



U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Jimmy Ide and the dog he handled, Daphne, search for explosives during a mission in the Helmand province, Afghanistan. Several hours later, while providing covering fire, Jimmy was hit and killed instantly.

# HE SERVED GOD AND COUNTRY

Story by Tom Price

After two combat tours in Iraq, Staff Sergeant Jimmy Ide was a month shy of completing his deployment in Afghanistan. He surrendered his life to Christ in 2003 after his first deployment in Iraq and gave his life defending his country on August 29, 2010.



Jimmy, wife Mandy, and children. At the time of his death, Trinity was 7 years old and James was 16 months.

**“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”**

John 15:13

“Sergeant Ide’s been hit! Sergeant Ide has been hit!” Captain Brian could hardly believe the words that crackled out of the radio of his modified fighting vehicle. The Special Forces unit Brian commanded had been engaged in firefights throughout the week with insurgents from Afghanistan’s Taliban. He knew that his friend, Staff Sergeant Jimmy Ide, had been providing suppressing fire as the unit’s vehicles maneuvered through the hostile Afghan high desert. Brian and Jimmy had been great friends for several years—they attended the same Calvary Fellowship while stationed at Fort Hood, TX, had grown together in their faith in Christ, and ended up in the same unit in the Helmand province.

*Surely it won’t be that bad*, Brian reassured himself as his vehicle raced to find safe cover to check on Sergeant Ide’s status. He prayed that Jimmy would be OK and that his injuries would be non-life threatening. Just the night before, while setting up their camp, both Jimmy and Brian had noticed their soldiers’ apprehension. Combat had been sporadic but intense. Desiring to calm everyone’s nerves that evening, Jimmy had yelled out to Brian so that everyone could hear, “Hey Captain, what’s the good word for tonight?”



Jimmy, center, leads men in prayer in 2008 after a service at CF Bell County, Killeen, TX. After coming to Christ, Jimmy became a prayer warrior and evangelist.

Photo by Jana Rivera

Brian shared that he had been meditating on 2 Timothy 1:7, “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” As Jimmy took a few bites from his dinner, a pre-packaged military MRE, he shouted back, “That’s a great one but how about this one?” Jimmy quoted Philippians 2:5-9 from memory. He paused and stole a glance at his young comrades, then completed verses 10 and 11 with emphasis.

“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Brian exclaimed, “Roger that, Sergeant!” The troops seemed to relax a little. Brian thought to himself what a wonderful blessing God had given him to have Jimmy attached to his unit. While never foolhardy, Sergeant Ide had unwavering, steadfast courage, secure in knowing that his life was in God’s hands.

Brian was thrust back to the present as his vehicle caught up with the others. But Staff Sergeant Jimmy Ide was already gone. Brian gasped inwardly but kept his emotions in check. He methodically called in a helicopter to retrieve the body. Brian briefly let his thoughts drift to Jimmy’s wife, Mandy, and their two young children at the U.S. Army base in Germany. He dreaded the thought of the knock on Mandy’s door with the news. *The church Jimmy and his family attended while stationed in Germany, Calvary Fellowship Kaiserslautern, will soon be in a state of mourning*, Brian thought to himself. *It will take a little bit longer for the news to reach Calvary Fellowship Bell County in Texas.* Brian wished he could be there with his friends, just for a day, to mourn with them. But he was a soldier and had a job to do.

## A Soldier’s Wife

Mandy Ide was in a state of shock. She wanted all of the past hours, from the fateful knock at the front door until now, to be just a bad dream. She remembered Jimmy’s instructions to her in case anything ever happened. Between painful phone calls back to the States, Mandy opened the couple’s Facebook page. She wrote: “I do not know what to say, but this is the way Jimmy asked me to tell his friends. Jimmy passed away this morning. He died in combat in Afghanistan. Jimmy loved his job and if he could choose a way

to go, this would be it.” She sighed, remembering her husband’s tour of duty would have been over in one month and he would have been on his way back to her.

Seven-year-old Trinity would have many wonderful memories of her father; when not deployed, Jimmy spent most of his spare time playing with her. Mandy realized that videos and photographs would be 16-month-old James’ only visual connection to his dad.

