

Ben Noland

Testimony of Ben Noland

I come from a family that is very proud and patriotic and that has represented the US military in every war since 1812. I am the middle child I have a younger brother Daniel who is 30 and an older sister Beth who is 40. My immediate family of 5 is made up of my daughter Alexis that is 12, and two step sons Kolton who is 11 and Kaleb that is 10. My wife and I have been together for 4 years. Growing up in a military family it was a lifelong dream to do my part to serve our nation. I was very active in primary school playing basketball and baseball in high school. After completing high school I attended a trade school for two years of electrical training at Cape Canaveral Florida. I came back home to Ohio in July of 2001 and saw a Marine recruiter walking in a local mall and decided now is the time to join. I chose the Marines because I enjoy physical and mental challenges and loved what I heard about the Corps core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. I attended boot camp at Paris Island and then moved on to my MOS 3051, 3043 Supply and Logistics school in Camp Lejeune North Carolina. My first duty station was suppose to be Japan, however with the events that happened on 9/11 I was sent to desert training in 29 Palms California.

I was then deployed with the 2 MEF group to Kuwait in December 28th of 2002. I was a part of the first landing party to set up supply and logistic support for both the US Army and US Marine Corps. Thus we set up Camp Fox which was the main hub for supplies to the ground units during the first part of the war. While there in April of 2003 I was meritoriously promoted to Corporal by the Commandant General Hagee and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, for my performance in the field. After that I took part in supply convoys to and from Iraq. On 5 June 2003 our Convoy was hit with an I.E.D and we lost 2 and several were hurt including me. I do not remember much of the event. I was med evac to Ramstein Germany, where I had learned of what had happened. I suffered burns to my left side of my face along with left eye damage from the severe concussion they claimed I had. I spent 3 weeks there recovering before being sent home in July 2003 to Camp Lejeune.

I was on limited duty for a period of time before I got myself in shape and completed another tour in Iraq in 2004 and 2005 followed by a 6 month deployment to Afghanistan in 2006. During 2006 and 2007 I spent brief times in 29 Palms, Camp Pendleton, and CACX desert training complex. I received my honorable discharge in 2009 after completing 6 years active and 4 in active reserve. I received the good conduct medal, the navy achievement medal, Combat action ribbon, sea service deployment ribbon, Global war on Terrorism Medal and National defense ribbon.

I came off active duty in May of 2007 and moved back to Ohio. I had found a great management job within a month for Durez Corp in Kenton Ohio. However by July of 2008 the company laid off 300 including me. I went 18 months applying to over 300 jobs in 6 states. In the fall of 2008 I tried to use my G.I bill to help me get employment by going to Ohio State University Lima campus and trying to major in Business and Logistics. But by the start of my sophomore year I was putting such a drain on my family with book fees and other school expenses that fell well

short of the VA funds. I was then putting my family in jeopardy of losing everything if I stayed in school.

So in 2010 I took to the road traveling picking up side jobs where I could. I Washed trucks at a truck stop for a month in Illinois, picked aluminum cans up along the road to recycle them for money. I painted parking lot lines for a couple of months in Memphis. As I traveled looking for work I ran into several other veterans I just could not believe it some of the stories I heard. We are in the same boat, we veterans chose to join our great military and this is what we come home to. We are trained to fight but also the military teaches many core values such as leadership, responsibility, commitment, and great work ethic in the vast jobs all across the military whether it be a battle field medic or a maintenance tech or a logistics person such as me. All of these jobs in the military have very similar if not the same positions in the civilian world so I just don't understand when I apply for a logistics supervisor job I am told sorry sir you do not have enough experience or on the job training. So my 6 years as a supply guy and having 24 Marines work for me and balancing a supply warehouse budget of \$130 million a year does not count. It makes me feel that my service to my country was worthless. So I tried to find anything I could cause my unemployment was so small we could not live alone on my wife's income. So I sent as much as I could back to my wife to help her and the kids.

In November of 2010 my wife had been keeping a record of issues she had noticed been increasing since 2007 and called the Columbus VA about these issues she saw that I was trying to hide. The VA asked me to come in and did some testing and found I have severe PTSD along with symptoms of a Traumatic Brain Injury from the I.E.D in 2003.

In late August of 2011 I was at VA appointment and in the waiting room and saw a news segment about a solar company that was looking for veterans. I thought to myself how great it would be for our nation to use a renewable resource such as solar. This would help allow our great nation to not be so dependent on foreign, save lives from being lost on the battlefield, and add jobs for veterans and others. So I wrote down Tipping Points name on my hand and emailed them when I got home. The next day I met Darin Hadinger and Eric Zimmer the owners at a job site. I told them I admire their passion for supporting veterans and would do any job they had open and would be willing to learn the solar trade.

Now into my fourth month of being employed with Tipping Point Renewable Energy I can really see the benefits of solar and the fact that it is a sustainable at creating jobs and helping our nation separate from the dependant on foreign oil. I have been a part of three solar projects in Ohio this year. Overall cost of solar is down 50 percent compared to just 5 years ago and continues to drop. Many companies and some residents have taken advantage of the state grants and federal grants such as the 1603 grant. However the 1603 grant is set to expire this year. We need grants like these and others to help drive the renewable energy projects. Even creating perhaps a credit for solar jobs completed by veterans and also allowing the other renewable training programs to be accepted under the G.I. Bill or Vocational rehab. The Department of Defense has already mandated that all branches must increase their use of renewable energy by 2025. The Marine Corp is currently using many solar projects such as ExFOB which is a forward operating bases, and they are training Marines how to work with and build solar. The US Army and other

branches are doing similar projects as well. So veterans are coming home with experience of working with solar. All of this would allow more projects and with more projects comes more jobs for veterans and others like me and thus not putting our men and women in harm's way but at the same time helping our national defense by becoming less dependent on foreign oil and other natural resources.