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Call To Duty

Last month, three military personnel who grew up near Murfreesboro, TN, were killed in combat. I know this because I was

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Since there were five channels when I was a kid, we watched a lot of Western reruns on the independent TV station. Shows like *Big Valley*, *Bonanza* and *The Rifleman*. Mix in a Daisy Red Ryder BB gun as a birthday gift and a fold-out Fort Apache under the Christmas tree, and the idea imprinted on a boy's mind back then was: "White man good, Injun bad." (Except Tonto... everybody liked him.)

Things changed around the time our nation's 37th president appeared on national TV from the Oval Office and announced, "Therefore, I shall resign the Presidency effective at noon tomorrow." People suddenly realized long-held perceptions aren't necessarily the truth. That started a positive evolution, as evidenced by the fact most youngsters today never have played Cowboys and Indians.

As you pause to celebrate Thanksgiving, give some thought to what really happened at that first gathering of Pilgrims and Native Americans. In his award-winning book, *Mayflower*, Nathaniel Philbrick writes: "Massasoit and a hundred Pokanokets (more than twice the entire English population of Plymouth) arrived at the settlement and soon provided five freshly killed deer." He shares that "by all rights, none of the Pilgrims should have emerged from the first winter alive...they all might have been killed or taken captive by the Indians."

For the Pilgrims, the New World turned out to be much like the Old – "a place where disease and war were omnipresent threats." Yet, in the late fall of 1621, those who left everything behind to pursue dreams of a new life in a new land, came to realize "these were not a despicable pack of barbarians...these were human beings, much like themselves." With that understanding, they would live peacefully together for the next 55 years. There's a lesson in there for all of us, and, thankfully, this generation of kids is able to learn the real truth in 50-inch hi-def.

Words of Wisdom The *Mayflower* arrived at Cape Cod in November 1620, after 66 grueling days at sea. It would be another month before the Pilgrims went ashore at Plymouth. These were simple people: men, women and children with little understanding of the harsh realities to come. More than half would die before spring.

"One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time." – André Gide

As this decade draws to a close, it would be natural to look back with dismay at all the negative things that have occurred including the ongoing economic doldrums. Yet, if you consider what those who

there visiting a client at the time. That gentleman understands how the families of those soldiers feel this holiday because his son died in Iraq in March 2007.

SSgt Marc Golczynski – India Company, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division – was only 30. President Bush later referred to him in a Memorial Day speech and CNN ran a tribute during its recent Veterans Day coverage.

It was my honor to see the Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal and Purple Heart awarded to Marc. He was a hero. On Thursday, please give thanks for him and all the military men and women who serve our nation. Spend a few minutes remembering their families too – including Marc's young son. Without their sacrifices, our lives would be a lot different.

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made the journey four centuries ago endured, the challenges today seem quite trivial.

[GPS Gone Bad](#) Friday the 13th was unlucky for Bruce Springsteen. Seems my favorite rocker started his show by saying, "Hello Ohio," and spoke on several occasions about how great it was to be in the Buckeye State. Longtime guitarist Steve Van Zandt finally whispered to The Boss that the E Street Band was, in fact, playing that night to an audience in Michigan. Red-faced and grinning, Springsteen said that's "every front man's nightmare." The crowd roared with forgiving approval, then he rocked the house for three hours.

As you may remember, I had a similar experience two years ago. At the conclusion of an hour-long keynote – despite having practiced my concluding poem more than 100 times – I confidently spoke the first line... then my mind went blank. I laughed and rather abruptly transitioned to something like, "And that's my message: Sometimes things don't go as planned, and you have to think fast on your feet."

When you play on a big stage – whether to 20,000 raving concert fans, an audience of 300 business owners, or that prospect you want to have as a customer – and a slip-up occurs, it's important to: 1) Look them straight in the eye; 2) Be gracious; and 3) Recover quickly. As long as you're sincere and created a level of trust along the way, they'll understand.

Until next month, Happy Thanksgiving.

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