

A Story of WHAT GOD CAN DO

DOMINICA

*To my new Dominican friend, Kevin Dangleben,
Manager of the Kalinago Barana Aute, Dominica*

Ed Robinette

Edited by DOCTOR JAMES HOWELL

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Edited By: Doctor James P. Howell

Pre-Press Editor: Anne Gaillard

My new friend from Dominica: Kevin Dangleben,
Manager Kalinago Barana Aute

It is my great honor that I was able to work on this story with my grandfather. Dr. James Howell. Blount Memorial Hospital



My good friend Ed Robinette has written a captivating story. You will be mesmerized early and have trouble putting the book down. Ed has served White Oak Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee for many years as a faithful deacon. His deep understanding of the things of God is reflected in the adventure he shares with the reader. Dr. Tony L Wilson. White Oak Baptist Church

IN LOVING MEMORY



MARGARET L. ROBINETTE
MARCH 16, 1931—June 5, 2009



1 THESSALONIANS: 4-13-18

13. But I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

PROLOGUE

Okinawa— April 1ST 1945

The 6th Marine Division had been on the L.S.T. (landing ship troops) for about a month. Moving at a slow pace, each day more ships appeared loaded with Marines. Sargeant Jim Baxter was with the 1st Platoon, commanded by Captain Reeves and 1st Lieutenants Babcock and Roberts.

This would be Jim's third major invasion, and he had previously served with Captain Reeves on Saipan. He admired him for his combat experience and loyalty to his men.

Jim and his friend, Corporal Rodney, just finished supper and went out on the top deck to have a smoke and watch the ships. There were L.S.T. and troop ships in every direction. After taking a second look, he noticed that all of them seemed to be moving a little faster than usual.

"Rod, old friend, I don't know where we are going, but I don't think it will be long before we will see some action," Jim said.

"I wonder where it will be. This is the biggest fleet of ships loaded with Marines that I've ever seen. I have heard we have our 6th, 1st, and 4th Marines Division, plus a couple of Army divisions ready to go. Do you think we might be going to Japan?" Rod asked.

“I don’t know, but it’s going to be a big battle, and I hope my luck holds out. This will be my third invasion. I may get killed, but I hope I don’t get my arms or legs blown off. I would hate to go home a cripple,” Jim said.

After watching the ships, it was getting dark, and they decided to go below deck and find a card game. Jim started losing, so he quit the game and went to bed.

It was now April 1st 1945. Jim was awakened by loud booms and what sounded like a swarm of bees. He looked at his watch. It was 4a.m. and still dark.

“What the hell is going on?” Marines were waking up and grabbing their shoes and life vests. Then over the loud speaker he heard, “All Marines report to the top deck with full battle gear.” This was repeated several times.

Jim looked at his friend and said, “Well, you wanted to know where we were going? In ten minutes we will know.”

When they got to the top deck, the sky was lit up. In every direction battleships, cruisers, and planes were firing continuously at an island, which they later learned was Okinawa. This would become the largest and bloodiest battle in the history of the Navy, Air force, Army, and land troops.

Sergeant Jim Baxter had his men form a group. He did roll call to make sure all of his men were present.

Jim looked at his men. Thirty of them depended on his leadership. He knew each one of his men and where they were from. Many had been with him since the invasion of Marshall Island and Saipan. Now they were waiting for orders, and they all knew many of them would die.

Captain Reeves gave the command for the men to go to

the rails on the side of the ship and make preparation to climb down the rope ladder. Below them were landing boats, with motors running.

Jim looked around and the sea was full of ships, many now on fire. He looked up at the sky and it was full of planes, many falling with trails of smoke and fire behind them as they plunged into the sea.

He had never seen anything like this before, nor would he ever again. It was like the 4th of July. The early dawn was lit up with burning ships and planes. The ship next to him was on fire. Men were screaming and jumping into the sea. He watched as the men tried to swim away from the ship, only to be burned alive by the fire surrounding the sinking ship.

Jim closed his eyes, hoping this wasn't real, but when he opened his eyes again he realized this was all happening. Screaming and death was everywhere. He looked at his men and saw the fear in their eyes, many were praying.

