

THE TASTE OF TEARS

It's been over twenty years ago that I left Vietnam and yet it seems a part of me never left. As I sit on my front porch swing, I can hear my sons playing some video game. As I listen, I reflect back on my youth and Vietnam.

Having been expelled from school and on the verge of some jail time, I joined the Marines. People talk of heaven and hell...well I spent ten weeks in hell and came out a Marine. Three months of intense Infantry training and I was ready for anything...except Vietnam.

My thoughts are interrupted for a moment by the sound of thunder. A storm is on the way. The thunder reminds me of incoming and takes me back to a time when Marines fought and died on many forgotten hills. I momentarily go back to that time and the friendships that emerged. They were of necessity, a need to survive. They could also be gone in the blink of an eye...forever.

The thunder is getting louder. As I watch the lighting shoot down from the sky, I find myself on one of those forgotten hills fighting to survive the death all around me. I can hear the cries of the wounded and the dieing.

As the incoming gets louder and the cries more deafening, I feel rain stinging my face. I then realize that I'm standing in my own front yard and that the incoming is only the thunder, the cries only that of my sons trying to get me out of the rain.

As I hear their cries, I look to the heavens...the rain stings my face even more. As I feel the rain running down my face, a salty taste trickles to my lips. The taste is familiar. It's the same taste I remember on that hill so long ago. A taste that comes from the very depths of my soul...the taste of tears.

**“ I looked for my soul...but could not see it
I looked for my God...but could not find him
I looked for my brother...and found all three”**

C. V. Egan

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