



MOSS CREEK MARINES OPERATION HELPING HEROES



**ADOPTED HERO NO. 12
Cpl. ZACHARY WHISENHUNT
WITH RHYS**



CPL. Zachary Whisenhunt, USMC

CPL E4

Navy and Marine Achievement Medal, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, Combat Action Ribbon (Afghanistan), Afghanistan Campaign Medal (w/ Bronze Service Stars), Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (2nd Awd), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Navy Unit Commendation, Certificate of Commendation, NATO Medal-ISAF Afghanistan

Zachary is an OEF Veteran who served in the USMC.

After 2 years in the Corps, Zachary deployed to Afghanistan. Throughout the deployment, he lost so much. He lost his wife to divorce and he lost 3 close friends.(one to suicide) He was hit by an IED and was in direct contact with the enemy for almost 5 out of the 7 months he was there. Eight months after he got home, he deployed again to Afghanistan. This time, he was a squad leader with 12 Marines under his command. He was fortunate to bring all of them back home safely to their families after 7 months. Within a few months of being home after his second tour, his active duty contract ended. Within a month of being out of the military, he began having severe nightmares about Afghanistan (seeing his dead buddies' faces as they screamed for help). He isolated from society because he was too anxious to step outside without a gun in his hand. He started drinking heavily and became mean his friends and family. He struggles with PTS on a daily basis. He zones out in school, relives his deployments, his abusive childhood, and his terrible relationships. He has trouble with interpersonal relationships with friends and family. He also suffers from depression, anxiety, insomnia and combat related stress.

Zachary hopes that an Assistance Dog will help him find peace and happiness. He does not want to feel defeated by PTSD. He hopes a dog will help ease his anxiety, interrupt his night terrors and bring back to reality when he zones out. He wants to feel joy and love again and hopes that an Assistance Dog will help bridge the gaps that he has put between himself and his friends and family.