He himself felt the urge to pray, but then he did not believe there was a God. How could a loving God watch men die? No! There is no God, if there was this war would never have happened. There is no life after death. "If I got killed, then that would be the end of my life." Again he looked at his men, and without thinking said, "God! Help me to keep these men alive, and maybe we can all go home together."

The Captain gave the orders for the men to climb down the rope ladder and into the landing crafts below. As they were going down, Jim saw a Jap plane coming toward them, with its guns firing at his men. He watched and hollered, but

could do nothing. Many of his friends were hit and fell into the sea.

The Marines that weren't hit climbed into the landing crafts and filled the boats. Then they circled their ship until the orders were given to head for shore. To their surprise, there was no gun fire from the beach. The Marines landed, without a shot. "Where was the Japanese army?"



The Major told his officers to have the men spread out and move forward across the island. Captain Reeves told 1st Lieutenant Babcock to take his platoon and head to the right. The Battalion was like a giant V, with the Marines of the 6th Division moving across the island.

The 4th Marines Special forces would follow and when the airfield "Yontan" was taken, the 16th Anti-aircraft Company would stay and defend the airfield. Once taken, the 6th Division would cross the island and then head south toward Shuri Castle and meet up with the 1st Division.

The day ended without any casualties and the airfield was taken with only little fighting, and they settled in for the night. A couple hours before dark, two Japanese planes came over and began firing on them. Jim found some Okinawa tombs and ordered his men inside.

The next morning it was quiet on the island where Jim and his men were, but you could see and hear the fighting still going on at sea.

After a breakfast of k-rations, the 6th Marine Division headed south. Captain Reeves told his platoon to split up, with Lieutenant Babcock on the right and Sergeant Jim Baxter taking the left. They were told to report any signs of the enemy.

Jim's men checked every straw house and found them empty except for a few goats. But when they approached a stone house, someone came running out with a pack on his back. Jim hollered stop, but the person kept running and Jim gave the order to fire. Then the man fell in a hail of bullets.

He sent Corporal Henry to check on the body, but when he came back he had tears in his eyes.

"Sergeant it wasn't a soldier. It was a woman, and she wasn't carrying explosives. It was a little baby, and we killed both of them. We didn't know. Damn, I have a baby that age at home. We didn't know it was a woman. Why didn't she stop?"

"I don't know Corporal, none of us knew. It could have been a Jap soldier and we had no other choice. We had to shoot."

Footnote: That would be the first of many Okinawa civilians killed during the six months of battle. Over 100,000 civilians were killed by the Japanese and the Americans. It was the horror of war.



It took about a week to cross the island, and the 6th Division met very little resistance. Sometimes they would run across a

Home Guard unit made up of Okinawa kids and old men left behind to slow the Marines down.

On the fourth day, Sergeant Baxter and his two squads of men, eighteen all together, spotted a schoolhouse about three quarters mile ahead of them, and informed Lt. Babcock his platoon leader. He was told to check it out, and if there was any trouble to contact him back. Baxter took his two squads of men and slowly approached the school house. When they got close to a hundred yards, a shot was fired from inside, hitting one of his men in the head.

He called his platoon leader and reported the firing and told him that his men were now surrounding the school. A couple of more shots came from the school house, and Jim told his men to use mortars and machine guns. Then when they got closer, they rushed the school using hand grenades.

After about thirty minutes, the firing from inside stopped, Jim and his men rushed inside and found five bodies lying on the floor. They looked like young men not over fifteen years old, all of them wearing the uniform of the Home Guard.

All of the boys were dead. Jim suddenly heard someone crying. He went to a closet and found a girl about fourteen with her arm shot off. She too was wearing the uniform of the Home Guard. He called his platoon leader, gave his report, and asked for a medic.

Jim and his men felt sorry for the boys and the young girl, but this was common in the north part of the island. This made him and his men more anxious to meet the Japanese army. They didn't come here to fight kids and old men.

A navy medic showed up and treated the girl the best he