

Faith on the Frontline – Some Observations

Introduction

We were blessed by a visit from Rhett Parkinson of the AFCU Armed Forces Christian Union www.afcu.org.uk/. Rhett gave this writer a copy of Faith on the Frontline compiled by his wife Liesel and available from www.eden.co.uk/. This writer found the book very insightful and has communicated some observations to Rhett as follows. Explanatory notes for the chapters selected are in [blue text](#).

Hi Rhett

Hope all's well. I have just finished the book Faith on the Frontline. Of the wealth of scriptural lessons in the book, here are a few that stood out:

[The Wall pp 70-72](#)

[A daughter stands with her WW2 USMC dad before The Wall.](#)

Noting the Medal of Honour Wall, this scripture comes to mind for what is owed to serving men and women then and now **“They were a wall unto us both by night and day...”** 1 Samuel 25:16.

Saipan is of course notorious for the suicide of 1000 Japanese civilians who believed their emperor's false promise of a blessed afterlife.

See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Saipan#Civilian_casualties.

That is like 2 Corinthians 4:4 concerning **“...them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”**

The ministry is therefore as the Lord said to Paul **“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me”** Acts 26:18.

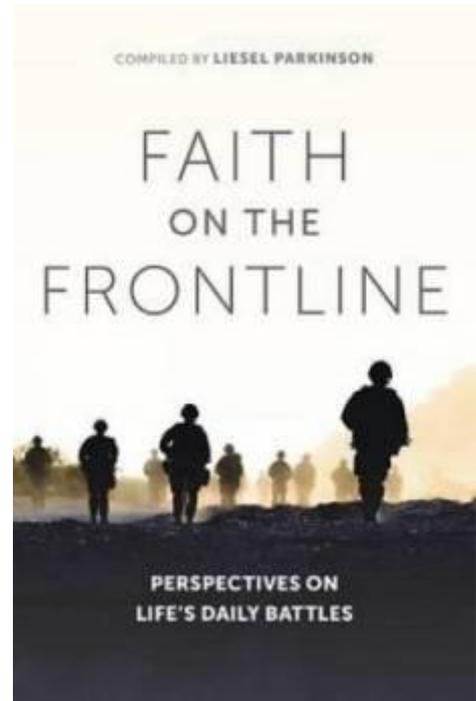
A good exhortation now as then therefore is Colossians 4:17 **“And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.”**

[What a mess! p 76](#)

[An RE regiment carries out battlefield clearance around Port Stanley, Falklands Islands.](#)

This put me in mind of *The 59th Division Its War Story*, by Peter Knight, Chapter Eight *The Falaise Pocket*, where the author describes the aftermath. HQ 197 Brigade with supporting troops numbering 30 officers and 250 ORs in total was tasked with battlefield clearance of the pocket. The task was carried out successfully with great professionalism between September-November 1944. The book may be available here:

www.parishchest.com/the_59th_division_its_war_story_1954_P21282



The author describes in vivid and poignant terms the challenging environment in which the clearance force had to work, pp 88-89. *“The few children then in that area must have before them for life a picture of death as it will never be seen normally...Nowhere appeared capable of hiding this army in retreat, no wood was thick enough to escape the incessant pounding from bomb and cannon shell and no route, however unusual, proved completely successful.”*

That is a picture of the judgement of God. **“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD”** Jeremiah 23:24.

The account is also a picture of how the Lord clears and cleanses us with great professionalism and King David’s exhortation reveals the practical way forward for staying clear and clean.

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” John 15:3.

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” Psalm 119:9-11.

O Group p 90

Orders must be given clearly the whole way down the chain of command!

