

# Was I Willing to Become a Killer?

By Woo Young Kang

*“TO EVERYONE:  
Unidentified things penetrated  
through the DMZ.  
The whole unit needs to go to  
each cannon and wait.  
REPEAT: This is a real  
situation.”*



On an ordinary sunny winter day, I was a Korean soldier stationed near the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea and received this message. The superior military officers reported that one North Korea squad had penetrated through the DMZ, and they would pass our barrack very soon. All of us were ordered to be armed and wait for them.

My squad got a command to conceal ourselves around the area where the squad might pass. I dug a trench in a concealed place inside the deep forest with my partner.

We were supposed to spend three nights together in the trench until the mission was done. For the first night, I stayed in absolute silence. During this silence, I could hear every sound, even the sounds of a bug's footprint.

All night, the dark atmosphere around the trench made me extremely scared. The wind would constantly make horrible sounds through the branches of the trees and bushes, and I continuously had the illusion of seeing something moving in front of me, even though the branches had stopped moving.

I felt as if something was staring me and approaching me from the darkness. I spent the whole night with these kinds of thoughts until sunrise the next morning. It was absolute torture for me.

After waiting in fear all the next day, the night gradually began to fall again. I was still on guard duty with my partner in the trench as usual. Around three o'clock in the morning, the freezing wind was as sharp as needles, and the wind was so cold that it felt as if sharp needles were not only scratching but also puncturing my body incessantly.

It made it hard for me, because I was too exhausted to bear my duty. When I was shivering in the cold, my partner suddenly got my attention quietly and indicated a

certain location carefully. My partner refused to lay his eyes upon the suspicious area. “Sergeant Kang,” he whispered. “Look over there. Something is moving... Watch out, sir.”

Because of the darkness, I could not see anything at first. A moment later, I saw an unnatural movement of branches and the small sounds of steps on fallen leaves. We had to decide to take action as soon as possible. We had to decide, whether or not to attack, because it was approaching us so directly. I told him very quietly:

“Fuck, if it steps a foot closer, I will shout and fire so stand by the radio, okay?”

I was waiting for the intruders when finally I heard them step by the tree in front of us. I shouted to the complete darkness imperatively and strongly:

“Freeze!! Say who you are immediately! YOU HAVE ONLY THREE SECONDS!”



After that moment, I just prayed to God that the strangers would not throw a hand grenade toward us. Thankfully, they did not throw anything, but they did not respond either. The next few seconds felt like an eternity, but then the steps began to come towards us faster.

I instantly fired my machine guns toward the suspicious movement in the darkness and my partner called on the radio. At that moment, I felt neither the silence nor

was it cold because the intensity of wanting to survive had replaced everything. After countless of bullets shot, we stopped, and the forest fell back to the silence and coldness. There was only the smoky scent of gunpowder left.

A few minutes later, we confirmed that nothing was moving around us and the other soldiers came to our bunker. We began to look for the corpses, then heard someone shout:

“I FOUND IT!”

When I went to the area where the soldier was, I saw a corpse. It was not a human corpse, however, but a big, bullet-filled boar. It was just a wild animal, a wild boar.



When I realized that I did not kill a human being but a boar, I heaved a big sigh of relief. Although I killed an innocent animal, it saved me from having the guilt of murdering a person. The next morning, I had a brief interview with my commander.

“Hey, what happened last night?” he asked. “Explain to me why you killed a wild boar, Mr. Boar Killer.”

I explained to the commander what happened in detail, and ironically, he praised me a lot. He recommended me to get a prize from the head commander. After this, I was nicknamed Mr. Boar Killer. My partner, who was much lower in rank than me, began to tell everyone this story, even though it

was a bit exaggerated. I was very proud of myself when my partner and I was praised as a very brave soldiers because of what happened, but I felt a bit sorry for the wild boar.

However, if I had not killed the boar, my partner and I would have been badly injured because boars are still very dangerous, especially wild ones.



Two weeks later, the superior military officers said told us that the mission was over and we could go back to the base. As I walked back to there, I thought that not only my team was lucky, but also the North Korean squad as well, that they weren't the boar.

Back then, and even now, I imagine what would had happened if I had met the real North Korean squad at that time. It definitely would be much worse than shooting a wild boar.

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