

The Battle

In the cold of the morning, Dave Reed was running his miles for the day. About three months ago, he had been deployed to Iraq with his brother, Joe. Dave was about six feet tall with dark hair and blue eyes that emanated wisdom. Joe was about the same height as Dave, but had blonde hair and brown eyes. Joe was also running his miles, but had fallen a little behind Dave. Today was just another day for them, for now.

Before Joe and Dave had been deployed, Dave had gotten married and had two kids, Jack and Mary. His wife's name was Samantha, who loved Dave with all of her heart. Joe, on the other hand, knew that he should avoid making a family so that if he died, he wouldn't cause any unnecessary pain. For Dave, his family gave him a strength in battle far greater than any weapon could provide, a reason to fight and survive.

After they had both finished running their miles, it was time for a shower, then after that, breakfast. When they had made it to the mess hall, they quickly grabbed the slop that they had become accustomed to and went to the nearest table. While the soldiers were eating, the scouts that were supposed to be watching the perimeter had left their posts, leaving the base completely vulnerable.

The enemy snipers on the ridgeline had seen them leave and notified their commanding officers, telling them that their opportunity to approach unnoticed had come. Less than ten minutes later, the enemy had arrived at the northern side of the base, and began their bombardment. Dave and Joe had grabbed their assault rifles and ran to the ditch on the easternmost side of the base. They were trying to flank the Iraqis and attack them from behind.

Joe stood up and tried slipping past the enemy, but failed. Dave could only watch helplessly as Joe got shot less than five feet away from where he was. The sun was beating down on the sand, nearly blinding him. In a fit of rage, Dave pulled the pin from a grenade and threw it towards the line of Iraqis. Five seconds later, the grenade had exploded, killing the men nearest to it, and injuring some of those that were farther away. Dave saw his opportunity to drag Joe back into the ditch and took it.

Joe was still barely clinging to life, choking on his own blood. Joe grabbed Dave by the back of his head and pulled him close, whispering in his ear that he would see him on the other side. The blood draining from the gunshot wounds had splattered on Dave's face and chest when Joe coughed. When he had taken his last breath, Dave broke into tears. The murderous rage building up in him became too much to handle. With the speed of the wind, he stood up again and opened fire upon his brother's murderers.

Since the majority of the Iraqis were focused on the soldiers in the base, Dave had the perfect opportunity to relocate. Going prone, he crawled on the ground until he was directly behind the enemy. He had two grenades left, one of which he pulled the pin off of and tossed. Quickly, Dave rolled away and down into another ditch. Before the grenade detonated, though, one of the Iraqis jumped on top of it and curled into a ball, stopping it from killing his comrades.

After it exploded, Dave popped his head over the top of the ditch and opened fire again. Unfortunately for him, the enemy had now found out where he was and began shooting. When they had emptied their magazines, Dave yet again relocated. This time, the Iraqis that were

The Battle

shooting at him had alerted others to his location. The enemies had seen where Dave had gone, which gave them the upper hand.

Meanwhile, the soldiers still in the base, unaware that Dave was in the line of fire, grabbed an RPG and took the shot. The RPG had impacted less than twenty feet away from Dave, sending him sprawling to the ground, as well as sending shrapnel flying in every direction. One of the shards of metal had severed his left arm at the shoulder. Screaming in pain, he began crawling back the way he came, trying to make it back to the base before he bled out.

When he had gotten to the end of this section of the ditch, he looked over it and saw that the Iraqis were all either dead or incapacitated. He thought it was safe to stand up, but when he did, one of the Iraqi snipers shot him. Since the sniper was far away, he had to calculate how much the wind would affect the trajectory of the bullet, and failed to do it correctly, so the bullet hit Dave in the leg, blowing out his kneecap.

Falling to the hot sand, Dave tried crawling away from where he had been shot. By now, his vision was becoming blurred and he began to feel light headed. His will to survive, though, gave him the strength to pull himself to the ditch that Joe had been shot at. This was as far as he could go, so he pulled the pin out of a smoke grenade with his teeth and put it next to him, so his comrades would be able to find him. This action took the last bit of his strength, so he fell unconscious.

Dave's wounds were gushing blood, and if they weren't wrapped soon, he would bleed to death. The soldiers in the base saw the smoke rising, but could not investigate until the snipers were killed. Unfortunately, when the gunfire had started, the scouts that had left their posts came back to see what was happening and got killed on their way back. Only one of the scouts was smart enough to stay at his designated location, but this man had been killed almost as soon as the fight started.

One of the soldiers in the base that had been close to Dave noticed that he was nowhere to be seen. This soldier's name was Kyle. When he saw the smoke, he realized that that was where Dave was. Throwing caution to the wind, he ran as fast as he could to the ditch and slid into it. When he saw Joe, lying dead on the ground, he felt a sudden sinking feeling. He had grown to love Dave and Joe as brothers, so this sight only enraged him, but there was nothing he could do to help him. This is when Kyle saw Dave bleeding out at the other end of the ditch, still breathing. Quickly, he crawled over to him, slung his rifle over his shoulder, and grabbed both Dave and Joe by the back of their combat gear and began dragging them back to the base.

The Iraqi sniper, still patiently watching, shot Kyle in the gut. Kyle fell to one knee, but got back up and continued running. The sniper sent yet another bullet flying, this one hitting Kyle in the leg. Still, though, Kyle pushed through the pain, ignoring the blood draining from the bullet holes. One last time, the sniper shot, hitting Kyle square in the back. This should have stopped his progress, but Kyle still made his way back, arriving in the base less than thirty seconds later.

The soldiers in the base watched unbelievably as Kyle dragged Dave and Joe behind the sandbags. Before Kyle even had a chance to set them down on the ground, one last bullet was

The Battle

shot, hitting him in the side of the head. Chunks of brain matter splattered on his comrades, shaking them to the bone. It was almost as if time stood still, as Kyle's comrades all looked him in the eyes for what felt like an eternity before he fell to the ground, lifeless.

While the soldiers were still recovering from what they had just seen, the sniper had called for reinforcements, which would arrive in less than a minute. When they did arrive, they gave up on trying to overtake the base with rifles and switched to Javelins, which are rocket launchers that lock onto the target. Five Javelins had been deployed, which was more than enough to eliminate the remaining soldiers.

Dave's comrades were unaware of the arrival of enemy reinforcements, which, ultimately, was the one mistake that was their downfall. The missiles came falling from the sky, obliterating everything that stood in their way. All that was left of the base was a pile of rubble and debris. Not a single soul survived.

When a supply shipment had come to the base about a week later, the soldiers that had accompanied it had notified their commanding officer that everyone in this base was dead. When Dave's wife was told about his death, she broke down into tears. She felt empty and alone in the world, so she grabbed Dave's old revolver from the closet, loaded three bullets, killed Jack and Mary, then herself.