



Stand To... A Journey to Manhood

E. Franklin Evans

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While many authors have written books about Vietnam, very few of these authors have actually experienced the horrors of this war. Retired Lt. Colonel Frank Evans brings to the table his experiences in combat.

His memoir “Stand To...A Journey to Manhood” is an amazing book written by a heroic man who served his country with great honor.

His memoir depicts how the struggle for survival brings about closeness among men. Evans and his comrades worked for a common goal, despite the danger threatening them, to stay alive and to defeat the enemy. They became a brotherhood with single mind and purpose. This work is relevant to today’s soldiers as they face the same emotions Evans faced.

When his Vietnam tour of duty ended, Evans decided to continue his military career with the U.S. Army. Today, he is a proponent for the men and women of the armed forces. He stresses the benefits in education, experience, and travel to be gained by serving in the military. Yet Evans is also realistic about the strain military life can place upon a family. His recounting of his own experiences enlightens readers about the realities of serving one’s country.

In Evans’ own words “Stand To” is about a young man’s daily experiences in an unfamiliar jungle environment and his emotions dealing with apprehension, loneliness, joy, sadness, and growth, much like the lives of the soldiers currently in the Middle East.

An excerpt follows:

T

he last glimmer of light crowned the distant trees and slowly faded to blackness. I sat on a sandbagged bunker drinking a cup of hot chocolate. I looked up at the stars and listened to the sounds from the jungle, unusual but somehow soothing. They reminded me of the sounds in the Florida swamps near Big Tree Park. Even the smells of the jungle were familiar, reminding me of peaceful nights camping a few miles from home.

A few yards to my right, my third squad leader, Staff Sergeant Baker, was giving final instructions to two of his men before they moved out to their listening post. He spoke quietly. “All right, you guys, I want you to maintain complete silence while you’re out there. Only use your radio to send your hourly SITREPS. Use your push-to-talk switch to break squelch. Once for ‘yes’ or ‘everything’s OK.’ Squeeze the switch twice for ‘negative’ or ‘we’ve got movement.’ Got it?”

“Yeah, Sarge. We know,” replied one of the men.

“Well, this is Brown’s first time on LP, so I want to make sure you all got it right.”

“Don’t worry ’bout me, Sarge. I got it,” said PFC Brown.

“OK. Move out and be quiet moving into your position. Let me know when you’re all set. Keep your ears alert for Charlie. We know the VC are moving through this area at night.”

The LPs quietly moved into their night locations using the designated paths through the protective wire defenses. Should they have to return quickly, they would use these same routes to run back to the safety of the perimeter. Upon arriving in their night positions they radioed back and maintained silence. Hourly situation reports, or SITREPS, would be relayed to the platoon CP through the prearranged radio signals. No voice communications would be sent unless enemy movement was detected. Earlier in the day the

company's 81mm mortars had registered defensive fires. Our supporting 105mm artillery battery was prepared to provide indirect fire support if necessary. These fires would help cover the quick return of the LPs.

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