

## Roger

By Mitch Z

As the weeks passed my chances of becoming a teacher seemed to disappear into the distance. The army has taken me away from my hometown and we are constantly moving on the ground that my ancestors used for hunting. My three other brothers say that they can protect me but the true fact is that no one can protect you, not out here not in the open. The booms and the bangs frighten the living soul right out of my body. The bright lights that go on every day and night seemed to harmful. Every time that you blink the kid next to you is dead or severely injured. You would not believe the horrible despicable things that I saw such wonders that you yourself couldn't imagine. For these are the moments in my life that have changed not only my physical state but my body as well, "but for now I will and always will be scared of the war!" I live in a small state in western Africa called Ivory Coast; I must not reveal my identity for my life could be endangered, for reasons I must not tell. I go to school for ex-soldier kids; my home is a small concrete shack that I share with my schoolmates. As you might have assumed by now I am an orphan. My favorite food is rice, tomatoes, meat, and fish ground up together. My love for football is like a mothers love for her child, my desire to teach started back when I was 9 years of age I had a passion for teaching other kids to learn new things and to explore the wonders of the mind. To do this I must train my mind to be able to figure out a math equation without having a sheet of paper to help me. I have three brothers and no sisters, my brothers always told me that I was the lucky one since I never got injured in the War. I hope it was for a good reason because I always thought that the other men and children didn't want to shoot the bright lights at a 9 year-old boy who doesn't know where his mother is and how to get back to

her in any way possible. "I remember the time when a group of soldiers came in big vehicles to ask if any of the men or children would like to join their army. How they spoke of such food and clothes also money lots of money, what man/child could refuse such offer. Most of the men signed up but all of the children including me signed up, my father told me it would be an adventure of a lifetime. My mother was worried sick she didn't want me to go, fight in the war to her was like walking to Sion's Gate. I went anyway and I shall and always will regret it for the rest of my life. When we got to the army basecamp there were a lot of dead men/kids in the fields where they had been fighting, the officers said to grab whatever you could without being shot. One of the kids rushed out there and started scavenging through everything; the sad thing is that he was shot the next day by the bright lights. As the day went on my enthusiasm seemed to disappear the want to earn money and fill my stomach and put clothes on my body just disappeared. Then when the most exciting part of my life came to be, I wasn't ready the day that I killed a man. It was the saddest day of my life, "other than the part of me and my three brothers not able to find our mother or father." The week after being dropped off at the campground I was asked by an officer to pick up ammo for the other soldiers since he saw that after I killed a young man in order to save my brother and his friend, I didn't fire another shot. As the days ravaged on I was collecting ammo from the field that we fought on, it was a very dangerous job. But in order to help my country. I needed to do it. After the war I went to the nearest state. It was called Ivory Coast. It was a very beautiful state filled with wonderful thoughtful people and very pretty flowers. There I have spent my life, but for now I will spend it somewhere else. The fact is that we all need help but the help just can't come from your wallet,

it also comes from your heart. And as the weeks passed my dreams of becoming a teacher seemed to disappear into the distance.