibles, and virtues. I worked legal and personnel issues with Carl Mundy on a daily basis and am well aware of this man's character. From that unique experience, I knew Carl Mundy to be a man of the highest intelligence, integrity, dedication to all Marines and to his country, and a strong family man. He simply did not have a malicious bone in his body and was virtuous to a fault. Carl Mundy was a remarkable gentleman, a true warrior, and a very effective leader.

Some of your errors:

1. Carl Mundy did not sign an order prohibiting married recruits from joining the Marine Corps. This idea, for discussion only, originated with junior officers in the Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department. Carl Mundy did not know of its inadvertent release until a journalist wrote about it. His response was that this was not going to happen, and in the tradition of President Harry Truman ("the buck stops here"), Carl Mundy took full responsibility so that those originating this discussion item were not "indicted" further by a "politically correct" media or others. Defense Secretary Les Aspin may have commented on this idea, but it was Carl Mundy who had already stopped it earlier.

2. As to the 1993 “60 minutes” interview, the request from “60 minutes” was to interview officers junior to the Commandant. The staff at Marine Corps Headquarters “discovered” beforehand that “60 minutes” had an “agenda” for this interview, i.e., it was apparently looking to find evidence of bias against minorities. Here again, Carl Mundy said he would be interviewed so that junior officers would not have to face “60 minutes” and any criticism that could follow. Once the “60 minutes” interview was aired on CBS, we realized that most of the interview recording was left on the cutting room floor. Editors at “60 minutes” cut and pasted selective comments to make it appear that the Marine Corps was indeed biased in its personnel practices. In fact, under Gen Mundy’s leadership, the Marine Corps exercised a focused “affirmative action” effort to recruit and promote minorities. Gen Mundy explained to “60 minutes” that recruiting minority officers, in particular, was a difficult business. Most qualified minority men and women were also aggressively recruited by businesses, the government, and other military services. That left very few minority candidates as potential officers for the Marine Corps. After all, when a minority college-graduate could get a job on Wall Street, as an example, and make over a hundred thousand dollars a year, why join the Marines and go through its rigorous officer training programs – all at a diminutive salary? Sizable sums of Marine Corps money and huge human efforts were invested in recruiting minorities before, during, and after Carl Mundy’s term as Commandant. Carl Mundy, being the honest man he was, explained the difficulties some minority officers had in keeping up with their peers. This was fact. To overcome this situation, and, under Carl Mundy’s leadership, affirmative action instructions were provided to every officer promotion board. Because the Marine Corps is a relatively small military service, affirmative action promotions created consternation with non-minority officers who were not promoted instead. This was the conundrum facing Carl Mundy. And, of course, minorities in the Marine Corps’ enlisted ranks were at a percentage much greater than in the non-military society. Fortunately, minority officers were also recruited from the enlisted ranks. Interestingly, the Marine Corps leads the other services in commissioning officers from its enlisted ranks.

Similar examples of your journalistic “missteps” in the obituary exist regarding the Marine Corps relationship with former-Representative Patricia Schroeder, “open homosexual behavior,” and women in combat. Also, missing from your obituary write-up were noteworthy accomplishments during Carl Mundy’s term that

improved readiness for combat (the primary purpose of the military services). You do not report on these successes while you misstate facts on selective personnel and social issues. I can only wonder how much research you did on Carl Mundy before writing his obituary. Perhaps you relied on earlier critical *Washington Post* articles without checking their veracity. Perhaps you were “instructed” to write an obituary as you did. Perhaps, you have some other bias. Rest assured that those Marines and others who served with and knew Carl Mundy can quickly recognize the “yellow journalism” in his *Washington Post* obituary. It is a sad day when a great leader in this country can even be “kicked” with false information after he has died. Have you no decency?

Sincerely,
Gerald Miller
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)