

## Falling in with a Rag Tag Bunch

Talk was hushed, only an occasional hint of nervous laughter rose from the predawn staging area.

We were a rag tag regiment, but willing nonetheless. We'd gathered from near and far, each of us deeming the mission worthy, and willing to accept the cost and sacrifices it would entail upon our families. Outside lay enough weaponry and ammunition to hold off an all out Russian ground assault.

After receiving orders, our convoy lit out into the light rain and drove south under the cover of darkness. About twenty minutes before dawn we turned off the pavement and onto an old farmer's road, where we precariously crossed a slippery little span that forded a steep ravine. The lead truck cut deep ruts into the soft earth and the rest of us fell right in behind.

Just short of the ambush zone we hid the trucks along a tree line and filed out into the soggy fields and spread out. I hunkered down in a little patch of cattails, thankful for the cover they provided.

Alertly, I double checked my weapon to make sure I'd shucked a round in the chamber. I knew there'd be no room for error once this September morning came calling.

Within minutes the calm gray skies appeared and were awakened with the crack of gunfire. First one shot, then another, then the whole field was clapping like thunder.

Voices shouted to me from my flank, "Here they come!"

I stabbed my barrel through the cattails, easing off the safety. Hastily I squeezed off three quick blasts. However, to my surprise, the little bird just dipped, dived, and flew right on by; none the worse for wear!

I could hear the other hunters shucking new shells into their guns and mumbled words I'll not repeat. Dove hunting- there's nothing like it.

We soon surmised that the doves weren't flying well in that field, so we headed back to the trucks to try another. Gerald, the land owner, yelled, "Move out," and turned the convoy around.

We followed along behind in his ruts, six or seven trucks back. As we came around the corner to the bridge I noticed something odd.

"What in the world?" I exclaimed.

Gerald's tailgate was pointing to the sky! The culvert had caved in and sent him nose first off into that ravine.

He'd already climbed back up the bank safely. Thankfully, his fancy new double barrel shotgun was unscathed. His brother rushed over, "Wasn't grandma riding with you?" Gerald's eyes got big. "Hold my gun," he said.

We pulled Gerald's truck out with a chain, but we were still in quite a predicament. This only way out was across that slippery half caved bridge.

The older guys gathered around to strategize. However, before they could even scratch their chins the younger bucks were circling around making runs at it. Mud was flying, and engines were revving to a loud chorus of Yee Haws. I felt like I was in a Dukes of Hazard episode!

The older guys just shook their heads in disgust. After much thought, they revealed their much wiser plan. They'd get the younger fellows to drive their trucks across for them. They did. Eventually we all made it; some of us a little worse for wear. Ask Grandma.

Have you ever fallen in with a rag tag bunch? Let me tell you, they'll sure lead you down some slippery slopes. The devil's crew is always running some sort of convoy

under the cover of darkness. Sadly, there appears to be no shortage of volunteers willing to slide over into his ruts.

Somebody's always poking up out of the cattails, "Let's go to the casinos and eat a buffet." Don't do it!!! There are stronger people than you down at the pawn shop right now hocking their kids X-Box for another roll of the dice. Then there's always that new girl at your job batting her eyes at you, "I wish my husband was as understanding and handsome as you." Run!!! You know she's lying. You've looked in the mirror!

Sin is never worth the cost and sacrifice it will entail upon your life, or your family's. It's a shaky bridge to nowhere, and it will cram your nose in the mud faster than you can say Yee Haw. Not to mention, displaying your tailgate for all to see.

If you're already plodding along knee deep in sin right now, repent. Circle back around to the solid foundation God has laid for you in Jesus. He will forgive you and lead you out. It may not be easy, it may take time, and you may come out a little worse for the wear, but at least you will come out! I can testify to it. God will rescue you if you will only humble yourself enough to reach up out of the ditch for His helping hand.

But anyway- It's much easier walking through this life when you stay on the straight and narrow and keep your boots clean. Don't say you can't do it. The Bible promises. *(But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it. 1 Corinthians 10:13 NLT).*

-Guy Sheffield 3-02-06