

The Day of His Power

'Your people shall be volunteers in the day of your power.' Psalm 110:3

I remember thinking: this is my Captain's big day, the day of his power. As I strapped into my gear, he stood larger than life in my mind's eye. As I buckled in my Kevlar vest, I remembered the day he issued it out to me and I ran my hand over the bloodstains down the right hand side. Everyone says they'll take a bullet for their buddy, but this reminder grips my chest every time I gear up. Even my helmet was paid in full by my Captain; I strap it on, and square it away. I'd follow that man anywhere any day.

The day of his power. I'm not talking about Ike on D-Day. Ike has the reputation that he massed the greatest fighting force in world history, but on that June morning in '44 he was a bureaucrat pacing the deck of a battleship far out at sea while other guys did the bleeding and dying. The day of power would be a lot more personal for my Captain. For one thing his goal is not just victory in Europe, but true freedom for every member of the human race, and he is not far back in the rear echelon but on the day of power he leads from the pointy end, just like always.

He specializes in small cadres fighting hand-to-hand. When my grandfather served under him, he was sent to the end of the road in Dahomey, before they even got a railhead, and my Captain opened the whole country in ten years with fewer than 20 men. In Kenya I was on the ground when he decided to move over the northern frontier and claim the nomadic peoples for his kingdom. He organized the entire operation on a shoestring and went in with just a dozen guys like me, recruiting others all along the way. We took some heavy hits during that action, but he stayed on point and just kept adding momentum. Right in the thick of the smoke and thunder I received a report from one of my men who said, "The enemy tactics are mostly bluff. We found out that if we keep advancing into his face, he can't hurt us; he barks the loudest when he's backing up!"

Your people will volunteer on the day of your power. That's what I love about this outfit; we are all volunteers. Lately I've been volunteering more, and that's why I'm on this battlefield today. I remember when he first enlisted me I always felt so unprepared and unworthy for the important assignments, so I would hang back. I thought he would be busy talking with his top lieutenants, and I wouldn't have anything to contribute. But these days I eat breakfast and lunch with him every day. It's not like I'm a military advisor; mostly we just talk about life.

But one day back in 2011 (it was the first day of Ramadan that year) we had been pushing hard on the trail all day with nothing to eat, far behind enemy lines. So he stops in this palm valley and takes a drink from the brook by the roadside. Then he lifts his head. I'm right next to him, so close I can smell the dust on him and see the sweat start up when the water hits the spot. I follow his eyes, and I can see him getting the lay of the land; this is where he's gonna move next, I'm thinking--no doubt about it. Just like that and without a second's hesitation I said, "Send me, Sir. Let me go in with you on the first wave."