

Due date: Saturday, 14 November 2009, 10:10 PM

Last edited: Saturday, 14 November 2009, 05:35 PM (664 words)

Little Things Matter

When you are going to war or are already in war it's the little things that matter to you. I was in the military during a time of war and so I can somewhat relate to authors or stories that I have chosen. I have put in some of the things that happened to me during my military days to try and make it more personable. In the Helen Tennant Hegelheimer (pg 106) she talks about her trips as a flight attendant and the soldiers on the plane with her. Having been the guy on that plane ride I really relate to that trip and the importance of someone to talk to. She talks about never saying good luck or good-bye to the soldiers and that might not seem like something that really matters, but when you get off that plane in a country that you have never been to and you are going to a war zone good luck is the last thing you want to hear. When I got off the plane the flight attendant, knowing that I was in the military, didn't say anything she just smiled because we both knew what was going on here. Just talking to someone that is not military on the plane ride is awesome. When she would try to strike up a conversation with the troops when they were on their way home and just listen or even help them practice talking to non-military is small but when I got out of the military and started talking to non-military members I would still use military abbreviations or terms and having someone to talk to is important even though it seems so small.

Now in the Quach Van Phong (pg 186) Having someone that has a gift, in this case being an artist, can help with morale. Anything that keeps your mind off fighting, whether in the war zone or not, is little but important. Phong writes about how when he left the unit the local soldiers wanted him back, or how the soldiers from commander down would pamper him. When I was in the military and standing watch in the gulf at midnight and freezing my butt off, we had this guy that was really good at telling jokes and freestyle. He would tell some of the funniest jokes, some dirty, or just bust into a freestyle about standing watch. While he did this it kept my mind off standing watch in the gulf where every fishing boat could be the enemy. The picture that Phong would draw would just keep the soldier's mind off the fight and help with their morale. Having an artist or comedian with you seems small, but is one of the most important things when in the war zone.

The last story I want to talk about is the Chi Nguyen story (pg 175) and while it ties into my theme for a completely opposite reason than the first two stories. We all know that medical facilities in war zones are not the prettiest of things and the people that work there deserve some credit not only for what they do, but for what they see. Nguyen writes about amputating a soldier and seeing the soldier's journals. Amputating a man that is now blind might seem like a bad thing but being alive and not having to fight might be worth it. When you are fighting a war that has no end in sight, like the war in Afghanistan or the operation Iraqi Freedom which I was in, you want to do anything to get away from the fighting. I can remember just wanting to fall down a flight of stairs and tear up my knee so I could go home so those little things like getting hurt, whether it be amputation or any injury that would get you home to see or be near your family again is of the most importance.

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