

# Compassion and the Decline of America

Dennis Prager

This past weekend, a friend of mine attended his 13-year-old son's baseball game. What he saw encapsulates a major reason many of us fear for the future of America and the West.

His son's team was winning 24-7 as the game entered the last inning. When he looked up at the scoreboard, he noticed that the score read 0-0. Naturally, he inquired as to what happened - was the scoreboard perhaps broken? - and was told that the winning team's coach asked the scoreboard keeper to change the score. He and some of the parents were concerned that the boys on the losing team felt humiliated. In order to ensure that the boys losing by a lopsided score would not feel too bad, the score was changed.

As is happening throughout America, compassion trumped all other values.

Truth was the first value compassion trashed. In the name of compassion, the adults in charge decided to lie. The score was not 0-0; it was 24-7.

Wisdom was the second value compassion obliterated. It is unwise to the point of imbecilic to believe that the losing boys were in any way helped by changing the score. On the contrary, they learned lessons that will hamper their ability to mature.

They learned that someone will bail them out when they feel bad.

They learned that they do not have to deal with disappointment in life. Instead, someone in authority will take care of them. (This is how reliance on the state for personal problems — the worldview of the Left - is formed early in life.)

They learned that their feelings, not objective standards, are what society deems most important.

They learned that they are not responsible for their behavior. No matter how poorly they perform, there will be no consequences, sort of like tenure for university professors.

They also learned to think in the feminine - with an emphasis on feelings - rather than to cultivate their innate masculine sense that winners win and losers learn to deal with it and move on to the next game. At the same time, the boys on the winning team learned not to try their best. Why bother?

Building character was the third value trumped by compassion. People build character far more through handling defeat than through winning. The human being grows up only when forced to deal with disappointment. We remain children until the day we take full responsibility for our lives. Our increasingly feelings-based society has created a pandemic of immaturity in our society. And there are fewer and fewer maturity-creating institutions in our society. Indeed, the opposite is more often the case. Schools, for example, keep young people immature, none more so than college, which serves primarily to postpone adulthood.

The fourth value that compassion denied here was fairness. It is remarkable how often compassion-based liberals speak of "fairness" in formulating social policy given how unfair so many of their policies are. It was entirely unfair to the winning team to have their score expunged, all their work denied. But for the compassion-first crowd, the winning team is like "the rich" who earn "too much" and should therefore be penalized with a higher tax rate; the winning team scored "too many" runs to be allowed to keep them all.

Compassion in social policy almost always produces unfair results. Compassion for murderers allows them to keep their lives after taking the life of another. Compassion for minorities leads to affirmative action, which means that individuals who are not members of a designated minority will be treated unfairly. Compassion for immigrant children led to bilingual education, which subsequently prevented most of those children from advancing in American society.

Compassion as the primary determinant of behavior is effective in personal life. In making public policy, it is a morally and socially destructive guideline. In fact, it is so bad that thinking people must conclude that its primary purpose is to enable policy makers who are guided by compassion to feel good about themselves.

**Dennis Prager hosts a nationally syndicated radio talk show in Los Angeles. He is the author of four books, His Web site is [www.prageradio.com](http://www.prageradio.com). COPYRIGHT 2007 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.**



# Global Warming Swindle

Thomas Sowell

The British Broadcasting Corporation has produced a devastating documentary titled "The Great Global Warming Swindle." It has apparently not been broadcast by any of the networks in the United States. But, fortunately, it is available on the Internet.

Distinguished scientists specializing in climate and climate-related fields talk in plain English and present readily understood graphs showing what a crock the current global warming hysteria is.

These include scientists from MIT and top-tier universities in a number of countries. Some of these are scientists whose names were paraded on some of the global warming publications that are being promoted in the media — but who state plainly that they neither wrote those publications nor approved them.

One scientist threatened to sue unless his name was removed.

While the public has been led to believe that "all" the leading scientists buy the global warming hysteria and the political agenda that goes with it, in fact the official reports from the United Nations or the National Academy of Sciences are written by bureaucrats — and then garnished with the names of leading scientists who were "consulted," but whose contrary conclusions have been ignored.

There is no question that the globe is warming but it has warmed and cooled before, and is not as warm today as it was some centuries ago, before there were any automobiles and before there was as much burning of fossil fuels as today.

None of the dire things predicted today happened then.

