

The Story of Roger

By Wyatt

I looked around wondering who would have a job that I could do for them to get food or money, my job was to find food or money to help my family because like most people in the Ivory Coast we all needed food, water, money, and shelter. I started by going to the opposite of my family's home because I haven't gone that way yet and I looked around in search of a job or food, a couple hours later I had found some food in the garbage and it didn't look too bad so I took it home with me and I also got some money when I did a job for some people. I was happy with myself because I didn't come home empty handed which means I know that I'm able to contribute to my family. When I got home I saw my parents but not my 3 other brothers I thought they were out still trying to find money or food, my parents smiled at me when they saw me coming but then I heard a loud marching coming from where I just came back from. It was the military we heard that they were recruiting troops men and children, my parents told me to quickly hide and I did. I heard the military officer ask " Do you have any children with you," they lied and said " No". He immediately rushed passed my parents and told some of his other troops to come in and find the children. They knew my parents were lying because they had gone through this before many times. They found me and took me away, right before I left I told my parents in tears, "I love you," and we started marching on.

I saw this happen to many children and it all happened almost exactly like the way I got here eventually we got to the army camp and they said " We are giving you all exactly 1 day to train and after that we go to the battlefield." So I started looking around for somewhere to go to train it because I didn't want to go to war without any training. I headed over to the target range and grabbed a gun and practiced shooting targets and after that I practiced crawling under barb wire and I try to run around. I basically did this all day, the only good thing about my situation was that I actually had food to eat and after we were all done we they told us to sleep because we were going to need it. Right before I fell asleep I thought about my family and that I

hoped they were doing well, my family was lucky that my brothers weren't at the house when I was otherwise my brothers and I would both be in the "same boat".

The next day, we all got up, quickly got dressed, and rushed to get to our food quickly and as soon as we finished eating we were sent off marching to the battlefield or soon to be our..... graves. Once we got there we were told "Shoot anyone who did not look like us and to keep moving no matter what and to not die" (the irony in that), I followed the leader and while we were marching we started getting shelled at (mortar fire) I immediately ran for cover but our leader said " Start running towards them Now!" and I listened to what we said because otherwise I would eventually be killed by the mortar and during that battle I was very lucky because I was in the front running forward but any bullet that got near me basically missed and only hit parts of my clothes and when I got near the enemy we all ducked for cover. When I looked back from where we ran I saw the horror of war, bodies of our army and the enemy lying on the ground. Then suddenly our leader said " CHARGE!" and we followed orders and moved forward 1 more time and this time I pulled out a grenade and threw it directly at the mortar cannon and it blew it up. As soon as that happened the enemies started retreating, we had won.

After that battle the spread us out all around Liberia and I ended up in the Ivory Coast which is east of Liberia I was sent to live in a concrete shack with some other ex-soldier children near my age and we were told to go to a school just down the road from it and they said this was our payment for helping in the war effort and I was mad about that because I wanted to learn new things because I want to be a teacher when I grow up to help kids learn and I definitely don't want them going to the army and seeing those bad images that will stay with you forever. After school is over we play football, which is my favorite sport, and then head home and eat food that I have and then go to sleep and do the same thing we did yesterday again, this is my life.

So in conclusion to end this story, this is where I am now but I plan to eventually find my family and become a teacher when I grow up. My dream of becoming a teacher may be almost impossible but I believe that I can and will achieve my dream, this is my story.

