



Aper-Brady Act

The proposed Aper-Brady Act is being requested in support of Veterans suffering from PTSD. There are no laws in existence to cover PTSD nationally, as it entails: Depression, drug and alcohol use, personality changes, anger, flashbacks and suicide. Certain states have laws in place to assist with suicide, mental illness and substance abuse, but they do not address PTSD as a whole. This proposal would allow veterans, law enforcement and loved ones of Veterans to get assistance for PTSD.

- On every driver license/state ID in every state, it is required that "Veteran" is listed.
- Veteran Court is available in every Circuit of every state and services are the same for each location and cannot be changed unless it is changed for every state.
- Aper-Brady Act is activated and available in every state. Law Enforcement, loved ones and the Veteran can impose this. It will allow:
 - The Veteran that suffers from PTSD can be taken into custody at the VA Domiciliary and held up to 72 hours for evaluation. If determined a longer amount of time is required at the VA Domiciliary, they can make this determination and authorize the Veteran to be held for as long as deemed necessary.



Supporting information for the Aper-Brady Act is provided below:

Michael Aper was on the frontlines of some of the most challenging years in Afghanistan as an Infantryman. He never shied away from the mission and he was eager to put himself in harm's way in order to help his brothers in arms. As shared by his battle buddy, Jeremy Thomas:

- When our platoon came under an ambush west of FOB (Forward Operating Base) Wilson in late November or early December of 2009, our convoy came under sustained small arms fire including enemy machine guns and rocket propelled grenades, Mike, myself, and Sergeant Zach Brady climbed to the top of an Afghan Police Station tower to engage insurgents located in approximately three different locations. All the while, Mike was cracking jokes and maintaining a high spirit, helping guide my machine gun fire to suppress insurgent positions and engage a squad of Taliban fighters. Within moments of us arriving at the top of the tower, an Afghan Police officer accidentally discharged his PKM medium machine gun at point blank

range directly at myself, Mike, and Brady. The round impacted Lieutenant Erik Edstrom's rifle and broke into numerous large and small pieces, and gravely wounded Zach Brady, peppering me with shrapnel as well. Sergeant Brady, rolling and screaming in pain, spitting up blood and chunks of his teeth, had received a near fatal wound. Aper sprang into action to assist with Brady while I detained the police officer and rendered his machine gun inert. Without regard for his personal safety, exposed on top of a roof with no cover and under sustained enemy fire, Aper rendered aid on Brady until our medic could arrive and take over. He then assisted myself and the rest of the platoon in providing security on the evacuation site to get Brady home. After the helicopters evacuated Sergeant Brady, Mike, myself, and Staff Sergeant John Wright were able to lock in and eliminate an enemy combatant armed with an RPG. His stalwart attitude and selfless bravery reflected honor on himself, his peers, and the United States Army.

- After the military Mike would go on to earn his master's degree in sustainability at Wake Forest. He wasn't just a warrior; he was a scholar and a believer in a better world. The environment was extremely important to him, as well as art, literature, philosophy, and science. He was truly a modern renaissance man. Never to be left sitting still, he would then go on to work towards his commercial diving license as an underwater welder at the Diver's Institute Of Technology in Seattle.

Michael suffered from PTSD as a result from his service in Afghanistan in 2009 at the peak of the war with the highest combat casualties. He was living through this hell age of 20. On the morning of February 16, 2025, Michael Aper was at his uncle's asleep when a police helicopter flew low over the house in search for a missing person reported in that area of the woods. This disrupted his sleep and sent him into a "flashback" of being at war. He grabbed his uncle's handgun as protection, reliving his days in Afghanistan. Later, he ran outside and proceeded to scream out and shoot a gun into the dirt of the courtyard area as he mentally lived the devastating flashbacks. His Uncle was home, worried for his nephew's safety he called the non-emergency Sheriff's department line in Prescott, Arizona. His Uncle was precise in his description of what was taking place and further explained Michael was a combat veteran experiencing a PTSD Flashback, but he was not harming anyone. The uncle made the phone call to get his nephew help.

