

## **I started realizing I'm not where I thought I was**

**Hector:** In my mind I was on an urbanized operation doing room clearing operations. I was with one other guy. My ranger buddy had gotten done clearing his sector of the room and was stacked on a door waiting for me. Stacked means that he is sittin there waitin. We did everything very quietly, we did everything very stealthily, speed, violence of action, move out. Let's go. And so he was in a door and I came in and stacked behind him, which means I push into him to let him know I am ready and he pushes back into me to let me know he is ready, and then I push him out the door. Except when he went out the door, he disappeared. This is uncommon situation, awareness is everything. I mean, my toes give me information, smell, sense, the way I move, the way he moves, everything is giving me information, and now he is gone.

My situation awareness was shot, and where did he go? I was very confused, I saw like the little speckles; white, gray, you know, cones and rods in my eyes and everything, the little yellow lines and everything. And then I remember shaking my head and looking to my left and my one and half year old son, now my 9 year old son, appeared in the front window of the home that I just came out of and I am thinking, "What is he doing here?" I started realizing, I am not where I thought I was. Nothing is right anymore. It was all in my head. It was very real in front of me.

I mean when I remember it, I can still remember it with sounds, smells and noises. You know, I remember it all. Although there was snow on the ground, I remember there being sand. I remember the heat of the sand. I remember the wind that was blowing but it was January 24<sup>th</sup> in Minnesota.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE  
CONNECTION**