



KICK for NICK

A Program to Provide Soccer to the Children of Iraq

Pfc. Nicholas A. Madaras
1-68 CAB
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Nick Madaras was raised for a majority of his life in a little town called Wilton, Connecticut. From an early age Nick took a liking for athletics, trying his hand in every imaginable sport. One sport in particular really seemed to be a perfect fit for Nick, soccer. Nick dedicated himself to the sport of soccer; going to summer camps, coaching his younger brother Christopher in the recreation league, and sharpening his skills in the off season with his friends on a local team and playing in the backyard with his sister Marie. Nick played the left flank on defense throughout high school, and although he wasn't the fastest player or have world class skills, there isn't another person on this planet I would trust more to have as my last line of defense than Nick. Nick's work ethic and dedication to the team was something we all strive for, but rarely achieve.

Nick took that work ethic and dedication into the Army with him when he left for basic training in July of 2005. After basic, AIT, and airborne school he was sent to Ft. Carson and prepared for deployment to Iraq. Nick was assigned to the PSD that protected LTC. Fischer, the commander of the 1-68 CAB. The members of the PSD came to love Nicky the way we love him here back at home. He never put himself first, and would do whatever it took to make everyone else's days easier. He had an amazing ability to know what people wanted, and would always take the liberty in making sure it was done to perfection before he was even asked to do so. At the end of his 16 hour days in the Iraqi sun in hostile Baqubah, Iraq, Nick would run across FOB Warhorse to get to the phones and make sure the people he loved back at home knew he was safe. Only when he knew everyone else around him was content, would Nick allow himself to relax.

The war itself at times confused Nick, the way it confuses many others. He believed in what he was doing, and truly wanted to help the people of Iraq. Nick particularly was fond of the Iraqi children. He would see them kicking bags of rocks around the streets trying to play soccer and realized these kids are no different than him. When he was home on leave in July 2006, he rounded up as many balls as he could to bring back to the children of Iraq. Nick figured if a war that had raged on for more than thirty years in the Ivory Coast could be stopped because of soccer, why couldn't one be ended in Iraq?

Nick was killed in action by an IED on September 3rd of 2006 at the age of 19. The men in his unit and all of us back home were completely devastated and continue to mourn to this day. Our way to get back at the men who did this, however, won't be a course of hatred and rage. Instead we are spreading Nick's love of soccer and his dedication to the children of Iraq by sending to Iraq soccer balls to be distributed to the children of Iraq directly by our soldiers in the field. We are all fulfilling Nick's dream by collecting and distributing these balls. Nick's Comrades in Arms have told us that when the times get really rough over there and they're



searching for a reason for all of the madness, they can hand a ball to one of the children and look at their eyes glow with happiness, remember Nick, and realize that yes, it is worth it.



*Written by
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