The Sheriff's response was to send out a Swat Team. The responding officers disregarded the uncle's request for help for his nephew and proceeded to take Michael's life by a sniper. Michael was killed immediately on his own family's property, right in front of his uncle who called to get help for his nephew not for him to be killed. No one was called out to "talk Michael off the ledge" during this frightening event. Michael was suffering, he felt sad, scared and alone. He needed their help, not death. His family is now left without their son, brother and a father to his young daughter.



At the age of 17, Zach Brady joined the US Army and became an Infantryman and Sniper. He served two tours of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. He had a grenade thrown at him in Iraq, and lost hearing in one ear, while suffering a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). In Afghanistan, he was struck by an incoming enemy 50cal bullet that disbursed in his face and back. He has about 40 pieces of shrapnel in him still today. While at war, it's considered a "sign of weakness" or "fragility" if you complain about the difficulties, you are experiencing mentally with all the death, dismemberment and injuries of your beloved fellow brother in arms. Zach never complained, and refused to go home when he was shot, until he could no longer wear his Kevlar shield for protection. He was sent home and medically retired for his injuries and PTSD. His experiences included by are not limited to:

- On July 4th while serving in Iraq, our vehicle broke down near the town we were at. We all got out and separated. This is a safeguard that if we are attacked, there would be less casualties at one location. Zach was spotted by the insurgents and had a grenade thrown at him. It sent him 20 feet into the air. Most of the shrapnel was absorbed in his Kevlar shields. However, smaller pieces penetrated his arms and legs. And he was left deaf in one ear.
- We also were on a special mission to find hidden weapons on a tip. We made one of the biggest finds of weapons, fuel and ammunition. It made Time magazine. Zach was instrumental in leading his men to be the first to find the contraband.
- Our Battalion was one of the first to penetrate Afghanistan. One assignment was to take over a compound in which three other battalions were annihilated prior to our presence. We were able to successfully accomplish the takeover of the compound. A huge step in our victory!
- Zach would take on the more difficult tasks, and was respected by his peers and subordinates as a result of this. We drove in Stryker vehicles. We were in a convoy, and the Stryker in front of us hit an IED and went airborne. The driver of the vehicle was thrown out and the Stryker landed on top of him. Zach had the rest of us get on the other side of the vehicle, pull it off of him and commanded that we stay back. He picked up the smashed body of our fellow soldier so the rest of us would not see him, and placed him in a body bag. This is the type of person that he was and continued to be an excellent soldier.
- One evening a 19-year-old soldier went missing. Zach and his battle buddy were sent out to locate him. They found his dead body with his arms and head severed from his body. They had to pick up his pieces and place him in a body bag. It was Father's Day. Again, he internalized this and continued with all the difficult missions, while earning the respect and admiration of his unit.

As a result of all this, the Army was successful into making him a killing machine, but they were not successful in helping him to cope with all he endured. He self-medicated with alcohol, and if the wrong person was to join him in that mix, the "depression expressed with

anger" came out! He was verbally abusive and threatening. As a result, his mouth got him into trouble, and he spent the last 18 months in the local jail. HE ADMITTED GUILTY TO THE CHARGES! Thursday, August 15, 2024, was his sentencing hearing, trying to convince Judge Steve Henderson to let him go to the VA Domiciliary for locked down treatment, to receive punishment in a different form. Two and a half hours of testimony from fellow soldiers and others, were presented to the judge that were there in the field with him. An Affidavit was read from his commander who served with Zach, who also endured these events, was provided, and a psychiatrist who evaluated Zach with PTSD expressed with anger, drug and alcohol abuse. A copy of the psychiatric report is also attached. Judge Steve Henderson had a decision to allow Zach's treatment to attend the VA DOM for his injuries, PTSD and self-medicating on lock down, or go to prison. This would have given a truly dedicated soldier the opportunity to get the help he needs, while still being punished for his verbal threats to others on lockdown. Please let it be known that Judge Steve Henderson sent him to maximum prison for 4 years. Per Zach's legal counsel, the final authority is now provided by the Prosecutor and not the Judge. A process that was changed in the 19th Circuit Court for veterans. In addition, Zach's particular charges, "Stalking With Threats", is no longer covered by Veterans Treatment Court in the 19th Circuit Court in Brevard county, Florida. This order is attached for reference. If he were in a different Circuit, this particular charge would have been honored in Veterans Treatment Court. On July 1, 2026, this power was transferred back to the Judges, and no longer in the hands of the Prosecutor. This was a HUGE injustice for our Veterans, and especially Zach.

