

Veteran Impact Story: Jeremiah H., U.S. Army, Retired

"No good plan survives first contact but no one should have to face it alone."



Service was always part of Jeremiah's story.

He comes from a family with strong ties to the military, and those early influences shaped him long before he ever wore the uniform himself. As a kid, he remembers digging through his grandparents' closet and finding old military uniforms. That moment stayed with him. After a history lesson from his grandmother, it became more than curiosity. It was a sense of direction.

That direction led to 26 years in the service, where he retired as a Staff Sergeant. His time in service included deployments to Afghanistan and years spent instructing and leading others in small arms and combat training. It was work that demanded focus and adaptability, but it also built a deep sense of purpose.

Of all his accomplishments, two stand above the rest. His son, Ayden. His service is the other.

The mindset from the military never really turns off. There is a constant awareness and a habit of thinking ahead. The concept of P.A.C.E. Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency becomes second nature. At the same time, there is a quiet understanding that even the best preparation does not guarantee control.

No good plan survives first contact.

That reality became more apparent after stepping out of uniform.

The transition into civilian life brought challenges that are difficult to explain to those who have not lived it. The structure was gone. The shared mission was gone. The sense of belonging that once came naturally had to be rebuilt. At the same time, Jeremiah was working through health concerns, navigating systems that often felt unclear, and stepping fully into his role as a father.

There were times when everything felt heavy and uncertain.

A reconnection with an old friend, Ray, opened the door to something new. Through Ray, Jeremiah met Dave, and what started as familiar conversation quickly turned into something more meaningful. They had all walked similar paths, even if in different places and times. That shared understanding mattered.

He was encouraged to come out to a Monday night - called MWR at the time.

What he found there was not just a gathering, but a sense of connection that had been missing. Over time, moments like attending an evening at Belay My Last Barracks reinforced that feeling. At one of those gatherings, he discovered an unexpected connection. He had served and deployed alongside another veteran's uncle. It was a reminder of how small the military world can be, and how those shared experiences continue to connect people long after service ends.

Then life shifted again.

In the middle of everything he was already carrying, his truck broke down unexpectedly. Without transportation, even routine responsibilities became difficult. 22 2 None stepped in without hesitation, helping him find a way forward so he could continue getting where he needed to be.

Not long after, another challenge came closer to home.

Cancer had already touched people in his life. Family members and others in his circle had faced it. But when his son Ayden spoke up and said something was not right, everything changed. What followed was a stretch of uncertainty and searching for answers. Eventually, they made the decision to travel to Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, where a diagnosis made it clear that time mattered.

Plans shifted quickly.

Being there for his son became the only priority. Being far from home created new challenges that could not be ignored. Housing, logistics, and the simple need to stay close during a critical time all became immediate concerns.

Once again, 22 2 None stepped in quietly.

Support was provided so Jeremiah could remain by Ayden's side, removing a burden that no parent should have to carry in that moment. It allowed him to focus on what mattered most. Being present.

Today, there is hope.

Ayden has recently received a clear test result and is now attending NMC, working toward a future in the medical field. His resilience reflects the strength that has carried both of them through.

Looking back, Jeremiah speaks with deep gratitude. "22 2 None helped me save my son," he says.

Not just for the support he received, but for how it was given. Without recognition. Without conditions. Simply doing the right thing when no one else is looking.

What stayed with him was not just the help itself, but the feeling that he did not have to carry everything on his own.

That is where real impact begins.

Because many of the hardest battles are not the ones you can see. They happen in the in-between moments. In the uncertainty. In the weight people carry quietly.

Sometimes, what makes the difference is having someone step in, stand alongside you, and help lighten that load, even just enough to keep moving forward.

That is what it means to fight the fight within.

And it is a fight no one should have to face alone.