

"THOUGHTS FROM THE HEART"

BY:

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A BULLET GOING BY YOUR HEAD SOUNDS LIKE A FLY-FLYING AT A THOUSAND MILES PER HOUR. THE PEOPLE YOU NEVER EXPECT TO DIE - "DIE" - AND AS I STOOD ABOVE MY FRIEND AS HE LAID ON THAT COLD SLAB OF STEEL AT THE U.S. ARMY CENTRAL MORGUE - DANANG, SOUTH VIETNAM MY MIND DIFTED BACK TO OUR FIRST DAY OF BASIC COMBAT TRAINING AT FORT POLK. I WAS 16 YEARS OF AGE. I HAD ENTERED THE ARMY BY THE USE OF MY TWIN BROTHER WHOM I NAMED AFTER. WHEN HIM AND HIS TWIN DIED UNEXPECTEDLY FOUR DAYS LATER. I AND MY TWIN SISTER WERE BORN FOUR YEARS LATER AND NAMED AFTER THEM. OBTAINING A COPY OF HIS BIRTH RECORD AND A SOCIAL SECURITY CARD I WAS ON MY WAY OF BECOMING A SOLDIER. FROM THE FIRST DAY OF BASIC TRAINING, WE HAD BECOME FRIENDS.

GOING OUR OWN WAY AFTER BASIC, MYSELF GOING TO FORT. SAM HOUSTON FOR MY MEDIC TRAINING, HIM GOING TO FORT. BENNING FOR JUMP SCHOOL- THEN TO FORT BRAGG, A WEEK LEFT OF TRAINING, I WAS CALLED INTO THE SCHOOL COMMANDING OFFICER OFFICE AND TOLD THAT I WAS BEING SENT TO MORTUARY SCIENCE SCHOOL AT FORT. LEE. BEFORE HE WAS SENT TO VIETNAM WE SPEND MOST OF OUR TIME TOGETHER, SINCE HE WAS FROM RICHMOND VIRGINIA, I USE TO GO THERE ON THE WEEKENDS HE WOULD SEND HIS SISTER TO PICK ME UP. I THINK HE WAS TRYING TO HOOK-UP. IT WORKED- WE WOULD GO OUT TOGETHER, HIS SOON TO BE WIFE AND HIS SISTER. AND I WOULD GO CLUISING. THEY WANTED TO GET MARRIED BEFORE HE WENT TO VIETNAM. SO ONE WEEKEND I STOOD AS BEST MAN- AND THEY WERE MARRIED IN THE FAMILY'S BACK YARD WHICH WAS HUGE. AND IT DIDN'T RAIN. AND NOW HERE WE WERE- IT WAS MONSOON SEASON A COLD HARD RAIN AS THE RAIN FELL HARD ON THE METAL ROOF OF THE MORGUE WHICH BROUGHT

ME BACK TO PRESENT DATE. AS I WASHED HIS BODY, TOOK HIS FINGERPRINTS AND ATTACHED HIS DOG TAGS FOR OFFICAL IDENTIFICATION WHICH THE ARMY REQUIRED. I PREPARED HIS BODY FOR THE EMBALMER. WHO GAVE HIM A NUMBER. HE WAS MY FRIEND, HE WAS SOMEBODY SON, HUSBAND, BROTHER, UNCLE, GRANDSON, HE WAS NOT JUST A NUMBER, HE WAS MORE THAN THAT- HE WAS MY FRIEND. A FRIEND I NEED TO VISIT AT THE WALL- A PLACE I HAVE NOT BEEN-ABLE TO VISIT- A PLACE WHERE MY LEG'S WILL NOT TAKE ME, A PLACE WHERE MY HEART IS BURDEN FOR A FRIEND. THE WALL OF BLACK GRANITE WITH OVER 58.000.00 NAMES ON IT. A WALL WHICH MY FRIEND NAME IS ON. A PLACE I NEED TO GO- TO START THE HEALING PROCESS.