



Top Producers A Memorial Day Remembrance

Approximately one month ago another of America's best and brightest was killed in action while serving his country in Afghanistan. I never met Pat Tillman, but based on what I have read about him in the media, he is someone that I wish I could have had the pleasure of meeting. Pat Tillman was an NFL football player for the Arizona Cardinals who, at the peak of his career, walked away to serve his country as an Army ranger in Afghanistan. As a matter of fact, he walked away from a \$3.6 million contract to join the military after September 11. His former coach Dave McGinnis said, "Pat knew his purpose in life. He walked away from a career in football to a greater calling."

Interestingly enough, Pat Tillman would have been considered an over-achiever. While he graduated from college in three and a half years with a 3.84 grade point average, he was still a 5' 10", 202-pound linebacker that was taken in the seventh round with an overall pick of number 226 in the draft. He made the Arizona Cardinals as a member of special teams and eventually became a starter at safety. In 2000 he set a franchise record with 223 tackles and then turned down a \$9 million, five-year contract from another team to play for slightly more than \$500,000 out of loyalty to the Cardinals.

As he walked away from the NFL, he would not give interviews, because he did not want to call attention to himself. It seems to me that Pat Tillman was a true leader on and off the field and the kind of role model that we wish our kids could look up to.

As we remember this Memorial Day, we remember Pat Tillman because he was somewhat famous due to his NFL connection. However, there are many people who are relatively anonymous who have also gladly given their life for a sense of purpose so that many of us can know the freedom that we enjoy today. I hope that you will take this opportunity to appreciate what other veterans have done to assure us our freedoms. There may even be a veteran in your family that you may wish to give a hug and say, "thanks." The life of Pat Tillman is just another reminder that freedom is not free.

Sincerely,
Andy Martin

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