

17 August 2013

To Members of the Panel,

My name is Specialist James Alexander. I am an infantry Soldier, and I have served with SSG Bales in garrison and together in combat in Afghanistan. I want to tell you about the SSG Bales I worked for and the man I spent time with.

SSG Bales was the best squad leader I have ever had. He is not a mean-spirited person. He is very tactically proficient and I learned a lot from him. Everyone in his squad knew that SSG Bales cared about them. At one point while we were still in garrison, I screwed something up in the arms room. First Sergeant found out, and SSG Bales took all the blame for my mistakes, and he did it publicly. He took me aside later, privately, told me what I screwed up, and worked with me so I would not make the same mistake again. SSG Bales was always doing things like this for his guys, trying to make our lives easier.

As one of only two African American infantry Soldiers at VSP Belambi, SSG Bales never made me feel like I was not part of the team, he treated everyone the same. I hung out with him and his family on the weekends many times before we deployed.

SSG Bales was a father figure to all of us young Soldiers and first-time deployers. While we were in Afghanistan, there were an increasing number of blue-on-green attacks, and everyone at the VSP was on edge. SSG Bales was very protective of us, he would joke around a lot with us to try to keep us in good spirits. He made fun of himself a lot too. We all knew he cared about us.



JAMES ALEXANDER
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