

Selections from Autobiography

Ben Huot

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1 Selections from Autobiography

1.1 Non Exclusive Patriotism

by Ben Huot

I voluntarily served my country and am permanently disabled because of my service. This is why I am receiving funds from the Veterans Administration. I am a disabled veteran. I served my country, because it is a beautiful country and it is my country. Many people see America as being an offshoot of England and based on the Enlightenment and that our closest allies are England and France. They see American history and culture as that of rich white men, as taught in history books and the mass media, that is accepted by the mainstream of opinion leaders. The mass media, called popular culture, is all over the world and is developed by a couple of rich white men, who don't even pay taxes in the United States. These multinational corporations have nothing to do with America.

I see America as reflected, by the people who live here, currently and I see America as an immigrant nation, except for the Native Americans. The only thing that is exclusively American is Native American culture. When I study about the culture of historic and ancient Asia, this is as American as studying about the American Revolution, the American Civil War, or World War II. I think that people, who got into America legally, from any other nation and follow the laws are just as much American as people who came over on the Mayflower who follow the laws. Not just those who sell out their culture for popular culture, but keeping their customs, from the countries they came from are just as American.

The really unique thing about America as I have, come to realize, after my service in the military is that we have a goal of toleration for people of different backgrounds and especially of other religions. That is one of the major things I seek to further, in my writings and artwork. This is often referred to as multiculturalism. I don't see why we need to put up artificial boundaries between us and other countries around the world. We can be seen as doing the right thing, as well as they can be, even if we order our society in different ways, or that they may appear farther ahead than us in some areas doesn't make us less of a nation. We don't need to think of ourselves, as the best nation on earth. We are one, among a number of great nations, and we don't need to be culturally exclusive to prove it.

1.2 Total Isolation

by Ben Huot

When you enlist in the Army
Your life is no longer your own
Joining is the last decision you make
Your intelligence is of no use
And your training a waste of time
There is no way you can get prepared
For a life without freedom
When you lived a life with
Choices for everything
There is only one way to march
One way to shoot a rifle
There is one way to make your bed
And there is only one way

Selections from Autobiography

To don your protective mask
There is one way to throw a grenade
And one way to dig a foxhole
There is no time to think about
Theories of war or the Geneva conventions
There is never a time when you
Can let your guard down
Your life is totally committed
You have your reasons for enlisting
But they matter less and less
Enlistment is a one way tunnel
And there are no stops or ways out
You can shoot yourself in the foot
But then your job will just be harder
You can follow your job to the letter
And yet be valued the same
As the biggest screw-up
You could follow directions exactly
And still get captured
The others fail you all the time
But if you ever fail them
The cost is enormous
If you fail to listen to instructions
You could be the next victim
Of the war on terror
You could pay attention to
Every last detail
And still end up needing to be
Identified by DNA

1.3 The Dark

by Ben Huot

Is is dark now
And I fight to stay awake
I never was this tired before
But my time in the Army
Sure was exhausting
And many things I still remember
Happened at night
The night of our arrival
At Reception Battalion
Lasted far past midnight
It took us hours to get into formation
And to stop talking
I dont remember
What processing they were doing
That took all that time
The night watch was so long

1.2 Total Isolation

Selections from Autobiography

I read my green Gideons pocket bible
And scoured its indexes
Finding helpful verses
I still dont know
What we were watching for
At Basic Training
Day started in a flash of light
The light switch was flipped
And we jumped out of bed
And ran into formation
Then we ran out into the dark
And stopped under stadium lights
My arrival to my Duty Station
Was in the deep of night
So idyllic with the palm trees
And the fresh sea air
I was lost of course
Following Drill Sergeants orders
I didnt get on the bus
With the rest of the soldiers
But I found my way to my unit
With a lot of help
Ironically the cab dropped me off
Within feet of my assigned battalion
I walked to and from my job
Usually in the dark of dawn or dusk
And I wore my sleeves long
And wore mountain boots
Because it can get chilly
With the air conditioning so high

1.4 Fear and Excitement

by Ben Huot

My experience in the Army
Was full of fear and excitement
I was terrified of being tortured
But I was thrilled beyond imagination
At being part of history
The risk is beyond human
But with the adrenaline going
You forget all the problems that could arise
I knew what I was doing was important
And it was exciting work
For someone just out of high school
Hawaii was a dream on earth
And the activities were plentiful
The land and ocean are breath taking
But the people are what keep you there

1.3 The Dark

Selections from Autobiography

One bus travels the perimeter of Oahu
From North Shore to Waikiki
By Scofield Barracks and Pearl Harbor
Location is everything
And that was perfect
But my mind was tormented
With long bouts of depression and paranoia
In my barracks
I was kept awake
With fear of deployment
And fear of chemical attack
I had no trouble at work
My supervisors were amazed at my performance
I tested out of a year of college
And maxed out my sit-ups portion of the PT test
But worries worked at my stomach
And I could never relax
I saw the island
But had trouble enjoying anything
It was not that I was just negative
But my mood kept me on a bad course
When I went in for counseling
They knew something was wrong

1.5 Commitment and Freedom

by Ben Huot

A perfectly made bed
And a perfectly pressed uniform
A hard run across the pavement
And push-ups on the living insect ground coverings
A breakfast of hard grits
And salty juice
A bleached protective mask
And a lubricated rifle
A rotating shift
With different days off every week
Are far from a perfect way
To get an edge on life
Running is the only freedom
When you are being put under combat stress
Your only break is when you are in church service
When the drill sergeant is always breathing down your neck
Over 5 years later
Outside the grip of Uncle Sam
There is a calm deep inside
A feeling of silence never leaves
There is no reason to always be alert
There is no threat of attack

1.4 Fear and Excitement

Selections from Autobiography

There is no one to make all your decisions for you
There is a freedom in being done with war
There is no allegiance that you have to die for
No commitment that might end your life
There is an excitement that comes
When you can go anywhere tomorrow
There is a contentment that comes
When you know you are working for peace
There is a way that you can relax
When you will not be insulted for slipping up
There is a confidence that comes
When you can plan your own day
War brings nothing good
And being done with it is the greatest relief
Why should we sacrifice
For decisions others have made?
What war ever brought less war to follow?
And when will they ever end?
Maybe if they stop enlisting
The Army will have to cease hostilities

1.6 Desert Mist

by Ben Huot

My eyelids are heavy as depleted uranium
My heart is burned with radiation
In a flash of the flares
And in the yellow smoke
My mind turns to my childhood
To others taken away
In the silent night
Firefights lit up the sky
One side obliterated in hours
Burning carcasses littered the desert
The Army goes rolling along
Over barricades at 40 mph
Pausing only seconds between firing
The young knights barely of age
Trampling the cavalry of years gone by
I dream of a time
When my boots were always polished
And my shirt ironed flat
Of fears lived
And hopes vanished
The god of war is steel
And the protector is a rubber mask
In danger I plead with logic
And critical time slips by
There is no escape

Selections from Autobiography

From the grips of Uncle Sam
This is a time
That I remember all too well
When staying awake
Is the least of your worries
When hitting the target is an empty goal
And clearing your rifle seems unimportant
There are times when you want to fly away
And now I can
But when you are in the middle of the beast
There is little you can do
Suicide seems rational
But that would bring little relief
When you hear Gas! Gas! Gas!
Two and half seconds is not fast enough