



Building Homes for Heroes

Staff Sergeant Visala Tui



Florida (Homestead, Riverview)





Staff Sergeant Visala Tui

Hero Story



Army Staff Sergeant Visala Tui joined the military out of American Samoa in 1997 and served the country for 14 1/2 years. Staff Sergeant Tui served with HHC, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment (Wolfhounds). He carried out tours in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Staff Sergeant Tui was exposed to numerous nearby IED explosions, indirect fire, and mortar rounds. As a combat medic, he had significant exposure to friendly and enemy casualties, at times had to retrieve body parts, and on many occasions had to aid soldiers during ambushes and IED blasts. SSG Tui witnessed several traumatic events, including a Blackhawk being downed that resulted in all eight aboard being killed. He also endured two vehicle rollovers.

On October 20, 2004, SSG Tui, along with his best friend and roommate of three years, Corporal Billy Gomez, was in a convoy that was hit by an ambush while on a mission in Waziqua, Afghanistan. An IED blast followed the ambush. There were mass casualties. SSG Tui was one of the first medics to treat the wounded, including Corporal Gomez. Three days after the attack, Corporal Gomez died.

Among the injuries SSG Tui suffered were a traumatic brain injury, severe sleep apnea, injuries to both shoulders, PTSD, permanent injuries to his left side, and injuries to his lower back and knees, and severe arthritis in his ankles. He must undergo further surgical procedures.

SSG Tui is rated as having a total disability permanent in nature.

SSG Tui received the Afghanistan Campaign Medal W/Campaign Star, Army Commendation Medal (5th award), Army Achievement Medal (5th award), Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Army Good Conduct Medal (4th award), National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal w/Campaign Star, Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (3rd award), and the Combat Medical Badge.





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Corporal Billy Gomez (left) with Staff Sergeant Tui in Afghanistan.





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Staff Sergeant Tui at a memorial for Corporal Gomez.





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The Tui family would like to reside in Florida.

