

Blog 44 – Summer Camp in Taiwan (Part Two)



At the summer camp in Taiwan, we did a bunch of exhilarating activities including tightrope walking, attempting to survive in the wilderness, paintball, teamwork games, swimming and quite a few more. But of these activities, there are two that I enjoyed most: my first time playing paintball and playing the late night games that included team work and of course, a house full of laughter.



The morning of the third day, the whole group was getting real giddy about paintball. Especially since our coach Monster was scaring the younger kids by telling them that paintballs hurt so much, they leave bruises the size of your fist. But of course they were just rumors (a comforting thought, but I knew the bruises were probably true). We hopped into these army camouflage patterned suits and a black, tough protection vest. I wasn't nervous for paintball at all; I mean what damage can they do if you're hiding behind the big tires where nothing can get to you (also trying to comfort myself)? In no time, our team had our red masks on and big guns lock and loaded, but that was when I really started panicking. Even though I was wearing my glasses, I was struggling to see my own fingers through the dirt splattered, dusty old mask. But before I could try cleaning it up with my sleeve, the whistle was off and we ran off to our hiding places. I have to admit that I was definitely

not the best soldier in our army. I settled my gun in a crack between the tires and pulled the trigger pretty randomly since I couldn't see a thing that was on the other side. After a while, I felt my gun was really light when I pulled the trigger, it didn't jerk anymore. I was out of bullets and we were only halfway through the game!! I started sweating under all that gear and embarrassment when suddenly I heard a loud slam somewhere and I staggered backwards onto my butt. At first I didn't realize what the sound was, but I did notice that I was drooling! Or at least I thought I was. I bit at my bottom lip and then tasted something so disgusting, it was worth throwing up for. I went to feel the unknown liquid and examined the slimy green... substance. I was shot. Boy was I glad that mask was there! I know it might've been dirty but it was a dang good protection!



Later that day, the coach introduced us to another activity called Assist the Frontline, which also had a connection with the coach's background as a retired army officer. There was one person in each group who was the frontline and the rest of the group was the rear service people who "assist" him. The coach would call out any object in the room and the rear service people would have to gather it and hand it straight to the frontline as quickly as possible. In order to add in a bit more motivation, the coach said that the group who couldn't gather the objects on time, would be scrubbing the rusty twenty stalls of the public bathroom. Well not to be a person with poor sportsmanship, but I was definitely not prepared to be a cleaning lady for those boys who so called "accidentally" overflowed the toilet with toilet paper. The game was on! Whatever the coach ordered, we were up to the game to supply our frontline with it. Every kid in the room was running around frantically collecting crazy things like bags, shirts, bottles, mosquitoes, flip flops and even hair. By the end of the game, not only did some of the boys contribute their shirts, they had also given up their shorts, standing there with only their underwear on. It was all to avoid the big punishment at first, but as the game stretched on, everyone was happily in for the fun of it. Through the duration of the game, people were in tears, smiling from ear to ear with eyes shaped like crescent moons, trying to keep up with the chaos in the room and bombarding the front-lines with object after object! But that wasn't it. Our last mission was to give the front line a whole new makeover to display everything that we gave him. Our group's outfit didn't work out very well but with a couple of accents here and there we managed to make it look something near the borderline of an outfit. At the very end of the day, the front lines of each group were required to do a catwalk down the room swaying their hips from side to side while someone from each group stood there explaining the outfit, saying things like "this man is all about the FASHION. Not fashion, but FASHION."



That was a night that I shed the most tears in the history of laughing, acting as one of the many spotlights of the time I spent at that summer camp. As kids with a limited Chinese vocabulary, my Floridian friends Anna and Willow both enjoyed the activities a lot. We were all surprised by how other kids in the summer camp knew how to speak a great deal of English, helping them with instructions I didn't understand, especially our roommates. Sure, we had many adventures and I'm sure we all got a lot more closer to the outdoors, but nothing can ever beat a good laugh with friends. Every summer has a story and the memories from those stories are often the most precious. Well, at least I know this one was.

