



The Battle of Falmouth Springs

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Our team had the advantage. We were on the near side of the Suwannee. This meant team two had to cross the river. They would use the Hillman bridge, so we planned our first ambush in the thick brush of the riverbank on our side of the bridge. Our spike camps were safe zones. We could not attack them in theirs, nor they in ours. It was foggy that morning along the banks, as we lay waiting for the enemy to advance. The air was thick and dripping off the trees, tapping all the leaves below. The aroma of bacon and campfire was flowing down river with the fog from the campground nearby.

We must have been there for over an hour smelling that bacon, huddled silently behind trees and shrubs. Suddenly I felt a sting on the back of my neck! At first, I thought it was a bee. Then I heard a whiz go by. I didn't even hear the crack of the BB gun. It was Eric and his posse! They had crossed upriver and doubled back behind us. I yelled, "Ambush!" I turned and quickly started firing at things that looked like bodies from way off. My team followed suit until one BB finally found a human target. We heard an ouch and saw some movement. Now we knew where they were. The battle continued, converging closer and closer to each other. BB's were flying through the air at Mach speed. It was dangerous to be anywhere in the vicinity.

In the fog of war, confusion sets in quickly. We had a rule of no more than three pumps per shot, but as we converged, Marc had one long-distance shot still loaded in the chamber. When Bo dove out from behind a cypress knee, Marc let him have it. Pow! Right in the meat of his calf. It went through his pants and into his leg. I yelled, "Medic!" and the battle ceased. On rare occasions, when a BB would pierce our skin, we would call off the struggle to administer first aid. Duct tape and a fuzzy leaf of Lambs Ear would usually do the trick. It was a short battle, but an epic one, while it lasted! With Eric's team soppin' wet and my team battle scarred, we decided to head back to Falmouth and recover.

This was the last of the battles of Falmouth Springs, that is for us anyway. Bo got initiated into the gang that night as a veteran. He wasn't a newbie anymore. He had a battle scar to prove it. We limped back to Falmouth to hand over the staff to Bo. All of us were full of whelps and bruises. We spent a couple more days out there recovering in the ice-cold spring. James caught Poison Ivy. John, Eric, and I went to Basic Training a few days later. I never saw John again. I found Eric a couple years later at Camp Warrior

in Korea, where we exchanged memorable moments and laughs for the next year or so. My kid brother eventually took over the reins and the staff of the Magnificent Seven. I am told the orbs still float around the forest looking for half-wild teenagers to camp with, which makes me wonder, are the trails we blazed all grown over now, and are there still some kids left who dare to play out there?