

Firing Range

by:

Dr. L. Steven Cheairs

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Private Bill Jones had eagerly awaited the sight of this huge laser cannon all his life. Every since he was a small child, when his dad had told him about these guns Bill had longed to become a gunner and sit behind the control panel. Now he had completed basic military training and was about to begin gunnery school. Bill adjusted his helmet's visor as his eyes followed the barrel of the cannon into the jet black darkness of the eternal night sky found upon the asteroid gun platform at the outer edge of the solar system.

"Private Jones would you mind joining us?" The voice growled in Bill's headset.

Bill quickly returned to life and ran to join his comrades. "Sorry Sarge."

"Mr. Jones what do you think you are, some tourist?"

"No Sarge, sorry Sarge."

"If any more of you clowns want to stop for sight seeing, I will give you a lot of sight seeing. One more sightseer and we will take a little walk around this asteroid. Do I make my self clear?"

A jumble of acknowledgments echoed in everyone's helmet.

“Form up.”

Quickly everyone fell into formation.

“Gentlemen welcome to camp Farshot. Each and every one of you has demonstrated superior abilities to be assigned to this post. Over the next six months we will work hard together to turn each and every one of you into a long range laser gunner. The taxpayers are being asked to spend a fortune to provide this training for you. It is my responsibility to insure that the taxpayers get their moneys worth.

These laser cannons represent the finest example of our civilization technology. There exists no more precision instrument then these cannons. Do you realize that the mirror surfaces are accurate down to a single layer of atoms? There is not a single defect in this surface. And the accuracy of the mirror's parallelism is such that a beam from one of these cannon's cavities will not diverge to any measurable amount at the distance of a light year.

Most everyone thinks these guns exist to destroy a hostile enemy. However, I believe they are much more, they are works of art. You will be very proud in six months when you have earned the right to be awarded the silver cannon to wear on your chest. And maybe someday one of you may even wear the golden cannon.”

Private Bill Jones thought to himself that the day would come when his chest would bear the golden cannon.

Over the following weeks, Private Jones was sent from class to class where he was taught the theory behind the laser cannons. To his dismay, week after week passed without him ever coming close to an actual laser cannon. Time passed.

Eventually the day came when it was announced that each of the gunnery students would be paired with an experienced gunner, for hands on training. Private Jones was paired with Corporal Susan Johnson.

Susan was a very attractive young woman, a fact that Private Jones was not officially aloud to notice. But he did notice the long brown hair flowing down her back, her green eyes, and her flawless completion. He also noticed the sharply curves of her hips, her long graceful legs, and the silver cannon pinned upon that very attractive full formed breast. These observations he of course kept to himself. Private Jones instead tried to concentrate upon what Susan had to teach him about how to fire a laser cannon. This was not an easy task for a young man who had recently finished basic training with its isolation.

Susan began with exercises on the use of the tracking computer and its target display. Linear mass drivers located at various points throughout the rim of the solar system continually fired small chunks of rock. These target rocks were located and tracked by the gunners, who would lock the laser cannon upon them, and generally fire destroying the rock. At this early stage of training Private Jones only tracked and identified the target. The process of locating, tracking and identification Private Jones repeated over and over, hour after hour, and day after day. Months passed as Private Jones became totally sick of this basic gunnery exercise. Susan set beside him day after day watching as he hunted out these little rocks from the blackness of the eternal night.

Finally one day Susan informed Private Jones that he was now ready to take the next step of aiming and locking the cannon upon the target. With great joy Private Jones added these steps to the routine of location, tracking and identification of the target. He loved the feel of the cannon swiveling to point at the target. For a period of time this was great fun, eventually it also became a boring exercise. Private Jones wanted to press the fire button. Weeks passed as Susan watch how quickly and smoothly Private Jones maneuvered the cannon. But unlike Private Jones, she also observed that the accuracy of his aim was not yet close enough to obtain a hit. So she continued to make him repeat the process over and over. Gradually his accuracy was improving and soon he would be ready to press the fire button.

Because the beam spread was so low, the range of these cannons was very great. Due to this large range value, it was standard practice to limit the number of misses. Even in the vastness of space, there was a possibility that someday some random miss would hit some far off object by accident. Therefore no gunner was ever given the permission to fire until their skills were such that the likelihood of a miss was low.

Finally the day came when Susan was confident that 99.999% of the time he would hit the target. Thereafter Private Jones was permitted to conclude the practice exercise with the destruction of the target. Weeks and weeks passed, Private Jones became better and better. He convinced Susan to let him continue on late into the evenings. At first she would stay and watch. Later she would just drop in periodically to check on him. Finally it was accepted by everyone that Private Jones was allowed to practice freely without supervision.

He had become very good with the aim of the cannon. He had soon found and cleared all the targets, which everyone had overlooked. During the evening rest periods the mass drivers were not firing new targets since other gunners were less persistent in their practice. Since Private Jones could not find any more targets he chose a star to use. He knew the rule about firing freely into space, but this was at a star very far off. He told himself he would only fire at this one point and no one would be in danger. Day after day, month after month laser fire was directed at this same point in the night sky.

