

THE STORY OF A GIANT KILLER

By John F. Hall

It is true that I sometimes feel that Jesus wakes me up early in the morning and inspires me to start working on another story. I began to write this story on one of those days when I did not want to get out of bed. It was a Sunday and I had to shave and shower and



get ready for church. I'm not sure how to best describe this story. It doesn't involve a slingshot or a stone that David used to slay Goliath. That Palestine Warrior was more than nine feet tall. He wore a coat of bronze scale armor that weighed 125 pounds. After David knocked Goliath out with a stone, he took Goliath's sword and chopped off his head.

David was brave and he believed that God would protect him. But David was able to defeat Goliath because he had the right training, experience and knowledge. He learned these skills and abilities on his own. He mastered these skills. He built real competence and confidence in his ability to defeat Goliath. God did not intervene on David's behalf.

I like the story of Michael, who is mentioned three times in the Old Testament. The reference to Michael is found in the Book of Daniel, Chapter 10, Verses 13-21. Daniel's vision of an angel identifies Michael as the protector of the Israelite's. When I was a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division, we considered the archangel Michael as our protector. A prayer was written in 1902 by Pope Leo. This is his prayer, "Saint Michael the archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; may God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wonder through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen."

Speaking of devils and angels, I remember an old rock and roll song that I liked to sing. It was written by Blanche Carter. These are some of the lyrics: "Devil or angel, I can't make up my mind. Which one you are I'd like to wake up and find. Devil or angle dear, whichever you are, I miss you, I miss you, I mi-i-iss you. Devil or angle please say you'll be mi-i-ine. Love me or leave me, I'll go out of my mind. Devil or angle dear, which ever you are, I need you, I need you, I need you. You look like an angle, your smile is divine. But you keep me guessin' will you ever be mine? Devil or angle please say you'll be mi-i-ine. Love me or leave me, I've made up my mind. I love you, I love you..."

In 1839, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, a novelist and playwright wrote these words, "the pen is mightier than the sword." The power of writing is eternal, while the power of the sword is short-lived. When I was much younger, I was like David, fearless and not afraid to go up against a giant. One time, back when I was the acting Inspector General of the 100th Division in Louisville, Kentucky, a complaint was received by one of my subordinate Captains. It was a serious complaint. A Brigade Commander, who was up for promotion to Brigadier General (one star), was having an affair with another man's wife. He was bringing her to official military functions. The man making the complaint told my

Captain, that if something is not done to that Commander he would take action.

He would call the Courier Journal newspaper and tell them what was going on and ask them to investigate his allegations. I told my subordinate Captain, "I have my 20-year letter and my pension is safe. If you investigate this, it could be the end of your military career in the 100th Division. So I will take the complaint."

Ironically, the Brigade Commander is very tall at about six feet and seven inches tall. I had investigated his Brigade and found evidence of fraud in the number of personnel that he was reporting to Division Headquarters. I was concerned about the image of the Division being tarnished if the Brigade Commander's actions and affair with a married woman was leaked to the press. I also realized that the Division Commanding General (two star) was a close, personal friend of the Brigade Commander. I knew that he would not authorize an investigation. Being an Inspector General is a double edge sword. No matter what I did, I knew my career in the 100th Division would be over.

I remembered what I was taught in the Inspector General School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. If it involves a General grade officer, pass the complaint to the next Higher Headquarters. I called the Inspector General at that Headquarters. I told him that the Brigade Commander was about to be promoted to Brigadier General, and gave him the details of the complaint. He told me that he would open an investigation. The Brigade Commander was arrogant. The Higher Headquarters gave him a choice. He could quietly retire and keep his rank or he could face a Court Marshal and be charged with Conduct Unbecoming an Officer and be reduced in rank. The Brigade Commander realized that too many officers and soldiers observed his conduct. So he retired.

Several months later, I was walking in a hallway and I met the 100th Division Commander. He said, "You should have talked to me first. I would not have authorized the expenditure of two cent for you to investigate the Brigade Commander. You are nothing but a damn Giant Killer." As he stormed away, I knew that he would give me a bad Officer Efficiency Rating (OER). After I completed six years as an Assistant Inspector General, I was given a position as a Special Projects Officer. After one year, my career in the 100th Division ended. Doing what was right and honorable came at a high cost.

I transferred to a Brigade in the 85th Division in Indianapolis, Indiana. I served as the assistant S2/S3 Training Officer. After six months, word came down that due to consolidations, the Indianapolis Reserve Center would close. We were told to find other positions. I was a Major and officer positions would be hard to find. I was walking past our bulletin board one day and I noticed a job announcement for the Inspector General (IG) position in the 85th Division Headquarters in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Being an IG is normally a limited three-year tour of duty. You are given an extra year if you are very proficient. I had already served for six years. I was the acting Inspector General of the 100th Division twice. Once, because the Inspector General decided to suddenly retire, and the second time, because the Inspector General, for health reasons, had to medically

retire. I was not even sure if I would be allowed to apply for the position. Arlington Heights is north of Chicago.

I submitted a packet for the IG position and gave it to our S-1 Personnel Officer. I received a phone call, about a week later, that I was to drive up to the 85th Division Headquarters in Arlington Heights, the next week, for an interview for the vacant IG position. It is about 410 miles from my house to Arlington Heights. I drove up there on a Friday as soon as I got off work. I was working as a Compliance Officer for the Kentucky Department of Revenue at that time.

I reported to the 85th Division Chief of Staff. He told me that I would be interviewed by the Assistant Division Commander (a one star General). When I walked into his office, my heart almost stop beating. I felt that I might as well just turn around and forget the interview, because I would not be selected. He was a former Brigade Commander in the 100th Division and a close friend of the Brigade Commander that was forced to retire. I had served with him. After I sat down, he cut to the chase. He looked at me and said, "John, you have a reputation of being a "Giant Killer." He wanted to know why I did what I did. I gave him all the details of what the disgraced Brigade Commander was doing. I told him that I had to protect the best interests of the 100th Division.

He told me to follow him and we walked into the office of the 85th Division Commanding General (a two star). He introduced me and told the Commander: "Sir, I have served with Major Hall when we were in the 100th Division. He is honest, a hard worker, and he has six years experience as an Inspector General. I highly recommend him." The Commander looked at me and said, "We need you on the job now. Go to your office and clean up the mess that you will find there."

The Commander was right. The seven-person shop had only one person. He was a full time Active Army Major and a basket case. He was going through a divorce and was not able to do anything. The office had a backlog of 108 cases. There was a Congressional Investigation that needed immediate resolution. I handled that case. I was able to get a replacement for the Army Major and two experienced Captains. I got the IG shop fully manned. It took a year, but I eliminated the backlog. I was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. I served as The Inspector General of the 85th Division from 2000 to 2003. Unlike David who used a sword to slay Goliath, I just used a pen to become a Giant Killer.

I like to put short articles in my stories that are written by others. Kay E. Richardson wrote the article, "Teach Children." These are her words: "What children need most does not cost a thing...They need the security love will bring. Let's tell them we love them every day. . . So they'll never doubt that we feel that way. The things you say they will say, too. . . Their precious eyes will learn from you. Their innocent eyes are watching you. . . And things they see they will learn, too. Teach them the difference between right and wrong... And that doing right will keep them strong. Teach them God will always be there.. . Each time they bow their heads in prayer. Let them learn the best of you..."

Someday they will be teachers, too. Fill them with goodness and set them free... They will live in a time where you cannot be.”

John F. Hall

*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>