

Introduce myself, Sgt. John Hauer, Topeka, Ks.

Reasons for joining the military

- expelled from high school
- didn't like college
- stuck at home, arguing with parents
- fired from part time job

Reaction from others

- parents approved
- proud of me
- positive reactions only

Basic training/1st duty station

- improved physically
- mentally tougher
- positive aspects of military service

1st deployment

- volunteered for convoy security team
- wanted to protect my friends/trained hard in first aid skills
- didn't consider reasons for war/big picture questions at this point

War

- became very disillusioned very fast
- harming property of very poor people felt wrong/ramming and shooting vehicles to follow the ROE
- building bases that we knew would be stripped and sold the minute they were handed over to the ISF
- overall impression that people were trying to live and we weren't helping "winning hearts and minds" sounded more empty every day
- prayed to never have to choose between kill or be killed
- friend's marriages fell apart
- negative aspects of military service

Why soldiers are against war

- we started to assess/talk about the war and what we were doing in Iraq
- couldn't find any reasons for us being there, 9/11 was other countries, no WMDs, not helping the people, making more enemies every day not winning hearts, killing innocent people and destroying property
- not alone in these thoughts

After my friend got killed

- his wife was pregnant
- gunner shot a civilian in retaliation
- we were sad and angry
- wanted revenge
- biggest source of anger for me was that he died and left his wife and child "all for what?"
- realized why soldiers kill
- very negative aspects of military

Back home

- soldier of the year award
- promoted quickly
- positive things about military

2nd deployment 08-09

- stop lossed, squad leader, construction missions
- only goal was to bring my squad back home alive
- saw massive military spending and waste on this bigger base, all on things we didn't care much about
- made friends with Iraqi army soldiers, saw them as regular people just trying to live their lives
- GF suicide (very common)
- struggled with depression/suicidal thoughts, didn't think I was serving for good

Lawyer visit

- left a huge impression
- they were discussing the ROE
- most ppl killed were non combatants, didn't matter if you were following the ROE
- women/children no different just follow the ROE
- "winning hearts and minds" vs this? Nothing made sense, confused and angry
- re-affirmed my desire to get home without killing anyone

After the deployment

- had grown up a lot
- saved lots of money for a first house
- went to college at k state
- I was fine, others weren't so lucky
- 2 buddies died from substance abuse, many struggled with depression and relationships

Final thoughts

- military service CAN be very positive, physically and mentally and is a great way to get a head start on life
- deployments to "armed conflicts" are immensely harmful, so many suicides and substance abuse problems and broken homes
- why? We felt no sense of purpose, that we were NOT serving a greater good, disillusioned, lack of purpose but with great sacrifice, fighting for an ignoble cause

What we can do

- can't end armed conflicts, deployment to hostile countries, or war
- CAN end the deployment of Kansas National Guard to these federal endeavors and help our own
- military can be very positive in a young person's life BUT these deployments to useless conflicts have ONLY negative impacts
- Kansas has a chance to lead the way with this revolutionary bill
- set an example for the rest of the country to protect the young people of their state National Guard
- lead the way in bringing PEACE and prosperity back to our state and nation