Twitter Thread by left lieutenant



left lieutenant
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Bravery

6 May 17, I was privileged to fly on the last chopper that brought back the released Chibok girls. Seeing the girls - young, naive BUT broken, was a reminder of how cruel man is. When we touched down, I stayed with them briefly in the C-130 before the Abuja lap.



Military medics began basic checks, deworming them and tending their wounds. There was one particular girl who had lost a leg. She said the Air Force had hit BHT positions & during the strike she lost a leg. I stared at her, wishing it was a dream.

Sitting beside her was another girl - the bravest girl I ever met. For the purpose of this thread, let us call her 'N'. N kept a daily journal of what happened everyday at the BH camp. I snapped as many pages as I could. The girls attested that she was the leader of the pack.

How To PRAY

1 Question: what can I Pray about?
Answer: Anything! God wants you to talk to him about everything in your life. nothing is too big or too small to talk to God about.

2 Question: when and where should I Pray?
Answer: Anytime and Anywhere! It doesn't matter where you are; you can always talk to God. he is always with you.

3 Question: How long should my Prayer last?
Answer: You can Pray for one second or for hours! God is always there.

Right under Boko Haram's nose, every night, after the terrorists had ordered them for 'lights out', she would organise the girls for prayers & morning devotion the next day. I found myself smiling sheepishly at this. This is faith. This is bravery.

When the medics were done & we were notified that the C-130 would depart for Abuja, N made a signal & all the girls sat up, crossed their legs & bend their heads. N led them in prayers. I would later learn that this was their routine when there was danger or the bombs dropped.

As the C-130 ascended to Abuja to hand them to Mr President, I looked. A pilot who had flown the chopper was sitting on the tarmac, red-eyed.

It took a soldier to talk us to leaving the tarmac that day. We were just heaving like bereaved men.

'Sarkin Yakin Damboa'

The people of Damboa called him Sarkin Yaki (King of War). But Captain MM Hassan was much more. BHT dreaded him to the extent that Shekau placed a 10 million Naira bounty on him.



Hassan was tough as a nail. 2 years after his death in 2018, I met a corporal in Gwoza, who drove him for most of his operations. The soldier was smiling all through & he said something that touched me.
'Sarki dey smile everytime. E talk say nothing worth person cry'.



He said MM Hassan was the toughest officer he ever knew.

"I happy say I pass through that Oga."

He told me of an incident where Hassan fought through an ambush to rescue him. After then, he never thought Hassan was human until 5 Janary 2018.

On 5 January 2018, MM Hassan died from a detonated grenade in the midst of gunfight with terrorists. May his soul continue to rest in peace.

'041116: My Longest Day Ever'

I remember how excited I was to see Lt Col Abu Ali the first time. He was a Major then. Stories of him sounded like folklore, like war stories brought to life. People talked of his sheer brilliance & sacrifice for his men.



So, the first day I met him he actually came from Mallam Fatori to Maiduguri to collect supplies for his unit. Sounds strange. A Major? Coming to the city to take supplies for soldiers? This is not typical of senior officers. It is one task they would delegate.

I was also surprised by his frame. Man was lanky and very quiet. But you saw the fight in him. He embodies the military song, 'Small body, Big Mind'. He didn't talk much.

When he was leaving, after a brief discussion, he breathed, 'We will win'.

In 2015, BHT carried out one of its bloodiest attacks in Baga, killing numbers so much that it was covered up till today. As far as the battlefield is concerned, we would always credit Abu Ali for taking that town back.



I woke up to a text on 5 November that the officer was killed in a dawn attack on Mallam Fatori. This was 2 weeks after I encountered him. His men eventually beat back Boko Haram but his death still cuts deep.



During his procession, I saw generals cried. The COAS wept. His death rocked the Presidency. He defined patriotism.

May his soul continue to rest in peace. Amen.

'In your words, we will win'.



Eyes from Above

I was in Rann in 2016, before the mishap on the IDPs. The Armed Forces maintain strategic outposts to protect the interest of the country. The one in Rann is one of such.



Cut off from the country and so close to Cameroon, Rann is a flat land. You could see as your eyes would let you. A company of soldiers stay there, mainly as a buffer.

When I got there, I confessed my fear that it was easy for BHT to overrun us. The CO swore that BHT had never succeeded & would never succeed because of one reason.

'The Airforce. We get eyes for up o.'



He talked about how Alpha Jets took out 8 guntrucks in April 2015 when BHT tried attacking them.

"Boko Haram will prefer to see 100 AA guns than to see one of those jets. Anytime I see the jets, I know I am sleeping well that night.'



That night, I rekindled my love for tea. I was given lemongrass tea. Damn! I stayed awake all night. When my watch shone 1145pm, I remember the CO pointing to the skies to a distant Beechcraft plane.

"My sleep will be long today'.

Khaki Angels

One set of soldiers I admire are the medics. Highly trained, thoroughly professional, these folks work in your regular city & hardest of grounds.



The Air Force established hospitals for IDPs in frontline communities of Dalori & Bama. Over 100k patients are attended to on these facilities.



In 2018, I witnessed miracle in Dalori. An Air Force ophthalmologist performed 132 pterygium in a day. One of the women, Iya Kaka, wept when she was discharged days after. It was the first time she would see after 12 years. She couldn't stop praying for the Chief of Air Staff.



As we celebrate this year's Armed Forces Remembrance Day, I pray for the safety of all military personnel as they carry on gallantly, doing this job - the most difficult job in the world. God bless you.


151 BATTALION
NIGERIAN ARMY
BANKI JUNCTION
GOD'S OWN BATTALION