She knew that God had called Jimmy home but she missed her husband more than she felt she could bear. “It is amazing how many people are being led to the Lord through him yet he is no longer here,” Mandy said. “Jimmy truly was an amazing person but I guess the Lord said his mission is over and took Jimmy home to be with Him.”

Someone from their church remembered seeing Jimmy featured in an issue of *Calvary Chapel Magazine*. She found some comfort in re-reading Jimmy’s testimony of how he came to a relationship with Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

### A Soldier Surrenders

In the Spring 2006 *Calvary Chapel Magazine* article, Jimmy recalled when a rocket-propelled grenade came within inches of his head during his first deployment to Iraq. “I promised the Lord that if I made it out of Iraq alive, I would start learning more about Him.” After returning to Fort Hood, TX, he began to search for a church where he could grow in his knowledge of God. After attending several fellowships, one in which he dedicated his life to Christ, a friend brought Jimmy to Calvary Fellowship Bell County in Killeen, TX. He quickly grew there in his relationship with the Lord. He shared in the 2006 article, “Sometimes I get to teach someone about what God’s Word says, and sometimes I get to defend my faith. I try to let the light of Jesus reflect off of me. I just don’t know how I ever survived without a relationship with my Creator.”

The church’s pastor, John Newberry, had guided Jimmy as he grew in the knowledge of the Lord. The two spent many hours together and worked well as a team, sharing their faith. Jimmy became a leader in the church.

He went off to war again, on his second deployment to Iraq, but now as a child of



**Soldiers mourn the loss of their comrade at their base in Helmand province.**

God. “As a new believer, I had a peace in my spirit,” said Jimmy. “I have nothing to fear. As God orders my footsteps and guides me through His plans for my life, I can relax knowing that He is by my side every step of the way. I’m living my life for the Creator of the universe.”

### Finishing the Race

Pastor John Newberry had just shared the Gospel message at Jimmy’s memorial service in De Soto, Missouri. The school’s gym had been packed with military personnel and civilians. Even the governor of the state had been in attendance. Now John sat in the hearse that carried Jimmy’s body the 20 miles from the memorial service to the gravesite. John choked back emotion as he witnessed the outpouring of grief and honor paid to his friend. Thousands lined every stretch of the route: police, firemen, officials, and everyday folk saluted or held their hands over their hearts, some openly weeping.



**Jimmy’s boots, weapon, and helmet rest under his photo at the memorial service in Afghanistan.**



**Firemen pay their respects as the 5-mile-long funeral procession makes its way along the 20-mile journey to the burial site from the memorial service.**

*Photo by Jana Rivera*

John laughed when he thought how uncomfortable Jimmy would have been to receive so much attention. But John knew without a shadow of doubt that Sergeant Ide was in the presence of God. “Absent from the body ... present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8b), John thought to himself.

Jimmy’s walk with God and love for his Savior had impacted so many of the congregants at his fellowship; his excitement was contagious. As Jimmy had grown as a Christian, the young soldier was consumed with God’s Word, never being able to get enough. John remembered the times that Jimmy and he had gone out to share their



**Scout troops wait to salute as the hearse passes by his high school in De Soto, MO.**

*Photo by Jana Rivera*

faith. John soon realized that Jimmy was gifted in evangelism and discipling new believers. Somehow, the sergeant’s easy manner put people at ease, never feeling pressured but yet driven to understanding of the reality of their sin against God.

At the gravesite they waited for the five-mile-long train of grievers to arrive. Daughter Trinity sat between her mother, Mandy, and Jimmy’s parents. She watched as the soldiers marched solemnly but crisply with the coffin in which her daddy’s body had been placed. They folded the American flag ever so exactly. Brigadier General David D. Phillips, who had served with Trinity’s father, strode over and knelt down in front of her mother and her.

He told them he clearly remembered the day of the rocket-propelled grenade attack in Iraq that ultimately led Jimmy on a voyage to give his life to Christ. The general then gently stated, “On behalf of a grateful nation,” as he gave Trinity’s mom the folded flag. 🇺🇸

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name.* Philippians 2:5-9



**Brigadier General David D. Phillips presents the flag that draped Jimmy’s coffin to Mandy Ide and daughter, Trinity, at the burial service.** *Photo by Dennis T. McHawes*

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