Here is the link for the law change effective July 1, 2026:

<https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillID=82735>

Also attached are two Affidavits of Character provided by Zach's commander from Afghanistan, Lt Col. Korey Brown and from his battle buddy, SPC Michael Aper.



Only 3% of United States citizens are willing to serve the US as in the military. We owe it to our Veterans to get them help when they need it. And for many of them, they can't and won't ask for help, as it's been drilled into their heads, it's a sign of weakness. Below are programs provided by 60 minutes addressing PTSD and the different effects it has on our Veterans. There is also an article by VFW Chief telling Congress to "Honor the Contract."

60 Minutes: Children of War <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=NNNch2PZJ3c>

CBS News: Father's hunt for answers after son's suicide leads military to modify training and weapons <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/veterans-suicide-puts-father-on-mission-60-minutes-transcript/>

60 Minutes: Attached is an episode explaining the effects of Traumatic Brain Injuries
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih9TilFgXFI>



Now is the time to implement the Aper-Brady Act to help our Veterans who suffer from PTSD, before there are any other suicides, imprisoning Veterans for their behavior related to PTSD, taking their life due to behaviors related to PTSD, and for their abuse of drugs and alcohol, to try and mask their PTSD. We owe it to them for all they have given and sacrificed for our freedom and aiding countries who can't defend themselves.





VFW Chief Tells Congress to ‘Honor the Contract’

The highlight of VFW’s annual Washington Conference featured a testimonial from VFW Commander-in-Chief Alfred “Al” Lipphardt to House and Senate VA committee members.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

On March 4, VFW Commander-in-Chief Alfred “Al” Lipphardt testified before a joint hearing of the House and Senate VA committees at the Dirksen Senate Office Building chamber during the 2025 VFW Washington Conference.

Lipphardt opened his testimony by expressing his honor in representing more than 1.4 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary. He then reached into his pocket and unfolded his DD Form 4, calling on the joint committee members to ‘honor the contract.’

“This is not charity,” Lipphardt stated, following his recitation of the contract that binds veterans and their

country in perpetuity. “Everyone who served honorably, like every member of the VFW, has upheld our end of the contract. We call on our leaders to do the same.”

CLAIM SHARKS

Lipphardt testified about the VFW’s ongoing efforts to advocate against unaccredited, predatory claims consultants — also known as claim sharks — who charge veterans for assistance with VA disability claims.

“The VFW and other accredited VSOs provide this service at no cost, as required by statute,” Lipphardt said. “Unfortunately, criminal penalties for

unaccredited claims agents were eliminated from the United States Code nearly 20 years ago, providing a loophole through which these predatory claims agents built this market sector.”

Lipphardt called for Congress to pass legislation to reinstate these penalties and urged the committee to advocate for passage.

“Several of these predatory companies have made statements that there is no avenue for them to seek VA accreditation, but this is false,” Lipphardt said. “There are no restrictions for these consultants to be accredited by VA, but they refuse to do so because they would no longer be able to charge exorbitant fees.”

TOXIC/ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES

Lipphardt expressed gratitude for the passing of the *Honoring Our PACT Act* (P.L. 117-168) in 2022 and for what it has accomplished for many veterans. However, he emphasized that this historic passage is not the end of the journey for all veterans and their survivors.

“The *PACT Act* also included an enduring framework to guide VA’s continuous evaluation of toxic exposures not included in the legislation,” said Lipphardt, who served in the Army from 1965 to 1979, which included two tours in Vietnam. “This is referred to as the Presumption Decision Process, and oversight of this process is where we are currently focusing efforts.”

Lipphardt mentioned several examples of military installations where toxic exposure has impacted veterans with serious health conditions that fall outside the coverage of the *PACT Act*.

