

**BUNKER**  
By James Collins

In early 1951, the US Army drafted Eddie Brown right off the streets of the Bronx. They shipped him out to an army base for 16 weeks basic training, handed him a rifle, put him on a boat, and shipped him to Korea.

The Chinese had entered the war by attacking the first Marine division at the Chosen Reservoir on the border of Korea and China in December 1950. Everything changed. A couple of million Chinese soldiers tried unsuccessfully to overrun the Marines. The Navy withdrew the Marines by ship from the Port of Hungnam after they fought their way out of encirclement.

The Chinese continued to advance down the peninsula from the Yalu River to the 38th parallel. There, the fighting reached a stalemate, a murderous stalemate. Young American soldiers with 16 weeks basic training and no experience with the Korean weather or the Chinese method of fighting tried to stop the avalanche. The Chinese tactic was to send wave upon wave of thousands of soldiers with automatic weapons until they overpowered the enemy.

After a couple of weeks of this fighting, Ed and his platoon were taken back to a bunker to rest overnight to give them a breather from the front lines. As was the custom in a combat area, everyone slept with all their clothes and boots on. This also helped because the weather was excruciatingly cold and there were never sufficient blankets.

At 3 o'clock in the morning, the scream of the bugles, the shrill of whistles, the boom of artillery fire and the rattle of small arms fire woke everyone in the bunker. All were running around trying to recover their gear..

The Chinese bugles were getting closer as were the sound of the Chinese burp guns. Apparently, the Chinese overran the forward positions. The men in the bunker were forming up, passing out ammunition and receiving orders when the first grenade came in through the door. Four more grenades and the sound of a burp gun rapidly followed this as the Chinese rushed the mouth of the bunker.

Ed was knocked unconscious and slammed into a wall when one of the grenades went off near him and a half-dozen of his buddies. He was unconscious for some period of time. Whether it was seconds or minutes he did not know. When he came to, he felt bodies on top of him and heard Chinese voices and shots. The Chinese were shooting the wounded. Ed could not move. The man on top of him appeared to be dead weighing him down. Ed he did not move. He dared not.

Then it sounded like an officer came into the bunker and shouted some orders. The shooting stopped. The bayonets came out and the Chinese, as they went around the bunker, started bayoneting the wounded. Ed could hear the screams . A Chinese soldier stood on

**the body on top of Ed and bayoneted that soldier to make sure he was dead but the bayonet did not come through to reach Ed. The Chinese took no prisoners. Ed never moved but prayed and figured he would never see another sunrise. Then a Chinese voice with authority was shouting, this time inside the bunker.**

**Ed heard the noise of the Chinese rushing out of the bunker. A whistle blew outside and quiet arrived. There was no sound of bugles and the gunfire receded into the distance. Apparently, the Chinese climbed the hill to attack other positions.**

**The smell in the bunker was overpowering. Smells of blood and gunpowder mixed with the smell of fear and burning flesh. While dying, men had vomited and excreted. Many bled to death and the smell was overpowering only exceeded by the silence. For a full 20 minutes, Ed heard no sound in the bunker. Then a whispered voice in the distance, "Is anybody in here alive?"**

**Hesitantly a second voice, "Yeah I'm over here but I'm hurt. I'm shot in my leg"**

**Another one, "I'm here. I'm under somebody and I'm all right. I'll come get you."**

**Ed hollered out but his voice was muffled by the arm covering his face, "I've got a couple of minor wounds but I'm good. I'll help."**

**Five men survived that massacre out of the 70 men who were in the bunker. The Chinese were efficient. The Chinese were deliberate. The Chinese were murderous. They took no prisoners. Each of the ones who survived hid under other bodies. The Chinese were eventually stopped and the stalemate continued.**

**To this day no peace treaty has been signed with the North Koreans and the 38th parallel standoff remains as a memory to those who gave their lives at that location.**

**Ed Burns would talk about his experience but said he would never forget the pictures in his head, the noise, and the smells. Ed said he would take those memories with him to his grave.**

**END**