



May 1, 2010

To my friends,

As a Hispanic/Latino and former Marine, I had been waiting with a lot of anticipation HBO's "The Pacific", believing that justice would be made to the Latinos who have bravely served our country in World War II, after the Ken Burn's fiasco. So far I am disappointed. True, Jon Seda, of Puerto Rican

descent, plays the role of Marine hero and Medal of Honor recipient John Basilone, but Basilone was an Italian-American, not a Latino and therefore does nothing to tell our story. Yes, there was a "Latino" called Manny, who was killed at the beginning, but where are all the other Latinos? This so far reminds me of the movies in the early 60's who under pressure, began to give African-Americans minor insignificant roles known as "token" roles.

I am still waiting, because I can't imagine a television series about the Marines fighting in the Pacific theater of the war without mentioning PFC Guy Luis Gabaldon "The Pied Piper of Saipan." For those of you who may not know who PFC Gabaldon was, I would only like you to know that he single-handedly (Yes, by himself all alone) captured over 1,500 Japanese soldiers and civilians, something that has never been done in American history by one single person. This was at a time when the Japanese were ordered by their superiors on Saipan to kill seven U.S. Marine and Army troops for every man they lost. He single-handedly captured more than ten times the number of prisoners taken by Sgt. Alvin York in World War I. Sgt. York was awarded the Medal of Honor, Gabaldon a Silver Star. Take a moment and think about how many lives were saved by PFC Gabaldon's actions.

I am wondering, will they make a slight mention of Lieutenant General Pedro del Valle who as a Colonel was the Commanding Officer of the 11th Marine Regiment (artillery). Del Valle led his regiment during the seizure and defense of Guadalcanal, providing artillery support for the 1st Marine Division. In the Battle of the Tenaru, the fire power provided by del Valle's artillery units killed many assaulting Japanese soldiers—almost to the last man—before they reached the Marine positions. As a result of the outcome of the battle Japanese commander, Colonel Ichiki Kiyonao, committed seppuku shortly afterwards. I mean, I have noticed that then Colonel "Chesty" Puller who played a prominent role in the Pacific Theater is mentioned (which he deserves) in the series.

Therefore, I ask myself once again, will there be justice or will the Latino participation in World War II be "whitewashed" again? I don't know about you, but I have a bad feeling in my gut. Let's see what happens.

**Tony Santiago**  
**a.k.a.**  
**Tony The Marine**