The BBC documentary goes into some of the many factors that have caused the earth to warm and cool for centuries, including changes in activities on the sun, 93 million miles away and wholly beyond the jurisdiction of the Kyoto treaty.

According to these climate scientists, human activities have very little effect on the climate, compared to many other factors, from volcanoes to clouds.

These climate scientists likewise debunk the mathematical models that have been used to hype global warming hysteria, even though hard evidence stretching back over centuries contradicts these models. What is even scarier than seeing how easily the public, the media, and the politicians have

been manipulated and stampeded, is discovering how much effort has been put into silencing scientists who dare to say that the emperor has no clothes.

Academics who jump on the global warming bandwagon are far more likely to get big research grants than those who express doubts — and research is the lifeblood of an academic career at leading universities.

Environmental movements around the world are committed to global warming hysteria and nowhere more so than on college and university campuses, where they can harass those who say otherwise.

One of the scientists interviewed on the BBC documentary reported getting death threats.

In politics, even conservative Republicans seem to have taken the view that, if you can't lick 'em, join 'em. So have big corporations, which have joined the stampede. This only enables the green crusaders to declare at every opportunity that "everybody" believes the global warming scenario, except for a scattered few "deniers" who are likened to Holocaust deniers.

The difference is that we have the hardest and most painful evidence that there was a Holocaust. But, for the global warming scenario that is causing such hysteria, we have only a movie made by a politician and mathematical models whose results change drastically when you change a few of the arbitrarily selected variables.

No one denies that temperatures are about a degree warmer than they were a century ago.

What the climate scientists in the BBC documentary deny is that you can mindlessly extrapolate that, or that we are headed for a climate catastrophe if we don't take drastic steps that could cause an economic catastrophe.

"Global warming" is just the latest in a long line of hysterical crusades to which we seem to be increasingly susceptible.

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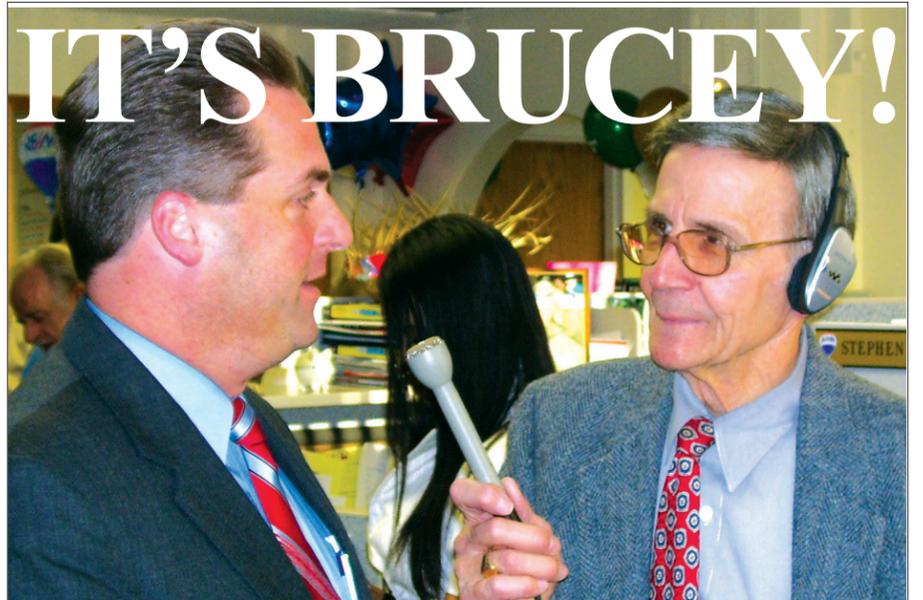
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Debbie Boda from Tedy's Team to Fight Stroke raised \$5,545.00 at an auction last month held at the Claddagh Pub in Lawrence. Debbie (right) is pictured with Kathy Kervin, a stroke survivor, and her husband Dave (from Groveland). They were the "biggest bidders" of the night, winning the autographed Tedy Bruschi shirt, the autographed Bruschi helmet, and the "snow picture." Boda is holding another fundraiser on April 29<sup>th</sup> at The Guesthouse Suites in Methuen (see ad, page 33). The Claddagh fundraiser party has brought Boda's fundraising for Tedy's Team up to \$11,000.00 so far.



