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Veteran: Nick Cady
Branch: Army
Years in Service: 2004-2010
Year Interviewed: 2018

Nick Cady

Going through the traumatic experience of war can shape people into who they are and how they see the world and every aspect of it. For Nick Cady, war was not just about killing people or trying to assert dominance over a country and its people, it was about making a difference by serving and protecting a country from those that want to cause harm. Growing up in Riverside, California and going to King High School, he did not know what he wanted to do with his life until September 11, 2001, when the terrorist group Al-Qaeda hijacked 5 commercial airlines, killing thousands of people. Witnessing that as a seventeen year old high school senior it was clear that God had put him on Earth for a reason, to fight in the Middle East and contribute by protecting his home and country on the Global War on Terror. He fought for several years receiving awards and medals for his contribution. After the war, he had seen the decline of soldiers stationed overseas and that the United States was sending veterans home, he realized that it was time to finish serving and resign from the military and do something else with his life. He has since worked as a military contractor and for the United States Government, a job the he still does to this day.

Born on June 9,1984, Nick was raised in a middle-class household in Riverside California, and going to Martin Luther King high school, he was a seventeen year old senior when the attacks of 9/11 happened. Seeing the destruction and how shook up the country had

been after the attack, he knew it was his calling to serve his country. He had a friend from high school, Max Hooper, who was a US Army Ranger, and helped him prepare to become a Ranger and fight in combat. He had attempted to join plenty of times, but they just wanted to put people where they were needed. He was determined to get in or he was not going to serve and after one of his instructors had talked to someone he knew in the Pentagon, he finally got in.

Cady was then sent to Atlanta, Georgia, where he faced a sense of culture shock because he had only known life in Southern California and was borderline depressed. Cady had feelings of quitting and just wanting to leave, but he had to remember the reason why he joined, to protect the people of his country and contribute to ending the war on terror. After finishing the Ranger training in Atlanta he was the highest of his class and chose where he wanted to be stationed and chose Ft. Lewis, Washington. On his first deployment to Khost, Afghanistan, there was practically nothing there, barely running water, no plumbing, no electricity, there was nothing to do there besides carryout missions. Privates would have to do the tasks or chores that no one else wanted to do like emptying poop buckets. He came back from his first deployment with a feel of what it was like to be a Ranger but no serious gun fire or missions that he had to endure. He had all this money with his friends that he had left with and so now they just decided to spend it. During his second deployment he went on many mission, his most memorable however was the operation Red-Wing that inspired the movie Lone Survivor, a rescue mission for a team that crashed. They had been on the helicopters looking through the Hindu Kush mountain range, but could not find anything so they landed at the base of the mountain with 40 guys and 250 rangers, and walked up the mountain only to come to the top seeing nothing there. After finding no survivors they headed back down when they got word that the Marcus Luttrell, the only survivor

had walked down to the town at the bottom of the mountain and rescued him. On his third deployment, that is when everything changed it was one of the hardest deployments he ever had to endure, completing missions everyday, sometimes even twice a day, just the complete exhaustion of having to complete task everyday is what made it the hardest for him.

The missions that he had to complete were majority night raids and having to breach into towns and homes and go unannounced and capture or kill important targets from Al-Qaeda or from other terrorists organizations. The missions were painstaking and exhausting, having to do one, sometimes even two missions a night. He had become used to the feeling of war and having to kill people for a living in order to protect his men on his platoon and himself, and carrying out missions that called for him to be the leader. For the missions, he was given sheets of people that he and his team were supposed to kill and they would have to operate missions. During the third deployment he and two other members from his platoon had been on the border of Pakistan, and while his group leader was talking to him and his friend, they got ambushed and the group leader got shot in the chest and his whole chest had gotten blown out and Cady had gotten shot in the foot, but he did not know because of the adrenaline going through him. He grabbed his gun and fired back, killing the three people who ambushed them and got airlifted back to the base for treatment and care, then received a Purple Heart. He then went home from his deployment and at the time had a daughter and it was becoming hard to leave her not knowing if he would be able to come back. He went on missions similar to his third deployment and was practically the same thing. One of his missions, his team had called an airstrike on a building with some guys they were meant to kill and they has to cut the hands off of the men they were supposed to kill and take them to base for DNA test. He went back from his fourth deployment home and was now

becoming tired of the feeling of war. The balance of having to serve his country and balance a life in the states with a daughter that was growing up while he was gone killed him inside and not being able to be there and spend time with his family made it hard for him to continue serving.

In his fifth deployment he had still been in control of his platoon and was now having to endure life there had just become normal and calloused to the idea of having to kill for a living. The missions were all the same but now the tasks had become harder on his body, as father time was taking over and had become to feel it in his body. After his fifth deployment, the death of Osama Bin Laden, leader of Al-Qaeda, was now dead and so the troops and people who had now seen the decline of military force in the middle east begin to leave. His sixth deployment he knew would be his last as an Army Ranger and after his sixth deployment, he finally was done in 2011, coming home to America where he was now faced with the task of becoming a parent and having to find work in America. He got hired by an agency that does bodyguard work, where he was a bodyguard for Britney Spears and then having to work other jobs including for a military contracting company where he was a military contractor and then was done in 2013. He then worked for the government one more time and has done 11 deployments and the current one that he is on is his 12th as a contractor.

War has been a thing that has been on Earth ever since the first civilizations engaged in conflict and it has not changed since then and we have those problems of war still today. Nick Cady believes that “the Global War on Terror is something that cannot be won,” and that there will always be people that see things different and that until we as a world can see that, then this issue will not end.

