

Warrior Award

I would like to nominate Todd J. Angell for this year's Warrior Award. Todd is a 2007 graduate of Bethel High School where he was active in NJROTC, finishing out his senior year as Commander of Cadets. Immediately after HS, he joined the US Navy and was accepted into Corpsman School. Todd volunteered to become a Combat Medic, so he could attach to a marine unit knowing full well that would mean deployment to Afghanistan. He joined the 1/8 Marines in September of 2009 and was deployed with them to Afghanistan in August of '10. His unit was a weapons company, and they were sent to a very remote part of eastern Afghanistan- a noted Taliban stronghold. There, Todd put his medic skills to work on a daily basis, as IED casualties for his marines, and Afghanistan soldiers were a common occurrence. He also treated the villagers that lived there for anything from minor cuts and scrapes, to severe injuries from gunshots for those that got caught in the crossfire of almost daily firefights with the Taliban. Todd saved the lives of countless individuals, including that of his best friend who lost both his legs after stepping on an IED, and his Staff Sgt., who Todd raced across an IED laden field in the dark of night to reach his gravely wounded comrade. For those actions, and his demonstration of skilled warfare tactics during times when there was severe fighting and his medic skills were not needed, Todd was nominated for, and awarded, the Silver Star, the 3rd highest Military honor. However, Todd's biggest battle to date has been the war of PTSD when he returned home. Adjustment to civilian life and leaving the trauma of war behind was a bigger battle than any of us had imagined. Always the warrior, Todd has met his battles head on, and continues to fight every day of his life to free himself from the horrors of his 7 months in Afghanistan. He has had to learn to live freely all over again, and to put the ghosts of war behind him. He has associated himself with others that are dealing with the same battles and they are learning to heal together, yet never forgetting those that never made it home. Todd will honor his best friend and comrade, Navy Corpsman Eric Warren, who lost his life this past May in Afghanistan, by establishing a scholarship in their names to be awarded yearly to a graduating NJROTC Cadet at BHS. This is Todd's way preserving the memory of his comrade, yet coping with the loss of a good friend. Todd is a Hero Warrior in every sense of the word, as he has demonstrated as a Navy corpsman who fought for our freedom, and now as a young man who must fight for his own freedom. He has undying love for his Country, and if asked, he would return to war in a heartbeat. He is, and always will be, MY HERO!

Mary Angell