

*My brother, Belton, and I hit the beach at Iwo Jima under intense enemy fire. I tried to get my men off the beach as fast as I could to keep them from getting hit. As we worked our way up a hill with enemy shells and artillery fire falling all around us, one of the corporals who had been quite close to me coming up the hill said, "Duffy, I'm getting out of here. It looks as though the entire Japanese Army is trying to kill you." I said, "OK, go ahead."*

*Three days later, that same corporal returned and said, "Duffy can my squad dig in by you?"*

*"I thought you wanted to get as far away from me as you could."*

*"I did, but if ever I saw a man with a charmed life, it's you. Can I dig in next to you?"*

*I told him he could. Then I reflected on what he had said about my having a charmed life, and thought, "No, not charmed, but guided and blessed by one higher, oh, much higher than I."*

*The battle raged on, and our unit found itself under continuous heavy fire. I was about twenty-five yards ahead of my unit and moving up when a mortar shell landed at my head so close that the blast of dirt completely covered me. A marine in a foxhole just to my left got killed, and my platoon sergeant came forward to help. He picked up the rifle of the marine who had just been killed, and looked back toward me shaking his head thinking, "they got Duffy." When he returned to the line, my brother asked him, "Is Duffy okay?"*

*The platoon sergeant didn't have the heart to tell*

*him what he really thought. He said, "I think he's okay."*

*At about that moment, I crawled out from under the dirt, and looked over the edge of the hole and saw Belton. Yes, he was looking for a sign from me indicating that I was okay. I waved assuring him I was alright.*

*The fighting on Iwo Jima was tough. Nevertheless, American Marines moved forward slowly against a very determined enemy. I received orders from the platoon leader, a Lieutenant, to move my men following right behind. I told them that I was going to move forward again, and I wanted them to hold their positions until I motioned for them to move up. I left my foxhole and ran forward. I couldn't find any shell holes nearby for cover. The closest one was about fifty yards ahead, and I ran full speed until I dove into one and felt safe. I knew I had to find a better way before my men could advance, so I peered over the edge of my hole. As I signaled the men not to come up, I got hit! The bullets hit my neck, entered my chest, and came out my back. I tried to call for help, but I could not use my voice, no sound would come out.*

*I turned to my Heavenly Father for help. I knew that I was hit badly and that I didn't want to die. As I prayed for a long time begging for my life, the Lord saw fit to restore my voice. The first words that I muttered were, "No God, not now, please not yet." Belton sensed that I was in trouble, and he jumped to come to my aid. The Lieutenant grabbed him saying,*

*"It's not possible to help your brother. I saw him raise up, and he got hit in the head, there is no sense of both of you getting killed. You can't get through. No one could get through."*

*He didn't know my brother. No power on earth could have prevented him from coming to my aid. Belton was always there. All through the battle, he had watched over and protected me in everything I did. Time and time again, he had covered me as I moved from foxhole to foxhole giving orders to my men or words of encouragement. In everything, he has been the most wonderful brother any fellow could have. After we are through this life, I hope he might say the same for me.*

*Unconcerned about his own safety, Belton headed out from the lines, with bullets flying all around him. He ran most of the way through the most intense enemy fire. No one believed that any mortal could get through, but Belton did, not once but three times. Three times, he went back and forth, risking his life for me, his brother. When he arrived, he knew that I was hit bad. He tore off my shirt and administered first aid. Then he anointed me with oil and blessed me before returning for a corpsman saying, "Hang on, Duffy, I'll get help and we'll get you out of here."*

*He went back through heavy fire and returned with a corpsman who gave blood plasma to me. Belton made a third trip to get our troops to open fire on the hill above and, once again, made it through heavy fire. He told the marines to cover him and the*

*corpsman as they were going to bring me out, and they did.*

*Three times, my brother risked his life to save me. He went into an area that no one thought was possible to go through even once without being killed. Why was he able to do it? Because there is nothing impossible when God has his protecting arm around. On that day, and at that place, he had his protecting arm around us.*

(Maher, *For God*, 31-33)