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'Battle Buddies' Provide Support, Comradery During and After Deployment

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VVS04E04

Host Intro:

Our Veterans' Voices series continues with Air Force veterans Matt Bauer of Vandalia and Jeff McCannon of Columbus. Matt and Jeff are battle buddies. They've been deployed three times and it's their shared experiences and memories – both good and bad - while on those multiple tours of service that bonds them today.

Host Outro:

That was Air Force veterans and battle buddies Jeff McCannon and Matt Bauer. Veterans' Voices is produced in collaboration with the Military and Veterans Center at Wright State University. This series is supported by Wright-Patt Credit Union.

Photo: Battle buddies (left to right) Chad Keever, Matt Bauer, Barry Roberts, Glover, and Jeff McCannon on deployment to Kuwait. Photo courtesy of Bauer.

Transcription:

Jeff McCannon (JM): My first deployment. I mean, you hear all these stories, you're going overseas, your nervous to all get out, you know. I mean you got the jitters, anxiety, and everything else. You're packed up, you've trained for this, but nothing quite prepares you such as you're lowering down through the air space out there, you can hear the explosions outside the aircraft as you're going to land...

Matt Bauer (MB): Chaos.

JM: Yes, that's the only way to describe that deployment was chaos.

MB: Mine was to Iraq so our first deployments were really, really cool!

JM: Haha.

MB: I'm a history buff and you know this, so for me it was like I'm stepping foot where the first civilization popped up of recorded human history. To me, that was fascinating, and then the nerdiness stopped. Because you get off the plane and it was one big ashtray. And just like you were saying with mortars going off overhead. It's not being truly communicated if we're under attack.

JM: No, this is just Tuesday.

MB: I don't understand what's going on, so there's no way to mentally prepare yourself for that. There's no amount of stories from people who have been there before and tell you about it. Those stories meant nothing to me as soon as I got there.

JM: Of course.

MB: My second was Qatar and it was like, "Well that's going to be easy." And then you get there and you have to deal with the politics. The politics of Qatar when I went there was like an episode of *The Young and the Restless*. It was drama every day. And I think it was because there was no big threat.

JM: Yes, that lull.

MB: So all these support bases like Kuwait and Qatar didn't know what to do. The command was like, "I guess we just hang out."

JM: Qatar was my second deployment, as well. And while I was over there was one the big government shut downs in 2011.

MB: Because nothing makes you want to work harder than not getting paid. Thanks Congress!

JM: Exactly.

MB: When I got to Qatar, it wasn't, it isn't very dangerous per se as Iraq or Afghanistan. I was able to go off base and hang out and eat and drink. Chai tea, not beer.

JM: I tried the Chai tea, one of the biggest mistakes of my life.

MB: Oh, I had great time with Chai tea.

JM: It tasted amazing. It's just five hours later when I was painting the inside of the toilet was the issue.

MB: Anyway. So with my third one, going into Kuwait. Me and you were on this deployment together. Our third and final deployment. I think that was my most fun and most rewarding one.

JM: I disagree with rewarding, but it was my most fun one. I mean, most of the times you think of deployment, you think of something either truly rough like Afghanistan, or Iraq, or super political such as Qatar. And here we are talking about Kuwait and how we actually enjoyed our lives when we were there.

MB: I think we had a really good team that went.

JM: We were really close, but a lot of characters.

MB: Yeah.

JM: For me, that's one of things I miss the most: the comradery, the battle buddy. You constantly had someone to rely upon. I mean, we're here sitting in this room and having this discussion.

MB: And I don't think we've missed a beat.

JM: Not at all. You make life long long friendships. Bonds.

MB: We wouldn't be who are without the military. And we look back on it fondly. But we're so glad we're out.

JM: Oh yeah.