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***"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."***

*A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker*

December 23, 2001



# Commentary

Never Judge a Book...

**M***y Naval Academy Class of 1957 has a daily e-mail review so that we can keep in touch, and yes, debate the issues of the day and the demise of Navy football. We also share information and writings of our fellow Service Academies with whom we shared both competition and a very high regard.*

*Yesterday there was an article written by an Air Force Colonel about a "Lesson Learned" while he attended the U.S. Force Academy in Colorado. The article was too poignant for me to disregard, and I pass along this shortened version...*

*While Col. James Moschgat was at the Air Force Academy, graduating in the Class of 1977, the janitor who cleaned the halls and common toilets for several years was a quiet and unassuming man named "Bill" Crawford. He was seldom spoken to by the Cadets, who were consumed with the daily routines of Service Academy life, a hectic rush from class to class, inspection to inspection, rigorous physical activity and trying to remain sufficiently focused to stay in a climate where there were so many trying to fail you out.*

*The Cadets would say an occasional "Hello" as they passed the janitor, but they never engaged him in conversation. He was an old man in a young man's game, and, of course, he was just a janitor among the nation's elite young men.*

*Then one day in 1976, while Cadet Moschgat was doing the usual history research of World War II he*



*read about the fight for Hill 424 in Italy, and the heroics of a Private named William Crawford: "in the face of intense and overwhelming hostile fire ... with no regard for personal safety on his own initiative, Private Crawford single-handedly attacked fortified enemy positions." It continued, "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty, the President of the United States ..."*

*...had awarded Private Crawford the Congressional Medal of Honor!*

*His Citation is online at <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/mohia1.htm> and reads, in part, "Pvt. Crawford, without orders and on his own initiative, moved over the hill under enemy fire to a point within a few yards of the gun emplacement and single-handedly destroyed the machinegun and killed 3 of the crew with a hand grenade, thus enabling his platoon to continue its advance. When the platoon, after reaching the crest, was once more delayed by enemy fire, Pvt. Crawford again, in the face of intense fire, advanced directly to the front midway between 2 hostile machinegun nests located on a higher terrace and emplaced in a small ravine. Moving first to the left, with a hand grenade he destroyed 1 gun emplacement and killed the crew; he then worked his way, under continuous fire, to the other and with 1 grenade and the use of his rifle, killed 1 enemy and forced the remainder to flee. Seizing the enemy machinegun, he fired on the withdrawing Germans..."*

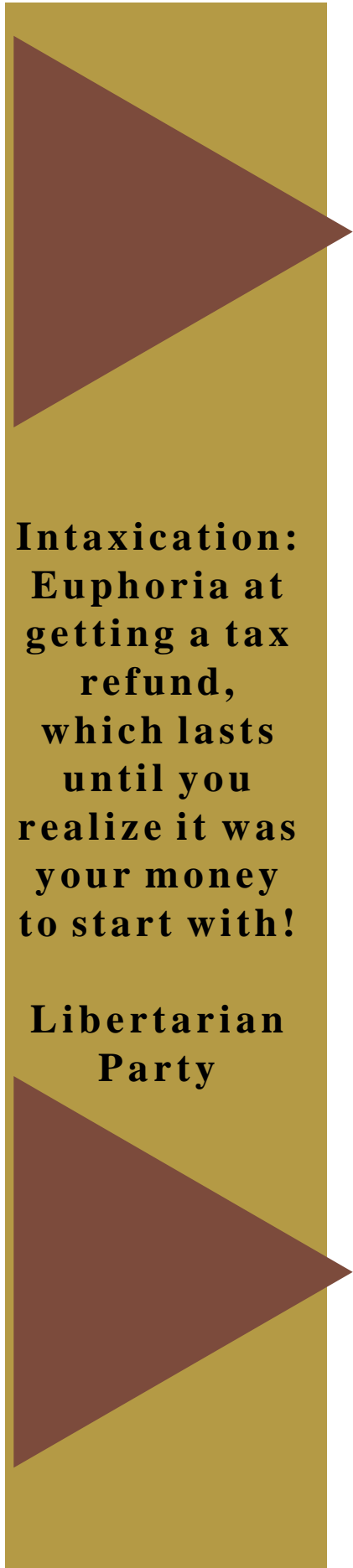
*Private Crawford subsequently was captured and held as a POW by the Germans...*

*(Details may be read at <http://www.homeofheros.com/profiles>)*

*The word spread like wildfire among the Cadets. They no longer said "Hello." It was "Good Morning, Mr. Crawford."*

*Few of us know the backgrounds of most of the people we meet. Perhaps we too have misjudged many whom we think we know. Sometimes they have been much better than we think -- and sometimes they have been much worse.*

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