

Memorial for Tom Wollny

I write today to honor Tom Wollny, my dear friend for over 20 years. Although I know Tom's name is Walter, I always called him Tom, and he called me Thomas. We were drawn together in support of his efforts to use his patent to save lives. We shared much – first as we worked to save the lives of military members and then to serve those in need. Tom Wollny inspired me to bring out the best in others and not to be afraid or timid in pursuit of the noble things in this life. We talked often about our families, our Sunday School classes, our faith and our work. He was devoted to his family and that was his main priority. Tom loved his wife and children dearly. Caroline was very supportive of Tom and often travelled with him when they came to visit me in Washington. They drove cross-country along with their dog. They shared family milestones with me and planned around their family activities. I am deeply saddened by Tom's passing and have spent the last week dwelling upon our shared experiences, the things that we accomplished and the work left to be completed.

Together, we were devoted to the practice of Tom's patent and his charitable endeavors. Initially, we sought to get others to use the patent that was awarded to Tom by the US Patent and Trademark Office. His patent is transformative. It is truly a life saver. Not only did his patent save lives, it also produced revenue used to support his charity. We accomplished much and yet know that there is much more to do. He has paved the way and laid the groundwork for all of us to move forward.

This is my story about Tom Wollny. For many years, Tom worked in the Aerospace/Government Industry and became an expert in the development and use of RADAR technology. He supported many US government programs which relied upon Tom's expertise in RADAR. Tom saw a need where RADAR and stealth technology could be advanced. The US needed to address the problems that US Soldiers were facing in the middle east/gulf wars, because the existing technology could not protect soldiers and citizens from land mine explosions. All of the then existing mine detectors were based upon metal detection technology. However, terrorists and others were not using metal containers for their mines. They placed mines in walls, in bags, bottles and in wooden containers, in seashells, in children's toys. These mines could not be detected by metal detection, so Tom developed technology that would allow detection even when the mines were placed in paper bags or non-metallic containers. Tom was able to invent a new mine detector by using RADAR and other technologies in addition to metal detection to provide detection of all explosive devices. Tom applied for and received a patent from the US Patent and Trademark Office for his invention.

When the United States began to use Tom's mine detection system they did so without Tom's involvement or permission. In essence, the US was infringing upon Tom's patent to develop devices that could detect non-metallic explosive devices. In fact, others from many different countries were also using Tom's invention. Tom was thrilled that lives were being saved. Tom asked me to help him to protect his rights in his patent. When he approached me, the US had taken control of his patent and was using it to help soldiers in the middle east. While we were excited that the patented technology worked and soldiers were being better protected, we were concerned that the US was not paying any royalties to Tom and that they were not deploying this new technology fast enough to further reduce death and injury caused by mines.

After Tom engaged me, over the next 15 years we challenged the US use of Tom's patented mine detector, without a license. We filed an action in US Court of Federal Claims seeking reasonable compensation for

the US's use of Tom's patent as the US was not paying a reasonable fee, and we were able to negotiate a reasonable settlement with the United States. Additionally, we sought to have others around the world deploy Tom's patented technology so that they would be spared from injury and death from land mines and other explosives that had been left behind by military units. We have come to understand many countries have used Tom's mine detector to detect mines and save lives. This effort addressed one of Tom's goals to reduce the casualties of war. Tom was always working to improve on the mine detector's capability.

As mentioned, Tom wanted to save lives. Additionally, Tom wanted to apply the royalties he received from the Metal Detector to a charity that he was starting in Texas to help veterans. His ambition was to use the royalty payments from his patent to provide financial support to a charity called "Honor Veterans Now". This is exactly what Tom did. The success and recognition of Tom's efforts has been outstanding. Tom could have taken all of the funds he received from his patent to use for himself, but he did not do this. He reinvested funds to support the charity Honor Veterans Now. He has also raised support from others including the State of Texas, to support his charity. Not only does Tom Wollny's patent save lives of soldiers and civilians who might come into contact with land mines, but the revenues received from his patent have been instrumental in the funding of his charity.

But the work continues. There are more lives to save and more mouths to feed. We must be inspired by the dedication and drive of Tom Wollny. His contributions have been significant and his pioneering spirit to feed the needy has been contagious. There is no doubt that Tom desires that his work continue. His family is stepping up to help. Others will as well. Tom and I engaged Don Phillips to write a book that outlined the full story of Tom Wollny and the fight to retain his patent rights. The book has been drafted and the details for publication are almost completed. It is anticipated that the book will be given to a published this year. Revenues from the book will be an additional boost to the wonderful work that Tom started.

As we mourn the passing of Tom Wollny, please remember that he started this work knowing that we would be helping him by finishing this work, even after his passing. By his efforts to secure and protect his patent and start his charitable foundation, he started a work that he wanted to continue. While I already miss my dear friend, I cherish my memories of Tom and stand ready to take more steps to support the efforts that he started. I am sure he would be pleased to have many join in to complete his work.

As I indicated at the outset, Tom was motivated by the love of his family and a burning desire to help others. That he loved his wife and children was clear. However, his earthly efforts are now completed, and it is time for others to step forward and carry on this work that Tom started. My Alma Mater provides my final thought. One of the last verses reads as follows: "And when our work is done, our course on earth has run. May it be said, well done, be thou at peace."

Tom Wollny's work on earth has now ended. Well done Tom Wollny. Rest in Peace!

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Mason, Esq.