“The military is an inherently hazardous profession,” Lipphardt said. “We must take care of our K2 veterans, those who served at Fort McClellan, veterans exposed to radiation, ‘forever chemicals,’ and others. The VFW urges Congress to conduct oversight of VA’s presumptive process because veterans cannot keep waiting.”

THE TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Lipphardt then detailed some of the challenges that service members encounter when transitioning from military to civilian life and emphasized the crucial role of the Department of Defense and the VA in actively supporting them.

He urged Congress to pass legislation such as the *TAP Promotion Act* and establish a position in the DoD to ensure service members have every opportunity to thrive during their transition.

“The VFW urges Congress to establish an Under Secretary of Defense for Transition,” Lipphardt said. “This position is essential for effective manage-

ment and accountability. Improving transition has the potential to enhance recruitment and retention, lowers risk for suicide and sets veterans on a path to success.”

STRENGTHEN CARE AND RESEARCH FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Lipphardt segued from securing a smooth transition for his fellow veterans into civilian life with another cause for alarm — mental health. He addressed concerns, which included the VA’s tendency to overprescribe medications, particularly antidepressants.

This led to a call for Congress and the VA to fund research on alternative treatments and solutions to help break the cycle of dependency and overmedication.

“The VFW acknowledges that there is a growing need for alternative PTSD treatments, and we have a resolution that speaks to the need for this important exploratory research,” Lipphardt said. “Our goal is to identify more tools for the veteran community to address suicide and mental health instead of simply continuing to spend money without tangible results.”

PARITY OF SERVICE BENEFITS

Lipphardt also advocated on behalf of members of the National Guard and Reserve. He mentioned their high rates of overseas deployments since Sept. 11, 2001, and how they are denied the same VA educational benefits as their active-duty counterparts.

“The time is long past for parity,” Lipphardt said.

To address this inequity, Lipphardt

“Everyone who served honorably, like every member of the VFW, has upheld our end of the contract. We call on our leaders to do the same.”

asked Congress to pass the *Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2025*, which would allow any day spent in uniform for which military pay is received to count toward *Post-9/11 GI Bill* eligibility.

Lipphardt addressed a key VFW legislative priority: the *Major Richard Star Act*, which aims to provide full concurrent receipt for deserving veterans. He also noted that Congress recently passed the *Social Security Fairness Act*, eliminating an unjust offset for Social Security recipients.

“It is time to correct this injustice for our military retirees,” Lipphardt said. “The VFW calls on Congress to fix this now.”

A REMINDER OF THE SACRIFICES

Lipphardt concluded his testimony on a personal note. He stood before Congress and named five soldiers he served with during the Vietnam War: Pvt. Lewis Sloan of East Point, Ga.; Cpl. Kenneth Adams of Santa Barbara, Calif.; Cpl. Philip Adams of Croton Falls, N.Y.; Pfc. Robert Waddell of Batavia, Ohio; and Cpl. Rodney Loatman of Newark, N.J.

“I would ask these men to stand and be recognized, but they can’t,” Lipphardt said. “Their names are on the Vietnam Wall along with all those who gave the last full measure of devotion to this nation acknowledged by the contract we each signed.”

Lipphardt went on to add, “Our nation must never forget our warfighters.”

To listen to Lipphardt’s entire testimony, visit <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/2025-vfw-washington-conference>.



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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR BREVARD COUNTY

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.:
23-12-B
SUPERSEDES 19-36-B

IN RE: VETERANS' TREATMENT COURT

WHEREAS, the Florida Statutes sections 394.47891; 948.08(7)(a),(b) and (c); 948.16(2)(a) and (b); and, 948.21, Florida Statutes (as amended by 2019 Fla. Sess. Law Serv. Ch. 2019-61 (S.B. 910), effective October 1, 2019), authorizes the chief judge to establish felony and/or misdemeanor pretrial and post-adjudicatory veterans' treatment intervention programs to address the military service-related mental illness, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse disorder, or psychological problems of veterans and service members charged with, or on probation or community control for, criminal offenses; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of Veterans' Treatment Court (VTC) is to reduce recidivism by emphasizing treatment and rehabilitation as an alternative to incarceration, while also requiring offender accountability and increasing public safety; and

