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Sgt. USMC veteran, Purple Heart recipient

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

“Sergeant Andrew Tahmooressi: Our Marine in Mexican Custody”

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the invitation to testify today. I am forever grateful for the Committee’s interest in the overview of Sergeant Andrew Tahmooressi’s dire need to get Veterans Affairs hospital medical treatment as soon as possible. As always I am eager to hear your advice and counsel as well.

You don’t truly know a man until you’ve deployed to combat with that individual. I had the pleasure of both taking part in training and deploying to Afghanistan with Sgt. Tahmooressi. He was truly one of the best junior marines and machine gunners I’ve ever served with. This was a Marine who received a combat meritorious promotion. This alone speaks volumes to what kind of individual Andrew is, and contests to his character. To be promoted meritoriously in combat is truly an honor amongst Marines and is not given lightly.

On Andrew’s last deployment he saved the life of a fellow marine by securing tourniquets on him after he stepped on an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) causing him to lose both of his legs. It’s in these moments that a mans true character is tested.

Congressmen Matt Salmon, Ed Royce, and Duncan Hunter have spear headed the campaign regarding Andrew’s release. They have sent out multiple letters in support to the State Department and White House. I also had the opportunity to sit down face-to-face with Congressman Ed Royce and explain Andrews story. We had his immediate and unflinching support toward our cause.

The crime with which Andrew is being charged requires intent; weapons’ trafficking is not a negligent crime and his true intent has been proven as being an accident. Please help us get this combat veteran home and getting the much-needed medical care that only the Veterans Affairs Hospital can provide.