

# EPH LEGEND – BRIAN GUGLIOTTA '95

by Dick Quinn, Director Sports Information



**UNLIKE MOST WILLIAMS ALUMNI,** Brian (“Gugs”) Gugliotta really can’t tell you where he’s working these days or about his particular job responsibilities, as that would be a breach of security protocol. He can tell you that he’s a member of an elite U.S. military special operations team.

Gugliotta’s desire to join special ops began with Williams football. Listed at 5-9, 175 pounds, Gugliotta was much closer to 5’ 6” and 170 pounds when, as a freshman on the scout team, he was paired against the Eph first team defense. He didn’t even blink. “Gugs never let up,” notes former head football coach Dick Farley. “Never.” Gugliotta soon became famous at Williams for running as hard as he could on every play, in games and in practices.

Gugliotta averaged 5.2 yards a carry for the Ephs in his career and his 1,656 career yards ranks him eighth all-time at Williams in NCAA Division III play. Gugliotta only became the featured back in the Eph attack his senior year, but as Dick Farley and the rest of the Eph staff knew – Gugliotta was certain to make the most of his opportunity.

## *“Still One Tough Son of a Gun”*

The highlight of his Williams career came in 1994 against Amherst. Holding a commanding lead at halftime, coach Farley passed the game officials on his way from the locker room to the sidelines and told them, “Gentlemen, we’re going to run the ball on every play, so you keep that watch ticking and we’ll all be home in time to watch some real football.”

The number-one Eph ball carrier that afternoon, as he had been all season, was Gugliotta. In a 48-14 victory, he carried the ball 41 times for 240 yards and scored four touchdowns, becoming the first Eph NCAA Division III running back to rush for 1,000 yards in a season. “He averaged over 125 yards a game in eight games, and he earned every one of them,” said Farley.

Gugliotta’s four rushing TDs in his final game set the Eph record for most touchdowns rushing in a game in Eph NCAA Division III play and is still the standard today. His touchdown rushing record has been tied, but not broken in the 19 years since his stellar day versus Amherst.

The Ephs finished the 1994 season 8-0 and 27-4-1 (.859) in Gugliotta’s four years. Ask him about that historic day in Amherst and be prepared to hear nothing about his own runs and everything about the performance of his teammates, on offense and defense. He’s always felt that if the team does not succeed the individual did not succeed.

After graduation Gugliotta worked for a Boston insurance company. Rising each morning at 3:00 a.m., he’d swim and work on strength training for three hours before reporting for work. That’s how he prepared

for the physical rigors required for an elite team in the U.S. military. What he eventually endured to join special ops “tests as much of your physical strength as it does your mental fortitude and perseverance,” he says.

Gugliotta’s government service has also included a White House stint on President Obama’s National Security Staff, but he felt the need to return to active duty. “I rotated off National Security to return to a milestone position in my career path.”

In 2009 Eph head football coach Mike Whalen asked Gugliotta to address the Eph team. He told of his years playing for the Ephs and his time in the military. His message that day was about trust. “You have to trust yourself and your teammates,” Gugliotta said. “You have to trust that you are going to do your job 100% and that your teammates are going to do theirs 100%. Anything else is unacceptable.”

Winning a football game and accomplishing a dangerous military operation have very different consequences if that trust breaks down. “Every game plan ever developed by U.S. Special Operations is at best a guess,” he added, “and that is why you have to trust in your teammates—that they have prepared for every contingency.”

As the spellbound Eph team members headed to practice, many stopped to shake Gugliotta’s hand. Off to the side, and out of Gugliotta’s view, was Dick Farley, with tears on his cheeks.

When spotted, the coach with the impossible-to-please persona said with great admiration, “Gugs, he’s still one tough son of a gun.” 🐾