



## Things to Ponder

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### The Young Soldier—Aged by War

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“The young soldier is someone’s son, father, brother or friend. Perhaps he is fresh out of college or a kid from off the street trying to find a better future. Maybe he is a teacher, a dropout or a dreamer. Now standing on the threshold of combat in a foreign land, he is faced with something larger than life – to kill or be killed!

He is filled with a patriotic fervor. Pumped up with great expectations; yet so young. Forced to be strong; forced to be brave, yet trembling so on the inside. Trying to find consolation in cigarettes; Skype; books and emails from home; or a familiar movie. Still standing tall; looking smart; gun – checked; ready to go!

But the noise of war makes a new surround sound, heightened by the beat of his pounding heart. Surprised eyes see action unfolding in slow motion, and the blood of fallen comrades flowing freely on unsacred ground. With cold hands touching against cold metal, the young soldier and his gun both become a weapon of pure destruction, and each of his shots seems to echo – kill or be killed!

The horrors of war are over now, but have only just begun. Gone are the days when the young soldier’s life was like a song. Gone are carefree thoughts of his once uncluttered mind - now filled with nightmares and sadness, yet cloaked in pride, and a mature, yet sometimes angry, outlook on life. The young soldier, aged by war, returns home, and sees the real world through the eyes of a man!”

—Felicita “Terry” Robinson  
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