

Tristan Alexander Holmes

January 30, 1987 - March 28, 2018



Tristan Alexander Holmes was a son and a grandson. A brother and an uncle. A nephew and a cousin. A friend and a Marine. He was funny, and he had perfect comedic timing. Tristan Alexander Holmes was a son and a grandson. A brother and an uncle. A nephew and a cousin. A friend and a Marine. He was funny, and he had perfect comedic timing. He was smart, and he was constantly asking questions to learn whatever he could. When he decided on a course of action, he didn't waver from it. He was so many things to so many people. He was a good man.

Born January 30, 1987 at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO, he was 100% boy. He was rough and tumble, loved to climb trees and hike, and loved running around and playing outside. His nickname was "Bear" and it was always appropriate: when he was a toddler and his shirts didn't quite cover his little round belly; when he played middle linebacker and every other team in his league was afraid to play his team; and when his two older sisters started dating. He moved to Texas with his family in 1993 and picked up the state religion: football. He flouted tradition and became a fan of the Indianapolis Colts, much to the dismay of his Dallas Cowboys loving sisters. He played in the Peewee league, then middle school, and eventually in high school.

He decided while in high school that he wanted to be a Marine. This led to him joining ROTC at Stony Point High School in Round Rock, Texas. He graduated in May of 2005. And because he had set his mind to it and didn't waver from that course of action, he enlisted in the Marine Corps on October 24, 2005.

He did several tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, as a mine sweeper with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. He saw things that no 19 or 20-year-old should have to see, and experienced things that most of us don't even see in our nightmares. Yet he did it until the day he was discharged, on January 30, 2009.

After discharge, he did what he could to make ends meet, while also suffering from severe PTSD as a result of his service in the Marine Corps. Like many Vets returning from war, he had trouble holding down a job and functioning in society. Sadly, this means he turned to drugs and alcohol as a means of coping with all that he had seen and been through. And like too many Vets, he had trouble getting the help he really needed from the VA. While living in Denver, CO, he was finally officially diagnosed with PTSD in 2016.

He eventually made his way out to Fresno, CA. But because of his addictions, he struggled still. He found his way to St. George Greek Orthodox Church, where Father Jim Pappas worked with him to get sober, find a place to live, get some job training, and find a job. He went to school to become an EMT and passed his EMT exam. He attended church at St. George where he served in the altar. He was attending meetings to keep himself sober and clean.

But the beast of PTSD was always looking over his shoulder. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is defined as a mental health condition that's triggered after experiencing a trauma or life-threatening event. The symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, depression and confusion. And Tristan certainly experienced trauma and a life-threatening event, after seeing and experiencing what he did in the Middle East. That's not something that you forget. That's not something you just get over when you're not Active Duty anymore. That's not something that you can fight on your own.

He tried, though. Tristan tried to fight it, and he did, for a long time. There were many people that helped him when and where they could. But the real help that he needed, the help that could have possibly saved him, never came. He was fighting to get help from the Veterans Administration. He was fighting to get treatment for the PTSD that was caused by his service as a Marine. And still the help never came. And he was fighting too many other fights at the same time. A person can only fight so many things for so long before they feel that they just can't fight anymore. Rather than keep fighting, Tristan tragically chose to take his own life on March 27, 2018.

Don't let this all be in vain. Don't let Tristan's passing be for nothing. If you are suffering, whether from PTSD or any other condition, please reach out. Text a friend. Email a family member. Find a support group on Facebook. Call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255. Go to an Emergency Room. There are people that love you and care about you

and are willing to help. Every single one of us looks back and thinks, "I wish I would have done more for Tristan." We wonder if that Christmas or birthday card that we should have sent would have been the difference. We wonder if that phone call to check up on him would have been the difference. We wonder if that email to let him know we were thinking about him would have been the difference. We wonder if we should have visited him more often, and if that would have been the difference. What we do know for sure is that each and every one of us would gladly accept your email, text, or phone call, if it means we can help prevent another tragic death. Tristan was a good man. He always had some deep philosophy to share, whether to cheer someone up, help them through a hard time, or share in their joy. He had a way of doing little things that had a great impact on those around him. There are at least two people in this world that he had such a profound impact on that they chose to name their own sons after Tristan. Tristan is survived by his father, William S. "Sid" Holmes, of Silver Spring, Maryland; his mother Victoria Deyeaux and stepfather Michael Friends, of Round Rock, TX; his sister Faith St. Thomas, brother in law Anthony St. Thomas, and nephew Isaac St. Thomas, of Woodbridge, VA; his sister Ruth Christensen and brother in law Russ Christensen, of Springfield, VA; his grandmother Shirley Holmes, of Sunset Beach, NC; several aunts, uncles, and cousins; and so many friends that mourn his passing.