



## Glitch Immersion

### The Great Assault

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As I sat at the Stogies Bar and Grill, I sipped my glass of bourbon reminiscing with myself about times passed. I have always particularly loved this location. The decrepit oak bar top lends itself perfectly to the stale smell of cigarettes and perfume, tranquility to a weary soul. I come here to slip away from reality, against the majority of guidance I've received from my psychologist. I didn't come to Stogies for any company other than my own, even if his candor and haircut implied he was military himself. I kept my gaze on my bourbon. To my dismay he dismounted his bar stool and headed towards mine.



"Sir, I don't mean to intrude but," he said, not caring that I didn't look up as he sat down, "But I just noticed you sitting here and wanted to thank you for the service you provided our country, can I buy you a drink?" My apprehensive attitude faded almost instantly. I forgot I had worn my campaign ball cap today. Normally I only wear it when I'm going to visit with some of my prior service buddies, but today I looked in the mirror and noticed the baldness was spreading like a California wildfire. My wife always reminds me I'm still handsome, but I let embarrassment take the wheel this time. I told the young man I'd love a drink as long as he'd have one with me, he graciously agreed.

Sir, my dad told me some stories about the war. Your platoon is renowned for being the first military force to combat a never before seen enemy. How'd you do it?" I was surprised he knew who I was, but maybe some lucky reporter snapped a picture of me before I went into solitude. "Son in my adventures so far as an old man I have lived through what seems to be thirty lifetimes and seen more than most could fathom." Bourbon always could get me talking. Kid wanted to know? He'd get more than he bargained for, but still wouldn't have a clue what it was like to live it. On July 8th 2016 my life came to a screeching halt and then catapulted into a future of mass confusion and hysteria...."

Standing the in line at Carver's Shoppette on post, I was playing on my smartphone, Boom Beach to be exact, when it started populating multiple headlines flashing from the Fox News App and BBC News App.

"United States President Declares War on Russia"

"All Non-Muslims in the U.S. Receive Death Sentence."

I thought ha! One of my crackpot buddies had hacked my phone. When I began to look around Carver's, everyone else was looking at their phones and tablets in disbelief. One lady, who resembled a not so funny Melissa

McCarthy, began yelling, “see ev’one I told ya this president was gonna get blown up by that Putin guy, y’all better stock up on all your liquor the end of the world is going to start right here in ‘merica.” As crazy as she sounded the way my phone continued to display headlines too ludicrous to continue reading, I began to actually be a little more than unnerved. I bought my Red Bull and Copenhagen and headed back to the company to see if my phone was an isolated incident or if this was really happening.

I tried to text my wife to see if she had received anything of similar nature, but to no avail my phone was not letting me send texts and the call function was disabled; even though I my connection had full bars? What in the samhell was going on? I arrived to the company to find everyone standing in formation. The 1SG and Commander were talking feverishly to one another. I ran to 5th Platoon and took my spot in the ranks. Immediately all of the Soldiers in my section began to bombard me with questions of what was going on and when we were deploying to Russia. I told them I was unsure of what was going on but to lock it in formation while we await guidance from the Commander. 1SG called everyone to attention and passed the formation to the Commander. CPT Salamander had definitely been one of the best commanders I had served with. He knew one of the best tools in his “kit” were his NCO’s.

“Troops today is a monumental day, as it appears we are faced with an old enemy and new mission. The 1SG and I have not received word from higher echelons of where, when, and if we will be deploying. At this time you will go to your quarters and prepare a 72 hour bag. You will return with that bag at 1200 hours and we will be on standby here at Company HQ until the FRAGO has been published. 1SG post.” 1SG turned to the formation and told us to make haste and to try and make what arrangement’s we could to ensure our family was safe before returning at 1200.

I went home to find my wife slumped on the couch, staring at the television. I heard the emergency television prompt say, “stay in your homes this is an emergency broadcast.” She looked up at me with her deep blue eyes and asked why I was home and if this was real. I told her my orders and she punched me right in the gut. “Why did you do that?” I coughed. “Because the girls and I need you the Army has plenty of other Soldiers why it is always you,” she cried. I stood looking her in the eyes before I reached over and put my arms around her. Having only returned from my last deployment 90 days ago, I knew how she was hurting to watch me abruptly disappear from being husband and father yet again. That’s when I heard the sound that I’m sure none of us ever want to hear while we anywhere near our loved ones, the Air Raid Siren.