WHEREAS, there is a recognized need to bring defendants qualified to participate in the VTC before a judge assigned to expeditiously and efficiently move veterans with service-related issues from an overcrowded jail system into veteran treatment programs without compromising the safety of the public; and

WHEREAS, a centralized VTC that utilizes available Veteran Administration and Veteran Mentor Volunteer resources and support systems will increase the efficiency of the criminal court system in Brevard County and permit better access to services needed by veterans; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Brevard County Veterans Services Office, and Brevard County Veteran Mentor Volunteer resources assist the court with the provision of services for veterans eligible to receive benefits and provide meaningful treatment for veterans as well as assisting veterans in securing housing, employment opportunities, job training, education, transportation, disability compensation claims, discharge status and other benefits available at the local, state and federal level;

NOW THEREFORE, by authority vested in me as Chief Judge and pursuant to the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, it is ORDERED:

I. PRETRIAL INTERVENTION PROGRAM:

- A. In order to participate in the pretrial intervention program of the VTC, a defendant must meet the following criteria:
1. Misdemeanor Cases – section 948.16(2)(a), Florida Statutes
 - a. The defendant is a veteran, as defined in section 1.01, including a veteran who is discharged or released under any condition; a servicemember, as defined in section 250.01; an individual who is a current or former U.S. Department of Defense contractor; or an individual who is a current or former military member of a foreign allied country.
 - b. The defendant suffers from a military service-related mental illness, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse disorder, or psychological problem, military sexual trauma, and will complete the Application for Veterans Treatment Court provided by the Office of the State Attorney, and VA Form 10-5345 Request for and Authorization to Release Medical and Health Information.
 - c. The defendant is charged with a city or county ordinance violation or a misdemeanor offense.
 - d. The defendant voluntarily agrees to participate in VTC for a period of time based on the program's requirements and the treatment plan for the offender.
 - e. The State, in consultation with the court, shall determine if the defendant meets the statutory criteria for eligibility, and also whether or not the defendant should be admitted into VTC.
 2. Felony Cases – section 948.08(7)(a), Florida Statutes
 - a. The defendant is a veteran, as defined in section 1.01, including a veteran who is discharged or released under any condition; a servicemember, as defined in section 250.01; an individual who is a current or former U.S. Department of Defense contractor; or an individual who is a current or former military member of a foreign allied country.
 - b. The defendant suffers from a military service-related mental illness, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse disorder, or psychological problem, military sexual trauma, and will complete the Application for Veterans Treatment Court provided by the Office of the State Attorney, and VA Form 10-5345 Request for and Authorization to Release Medical and Health Information.
 - c. The defendant is charged with a felony, other than a felony listed in section 948.06(8)(c), Florida Statutes.
 - d. The State, in consultation with the court, shall determine if the defendant meets the statutory criteria for eligibility, and also whether or not the defendant should be admitted into VTC.

- B. Efforts should be made to identify potentially eligible defendants as early as possible. Initial identification should be the responsibility of all entities involved, including the court, the Office of the State Attorney, defense counsel, law enforcement at booking, the Brevard County jail, Veterans' organizations, and the defendant. The issue of eligibility for VTC may be raised at any court proceeding by the defendant, defense counsel, the Office of the State Attorney, or the court. Determination of eligibility shall be set for a subsequent hearing.
- C. Prior to the first hearing in VTC, the defendant's VA treatment eligibility status shall be verified by the State through the Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist.
- D. At the defendant's first hearing in VTC, the State shall determine if the defendant meets the statutory criteria for eligibility, and also whether or not the defendant should be admitted into VTC.
- E. If it is determined that the defendant is not eligible for or is unwilling to participate in VTC, or the defendant is otherwise unsuccessfully discharged from VTC, the case will be transferred back to the criminal division from which it originated. If the case was not assigned to a criminal division prior to transfer to VTC, the case will be assigned to a criminal division by the clerk in accordance with the applicable administrative order.
- F. If accepted into VTC, the defendant is required to attend court hearings as ordered by the court, based on each defendant's needs. The defendant will participate in continued assessment and treatment and engage in discharge planning. This participation must include the voluntary and truthful provision of information to the court and all collaborating entities in the assessment and treatment process. All participants are required to keep a copy of the Veterans' Treatment Court Handbook, and are responsible for following all rules outlined in the VTC Handbook.
- G. Participation in the pretrial intervention program will subject the defendant to a coordinated strategy developed by a veterans' treatment intervention team.
 - 1. The coordinated strategy is modeled after the therapeutic jurisprudence principles and key components in section 397.334(4) and may include a protocol of sanctions that may be imposed upon the participant for noncompliance with program rules.
 - 2. The protocol of sanctions may include, but need not be limited to, placement in a treatment program offered by a licensed service provider or in a jail-based treatment program or serving a period of incarceration within the time limits established for contempt of court. A defendant may refuse any sanction and as their alternative, resign or be revoked from VTC.
 - 3. The VTC team includes the VTC Judge, Assistant State Attorney, Assistant Public Defender, Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist, Court Managers, VTC Coordinator, Mentor Coordinator, and others approved by the court.