Jill Favereau LSW (left), and Karen Savinelli LICSW, receives recognition from Rich Leboeuf, administrator of the Methuen Health and Rehabilitation in Methuen. Both Favereau and Savinelli were honored at the National Social Workers Month Breakfast at the Rehabilitation Center, located on Jackson St.



Lawrence's Economic Development Director Tommy Shiavone gets interviewed by Radio Legend Bruce Arnold.

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Lawrence School Committeeman Greg Morris and his daughter Kate proudly display her trophy from the Lawrence Pop Warner cheer-leading championship! Kate is a frequent contributor to The Valley Patriot's Kids page.



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# Team Zingales Holds Grand Opening in Lawrence



Joe Zingales of Re/Max Prestige was welcomed to Lawrence by local dignitaries at the official grand opening of their new location at 360 Merrimack St. in Lawrence at Sal's Riverwalk (Building #5). Upper left picture: former Methuen Senator Jim Jajuga, former Methuen State Rep. Arthur Broadhurst, Joe Zingales and Methuen Senator Steve Baddour. Upper right picture: Team Zingales poses at the ribbon cutting ceremony. Left: Lawrence City Councilor Joe Parolisi, Lawrence Economic Development Director Tommy Schiavone, District "B" Councilor Grisel Silva, Joe Zingales, and Re/Max Prestige owners Andrew Armata and Stacy Alcorn. Directly above is former Methuen School Committeeman Tom Firth, Methuen Mayor Billy Manzi, Joe Zingales and Jamie Atkinson.

## Brien Announces Candidacy For City Council

Mt. Vernon Street native Matty Brien, seen here with his family, held a political fundraiser last week at J. Brien's Pub and Restaurant on South Union St. in Lawrence.

Brien kicked off his campaign for City Council (District "E," Mt. Vernon) before a packed room of friends and supporters. Brien talked about economic development in the Industrial Park, the lack of street paving in the city and helping small businesses to stay in the city when they need more room to expand. Brien will face incumbent District "E" City Councilor Gil Frechette, who has yet to announce his reelection bid. Sources close to Frechette say he is 90% sure he will seek another term.



## Haverhill Exchange Club Raises Money for Child Abuse Prevention



Girls in Green: Alison Gulibicki, Michele Ambra and Leanne Eastman attend the event.

The Exchange Club of Haverhill Hosted its 6th Annual St. Patrick's Day Charity Breakfast to benefit the Prevention of Child Abuse Programs. Throughout the year the club hosts many fundraising efforts and has developed many nationally recognized programs for youth in the community including Fire Prevention, Junior Police, Read Across America and the Youth of the Year and ACE Award scholarship programs. The Exchange Club of Haverhill is a non-profit service organization comprised of about 40 volunteers who meet weekly on Thursdays at 12:00 noon at Olivia's in Haverhill. To find out more information on how to join the club, contact Rick Barry at (978) 372-9311. Visit them on the web at [www.haverhillexchangeclub.com](http://www.haverhillexchangeclub.com).



From Left to right, Rick Barry, Rep. Brian Dempsey and Sam Ambra.

## Verizon Contributes to Family Literacy



Lawrence City Councilor Gil Frechette (left), Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan, School Committee Member Patricia Sanchez and Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy

Immigrants Sonia Then, Rosa Castro, Denise Castillo, and Guillermo Henriquez recently spoke at a reception held at the Arlington School in honor of Verizon's contributions to family literacy in the city of Lawrence.

Included in the audience were Mayor Michael J. Sullivan and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Wilfredo Laboy, as well as city councilors, city School Committee members, city leaders and representatives from the Massachusetts Department of Education.

For a person fluent in English, public speaking can be intimidating. But for someone just learning the English language, it must have been terrifying. Yet, without hesitation, each one approached the podium and spoke proudly of how the Pathway to Family Success program is affecting their lives. Their messages were similar. They wanted to learn English so that they could get a better job and help their children be successful in school. Guillermo Henriquez added with great pride, "This program helped me a lot. Before I needed interpreter at doctors, but now I can speak for myself."

During the reception, Mayor Sullivan cited Verizon for its commitment to family

literacy in the city of Lawrence. Patricia Harty, regional director of public affairs, accepted the citation on behalf of Verizon.

