

LIFE AND DEATH PAPER

Duty: By Bobby Jorgenson

Matt Baer

Wasilla, AK

“Medic, Medic!”

The thing that war does for you is test your limits. It shows you what you are really made of, and what you can take and what you cannot. In war there are infinite possibilities. There are a million things happening at once and you gotta pay attention to what you choose to do in war. Cause if you choose the wrong action, you could end up dead. That's what's so confusing about being a medic, there are so many things calling you, coming from all around. It's hard to decide which one to take. It hard because you cant think on which one to take, you just have to do it or people die.

It happened so fast, yet after it started it seemed like everything after was in slow motion. We were doing normal RECON along the Song Tra Bong. This was my first company and I was new to Nam. This whole war was new to me, the sights, the smell of the jungle, the long marches. Hell my boots give it away the most, polished and shined, no scuffs or dirt marks to speak of. I guess that kinda symbolizes me in a way, how new I was to this whole damn

situation. Nam isn't something that you can't be told; you just gotta be there and do it. Nervousness was what was really getting to me.

"Medic, Medic!"

I hadn't been in a real combat situation before. It was the waiting for it that really got to me. You know that it's coming; you are always on the tips of your toes waiting for it, someone to strike. You can feel the tenseness in your guts. You could see the guys in my unit, they weren't fazed by it. They been on 100 of these kinds of missions but me, this was my first, it was different.

Coming into a new unit is hard; they look at you different, like an outsider. Their last medic, Rat Kiley I think his name was, they were fond of him. Word on the street is he freaked out and blew his own foot off. Well that's what I hear at least, but you can't take anything for certain, especially not here. He served with them for a while; I just hope I have the opportunity to do the same. What I wanted the most is just to become one of the guys, someone that they can count on to be there when they need me. I just hope I can earn their respect.

"Medic, Medic!"

I always wanted to be a doctor; I just always wanted to help people. When the war started I wasn't sure if I could handle going or not until it was decided for me. I was

drafted like so many others in this war, but I was sure I was ready for it. The training was no sweat, being a medic just came naturally to me. Treating wounds wasn't ever a problem for me. I was really good at it, but there are just some things that they can't teach you in Basic. They can't teach what to do when they are bullets coming at you. They can't teach you what it's like to have to run into combat knowing that you might get killed trying to save a fellow soldier. They don't tell you how to treat somebody like that. Something's you can't be taught, you just gotta have to experience it. It made me think if this is really what I'm suppose to be doing in life.

"Medic, Medic!"

The patrol was going smoothly, well as smoothly as I thought patrols should go. Then it seems like just out of nowhere it hit. Bang. Gunfire from all around. I dropped to the ground faster than I think I ever have before. It seemed like we were being attacked on all fronts, it seems that way at least to me. Mortar blast started hitting behind me, when the first one hit it feels like your skeleton is gonna come jumping right out of your body. It was so loud and so intense yet everything seemed to be in slow motion. I could see men running around me; I could the earth flying in the air violently from the mortar. I could see it all yet I was paralyzed to it.

“Medic, Medic!”

You never really know yourself, your limits, unless you put yourself in a life or death situation. I really learned a lot about myself, my limits that day. We were taking lots of gunfire and I wasn't sure what to do. Then a little off in the distance I see someone fall to the ground. It was hard to make out at first but by the sound of his scream I could tell it was O'Brien.

“Medic, Medic!”

He was yelling for me, he was calling out for me. I could tell he was hit in the butt, although I wasn't sure how bad it was. I knew I should go help him but it was like I was drugged or something. It felt like my legs were filled up with sand. I just couldn't move. I just lied there like a rock.

“Medic, Medic!”

He kept calling out to me but I just couldn't get up, I couldn't. All the gunfire got me thinking. Am I willing to die for this man, for this war? Am I willing die for someone that I really don't know, am I will to put my neck out on the line for this. I could see Tim going in and out of consciousness, but I still couldn't move.

“Medic, Medic!”

All the training that I had, all the things I knew went out the window. How can they train you to run into gunfire, its something that you gotta do. The gun fire was

starting to die down a little, it had to of been about ten minutes till I got to him but to me it felt like an eternity. Just sitting there, watching this man bleed to death in slow motion, it's hard to deal with.

"Medic, Medic!"

See, when you are in a life or death situation, you learn you limits. You learn what you are able to do, what you truly are made of. What mattered to me the most was not saving his life, but saving mine by just sitting there. Its all about limits, but the question is, can you set your limits or do your limits set you?

"Medic, Medic!"

He's calling for me, but is this want I really want. Is the route my life is going to take. Is my life worth this war? Is my life worth the price of saving O'Brien's life? Why should I answer his call?

"Medic, Medic!"

This is the choice I made when I signed up. Being a medic is they responsibility I took on in my life. It's my life, the calls I make, right or wrong will be my choices. I will choose my call.

"Medic, Medic!"

I can see him dying, do something.

"Medic, Medic!"

I'm coming. I'm answering.