Different Roads. Same Values. November 11, 2026
Zachary Coakley | Army Veteran

From serving as a Heavy Wheeled Vehicle Operator in the United States Army to his career as a XCAL Tools Sales Territory Manager, Zachary Coakley's journey has taken him down very different roads.

Through it all, the importance of showing up for the people around him, looking out for one another, and knowing you're part of something bigger has remained familiar.

Among the weapons and equipment surrounding Zach during his deployment in Afghanistan, a photograph of his son was held in place inside his turret.

It was a small reminder of home in an environment where the stakes were anything but small. As a member of the United States Army, Zach spent seven years in service, completing two combat deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, he travels thousands of miles across eight states as a XCAL Sales Territory Manager, building relationships with customers and putting many of the lessons from his military experience into practice.

Zach served as the gunner on a scout gun truck team in Afghanistan. While most gun trucks operated with four people, including a second gunner who could switch out when needed, Zach's truck was different. It was considered a "mass casualty truck," meaning the team operated with only three people. In the event of a severe hit, having one fewer person in the vehicle meant one fewer potential loss.

The three-person team included Daniels, the driver; Sergeant Wise, the truck commander, or TC; and Zach, the gunner. Seated in the passenger seat, Sergeant Wise directed the team's movements using a Blue Force Tracker, a mapping system Zach compared to an iPad. It displayed the routes they would travel throughout Afghanistan.

As part of the scout team, their job was to move ahead of the main convoy, identifying and addressing potential threats before the rest of the vehicles arrived. Their work helped keep the convoy moving and avoid unnecessary stops.

Amongst all of the weaponry and equipment in Zach’s turret, four small pieces of tape held up a photo of his son.

“You know what you’re doing it for,” Zach said. “You got a little man at home. So it’s you or them.”

That photograph represented those waiting for him back home. Today, Zach and his wife have three children, ages 15, 13 and 4.

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The importance of having people to rely on is something Zach says he recognized both during his military service and in his career at XCAL. He sees many similarities between the camaraderie he experienced in the Army and the family-oriented culture he found at the company.

“The genuineness of people caring here is kind of like how it was for me in the military, and that makes my life a lot easier,” Zach said.

His time in the service also brought him into contact with people from a wide range of backgrounds. He says learning to work alongside people with different experiences and perspectives has been especially valuable in his current role as a XCAL Sales Territory Manager.

“I think the greatest thing about being in the military is you’re forced to be around people from everywhere,” Zach said. “You’re forced to work with such a diverse group of individuals that you have to be like, ‘Hey man, it’s us. We’re best friends now. We are boys, like, this is it.”

In addition to being able to talk to people from all walks of life, he says another valuable asset he got from being in the military was being able to find the positive, even in difficult circumstances.

“I think making the best of any situation is probably a really good thing from the military,” Zach said. “When we were doing night training, you got ten free minutes. You’re using that ten minutes to find somewhere to lay down and sleep, and you’re happy that you got ten minutes of sleep.”

Today, Zach's work takes him across eight states, where he continues to meet new people, build relationships and adapt to whatever each day brings. While his role at XCAL looks very different from his time in uniform, the importance of camaraderie, looking out for others and making the best of every situation remains.

His journey has taken him down different roads, but the values he carries with him have stayed the same.

This Veterans Day, we thank Zach for his service and recognize the veterans across our country who have served.