The evening also included a tour of the Pathways to Family Success family literacy program led by Samaria Hashem, director of the Lawrence Adult Learning Center. Besides observing ESOL instruction, parents were seen using computers and working with their children. At the end of the evening, City Councilor Gilbert K. Frechette commented, "I am so glad I came tonight. I have a much better understanding of what family literacy is all about. I was very impressed that technology instruction is included." The Verizon representative expressed similar comments.

Collectively, these programs are serving 75 families. Besides Verizon, Pathways receives funding from the Massachusetts Department of Education. The Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. is the fiscal agent for Pathways.

**Pathways to Family Success is a Partnership of local organizations who are working together to help families with their literacy needs. In Lawrence, they have developed a family literacy model at the Arlington and Leahy Schools.**



Back row: Ninety Nine Restaurant General Manager Bob Ryan, North Andover High School Music Director Lee Beatty, North Andover Public Schools Superintendent Dan O'Connor. Front row: North Andover High School Band Trip Director Deborah Degalla, Band President John Mange.

On Wednesday, March 14, the Ninety-Nine Restaurant in North Andover donated \$7,640 to the North Andover public school system. The Ninety-Nine recently underwent a complete renovation and was able to raise the funds from an incredibly successful silent auction for the memorabilia that used to decorate the restaurant before the renovation. Accepting the donation on behalf of North Andover public schools was Superintendent Dan O'Connor, Music Director Lee Beatty and Band Trip Director Deborah Degalla. Degalla indicated that the money raised would go towards the marching band's trip to perform at the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, D.C. on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

## Special Training for Special Olympics

By day, Kathy Mamos is a Realtor for Re/Max Prestige in Lawrence, but every Tuesday evening Mamos spends her time working with individuals with special needs to learn gymnastics for the Special Olympics at Interstate Gymnastics on Burnham Road in Methuen.

With volunteers from Methuen high, Julie Loosigian and Megan Bleem to help her, Mamos goes through a rigorous routine of exercises tailored to each individual and then has group participation as each student learns how to walk the balance beam, jump on a trampoline, and learn a series of gymnastics moves.

"Our program runs from September through June but we take new students throughout the year," Mamos said.

"To sign up parents can call Interstate and I will set up a time to meet with the child to get a better idea of their needs and where they should be placed. Class times run from a half hour to an hour in length depending on the child's needs. We work on all four events, floor, balance beam, uneven bars and vault, and of course always have time for the class favorite, trampoline."

In the past Mamos' students have competed in the Special Olympics, but she adds, "we don't do it every year. This year we will be in Interstates' annual gymnastics show which is the weekend of June 9th and 10th at Methuen High School."

Mamos says her work with youngsters with special needs at Interstate is a labor of love.



At Interstate Gymnastics in Methuen are: Back Row, Left to Right Olivia Stone, Julie Loosigian (volunteer), Jessica Felson, Kathy Mamos, Megan Bleem (vounteer), Alyssa Cerullo

"I love it the kids are great and it's a great time for them to come and socialize and have fun. I think I have more fun than they do sometimes."

"I can't help but look forward to coming to work each week, they keep me smiling every minute they are there. The program is just so successful. It is a great place for the

girls to learn gymnastics, get some exercise and create great friendships."

Mamos has been working at Interstate Gymnastics for six years. Interstate is owned and operated by Doreen Miner, from Methuen.

## NECC College Students to Hold Second Annual Bone Marrow Donor Drive

Northern Essex Community College's student senate will hold its second annual bone marrow donor drive on Wednesday, April 25, on the Haverhill campus, in the hopes of finding a match for hundreds of leukemia patients including Baby Giovanni, a six-month-old boy from New Hampshire, whose only hope of survival is a bone marrow stem cell transplant.

The drive will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Spurr (C) Building in Lecture Hall A. Students, faculty, and community members between the ages of 18 and 60 can register to be a donor with a bloodless test. Participants must fill out a simple health questionnaire at a station in the lobby of the Spurr Building, as well as submit to a short screening interview and a mouth swab test. The cost of the test is covered by Massachusetts health insurance policies. Participants should bring their health insurance cards. Uninsured/out-of-state donors will not be turned away.

Last year, 170 individuals registered at the NECC Donor Drive which resulted in nine matches. This year the student senate hopes to register more than 200 donors. The student senate is working in conjunction with the Caitlin Raymond International Registry (CRIR), which has registered more than 5.5 million donors internationally. The senate became interested in the cause after hearing from an NECC alumna, who is herself a leukemia survivor because of a bone marrow transplant.