I ran outside to be confronted with one of the scariest things I had ever seen..., until later that day. A formation of at least 100 sixteen foot quadcopters, were moving in synchronized concert. These airframes were unmanned loaded with cameras, some type antenna with a globe, and what appeared to be a 30mm mini-gun. I pivoted around and dragged my wife and kids back inside. I told them to pack their bags and that they were coming with me to HQ to ensure that these UAV’s were friendly not enemy. Everyone packed and my family and I cautiously headed to the company area.

Everyone else in the company appeared to have the same idea of bringing family. 1SG came to the day room carrying his M9 pistol holstered and M4 Carbine slung. I felt like I had to be deeply immersed in a vivid nightmare. And if not that, then my 1SG, emulating Rambo was a joke.

He was not joking. “Troops draw your weapons I don’t know who those big ass remote control toys belong to but if it’s not us then we need to be ready to shoot them down.” I had my weapon and my family, and that should have been enough to feel a little bit of security, but I had to accept 100 rounds that we had on hand in the Arms room was going to our Supply Sergeant and his driver so they could drive to the ammo yard and draw more. I didn’t know whether to feel confident or crushed, watching that ammo drive away from my family and the families of my company.

From our company area the Airfield was only about a half a mile away and I could hear the “birds” begin to start their engines. The hair stood up on the back of my neck when I had the crackling of energy that was coming from the “globes” massed on top of the quadcopters. Everyone one of those UAVs begin making the same sound

and then-VA-BOOM!

With the bright emission of blue light and a rush of wind the engines on all the helicopters from our base died. Having always been a big fan of Call of Duty I was 99.9% sure that some new form of EMP had just killed the chance of us having any of our Rotary Winged Calvary to come to our rescue. I ordered everyone back inside until our ammo arrived.

Throughout the following 30 minutes I huddled together with the rest of company leadership, scratching our heads to try to stage a plan on how we exactly were going to combat the drones that were hovering over our heads. How in the world did they even make it into the Continental U.S.? The only semi-conclusion I could deduce was that they were delivered in small unmanned submersibles able to the surface and release the quadcopters near their destination. We didn't want to just take aim from the company, the risk to our families was too high. We settled on leaving a ten Soldier detail to guard and defend the families in the company area. 2nd platoon and 3rd platoon would begin movement in an easterly direction and take cover and dig in good fortified fighting positions to the East of the Shoppette. 4th and 5th Platoon to flank westward from the company and Shoppette to do the exact same thing once the other platoon sergeants and I had our troops in position we would open fire. After the UAVs were shot down we would be able to establish communication with our echelons of command.

We stood there, backwards planning the upcoming operations advantages and disadvantages to make sure we'd thought of every contingency. The door to company flies open, instinctively weapons with no ammo we at the ready all around the room. A bloody faced SPC Hashim, the Supply Sergeants driver, out of breathe and scared stumbled into the room, "says SGT Adams is gone the mirrors killed him."

With bewilderment on all of our faces I asked SPC Hashim to take a seat at the table. "SPC Hashim could you please recall with as many details as you can how the sam hell mirrors killed SGT Adams and did you retrieve the ammo?"

Hashim told us that he and SGT Adams had a smooth ride to the ammo supply point, but the line outside the gate was backed up about ten or so trucks deep. We inched forward a little at a time. We kept inching forward for about thirty minutes until SGT Adams became impatient and wanted to walk up to the gate and see what was going on. As soon as SGT Adams hopped out of the Humvee he looked at me and said I needed to go back to drivers training because even waiting in line he couldn't stay on the road. I didn't have the faintest idea what he was talking about, but I didn't have time to reply before SGT Adams walked forward and disappeared momentarily as if he had just walked through a trans-dimensional wall. At that, a couple of men burst out laughing in disbelief. I shot them a look before motioning Hashim to continue.

"A minute later he came back into my view looking scared. He kept looking around and went to look under the truck for whatever was creating the illusion. He said it had to be close, since the radius of the illusion was so small. He found about six silver dollar sized drones with a small rotary wing feature had clasped themselves to our vehicle.

SPC Hashim eyes began to water, and he said, "SGT Adams hopped back in the vehicle and said that he believed the drones were leading the two of them to drive right off the small cliff just ten feet in front of us as there were three Humvees at the bottom when he walked through the projection."

To be continued...

*Photo Credit: composite of Call of Duty Black Ops 2 Backgrounds by Call of Duty Black Ops 2 Backgrounds by fastcocreate.com and M1A2 Abrams Muzzle Blast - U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Austin McGuin and Resupply by UH-60 Black Hawk by Sgt. Juan F. Jimenez, 1BCT, 82nd ABN DIV PAO*