It wasn't long before the silver cannon was placed upon the chest of Private Jones. But his practice didn't end; he was after the golden cannon. Everyone soon acknowledged that he was the best gunner at this outpost. He continued to shoot at the star day after day. Eventually his firing scores were noted by upper command and the day came when the gold cannon was presented at a great ceremony. He was now one of the few who had ever reached this skill level.

Gradually his obsession with practice lessened. He filled the time with a developing friendship with Susan. In time this friendship gave way to romance, followed by marriage. For years they worked together, served together, loved together, and raised a family together. Time passed and they grew old. Their children now set behind the display of the laser cannon.

The generations gave way to new generations. It became the tradition of the Jones family for its children to serve as gunners. It was so in this generation as well Sam Jones set on duty at the laser cannon looking at his silver cannon. He thought how he would like a gold cannon like the one his great grand father earned. Sam was jarred out of his thoughts by the alarms, which had erupted. Quickly, he scanned his display. There were thousands of ships. They were close in,

how did they get by the sensors. He locked onto one to obtain identification. The ship fired, Sam only had time to swivel and lock before his station melted about him.

The battle lasted only minutes. All the rim defenses were now smoldering. Not one of the ships of the attacking fleet had been hit. Command Admiral KA-su stood on the bridge of his command vessel receiving the report of the phase one success from the ship's captain RO-ma.

KA-su sir, not one of the cannons was even able to fire before we destroyed them. With such weak defenses why would these beasts provoke a war?

RO-ma, I watched many cities burn on our world during the years in which these cannons targeted our system. I worked for years with the designers of this fleet to create the capability to seek revenge after I held my dying son in my arms. Our species had never known war, but these creatures taught us to learn it.

KA-su sir, why do you think they wanted war with us?

RO-ma, it doesn't matter because we will now move on to their cities and teach them the way of war.

Some other works of Dr. Cheairs.



The Doors Back to Eden is a Christian adventure video

The Doors Back to Eden is a Christian adventure video game which is carefully designed to teach Bible truths in a very enjoyable way. The game starts in the desert and ends in heaven eternal. The game comes

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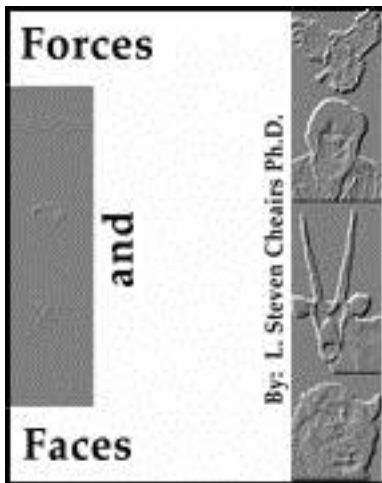
Walk through the tabernacle in all of its splendor and then speak to God as a pillar of fire above the ark with its cherubim. Next enter the city of God and pick fruit from the trees of Life or Knowledge of Good and Evil in Eden. See cherubim as Ezekiel saw them. Also, learn the meaning, which is not some silly UFO.

Requires a Macintosh computer with a CD drive, color screen, and any OS from 6.0 on.

Sorry there is no PC version of this game.

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some stupid apple. Also the rivers of Eden are explained.

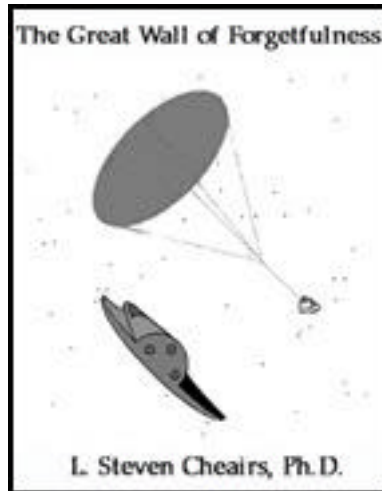
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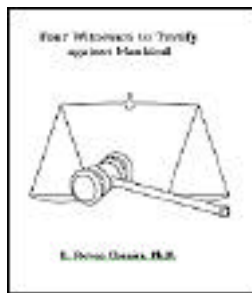
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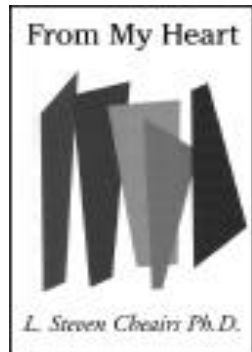
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From My Heart, poems of Dr. L. Steven Cheairs. These fall into various categories. Poems of romance, heart break, about nature, or friendship are all contained in these pages.

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In the booklet Firing Range, Dr. L. Steven Cheairs a knowledgeable physicist /engineer and biblical scholar tells a story of a young man and in so doing shows than many of our everyday actions have unknown effects. These effects may not even be seen in our live times.

L. Steven Cheairs has a B.S. in Physics/Mathematics, M.S. and Ph.D. in engineering. Dr. Cheairs is the author of the books "The Right Hand of Creation" and "Forces and Faces." Dr. Cheairs spent 12 years as a microelectronics engineer and another 14 years as a software engineer. Dr. Cheairs current resides in New Mexico.