For more information, contact Dina Brown, NECC coordinator of student activities and orientation, at 978-556-3732 or dbrown@necc.mass.edu.



**Sr. Mary Murphy, SNDdeN, Ph.D, president of Notre Dame High School, Michelle Oviedo, NDHS class of 2008, Obed Quiñones, NDHS class of 2008, Kate McEvoy-Zdonczyk, vice president of community relations, Fallon Community Health Plan.**

## Fallon Awards \$20,000 for Notre Dame High School Program

Fallon Community Health Plan (FCHP) will award \$20,000 to Notre Dame High School (NDHS) in Lawrence, Mass., a college-preparatory high school serving low-income, predominately minority youth in grades 9 through 12.

This funding will support the creation of the NDHS Office of College Support, which will provide students with college counseling and academic preparation services.

"With the creation of this program, it's our goal to ensure that 100 percent of enrolled students move on to higher education when they graduate from Notre Dame High School," said Sr. Maggy Lindgren, SND, Principal, NDHS.

NDHS opened in 2003 as a college prep high school. Under the direction of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, the school provides quality education and workforce development experience to local youth.

"We're looking forward to creating a system of college advisement for our students and their parents, with workshops,

college campus visits, and help through the admission process," Sr. Lindgren added. Every year, Fallon Community Health Plan seeks grant applications from non-profit organizations dedicated to improving the lives of youth in communities throughout Massachusetts.

"We're proud to support Notre Dame High School and their Office of College Support," said Eric H. Schultz, president and CEO, Fallon Community Health Plan. "The goal of this program is truly remarkable! Children are our future and it's very refreshing to see a high school so motivated and dedicated to ensuring that each and every one of their students attends college."

*Founded in 1977, Fallon Community Health Plan provides health care services designed to meet the unique and changing needs of all we serve. FCHP is the only health plan in Massachusetts that is both an insurer and provider of care. Both our commercial HMO and Medicare Advantage plans have been awarded "Excellent" accreditation by the National Committee for Quality Assurance.*

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## Trouble with Twins

Barbara Peary, M.Ed.

My twins, who recently turned five, attend a preschool program located in a high school. When we first arrive at school, they are with me in the classroom. The problem comes when I need to walk them down three long hallways and two flights of stairs to their child care center. They always run ahead of me as I struggle to carry their backpacks and coats and keep up with them. The hallways are generally pretty empty at this time; my concern is their safety on the stairways.



out of it unless they ask your opinion. You could, however, buy them a basic parenting book for the next holiday.

My husband and I have been the owners of a barber/hair-dressing shop for fifteen years. Lately, the behavior of the children who are waiting has become a problem. The work area is separated by bamboo dividers, there are baskets of multi-age toys for the children to play with, and there are signs posted "No one but patrons beyond this point," yet the parents do not

watch or control their youngsters. Typically, one child will be in the chair getting a cut and two more will be running around while mom calmly reads a magazine. Am I wrong to speak to the children, if the parents aren't reprimanding them?

When this happens, start by going directly to the oblivious parent and using the word "safe." Say something like "I want your child to be safe and he will not be safe if he continues to play in the cutting area." Proceed by elaborating on several disasters that could befall the child, making sure your scenarios are sufficiently gory ones. Inform the parent that the insurance company sets the standards and if they want to use your facility the children must be reigned in immediately. Failing action by the parent, ask them to forgo haircuts and leave. Their business is not worth the liability or the aggravation.

At what age should children give up the pacifier? This is a personal decision. They are over-used by some parents to keep the peace. When a child starts attending preschool, at two and a half years old or three, they are usually not permitted for sanitary reasons.

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If they are five they should be toting their own stuff. Have them wear their backpacks and carry their coats. Tell them they have a choice. They can hold hands and walk in front of you, or you will dump all their stuff in a trash bag, tote it in one hand, and grab them with the other. Given the choice, I bet they will choose to walk with each other in front of you. Walking this way will make them feel independent while at the same time ensuring their safety.