4. The defendant must be under the supervision of Probation and Parole for all felony cases and Professional Probation Services for all misdemeanor cases.
- H. At the end of the pretrial intervention period, the court shall consider the recommendation of the treatment program and the recommendation of the State Attorney as to disposition of the pending charges.
 1. The court shall determine whether the defendant has successfully completed the pretrial intervention program while in VTC.
 - a. If the court finds that the defendant has not successfully completed the pretrial intervention program, the court may order the defendant to continue in education and treatment or return the charges to the criminal docket for prosecution.
 - b. The court shall dismiss the charges upon a finding that the defendant has successfully completed the pretrial intervention program.
 2. Any defendant whose charges are dismissed after successful completion of the pretrial intervention program, if otherwise eligible, may have his or her arrest record of the dismissed charges expunged under section 943.0585.

II. POST-ADJUDICATORY PROGRAM:

- A. To be eligible to participate in the post-adjudicatory program of the VTC, a defendant must meet the following criteria:
 1. Military veterans and servicemembers court programs - section 394.47891, Florida Statutes
 - a. The defendant is a veteran, as defined in section 1.01, including a veteran who is discharged or released under any condition; a servicemember, as defined in section 250.01; an individual who is a current or former U.S. Department of Defense contractor; or an individual who is a current or former military member of a foreign allied country, and will so state by completing the Application for Veterans Treatment Court provided by the Office of the State Attorney, and VA Form 10-5345 Request for and Authorization to Release Medical and Health Information.
 - b. The defendant suffers from a military service-related mental illness, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse disorder, or psychological problem, or military sexual trauma.
 - c. The defendant is charged with or convicted of a criminal offense.
 - d. The defendant must be under the supervision of Probation and Parole for all felony cases and Professional Probation Services for all misdemeanor cases while in VTC.
 2. Entry into the post-adjudicatory program

- a. Must be in accordance with chapter 921, Florida Statutes, in a manner that appropriately addresses the severity of the mental illness, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse disorder, or psychological problem through services tailored to the individual needs of the participant.
 - b. The State, in consultation with the court, shall determine if the defendant meets the statutory criteria for eligibility, and also whether or not the defendant should be admitted into VTC.
- B. The court shall determine whether the probationer or community controllee has successfully completed the post-adjudicatory program. All parties shall have notice and a fair opportunity to be heard before such determination.
 1. If the court finds that the probationer or community controllee has successfully completed the post-adjudicatory program, the court may consider withholding adjudication of guilt or early termination of probation.
 2. If the court finds that the probationer or community controllee has unsuccessfully completed the post-adjudicatory program, the VTC court must find the defendant in violation of their supervision and the VTC court must sentence or modify the supervision of the defendant in accordance with all relevant laws, after hearing input from all parties.

Done and Ordered this 9th of February, 2023.


JESSICA RECKSIDLER
CHIEF JUDGE

Distribution:
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AFFIDAVIT OF CHARACTER

STATE OF FLORIDA

Before me, the undersigned authority, Korey Brown, 54 years of age, currently residing in the State of Florida from presented this written affidavit in reference to the character of and in support of Zachariah (Zach) Brady.

