

Can you imagine any other response from George Washington, from Patrick Henry, or from Thomas Jefferson?

We may lose these kinds of people occasionally to unfortunate incidents stemming from their rigidity. Without doubt, however, it is people who understand the word “dishonorable” who have made and kept us free.

Conversely, it is the dishonorable characteristics within our society — and often within each of us — that are costing America her freedom.

THE COMMISSAR

We had many enjoyable visits with the late Alex M. Poniatoff, the founder of AMPEX Corporation. Mr. Poniatoff introduced audio tape recording in the United States and is credited as the inventor of video recording.

Mr. Poniatoff was also a pilot in the airforce of the Czar of Russia during World War I. He kept on his office wall a picture of one of the most feared German Aces of that war.

The German was feared, in part, because of the diabolical aerial weapons which he devised and deployed against opposing pilots. In Mr. Poniatoff's picture, the Ace is shown with one of those weapons — a long chain trailing from his airplane with a ball and hook on the end. He would drag the hook across his opponent's airplane. Strategic and civil defense would have protected us from this guy, too.

After the war, Alex returned home to discover that a civil war had erupted between the White Russians and the Soviets. The Soviets had overthrown the elected Russian government by force.

Mr. Poniatoff flew a wood and fabric airplane against the Communists. His airplane was nicknamed the “flying coffin”, because it frequently caught fire in the air. When he initially returned to his village from the war against Germany, Alex had a problem. He wanted to join the White Russians, but there was fighting in all directions and he didn't know which forces were which.

So he enlisted the help of the village commissar, the individual the Communists had picked as head of his village. The commissar was easy to identify. He had been the town ner-do-well and drunk. He was picked as commissar, because he was obviously easy to control and would have status only if he obeyed his masters.