

## The times are always going to get better

**Bryan:** Bryan, United States Marine Corps. My MOS was a O331 Machine Gunner. Service dates were February 2005 til May of 2011. Montana, I've always had the dream of living up here. Growing up, I hunted, I fished, snowmobiled, rode horses, so it was like, wow, this would be the perfect place to live. You work, live and play and get paid for it. I grew up in a small town, eastern Pennsylvania where the farm fields intermixed with Amish and I don't know, one day, I just like, before I get too old, it's time to go, so at 25, I up and joined the Marine Corps.

So I've done three deployments total. Two to Iraq, one on the thirteenth Meu in 2009. We experienced a lot of IEDs, 2005, 2006, that's when they started switching over and really getting heavy into the IEDs. So like, wow, this is real. It's no longer what you see on tv or what you played as a kid, this is real. People are trying to kill us here.

When I got back from that first deployment with all those things going in, it was hard to drive down a road. I had driven Humvees quite a bit for the platoon. You kind of still hold that mentality, every car coming at you is trying to kill you. My go to medication at that point was alcohol. I'd go to the bar every night, or I'd get off work at noon and I'd go right to the bar and I'd drink til 10-11 o'clock at night.

I wrecked my truck coming home from the bar. Yeah, that was probably what prompted me to seek help. Yeah, that was a pretty sobering moment and I don't even remember the accident. I don't remember getting home, but I remember the next day, I knew something had gone on. I could remember bits and pieces, hung over, walk out to my truck and two of the tires are flat, every window is busted out, the hood's all smashed in, it was barely driveable. It was like, okay, this is my wakeup point. I need to find help.

Since I've gotten the treatment, just like sit down with Psychologist and just talk about things. It's easier to deal with things. It was a tool for me. I put it into that tool bag so to speak. When I'm having bad days or bad times, I can go back and well, I remember when this person told me this, or this doctor told me that, it's really helped me to transition and get away from the things that were trigger points for me and set myself up into a life to where I can help myself get through things. Like being out on the snow mobiles, that's an adrenaline rush in itself and it's natural, it's a natural high. It's its own medication for me.

As time went on, I found more help through friends that I served with. In fact, I'm still that way today. When I start feeling on that depressed side, and things are kicking in and I can't sleep or whatever, I got a really good friend of mine that I served with that lives in Missouri, and I'll just call him up. "Hey man, what's going on?" If I'm having a bad day where I didn't sleep well the night before or things just aren't going right, it's don't even worry about what's happening in two hours from now. It's take it minute-by-minute. You just break it down. I always try to stay at that day-by-day mentality. If it's a bad day, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute. Don't try to get too far ahead of myself. The times are always going to get better. You always just gotta fight to get through the bad spots.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE  
CONNECTION**