

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of SSG Robert Bales, a fellow Soldier and dear friend of mine. I have known SSG Bales for over ten years now and have deployed with him to Iraq on three separate occasions.

Myself and SSG Bales were members of the same platoon as Privates together beginning on or around 2002, both rose through the ranks together, and finished our final deployment together in 2010. We not only worked together, but became lifelong friends. SSG Bales is more or less a member of my family. He has made trips to Wyoming and spent time with my parents, was present at my wedding, and will always be welcome on my front door. SSG Bales throughout the duration of our friendship has been one of the most generous and giving people I have ever met. SSG Bales is one of the finest Non Commissioned Officers I have ever worked with and has saved my life on more than one occasion under fire.

Throughout our three deployments I have been witness to SSG Bales being involved in multiple enemy engagements and as well can attest to him being directly hit with numerous Improvised Explosive Devices. However the occasions that I believe weighed most heavy on SSG Bales were the countless times we would react to local nationals and civilians killed on the battlefield. Two incidents stand out more so than any to me. I remember in 2004 in Mosul Iraq standing next to SSG Bales as we looked down on the lifeless body of an Iraqi woman who was obviously eight to nine months pregnant who had been killed by an IED which was meant for our Platoon. I clearly remember SSG Bales looking at me and only asking "why?" I had never heard that tone of voice in my friend before, and never heard it again. The second thing that stands out to me was the battle of Najaf which took place in January of 2007. Anyone can find the information from this battle online, can see the count of hundreds of insurgents which we defeated and killed, but unless you were there you wouldn't know the look on your friends face when we cleared the town, established a casualty collection point, and saw the carnage. Do not take me wrong, it was a success, but witnessing wounded women and children seeking aid the following morning, or a woman carrying her dead infant child to you is something that never goes away. Having recently had a child, Bobby was the one who took this the hardest. I truly don't believe he was ever the same after that day.

SSG Bales is more than just a fine Non Commissioned Officer though. I cannot stress enough how big of a part of my life he has been, how many difficult situations he has guided me through, and how many people he has touched on the way. My parents have known him throughout all these years, and sometimes would call me just to talk to him. He's eaten dinners with my family, spent weekends with myself and my wife, and called to congratulate me on becoming a father that morning. There is one time that truly sticks out in my mind more than all the others though. Following our Units deployment in 2010, we returned to the states to find out that a dear friend of ours, Bryson Schemahorn, who myself and SSG Bales had deployed with in 2003 had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. By the time we returned from the deployment Bryson was only given a couple weeks to live. Without hesitation nearly all members of our old Platoon came from all over the states to Colorado, where Bryson was spending his remaining time with his parents. I don't think any of us were ready though for when we arrived and saw a fellow Soldier and friend in the condition that Bryson was in. It was SSG Bales though that held everyone together and made the four days which we were all there so special for Bryson and his family. When Bryson would rest during the day, Bales would task everyone out that was visiting to work on the Schemahorns farm just to help them out. At the end of the four days everyone returned to their walks of life, only to be called the next day to find out that Bryson had passed. Again without hesitation a handful of us to include Bales immediately dropped what we were doing and returned to Colorado to assist with the funeral and be Paul Bearers as requested by Bryson. Myself and Bales put Bryson in his uniform one last time, rehearsed the ceremony the entire night before, and did all we could to take the burden off of his parents. That is the SSG Bales that I know. The guy who eats dinner with my parents, whose wife and kids I've spent weekends with, whose been there with me as we laid one of our dearest friends to rest, and who I would trust my life and my family's life with. I truly wish everyone had someone as special to call a friend as I have when I think of Robert Bales.

V/R



SFC Daniel Moss
C Co, 4th Ranger Training Battalion
Fort Benning, GA