

Jumping Out of Airplanes

Neil Brian Davis was an Australian combat cameraman who achieved worldwide recognition for his work as a photojournalist during the Vietnam War and other Indochinese conflicts.

In the book, *One Crowded Hour*, author Tim Bowden tells a story about an incident that happened in Borneo during the confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia in 1964.

A group of Gurkhas from Nepal was asked if they would be willing to jump from transport planes into combat against the Indonesians if the need arose. The Gurkhas had the right to turn down the request because they had never been trained as paratroopers. Bowden quotes Davis's account of the story:



“Now the Gurkhas usually agreed to anything, but on this occasion they provisionally rejected the plan. But the next day, one of their non-commissioned officers sought out the British officer who made the request and said they had discussed the matter further and would be prepared to jump under certain conditions.

“‘What are they?’ asked the British officer.

“The Gurkhas told him they would jump if the land was marshy or reasonably soft with no rocky outcrops, because they were inexperienced in falling. The British officer considered this, and said the dropping area would almost certainly be over jungle, and there would not be rocky outcrops, so that seemed all right. Was there anything else?

“Yes, said the Gurkhas. They wanted the plane to fly as slowly as possible and no more than 100 feet high. The British officer pointed out the planes always did fly as slowly as possible when dropping troops, but to jump from 100 feet was impossible, because the parachutes would not open in time from that height.

“‘Oh,’ said the Gurkhas, ‘that’s all right, then. We’ll jump with parachutes anywhere. You didn’t mention parachutes before!’”

Consider what the Gurkhas were willing to do. Any military unit – or any other organization – can use such Gurkha-like commitment and courage.

(more)

What about you? Do you display extraordinary commitment and courage...

- To your marriage?
- To your job?
- To your country?
- And, most of all, to your Lord?

Whatever we truly believe in requires the demonstration of these qualities. Some introspection is in order as we approach a new year and resolutions we will make.

– Beecher Hunter