Welcome To The Jungle

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I have just written Ma and Pa about my experiences while being in live combat. It is hard to believe the war started so long ago. I feel as if my time here has been meaningful, yet intense and intimidating at the same time. I am unable to think about the future because some nights I lay awake wondering if I will have a future with possibly a wife, kids, grandkids, and an education if I ever get to return back to the United States.

The gunshots are heard throughout the night; you never can tell what is going to come next. I remember the first day that I found out we would go to war. A large event occurred that devastated our nation at the time. I never realized that I would be one to go to war, but I knew I wanted to make a difference and thought that this would be a small way that I could accomplish this. But that is the rest of the story.

When the President of the United States declared war, I had a fear as I lay in my bed at night that I could be drafted for war if things got too bad. I told my parents of my fear and soon enough that fear became a reality and I entered into the United States Army. My parents were worried for me and scared they may never see me again. They understood after several discussions about it and convincing, and I headed to training for war. I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

I can most definitely say that at this point I am lucky to be alive. Time has flown by and I can hardly believe that I have survived this far. We are attacked day by day and being shot at is one of the scariest experiences I have ever gone through in my entire life. I was sitting right next to my buddy when all of a sudden a sniper began shooting at us. I looked next to me and my friend had been shot in the back and killed. I ducked down and immediately began shooting at the sniper who was up in a tree nearby. We shot him down and he was dead instantly. There are snipers like him around every day trying to kill us. I easily could have been the one, who was shot that day, but I was lucky and the man next to me was shot instead. It’s life or death over here every second of every day, and it sure is scary.

Sometimes I wonder if the enemy’s hatred is because they are protecting their own country or because they hate the United States that much. We came in and have fought on their land and tried to take control of their soil. I can only imagine how I would feel if they came onto United States soil and we were fighting a war there. I am very grateful that I was trained enough on how to work machine guns before entering this war.

Do you ever wonder if what you are doing is making a difference? Sometimes it is so difficult for me to be over here and away from my loved ones, not knowing if this war will ever end. We are trying everything we can to defend our country and put up the greatest fight that we have attempted to push through and end this war. I hope that I am able to protect my fellow soldiers and get us all out of this war for good. I think then, I will know that I definitely made a difference.

For the rest of the story . . . I am a solider in the United States military. As a United States citizen, I eventually entered the army and had to go to war. Mortar shells flying everywhere constantly, watching whirlwinds of dust and dirt cover me head to toe on a day-to-day basis. Welcome to the jungle. However, I am not in Vietnam or Iraq, fighting in the war that has an unknown ending. The sniper incident really happened. I had to watch several of my fellow soldiers and friend’s die, just as soldiers today are experiencing. War is scary no matter what time period you are in. I can only hope that soldiers who are out there fighting for our country now can be as lucky as I was and live a long and fulfilling life as I have. It is hard to believe I am now being interviewed for a book to be published about World War I veterans as I am one of the last doughboys that still is alive and kicking.

You may wonder, what is a doughboy? What could that possibly mean? It was the coined name given to the United States soldiers that fought during the time of World War I, and I fall into this category. We were malleable like doughboys and were molded to fight for their country. Men and young boys at the time had to be transformed by military from a generic farm boy into a full-blown fighter. This occurrence nicknamed the generation of soldiers, doughboys. Being a doughboy may have been one of the craziest experiences that ever happened to me, and for that time period in my life, I am grateful.

It is 2003, and I am a 107-year-old man who watched the twin towers fall and the United States enter a war again. It brought back all of the memories of my time overseas 85 years ago in 1917 when I was a soldier in World War I. I did not have the technologies to talk to my family as we do today. I did not know if such a great and powerful war with so many countries involved would end. I had no idea what would happen. All I had was my gun to go out there and fight for my country and hope that I lived for the next day. I was as moldable as the rest of the soldiers. I am proud, that now I have been able to tell the rest of my story and explain the type of experiences I went through. I hope that by sharing my experiences I have impacted United States citizens to want to take pride in our country and maybe even fight one day on the front lines like I did. Although, I hope that nobody ever has to experience what I saw during those years I was in war.

Soldiers like myself should be proud to tell about the Great War, or any war for that matter, in explaining what they went through. I hope that I could be an inspiration to other soldiers to speak out about what they went through. Tragic experiences can lead to not wanting to discuss or talk about the awful things that we saw. But the way I see it, this is exactly what will teach our children and our children’s children about real life in the war and how prideful we should be of our country. And now you know the rest of the story.

Sources

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