



BASEPLATE

Mc GURK



Baseplate and friends toss around a popular four-letter word,
come up with a new meaning for it

“ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY SEVEN OF US HELD OFF more than three thousand of them for twelve bloody days,” Tex O’Reilly said solemnly, “and they had to kill every last man of us to carry our position!”

“You’re batty!” Dusty growled, “The defense of Wake took place in December and this is February. Besides, your figures don’t sound exactly right.”

“I’m talking about the Alamo, you ignorant Yankee!” Tex flared. “What do they teach you people in those northern schools anyway?”

“Simmer down, cowboy,” Dusty chuckled, “after all, there’s quite a bit of similarity between the two battles—brave men against hopeless odds. What kept them going, do you think?”

“Guts,” offered Bertram-the-bar-keep as he emptied the ash trays. “Ninety-nine and ninety-nine one hundredths percent pure, beautiful guts!”

“If you’re talking just about physical courage when you say ‘guts,’ Mr. Kernoodle, you’re forgetting about other qualities like self confidence,” I put in primly—thereby earning Bertram’s famous curled lip and hot-eyed “loony Lieutenant look.”

“You’re right, Baseplate,” Dusty said, “and don’t forget moral courage or what some people call ‘character.’ Remember, Napoleon said, Men of principle are the principal men!”

“Well!” Tex snorted, “if we’re going to start quoting people, I can top that one with what a famous American once said. However, before I do, let me point out that you’re all ignoring the part esprit-de-corps played in both of these situations. They had pride in themselves and each other. What’s more, they had the desire to be identified one with the other. They shared a common standard that each of them held sacred. In short,

they had esprit-de-corps!”

“I agree with Bertram and Dusty that it took both physical and moral courage on the part of those people to stand up against such odds,” I said, warming to the subject. “And I also agree with Tex. As just a bunch of individuals they wouldn’t have lasted very long either at Wake Island or the Alamo. It was their esprit-de-corps that bound them together as a group. They had mutual interests.”

“You know, sometimes we forget that this is as true every day as on the days when the ‘incoming’ is flying around,” Tex said thoughtfully. “The strength of the Corps is this mutual interest in one another. Marines have always had this in peace as well as war. But consider some typical exceptions like when an MP thinks it’s more important to lock up a Marine than it is to keep him out of trouble.”

Tex paused to light a cigarette and then continued. “Or how about a senior who gives an unsatisfactory mark rather than making an effort to correct a junior’s deficiencies. Or, in turn, take a junior who, to his friends, ridicules rather than loyally supports his senior. These are the times when our ‘mutual interest in one another’ is found wanting.”

“Right, Tex,” Dusty said softly, “and those are the times when the *real* Marines must step in and square things away, *regardless* of how sticky the situation may be. If we don’t protect our heritage, nobody else will!”

“But enough of this! I’m still waiting for you to top my quote! Just who was this great American and what famous saying is credited to him?”

“Davy Crockett,” Tex grinned. “‘Be sure you’re right and then go ahead!’ Don’t you ever watch TV?”

US&MC



Speaking of the Alamo

A MARINE HONOR GUARD was standing in front of the Alamo during ceremonies which were part of the premiere of John Wayne’s “The Alamo.” “What are you doing around here?” asked one bystander. “There weren’t any Marines in the Alamo.” Yep, that’s right” answered one, “But if there had been, Santa Anna would still be fighting for it.”

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