

# Coming Home to More Battles

*Khalil Bennett*

My cousin Tyrone came home from fighting in the first Gulf War. He was very proud to fight for his country. He was feeling patriotic. But his happiness did not last. He came home to the same neighborhood where the same struggles were still going on. Now he was battling poverty, racism, lack of schools, lack of health care, gang violence, police brutality, drug abuse, and alarming incarceration rates of minorities.

**Years later, I thought about what happened to him and what keeps happening to other young soldiers. What do these wars accomplish?**

sanity and composure, my cousin would often lose his temper on just about anybody.

He could not find a job, so he could not take care of himself and his family. Naturally, the world being what it is, another war came along

His PTSD left him prone to split-second reactions that might have been appropriate in war but weren't appropriate back in the neighborhood. Struggling to maintain his



*Tyrone (left), pictured here with family members, died in the war in Afghanistan.*

and the military sent him off to fight in another war, this time in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, Tyrone never got to come home from that war. The military informed his family of his death. They gave the family a flag and a medal. At the moment, it seemed acceptable and heroic to me. But years later, I thought about what happened to him and what keeps happening to other young soldiers. What do these wars accomplish? When will they end? When will we realize that we can all be heroic by fighting for peace and not war?

*Khalil Bennett and his cousin, Tyrone, grew up in Pittsburgh, PA.*

## The War at Home and the War Abroad

**What do you think** about the idea that some Americans (like Tyrone in the article above) don't have much to come home to?

**Look at the cartoon** on p. 4. What did that soldier come home to? Do you think it affected his decision to go back to war?

**The current cost of the wars** in Iraq and Afghanistan is almost \$1 trillion. What do you think of the idea that some of that money should be re-directed to social programs at home?

**The author suggests we can be heroic** by "fighting for peace." What is your response to that? Do you or people in your community "fight" for peace? If so, how?

**Source:** <<http://costofwar.com>>