I am submitting this affidavit in support of Zach who I have known since 2009. Zach and I served in the Army together and deployed to one of the most kinetic territories of Maywand and Zhari in Southern Afghanistan in 2009-2010. There I served as Zach's Battalion Task Force Executive Officer and have direct knowledge of the stressful demands and lasting consequences of our service in this area of operations.

While deployed, Zach's company was responsible for the security of a main transportation thoroughfare, *National Highway 01 or NH01 and often referred to as the "Ring Road,"* in southern Afghanistan. A portion of this responsibility also meant the security of 5 kilometers to the north and south of this highway. A task met with an immeasurable amount of resistance from both Taliban fighters and criminal elements vying for control of the highway. It was not uncommon for Zach's company to receive direct enemy contact on a daily basis with the purpose of removing the security zone his company created. To say the least, Zach's company had to fully remain mentally and physically engaged to deter enemy threats. This posture, remaining mentally and physically engaged for extended periods of time causes mental fatigue (neuro fatigue) and results, and or is a major symptom, in a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Syndrome (PTSD).

As many Soldiers returning from Afghanistan are, I was also impacted and diagnosed with "Combat or neuro fatigue." I felt frustrated, mad at every and all things and in a way felt non-susceptible to consequence of rules and good order. I began making bade decisions costing my marriage, relationship with my kids and almost cost me my career in the Army. However, understanding I was in a "downward spiral," I sought out and received counseling and learned coping strategies for how/what I was feeling. This counseling saved my life, I am sure. Seeking counseling for this type of diagnosis, at the time we returned from Afghanistan, came with a stigma of "weakness" and "fragility" and many Soldiers opted "out" to save their Army careers and status within the unit. Zach, having been injured in combat and electing to stay on the deployment rather than re-deploying back to the United States, was one of those Soldiers to proud to seek out the proper mental health strategies. I can only imagine the mental weight he must carry from his experiences in Afghanistan and without seeking coping strategies to ease the pain of this experiences; experiences unimaginable to those not serving in our area of operations, the 'Home of the Taliban.' I have no doubt Zach still experiences neuro fatigue and the cognitive symptoms of difficulty of thinking clearly and confusion as I continue to struggle with these symptoms years after my last deployment.

Zach is in great need of coping strategies to minimize impacts of his experiences while serving honorably in Afghanistan. I know Zach as being of great character, a compassionate, fierce warrior and very dependable. Zach's most recent legal issues do not define his character; in fact, I do not recognize Zach as anyone who could disregard the law, intentionally hurt another soul or put himself in a position to be in the position he currently finds himself. Zach, during his service, was always a standard bearer

and expected his Soldiers to follow rules and directions. A mentor, teacher and coach, Zach's service in the military can only be defined as impeccable.

Not understanding the full extent of the charges Zach has accrued and what the consequences may be, but I would recommend if he were to have to serve anytime incarcerated he be given the opportunity to be housed in a Veteran Domiciliary. Zach's future mental health and rehabilitation depends on being surrounded by other veterans and similar mindsets. The "brotherhood" of military service in a Veteran Domiciliary would be a "safe" and trusted place where Zach could share his most interpersonal experiences and truly rehabilitate; Zach is fully adept to self-reflection and rehabilitation and I know with the proper treatment, he will make a full recovery. A jail/prison sentence would only hinder his ability to rehabilitate and receive the mental health care he desperately requires. Bottom line: Zach needs mental health support in a trusted place he feels safe to do so.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at 386-530-9868 or korey.brown15@yahoo.com. Zach led his Soldiers with distinction while we prepared, deployed and returned from Afghanistan although he endured many set-backs during his time in combat. I know his service well and I understand, from my own personal experience, what he is going through and the stress range of emotions since his return from combat. Zach needs rehabilitation and I believe incarceration in jail/prison would mire the progress of any rehabilitation and mental health attempts.

