

On Veteran's Day, Remembering Robby

Every Veteran's Day, I think of a young man who was a reservist in the Air Force who returned from Iraq. That trip marked him with a determination to serve his country, but he struggled with the scenes that his boss couldn't even handle. His life spiraled downward and no one knew what to do.

Today I believe that Robby suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. His life ended fatally when a police man shot him while he was brandishing a rifle. The police department officials discovered the rifle had no cartridges, but it was too late.

I've been marked by Robby's life forever. His funeral was one of the biggest that I had been to because no one expects a 20-something's life to end. Robby was a reservist in the Air Force. He worked in transportation but he wanted to do more to serve his country. He donated blood and volunteered to work at a hospital.

Robby cleaned up after surgeries, which meant he had to dispose of amputated body parts. His boss went with him one time and could not go back. When he returned to the United States, he decided to get trained as a combat medic. He knew he would be assigned to a group of Marines who would risk their life protecting him. And he knew he would be in danger walking on land mines.

He had been sent orders to go to Afghanistan the morning he was shot down. I can't imagine the grisly scenes that Robby worked in Iraq. I just know that Robby is one of thousands of the silent wounded among us. They are the young men and women who went to Iraq or Afghanistan and returned to no support, no counseling, and families and friends who didn't understand

what they had been through.

I prayed for Robby's family this morning and for the families of those who have lost sons and daughters prematurely to death. Even now his death stings me with compassion, mercy and a cry to God that I would see the signs of those who are hurting and in pain but too wounded to talk to anyone.

Today on Veteran's Day as we celebrate the service and sacrifice of the millions of military service men and women, pray for the silent wounded who haven't spoken up, but whom we know are hurting. Pray that we will see them. And that we will act.

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