We don't see my brother-in-law and sister-in-law often since they live in another state. Recently, we spent the weekend with them and their twins who are three and a half. The children rule the house and the whole visit was chaotic for us all. I am in the health care field and my knowledge of children leads me to believe that one of the twins has developmental delays. Amidst all the confusion, both parents seem oblivious to what appropriate skills and behaviors should be expected of children of this age. Should I do anything?

No. If the children go to a pediatrician regularly the doctor will eventually tell the parents what should be happening. They may be denying reality. This is unfortunate, because the earlier services are started the better for the child in the long term. Since you don't see them on a regular basis, stay

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## Tom Petrillo - Valley Patriot of the Month, From Page 1

escorts were about half the length, one-third the displacement and had about one-third the crew of the larger ships. Each carried only 24-32 fighters and bombers. Amazingly, over 120 of these small carriers were built during the war.

The USS Midway (CVE-63), 512 feet long with a 65-foot beam, was launched on 17 August 1943. She had a top speed of 19 knots and a complement of over 1000 sailors and aviators. Her defensive armament consisted of sixteen 40 mm guns along the sides of the ship and a single 5" gun on the stern.

The Midway was commissioned on 23 October 1943 at Astoria, Oregon where Tom boarded the ship and set up station in the 5" gun turret. Unlike the Massachusetts' armored twin 5" gun turrets, this 5" gun was open to the elements and provided minimal protection from enemy fire.

Shortly after boarding, Tom was promoted from seaman to gunners mate 3<sup>rd</sup> class.

The Midway proceeded south to San Diego to load planes and spare parts for delivery to Pearl Harbor. Tom says every square inch of the flight and hangar decks was loaded with replacement aircraft. Upon return to the states, the Midway picked up another load of aircraft for delivery to Brisbane, Australia.

After one more trip ferrying aircraft, the carrier returned to San Diego where she picked up Air Composite Squadron VC-65 and headed west into the Pacific to fight the Japanese. She joined Admiral Bogan's Carrier Support Group 1 in June of 1944 for the conquest of the Marianas. During that summer and into the early fall, the Midway participated in strikes against Saipan, Tinian and the invasion of Morotai.

On 3 October the Midway returned to Seeadler Harbor at Manus Island for replenishment. There, the crew learned the name of the ship was going to be changed to the St. Lo to free up the name Midway for a super aircraft carrier then under construction. The new name St. Lo was to commemorate a hard-fought victory by American troops who had liberated the French town on 18 July 1944.

Tom remembers that the crew was quite upset over the name change. Apparently, it is bad luck to have the name of a ship changed while at sea and many on board tried to transfer to other ships. However, because of wartime conditions, that was virtually impossible.

The St. Lo departed Seeadler Harbor on 12 October to participate in the amphibious landings on Leyte in the Philippines. MacArthur landed on October 20<sup>th</sup> in his famous pledge to return and liberate the



**Left to right: Gunners Mate 3/c John Welch, GM 3/c John Rollo, Tom Petrillo, GM 2/c Gene Hughes and GM 3/c Robert Estle - San Diego 1944. Estle would later perish when the St. Lo was sunk.**

islands. The St. Lo provided air support for the invasion forces.

The St. Lo was now part of Rear Admiral C. Sprague's Task Unit 77.4.3, better known by its radio call sign of Taffy 3. The St. Lo was one of six escort carriers in the task force of 13 ships, which also included a protective screen of three destroyers and four destroyer escorts. From 18 to 24 October the planes of the escort carriers attacked enemy airfields and bases on Leyte, Samar, Cebu, Negros, and Pansy Islands.

On 25 October the task unit was off Samar Island when it launched its initial aircraft strike just before dawn. Shortly afterwards, an anti-submarine patrol plane spotted a large Japanese fleet approaching at high speed from the northwest. At first Admiral Sprague thought the pilot had mistaken U.S. ships for the Japanese, but then lookouts quickly confirmed that they were enemy ships. The surprise attack by Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita's Center Force had taken the Americans completely by surprise.

Composed of four battleships, eight cruisers and 12 destroyers, the overwhelming Japanese force was poised for a decisive victory. The largest ship, the 72,000 ton superbattleship Yamato, displaced more tonnage than all 13 American ships combined.

The faster Japanese force closed in and at 0658 opened fire on Taffy 3. What followed next was one of the most heroic naval battles of World War II.