END OF AFFIDAVIT


Signature

29 May 2024
Date

STATE OF FLORIDA

COUNTY OF Putnam

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me by means of ☒ physical presence or ☐ online notarization on this 29th day of May, 2024, by

Korey Brown who ☒ is personally known by me or ☐
produced a Florida driver's license to confirm identification.


Signature of Notary Public



Print, Type or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public

AFFIDAVIT OF CHARACTER

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Before me, the undersigned authority, personally appeared **Michael Aper**, who after being duly sworn deposes and states the following:

My name is Michael Aper and I am more than 18 years of age, competent to testify in this cause, and have personal knowledge of the matters contained herein.

I reside in Los Angeles, California. I am currently medically retired from the US Army.

I met Sgt. Zach Brady while serving in the US Army. We were both Infantrymen, and Zach was a Sniper. I have never met such a dedicated soldier as Zach Brady. We served two tours together in the Middle East: Iraq and Afghanistan. I have immense respect for Zach and all his accomplishments in the military. His accomplishments and outcomes set him apart from all the others. They included by were not limited to:

- On July 4th while serving in Iraq, our vehicle broke down near the town we were at. We all got out and separated. This is a safeguard that if we are attacked, there would be less casualties at one location. Zach was spotted by the insurgents and had a grenade thrown at him. It sent him 20 feet into the air. Most of the shrapnel was absorbed in his Kevlar shields. However, smaller pieces penetrated his arms and legs. And he was left deaf in one ear.
- We also were on a special mission to find hidden weapons on a tip. We made one of the biggest finds of weapons, fuel and ammunition. It made Time magazine. Zach was instrumental in leading his men to be the first to find the contraband.
- Our Battalion was one of the first to penetrate Afghanistan. One assignment was to take over a compound in which three other battalions were annihilated prior to our presence. We were able to successfully accomplish the take over of the compound. A huge step in our victory!
- Zach would take on the more difficult tasks, and was respected by his peers and subordinates as a result of this. We drove in Stryker vehicles. We were in a convoy, and the Stryker in front of us hit an IED and went airborne. The driver of the vehicle was thrown out and the Stryker landed on top of him. Zach had the rest of us get on the other side of the vehicle, pull it off of him and commanded that we stay back. He picked up the smashed body of our fellow soldier so the rest of us would not see him, and placed him in a body bag. This is the type of person that he was and continued to be an excellent soldier.
- One evening a 19 year old soldier went missing. Zach and his battle buddy were sent out to locate him. They found his dead body with his arms and head severed from his body. They had to pick up his pieces and place him in a body bag. It was Father's Day. Again, he internalized this and continued with all the difficult missions, while earning the respect and admiration of his unit.

- We were sent on a special mission where several units were under attack. We did not have our typical assigned Officer. He held us back while we watched our guys being bombed in their vehicles. The Officer commanded us to stay back. Zach refused, and he and I ran into the burning vehicle and recovered three of our fellow soldiers. They were all unconscious and would have died had we not rushed in to rescue them.
- Then the ill fated day came in which we were in cross fire. A machine gun bullet hit my gun, causing the 50 Cal bullet and my gun to shatter. All of these pieces were absorbed in Zach's face and back. I helped save his life by placing pressure on his wound. He was air vac'd to the hospital at Kandahar. He was hospitalized and then assigned to go home on medical leave. He refused. He wasn't going to leave his men. They allowed him to stay, however for the next mission he was unable to wear the Kevlar shield due to the pain it caused. He has about 40 pieces of shrapnel left in him. At that time, he was permanently sent back to the US and became medically retired. He received a Purple Heart.

I have nothing but respect and admiration for Zach Brady. PTSD comes in varying forms. I struggle with it myself. I hope and pray Zach gets the help he needs to overcome his PTSD. He's a good man and comes from great family. He has given to our country unselfishly and we owe it to him to get him treatment for his issues. I hope and pray we help him.

END OF AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF FLORIDA

COUNTY OF BREVARD

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 12TH day of May, 2023, by Michael Aper.

Michael Aper is personally known by me and produced a Florida driver's license to confirm identification.

Michael Aper
Teresa CB Heribacka
 Signature of Notary Public

Print, Type or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public

