

5 Characteristics of Brothers in Arms

Michael Durant sat in the seat of his crashed “Super Six-Four” Black Hawk helicopter. He had a broken femur and crushed some vertebrae in his spine. He was the only conscious crewmember of the aircraft that was now surrounded by Somali militia.

Enemy fire began to hit all around him. Unable to move, he picked up his weapon and began firing from his seat in the cockpit. Durant stood alone as the surrounding mob descended upon him.

In the safety of their own helicopter were Delta Force snipers, Randy Shughart and Gary Gordon. Realizing the only chance for the downed crew’s survival was ground support, they quickly volunteered. After three persistent requests, they were given the green light. They hit the deck 100 meters from the crash site and fought their way there.

Just as Michael Durant began firing for the first time, Shughart and Gordon arrived. They pulled Durant from the aircraft and laid him in a safe place. Then they went to the front and entered into tenacious fighting.

Gordon fell, mortally wounded. Shughart grabbed Gordon’s rifle and brought it to Durant. Then he went to the front of the aircraft, never to be seen again. Gordon and Shughart were posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Durant credits them for saving his life.

Michael Durant described the events this way: “When it got ugly ... when you get into a situation like that ... I’m fighting for the guy next to me. I’m fighting for my comrades.”

As we celebrate Memorial Day, let’s pause and remember these heroes and glean characteristics of true friendship. What

would it look like if we had friendships like this in our everyday lives? What difference would it make in our marriages?

Marriage is not war, but it has its difficulties. Having brothers in arms can make all the difference. Here are five characteristics brothers in arms share:

1. Love. This goes beyond warm feelings and a bond. Love is a choice. It is about putting someone else before oneself. It's about giving someone else honor. All of the characteristics below are born out of love. We were created to love and to be loved. It is the deepest human need. Is there a friend you have loved without looking for anything in return?

2. Sacrifice. This is about being at someone's side regardless of the cost. It's the willingness to give up things of significant worth for the benefit of another. Sacrifice can be shown in big ways, like traveling a considerable distance to be with a friend in need. It can be shown in smaller ways, like losing some sleep by taking a late-night phone call. In what ways have you sacrificed for a friend lately?

3. Faithfulness. This is about being dependable through good times and bad, someone your friends can truly count on. You endure and are consistently reliable. When things were at their worst, Shughart and Gordon were by Durant's side. They shared his burden when they didn't have to. How can you share in a friend's burden?

4. Honesty. Someone who is honest is someone who's willing to be truthful even when it is hard. "As iron sharpens iron, so does one man to another." We sharpen one another by holding one another accountable when we get out of line. It takes courage to say the difficult thing when we see a friend going down a destructive path. We have to be willing to be vulnerable with our weaknesses first in many circumstances. Is there a friend you can be completely real with?

5. Trust. Faithfulness and honesty build trust. You have won your friend's full confidence. This is earned. As you do this over time, the bond will grow deeper. More will be shared and the part you will play in your friend's life will increase. How much trust have you earned with your friends?

These characteristics feed one another. As you live this out, your friendships will become richer.

Huddle up with your kids and ask them what it means to be a good friend.

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