Admiral Sprague immediately ordered the launching of all available aircraft to attack the Japanese fleet with instructions to rearm and refuel at Tacloban airstrip on Leyte to continue the attack. Meanwhile, as Japanese salvos fell around them, the ships of Taffy 3 took evasive action and the destroyers laid down a blanket of smoke to protect the carriers.

Several of the destroyers and destroyer escorts made torpedo runs at Kurita's fleet and continually harassed the Japanese forces. They would eventually pay a dreadful price. At 0855, the Destroyer USS Hoel, peppered by Japanese shells, was the first to be sunk, losing 267 men in the process. The Destroyers

Now the remaining ships of Taffy 3 began to pick up survivors from the water. But the battle wasn't over yet. At 1050 hours a flight of eight Japanese suicide planes attacked the escort carriers. Three were shot down before they could reach the ships but two of the remaining planes hit the Escort Carriers Kitkun Bay and Kalinin Bay; fortunately, the planes inflicted little damage. A third Kamikaze, with two 500-pound bombs under its wings, crashed onto the flight deck of the St. Lo. At least one of the bombs penetrated to the hangar deck below where crewmen were loading torpedoes and bombs onto returning aircraft. The ordinance exploded, creating a massive gasoline fire which led to additional explosions. The third explosion shook the entire ship and many knew at that point the St. Lo was mortally wounded. The word was passed to abandon ship.

Immediately after the plane hit, burned and injured men started fleeing the hangar deck. On the fantail, Tom Petrillo and two others started assisting the injured and putting life jackets on those that went into the sea. The three stayed behind to help as explosions rocked the structure and they were able to assist 25 to 30 injured sailors get off the ship safely.

Roberts and Johnston would also be sunk shortly afterwards with the combined loss of another 274 sailors.

The escort carrier Gambier Bay took a shot just below the waterline that knocked out one of her engines and reduced her speed. As she fell behind the others, the Japanese closed in to finish her off. She went down with the loss of another 131 men.



**Petrillo's medals. Top row, left to right: Navy and Marine Corps Medal for Heroism, Purple Heart, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with Five Stars, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with One Star, Liberation of the Philippines Medal; bottom row: National Defense Medal, American Campaign Medal 1941-1945, Military Merit Medal, World War II Medal.**

Meanwhile, the planes from Taffy 3 were inflicting considerable damage on the Japanese fleet. U.S. Task Units Taffy 2 and Taffy 3, to the south of the battle, sent additional torpedo planes and dive-bombers. The combined air assault sunk three Japanese heavy cruisers and relentlessly attacked the remaining ships. At about 0930, Admiral Kurita signaled his task force to withdraw, just as two of his heavy cruisers were within a few thousand yards of Taffy 3's escort carriers. One explanation given later was that Kurita, because of the unexpectedly fierce counterattack by U.S. forces, mistakenly thought he had stumbled upon Admiral Halsey's entire Third Fleet, and withdrew to fight another day.

During all this action, Gun Captain Tom Petrillo was directing fire from the St. Lo's 5" gun towards enemy ships. His crew hit one Japanese cruiser three times and left it burning. Another shell from the gun had deflected a torpedo away from the St. Lo's stern. As the Japanese ships fired their parting shots, Tom's 5" gunners scored a direct hit on a retreating destroyer.

The fifth explosion, however, was enormous and close. Tom suffered shrapnel wounds in his right shoulder and left leg and the blast shattered a portion of his hip. Dazed and wounded, he couldn't get up so he rolled off the deck into the sea below. Once in the water, Tom knew he had to get away from the ship before it went down, but he couldn't swim because of his injuries. Fortunately, a raft with five men on board came by and picked him up and paddled away from the ship. They also picked up a 17-year-old sailor with his left leg blown off.

Just thirty minutes after the Kamikaze attack, the St. Lo went down. Tom couldn't watch as it disappeared beneath the surface. The St. Lo became the first U.S. ship to be sunk by Kamikaze attack.

All of Taffy 3's remaining destroyers and destroyer escorts accelerated their rescue efforts for the many survivors still in the water. The recovery area was large and at one point the ships disappeared from the horizon where Tom and a handful of other survivors were waiting. They felt abandoned. There were sharks in the water that attacked some of the wounded sailors. Hours went by as Tom and the others waited



Photo Courtesy St. Lo Association

**Escort Carrier USS Midway (St. Lo) in San Diego before joining battle in the Pacific**