

A Soldier's Story

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On nine-eleven, they had struck the World Trade Center on American soil. Like so many others I felt a strong sense of patriotism, and wanted revenge. My mind made up I enlisted to become a soldier and to participate in the war in Afghanistan. My heart breaks at the thought of leaving my wife and young son, but duty calls and I must go.

Basic training came first and then advance training followed. I learned that as a soldier my job was to protect my family, friends and this county. The invasion mission objective was to dismantle the Al Qaeda organization and end its use of Afghanistan as a base. As a military man at war, I must set my personal feelings aside. Killing the enemy was my only option, because as long as they remained alive they were a lethal threat. In war I must fight and return fire, otherwise I too may become a casualty of war.

Our team's first mission was behind enemy lines. Without warning, we drew suppressive fire, forcing us to scramble for cover. Our hearts pounding, we struggled to identify the enemy's position. As bullets rained in on our position, there was no time for conscience thoughts on morality. Puffs of smoke were clearly visible in the distance. We returned fire until the shooting had stopped, and the enemy was dead.

As the days wore on and missions continued, the blistering heat and choking dust took their toll. Every mission had its life threatening moments. Fear, loneliness and a lack of sleep relentlessly filled my thoughts. I quickly learned that to survive in war I must promptly learn all its terrible lessons or else I will die. Over time I had to build up my mental resistance to the agony and death of many others. I witnessed full-grown men openly weeping for their loss of a friend and companion, and for the anguish they felt by their death. Traumatic events that I witnessed and participated in quickly desensitized me to the horrific gore of war. I began to have horrifying dreams, and I continually had difficulty sleeping.

As the bullets fly right past my head; my vision fades to darkness. Another bullet finds its mark, and it is clear that I am dying. There was so much life yet to live and so much more to accomplish. The thought of leaving my wife and young son fill my heart with sadness.

Because of their sacrifice today, my family will be presented with a purple heart and a folded American flag in appreciation for honorable and faithful service to my country. Though I am now a casualty of war, I pray that I will not be forgotten!

I would have one final wish that all war be ended. That human life is cherished instead of prematurely ended. Why can't we all be free and live in peace together? This is my hope and this is my plea, as my life on earth is ended.