

AN AMERICAN HERO
(Left Behind)

By Pat Barton

Dear Mom,

The war is over now. My tasks are at last done. But, mom there is something I must ask you. I have a friend, oh ... such a friend, who has no friends. You see mom, I would like to know if he could come home with me.

Dear Son,

Of course....we don't mind if he comes home with you. I'm sure he could stay a day or two.

Dear Mom,

But, mom, you don't understand. What I'm trying to say is that I want him to live with us as long as he wants to stay. But, mom, I must tell you something. Don't be alarmed ... my friend, in battle, happened to lose his arm.

Dear Son,

Don't be afraid to bring him home with you. He can stay for a week or two.

Dear Mom,

But, mother, he's quite a friend. He's like a brother to me. That's why I'd like him to live with us, and he'd be like a son to you. But, before you give me an answer, I must tell you that my friend, in battle, happened to lose his leg.

Dear Son,

It hurts me to say this, but, my answer is 'no'. Your father and I have no time for the crippled.

Sometime later, a letter came, saying their son had died. The cause of death was suicide, and when the casket came, draped in our country's flag, they saw their son lying there, without an arm and a leg.