

## IN LOVING HANDS

in the fraction of a second it would take to open her eyes and drop her milk and cookies, the chance to help if would be gone. Like life passing instantly before a person's eyes, she pictured her body somersaulting from one step until she came to rest in a heap at the bottom. How would that do to her unborn child?

She had not taken into account the quick reaction of her mother. Perhaps nobody else would have been able to move as fast; certainly nobody else would have had as much to lose. How Sharon managed to maintain her balance as both were shot out to rescue her children—and her grandchild. With Dana clutching for the rail and Kim bent nearly double, falling out of control with her head frighteningly near the railing against the next step, Sharon seized a handful of her own clothing, dug her heels in, and hung on fiercely. The force of their forward propulsion was so severe that even her falling was a jolt, but, of course, a jolt highly preferable to the alternative.

After regaining their footing, they helped each other walk a bit shakily, down the stairs. The baby's life had been

Why did Dana insist on stopping to say hello to her sister when it was anything but convenient?

Why did they ride the elevator, which allowed them to reach the top of the escalator the very second Kim stepped on, when Dana began her descent?

Why did all these apparently unrelated actions take place on the only day the escalator has ever failed in the history of the building?

Wonder. But along with the Lees and the Haycocks, I'm sure I know.

This is about  
John Frank Nowers  
Trapped in The Korean War. ①

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## Six Hundred Stripling Warriors

And now it came to pass that Helaman did march at the head of his two thousand stripling soldiers, to the support of the people in the borders of the land...; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them. (Alma 53:22, 56:47.)

Could a comparable scenario take place in our modern day and time? It not only *could*, but it *did*.

It was the night of May 26, 1951, near Sanghong-jong-ni, Korea. The guard was camped in a narrow valley with sagebrush higher than a man's head. They bedded down on

hard earth, under tarps attached to their vehicles on one side and staked to the ground at the other.

Patrols had returned with word of an enormous enemy force numbering in the thousands pausing for the moment barely over the next hill. The grim order went out: "Nobody sleeps tonight!"

Lt. Col. J. Frank Dalley of Summit, Utah, felt enormous responsibility for the safety of his men. There were six hundred of them and they hailed from the small southern Utah towns of Cedar City, Fillmore, Beaver, St. George, and Richfield. They made up Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Batteries A, B, and C, and Service Battery of the 213th Armored Field Artillery Battalion of the Utah National Guard. Col. Dalley was their batallion commander.

These "weekend soldiers" were not hardened soldiers lusting after the thrill of battle, but scholars and farmers, gentle, honorable men who were also brothers, cousins, uncles, or nephews—relatives and lifelong friends. They were young. Except for a few officers, they were "green" to the rigors and hardships of war. They hadn't joined the guard because they hungered for or even expected a fight. Most devoted weekends and two weeks in the summer to training maneuvers in order to help finance their college educations.

But they had done exceptionally well in training. Levels of education and intelligence among the six hundred were extremely high, as was their spirituality. Col. Dalley muses, "I would never expect to see another group of the same calibre, with the same dedication to righteous principles, gathered in one spot again in my lifetime."

Col. Dalley was assisted in command by Major Patrick Fenton, executive officer. Third in command was Frank's brother, Major Max Dalley, battalion operations officer. They were men he could trust, and he knew that they also were close to the Lord.

This was an LDS battalion. Numbered in their group were bishops, high councilors, and a counselor to a stake president. Like the stripling warriors of Book of Mormon fame, they were "men of truth and soberness for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him." And they had been taught to honor their country.

Now, almost without warning, they found themselves suddenly called up, federalized, and shipped to the Korean conflict, where they were involved in battles at uncomfortably close quarters and sometimes in hand-to-hand conflict with an enemy so vast in numbers and so ferocious that prospects of returning alive to families in those southern Utah homes seemed dim indeed.

Except for one advantage. Their hope lay in turning their safety over to the Lord directly, and their prayers for his aid were earnest and consistent—all the way to the top. Every morning their colonel's tent flap was lowered for a space of time and they knew he must not be disturbed. He was pleading with the Lord for guidance.

The battalion arrived in Korea on February 16, and in less than a month they'd completed shakedown training and were in the thick of serious battles. Several times they were separated from all friendly forces. In their first encounter, the Republic of Korea units they were supporting fell back with no warning, enabling the communists to encircle them almost completely before the trap was detected. All alone and outnumbered in a foreign land, surrounded by enemy soldiers committed to their destruction, their annihilation seemed a foregone conclusion.

Col. Dalley says, "For moments I suppose I was almost dazed. Then instinctively my thoughts turned to our Maker. I humbly and sincerely asked for help, as I knew and felt others did who were near me.

