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Mission Perilous

To Friends and Family, I am currently writing this on my deathbed. If I had to describe this mission in one word, I would describe it as perilous. Mission Perilous, which meant full of danger and risk, was what I would recall as my last mission. It all started on the journey to Afghanistan, to bomb a terrorist camp near Kabul.

“Alpha, do you copy,” I said as I maneuvered through the infinite vastness of the beautiful sky.

“Yes Viper, preparing the dismissal of the bomb,” my partner said through the radio.

As I was looking through the glass of the jet, I could see the majestic cities bordering Kabul. The white snowy mountains stretched beyond the alluring city, which was dotted with sky-high buildings. On the contrary, I saw pitch-black trucks circling the city. The people in the trucks were shooting at the US soldiers on the ground. When my squadron and I approached a lower altitude, I could see blood splattered across the gray walls of the buildings. Dead soldiers lay everywhere, with bullets flying in the sky ready to pierce through anything. Through all the chaos, all I could hear were the gunshots of soldiers from the hostile area. Finally, in the near distance, I could see our target was within reach.

“Alpha, beginning the dismissal of the bomb,” I announced through the radio.

“Yes, Major Green, clearing skies for dismissal,” my comrade responded.

But then suddenly on my radar, I could see two green dots approaching. *It was just back up*, I thought while hearing the rapid beeping from the radar.

However, in the corner of my eye, I saw a ball of fire and metal falling from the sky. As I looked behind me, a pack of unfamiliar jets trailed behind us, firing at us by the second. We were getting ambushed. Our squadron fought back and shot down the enemy jets, but it was too late. We were outnumbered—it was too risky.

Without hesitation, I screamed on the radio, “Alpha do you copy? Retreat!” and immediately maneuvered in the other direction.

None of my comrades responded to my radio message. I had to assume everyone else was dead. In the meantime, I was circling the skies till the coast was clear. Once it was, I decided to keep going.

While heading toward the bombing site, I saw many of my squadron’s jets in the fields set aflame and reduced to metal bits. Around the jets, there were no signs of survivors. A feeling of horror flooded my brain like a tsunami. I knew I was the last pilot alive. Then underneath, I could see the camp that I was planning to bomb. I could hear the terrorist with torn-up clothes screaming, “Load the weapons,” as I lowered altitude. When my plane went into autopilot, I released the bomb. When it dropped, I could feel a wave of heat rush toward me as the bomb let out a thunderous roar. Now, instead of a camp, it was a burning graveyard with no one in sight. Everything was on fire—the trucks, the tents, and, most importantly, the supplies of weapons.

I started making my way back to the entry point. However, instead of a sense of relief, grief overwhelmed my brain. All I could think of was one question. I could not help but think, *was it the wrong decision to retreat?* Suddenly—BANG—I heard a sound from my engine on

the side of the jet. When I looked at the engine it was on fire with bullet holes. Behind the jet, an enemy aircraft was firing toward me with no mercy. I was trying to get hold of my jet, but the engine was down, and I could not control it.

Parachuting was the only option to reach the US base. Once the plane lowered its altitude, I jumped. In the sky, negative emotions were flowing in my mind at an incomprehensible speed. I could feel my heart beating at full tilt while I fell into this blue lifeless void. Fortunately, I was low enough to activate the parachute. As I pulled the strap near my leg, a fabric device flung right out, floating me to safety. In the sky, many gunshots drifted through the breeze, ready to penetrate anything.

While trying to calm myself down I heard a blaring sound and felt a bullet whizz right over me. When I looked up, I could see a big hole in the silky fabric of my parachute. A bullet had pierced through my parachute, leading me to fall to my demise. In the sky, I was petrified from the fear of losing everything. Suddenly, all I felt was a hard landing on the ground. While arising, I felt lightheaded as I looked up at the blazing hot sun. Then, in a blink of an eye, the world slowly turned black.

When my eyes opened faintly, I was on a white bed in a silent vacant room. I tried to get up but could barely utter a single breath without gasping for air. Then, right across me, a doctor with a military uniform and a stethoscope hanging around his neck entered the room.

“I am sorry Major Green, but you might want to send your goodbyes to your family,” the doctor abruptly said.

He continued, “You’re suffering from internal bleeding because of your ruptured lungs, and we cannot treat it here at camp. Unfortunately, if we transfer you to a hospital, by the time you reach it, you won’t make it in time.”

I stared at the doctor in shock. The room went Pindrop silence. *At least I don’t have to live with the guilt of my squadron dying because of me.* The least I could do was to let someone remember my squadron and this mission. With my final breaths, I grabbed a pen and paper and knew exactly what to write about to my family... Mission Perilous.