You’ll be familiar with the old Army anecdote of the message *“Send reinforcements we’re going to advance”* that gets garbled in transmission and comes out as *“Send three-and-four pence we’re going to a dance!”*

That put me in mind of 1 Corinthians 14:8 **“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”**

In addition, in a related context, many years ago, one of my students whom I was supervising for a design project drew my attention to a Chemical Engineering textbook that was one of the best that I ever encountered and which I always recommended to students afterwards. It is *A Guide to Chemical Engineering Process Design and Economics* by Gael D. Ulrich. Chapter Nine is on *Report Preparation*. The author describes pp 411-413 how it is essential to have a low Fog Index for a good report. He gives examples for The Wall Street Journal, Time and Newsweek and The New Yorker that have Fog Indices of 11, 11, 12 respectively. The opening lines of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address yield a Fog Index of 10. The following example that Ulrich notes is therefore very instructive:

Matthew 6:9-13 King James Version:

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” Fog Index: 4

No ammo! p 102

A rifleman returning from patrol discovers that his rifle was minus its magazine!

This reminded me of an incident that Peter Steadman describes in his book *Platoon Commander (Memoirs of a Royal Engineer Officer)* Chapter Five *On to ‘A Bridge Too Far’* pp 84-86.

See www.amazon.co.uk/Platoon-Commander-Memoirs-Engineers-Officer/dp/1858219019.

His platoon had drawn off from the road for the night during the advance from northern France in September 1944. Mr Steadman received the ill-news from the commander of an anti-tank battery that an advance down the road by a troop of German tanks was imminent and suggested that the RE platoon set up any anti-tank weapons it had. Mr Steadman knew that this was the only feasible

course of action, reflecting that *“these Panzers wouldn’t likely settle for a friendly wave as they sped by us to seek out more challenging opposition”* but what to do about A/T weapons?

A member of the platoon then remembered that they had recently been issued with PIATs, Projectile Infantry Anti-Tank, although the platoon had not been fully trained on them. Nevertheless, they set the weapons up in the best possible tactical positions, loaded them with bombs and waited. The German tanks did not arrive. Mr Steadman wondered if the Panzers *“had wisely decided not to confront the awesome firepower of 2 Platoon.”*

Mr Steadman relates that in the morning *“when we were packing up in readiness for moving on, I reminded the PIAT marksmen about first having to disarm the projectiles by removing the detonating caps. ‘The what?’ they asked.”*

Reproaching himself for not having checked that the bombs had been armed, Mr Steadman ensured that *“during the next break in the action we quietly got our PIATs out again, and trained ourselves in how to use them effectively – although it was probably just as well that the Allies managed to win the war without having to call upon 2 Platoon’s newly-acquired anti-tank weapon skills.”*

That has been a lengthy illustration on the need for preparedness in advance or as the armed forces are known to say alliteratively, though of course it’s a little stronger in ‘the original,’ *‘Prior preparation prevents pitifully poor performance.’* That is as David testifies in 1 Samuel 17:36 **“Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God”** and we should note that with respect to ourselves, God does the checking as Paul explains **“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”** Romans 14:12.



See kinooze.com/david-and-goliath/.

Make sure then that you have done all you can to wield **“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”** Ephesians 6:17 with effect as Paul further explains. **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”** 2 Timothy 2:15.

Commissioned p 161

Every British Army commissioned officer receives this solemn briefing from the Crown.

This evocative account brought to mind the Lord’s basic commission to every believer through Paul, challenging though it is, certainly for this writer.

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” Acts 20:24. As John Wayne remarks in *The Longest Day* *“It’s a h-e-l-l of a war, but God willing, we’ll do what we came here to do.”* See



lookingtowardportugal.blogspot.co.uk/2014/06/the-longest-day.html.

“And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them” Matthew 21:6.

Quarter nightmare pp 163-165

Necessary exorcism of a married quarters turned haunting into holiness.

This harrowing account that nevertheless ended bringing glory to the Lord Jesus Christ by the simple and effective expedient of praying in every room of the new dwelling brought to mind King David's pledge for his household and the good outcome it would have today when coupled with Paul's assurance to today's believer.

"...I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" Psalm 101:2-3.

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place" 2 Corinthians 2:14.

Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ

Alan O'R

P.S. This is for all the contributions to the book.

Exodus 3:17 states **"And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey."** Exodus 3:17 pictures the way of comfort that today's believer needs.

Likewise Jonah 2:7 **"When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple."**



www.tumblr.com/search/edward%20tipper

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gec7OUrj87M

1 minute 50 seconds in

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God"

2 Corinthians 1:3-4.