"The change in my feelings is hard to explain. Our course became clear. All the men calmly and instantly responded to

a rapid series of instructions, and in superhuman time the battalion assembled and headed for the temporary safety of friendly lines. For nine grueling hours while we picked our way over rough, steep canyons a prayer remained in our hearts. And we made it."

That was only the beginning. By the night of May 26 they'd already assisted a number of the army's finest infantry divisions, and their reputation as soldiers of merit was rapidly growing.

Yes, they were honorable men, gentle men. They were convinced that they were fighting to make the world safer for their families; and that if they did their job well, their sons might be spared from war in their turn.

The guard established some military procedures that were unusual for artillery units. One such practice was to send out nightly scouting parties, pinpointing the exact locations and strengths of their adversaries.

That's how they became aware of the thousands of troops poised to attack just over the hill. And they were startled to learn that once again they were alone and vulnerable. With no word of warning, their protective infantry had quietly crept ahead in the dead of night, hoping to locate their enemies and surround them.

It was 2:00 A.M., Gordon Farnsworth's turn to stand guard. He was lacing up his combat boots when all hell broke loose.

Four thousand Chinese soldiers, finding themselves surrounded by the infantry, make a desperate bid to break through by the only escape route available—the narrow valley where two hundred and forty men of Headquarters Battery and Battery A were camped. This was a minor obstacle in the enemy's rush for freedom, and the four thousand launched a vigorous attack.

During those early morning hours the fight for survival was ferocious. They fought hand-to-hand in the darkness, but miraculously the two hundred and forty were able to hold

## SIX HUNDRED STRIPLING WARRIORS

their ground against the four thousand, enabling their comrades to continue firing in support of the distant infantry.

At dawn the enemy attacks abated. In the temporary lull the two batteries organized a combat patrol of eighteen men, using a self-propelled 105mm Howitzer as a tank. Captain Ray Cox rode at their head in the open, non-turreted Howitzer with automatic weapons on either side. Following his lead and with guns blazing, the eighteen (most of them on foot) hurtled down the valley. They engaged the enemy wherever they found him hiding, behind every bush, rock, or tree. Numerous machine gun emplacements were destroyed as they fought their way forward.

These scattered, bitter engagements continued for several hours until the opposition finally withdrew, attempting to climb surrounding slopes under an intense artillery barrage by the men of the 213th. That devastating fire convinced them that escape was impossible and they turned back in massive surrender.

With the roar of guns stilled, the artillerymen returned to count the cost. Hundreds of soldiers lay limp and dead, but *not one* was from the Utah National Guard. There were guard injuries, but none that proved to be fatal.

Three hundred and fifty of the enemy lost their lives in that night-to-morning encounter and eight hundred and thirty surrendered. Likewise, casualties among the American infantry were tragically high.

*But not one man from the guard had been killed.*

Before rejoining their infantry, these "warriors" performed a humanitarian act that set them apart as sensitive, caring men. They paused long enough to be sure the enemy dead were properly buried.

A newspaper clipping from the *Star and Stripes* states, "Certainly few artillery units have ever fought as aggressively at close-in fighting as have these men from the Beehive State

As artillerymen they are classed among the best in the business."

They were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their "unshakable determination and gallantry," and the Citation further stated, "The extraordinary heroism displayed by the members of these units reflects great credit on themselves and upholds the highest traditions of the military service of the United States."

Frank Dalley and his officers—working in close conjunction with the Spirit—brought all six hundred relatives and friends home safely. Thirty years later we still detect more than a trace of hero worship from the men under Frank's command. In answer to my question, "Why were you able to make it home?" they said it was a combination of Col. Dalley's dedication to making that happen, and his common-sense, sometimes unusual military strategy.

But more importantly, they attribute their safe return to the will of God.

So does Col. Dalley. He was a guest on Edward R. Murrow's national radio program, "This I Believe," and was invited to air his conviction that they were guided from on high. He sums up their experience like this:

"Early in 1951 I found myself in Korea in command of a field artillery battalion, with the immediate prospects of taking these men into battle against the communists. Many of them were relatives or personal friends, and practically all of them were from my hometown or nearby communities.

"With this to face, I knew I must have help. I was taught from childhood to seek help from God through prayer. I believed in God as the Supreme Being and believed in the power of prayer, but the events that happened in my battalion's participation in the Korean war did much to strengthen this belief. . . .

"Although the situation was precarious, not once was the outcome doubtful to me."

Col. Dalley *was* dedicated to bringing every one of his men home alive. Striking physical changes in appearance attest to the price he paid for shouldering that awesome responsibility. He began that year in Korea weighing 179 pounds, and his close-cropped hair was dark brown. At the end of the year he went home weighing a slight 147 — and the hair on his head had turned white.

For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will show unto the world that I am the same yesterday, today, and for ever; and I work not among the children of men save it be according to their faith (2 Nephi 27:23).