

Desertion, Murder & Treason: Three World War II Courts-Martial

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Roadmap

United States v. Powers

United States v. Compton; United States v. West

United States v. Monti



Wayne E. Powers

Desertion

**(about 50,000 Americans deserted
in WWII)**



Wayne E. Powers

Born 1921, Missouri.

Farmer prior to being drafted in May 1943.


Shipped out to England early 1944.

**Private Powers lands in Normandy on 9-10
June 1944; truck driver for next 5-6 months.**



November 1944, Powers meets Yvette Bleuse in town 40 miles from Belgian border. She speaks no English; he speaks no French.

One week prior to Christmas 1944, while Battle of Bulge is being fought, Powers shows up at Yvette Bleuse home.



They live together for next 13 years.


Until he is apprehended for desertion in 1958.






General Court-Martial, Verdun, France, August 1958.

Charge and single specification: “desertion in 1944 until terminated by apprehension in 1958.”



Plea agreement: No approval of confinement more than six months; all other lawful punishments may be approved.

(Two prior CMs: drunk and disorderly (April 1944); AWOL (Jan. 1944)).



Panel: DD, 10 years, REDLEG, TF





**But this isn't right: it's a LOVE
STORY!!**

**(they had FIVE children
together)**



So what happened to Powers?

37 years old

Married Yvette

Had sixth child

Horace T. West & John T. Compton

Murder



Operation Husky – Sicily July 1943

Sergeant Horace T. West

Captain John T. Compton

Sergeant West

- **Murder of 37 German and Italian POWs**

Captain Compton

- **Murder of 36 POWs**
- 



**Lt. Gen. Bradley personally interviews
Compton . . .**


**According to Compton, General Patton told his
unit in North Africa that . . .**





When Patton is questioned by Bradley, Patton says . . .

Two General Courts-Martial

- **West, September 2, 1943; trial ends next day. Result?**
 - **Compton, October 23, 1943; trial ends same day. Result?**
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What do we do now?

What is Army afraid might happen?



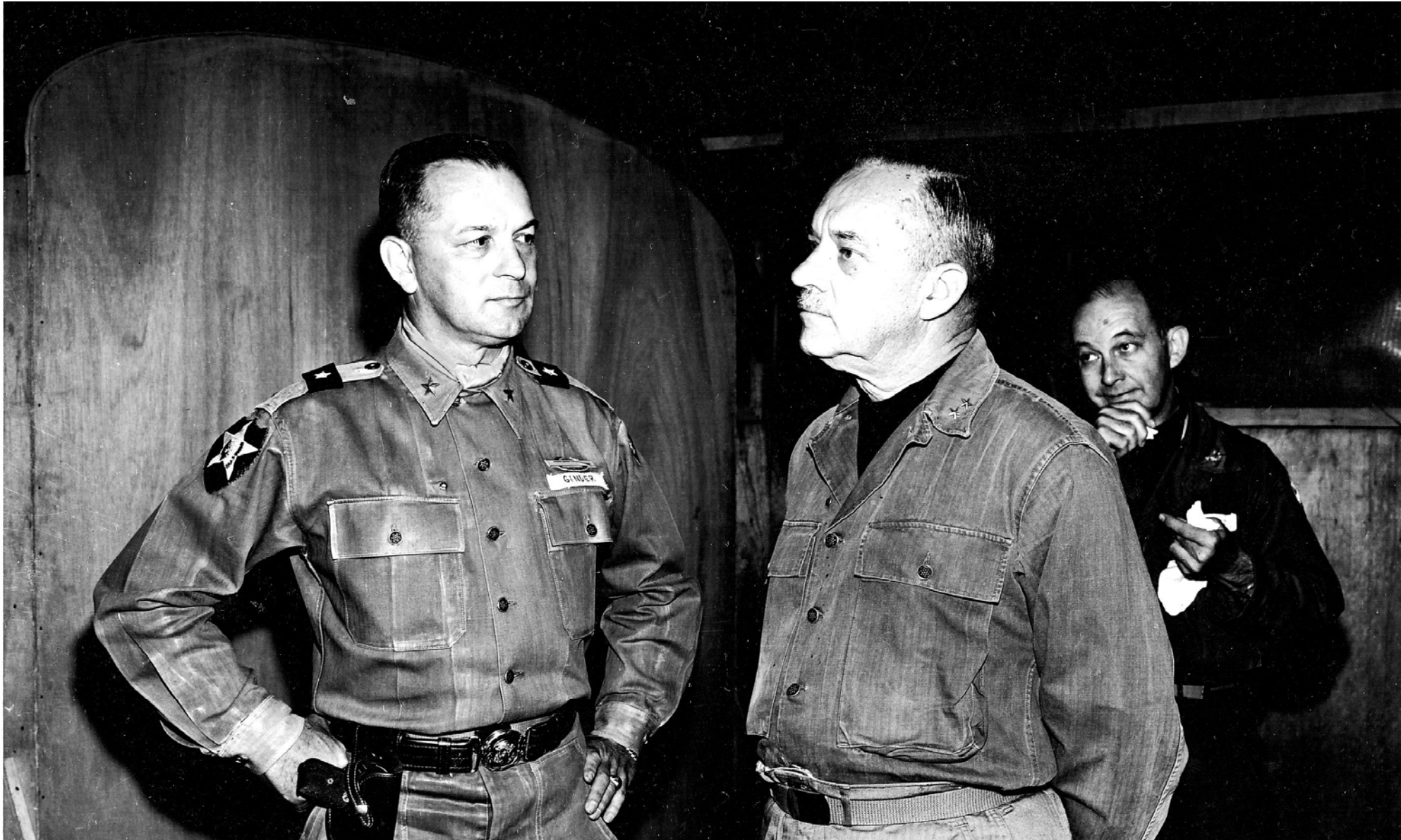
Eisenhower says:

