

Black friday descriptive essay

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There are experiences in life that create an everlasting impact on our character. Seeing first hand what kind of intestinal fortitude one possesses can be both rewarding and humbling. Black Friday is the 1st day used by Special Forces Assessment and Selection to test the individuals who volunteer to serve in the elite Army Special Forces Green Berets. Just as many people before me pushed themselves to the absolute limit; I was about to experience my own test of will. Camp Mackall airfield is located a mile or so from the main training area.

The airfield is surrounded on all sides by the thickest pine forest, one that you would think wasn't by accident. The thick summer humidity sucked the oxygen from the air. Amazingly the dew and fog never quite leave the airfield, as if to create a more somber atmosphere. The landing strip itself looks dilapidated and left more as a reminder of a different time. WWII era trucks, rusted and worn, are locked behind a fence as a constant reminder of the pain that will come week three. The smell is almost pleasant, like a candle, creating a false sense of comfort that will soon be shattered.

The training begins before dawn, the time wasn't known since watches weren't allowed. The rustling of 400 eager souls, ready for the pain we all knew was coming, filled the air. Loud bullhorns and exploding ordnance coming from every direction drowned out all attempts to organize the mass of candidates. The jog to the airfield was slow but purposeful, and didn't take very long. Once gathered on the airfield some final instructions were given, groups were made and dispersed evenly throughout the field.

Like gathering for a little game, Green Berets from all over Fort Bragg position themselves with fold out chairs awaiting the excitement of other peoples torment. Some even have food, which adds to the misery of not having normal food for seven days. A local fire truck comes screaming by horns blazing and lights flashing, and parks just to the right of the mass of candidates. I find myself, rifle in hand, closest to the fire truck wondering what is next. The fun begins with an instructor briefly explaining the first “exercise.”

The simple task soon felt like a mountain that never seemed to stop rising. Shortly after I hit the dirt, face first the fire truck begins to point the high pressure hose at me forcing me to either endure the sting or move faster. I crawl for what seemed like forever until I heard a horn signaling this station was done, for now. I stand up and move to the next station, simple rifle exercise was the task. With the rifle only weighing five pounds the movement seemed easy; lift over the head, then down to the midsection, then back up again.

By the hundredth repetition the rifle might as well have weighed a hundred pounds. Next was logs, four hundred pound logs smooth and smelling of past candidates sweat. The task was to lift the log up, as a team, and then lower to the opposite shoulder. This is the first event that tested everyone’s determination and reason for attending the course, sadly candidates began to quit. The weight of the log, and frustration with fellow candidates, contributed to grown men saying they couldn't take it.

The beautiful pine forest backdrop was replaced with bright simulated machine gun fire, exploding ordnance and instructors gawking at every sign

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of weakness. It was somewhere between burpee long jumps and kettle bell swings that I caught a glimpse of a sight that I can still picture today. The fire hose was spraying into the air creating a mist, the muzzle flashes from the machine guns flashed brightly. The three hundred candidates continued moving with such vigor reminding me of why I was there, which gave me the boost I needed to endure several more hours of pure pain.

The jog home was quiet and quick, grown men eager for good meals ready to eat (MREs). The pure joy of being pushed to the point of total discomfort and breaking thru a mental barrier radiated from every man there. As abruptly as it began the day simply just ended. Nothing else about Black Friday is special except the good ole fashioned gut check. The pain, distractions and ridicule were meant to weed out the weak and retain the strong. Realizing this made me appreciate making it thru and now possessing the tools needed to overcome life's obstacles.