

A 9/11 Reminder to Pray

"My job was to go from house to house looking for bombs," the 19-year-old told me. Joel was the son of a friend of mine. It was hard for me to believe this young man who should be playing video games, going to college or working in the U.S. would spend his day looking for bombs for his unit.

Joel shared his story with my journalism students at the time. We heard a lot of news about the war in Iraq, but I wanted to give my high school class an inside look at the war. The best way to do that was to bring Joel into my class to speak.

I had not heard Joel's story until he shared it with the class. I was shocked when he told us how he went ahead into village marketplaces to make sure they were bomb-free. This cherubic-faced, tall young man walked into dangerous places with the threat of being killed every day.

I guess you could say that is why war is called war. But I believe there is a whole generation of young men and women who are the walking wounded—the living casualties of 9/11.

I attended a funeral of a young man who I believe was a casualty of 9/11. I don't want to name him out of respect for his parents, but he had post-traumatic stress disorder that went untreated. He died tragically when a policeman shot him down because he was holding a rifle that had no cartridges.

Joel and his friend—the unnamed young man—loved God, prayed and had faith. Yet when war comes in all of its fury, everyone gets wounded or scarred. War changes everything like it did for Joel and his friend.

Today, remember to pray for the scarred and wounded young men and women who fought on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan. They were barely out of high school, full of dreams and hopes, and now they are trying to rebuild their lives. Pray for the families who lost their sons, daughters, sisters or brothers in the war. Never forget, and pray.

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