'Give West another chance . . .'

Secrecy remained paramount . . . In 1950, TJAG Major General Ernest M. “Mike” Brannon directs that the Compton and West records or trial be kept under ‘lock and key’ in Pentagon

Not declassified until late 1950s





What happened to West?

Martin J. Monti, Jr.

Treason

Martin J. Monti, Jr.

**Born 1921, Missouri; one of seven children
Father Charles Coughlin, the “Radio Priest”**



MP3



**FATHER COUGHLIN
THE RADIO PRIEST'S
RADIO SHOWS**

MediaOutlet.com

November 1942, Monti enlists as aviation cadet

Qualifies as pilot in P-38 & P-39

August 1944, Second Lieut. Monti reports for duty in Karachi, India





October 2, 1944


Monti flies from Karachi to Cairo on C-46 transport plane

Then Cairo to Tripoli

Then Tripoli to Naples; Naples had been captured by Allies ten (10) days prior to Monti's arrival

Monti goes to Foggia airfield; requests transfer from Karachi to 82d Fighter Group; “I want to fly combat missions against Germans”

Monti goes to another airfield near Naples, asks to take P-38 up for test flight. Told ‘no,’ he walks to P-38, climbs in cockpit and takes off



**Flies to Milan, lands, delivers plane to
Luftwaffe**

Professes his unwavering loyalty to Third Reich





November 1944, Monti sent to Berlin

**Enrolled as *Untersturmfuhrer* (2d Lieut) in
Waffen-SS propaganda unit**

**April 1945, Monti sent to northern Italy to join
combat unit**

**Surrenders to U.S. Fifth Army in Milan
(wearing Waffen-SS uniform)**



**When interviewed by Army intelligence, he
says . . .**

August 4, 1945

- **Charge and specification: Desertion**
 - **Charge and specification: Wrongfully misappropriating “one P-38 aircraft”**
- 

Trial results?



But then . . . restored to active duty!



Army intelligence goes through thousands and thousands of pages of captured German documents . . .



October 14, 1948, indicted for treason

January 26, 1948, apprehended by U.S. Marshals, pleads not guilty


January 17, 1949, appears in U.S. District Court, Brooklyn, New York





U.S. Constitution, art III, sec. 3:

“No Person Shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.”



“I desire to change my plea from not guilty to guilty”

Why??



Trial result?





What happened to Martin James Monti, Jr.?



That's all, folks!

Questions?

Comments?

(Is truth stranger than fiction, or what?)

