



By Nick Alexander

Authors note- *This piece is about a young Afghan soldier struck in the chest plate of his body armour by a directional IED in late 2013. We crossed paths in a US Forward Surgical Team facility about one week prior to the end of my deployment.*

He wakes;

kisses his wife,

dresses then prays.

He walks the short distance to his mates to get a lift to work.

I know him, but I don't know his name.

He is greeted by friends;

they laugh,

complain about their kids.

Then they dress in uniform and step out into the beige streets.

I know them, but I don't know their names.

He rounds the corner;

boom,

ringing.

He's on the ground intact, conscious but dizzy and finding it difficult to breathe. I know this, but I don't know its name.

He arrives in our hospital;

assessed,

scanned.

To the eye he is lucky, inside he is drowning, slowly his lungs inflame. I see him, but I don't check his name.

He's not for us;

MEDROE,

transfer to host nation facility.

Its tearing at me as their skills are insufficient, he needs critical care. He's listening, but I

don't fight for his name.

I wake;

sweating,

heart racing.

He's visited me again, at home, beside my wife, down the hall from my kids. He knows me, but I don't even know his name.

Nick Alexander is a current serving member of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps. He deployed with a small Australian health element to Afghanistan in 2013.

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