

William M. Speer EOD2 EWS/FPJ/AW (Retired)

5/28/2009

John Nash
Combat Veterans, Cowboy Up
Moonfall Ranch, Elizabeth Co.

To Mr. and Mrs. Nash and the Cowboy Up Program

After my medical retirement from the Navy in June of 2008 I have suffered with the loss of my fallen brothers and sisters, with the anguish of the choices I made and did not make on the battle field, with myself, and my life. I have lived the last 2 years like this, in this limbo, going from day to day, trying to keep myself moving. I didn't realize it then, as is always the case. I wasn't living at all.

I support my VA, I appreciate all the help they have done for me and my comrades. The PTSD though still consumed me and with it, my family. Even through the classes and counseling sessions I still couldn't put a finger on it until John Nash and I were talking. They were never there. They didn't see what I saw, they didn't make the irreversible and complex decisions that could have been the last one for me and so many others.

John Nash is a decorated and honorable man, who has been through the toils of life so few have seen. He is my brethren, my battle buddy. The most important part is that he carries such intensity for his work and his love of life into every second of my time with him and his beautiful wife. He is Cowboy Up, and his love and passion to help change our comrades lives is immeasurable.

Since my beginning with CVCU in the last week of March 2009, I have seen such a calming and bright change in my life and my future. Without John and his staff of wonderful people I am assured that times would have been much different.

John you are my staple for fighting this demon inside of me, and you will continue to be that staple to so many others. Thank you, your darling Wife Jackie, and your irreplaceable staff for your continuous service to our country and especially to our brothers and sisters.

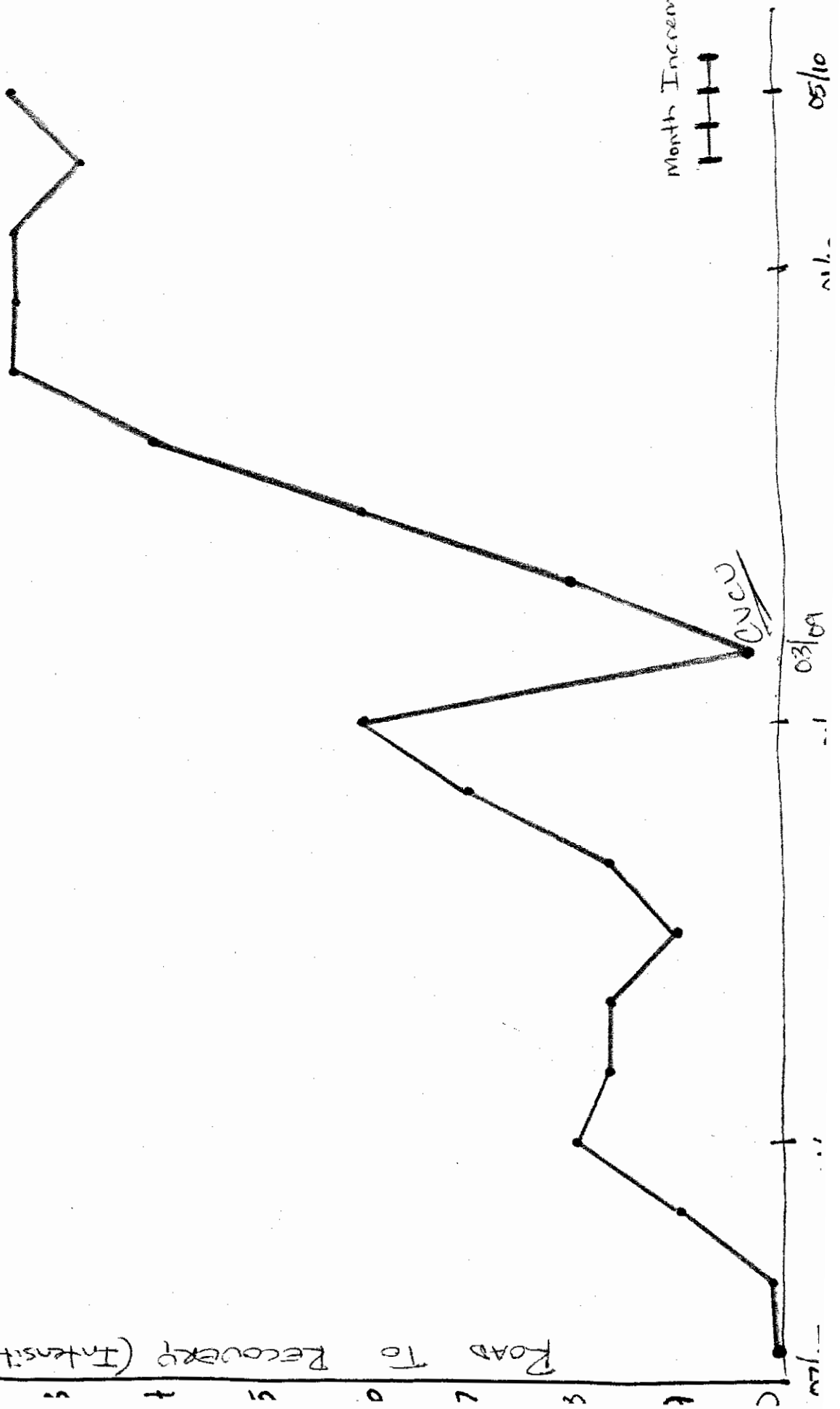
With my deepest Appreciation, Thank you.

William Speer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Speer', written over a circular stamp or mark.

Billy Spear

Road To Recovery (Intensity 1 = Best)



Month Increments



01/20

03/20

05/10

07/10

I spent just over 8 yrs in the Navy. 6 of those were dedicated to the Special Operations in the military Bomb Squad. I did 2 tours back to back in South-East Baghdad during the high resistance times in 06 and 07.

Our interpretation of the Combat was that of a manly nature. We shrugged off the gore and kept pushing forward, but inside we were all a mess.

Soon after my return I began ~~treatment w/ the Va and have stayed~~ active ever since. I received a medical retirement for a back injury and PTSD from the military then moved back home here to Colorado.

My life went down hill pretty fast soon after. My reaction to being diagnosed with PTSD was one of reason and understanding. I knew the symptoms, I understood how it affected me, I could sometimes see it in my actions. I thought that I'm getting all the help I can, the rest is up to me. I thought that this was some mental war I could win by myself.

Reality hit. I suffered a divorce, loss of a very nice career. I distanced myself from my family, my kids & reality. I was the one being beaten and I was blind to it.

I felt stuck in my treatments with the VA, I felt stuck taking pills in hopes of feeling normal. This battle with in myself was so foreign to the battle field I fought on and yet it was so much more alike.

Just about a year ago my girlfriend Andrea ran across John Wask's newspaper article about the Cowboy Up Program. I read it and was instantly intrigued. We called that day.

I remember talking to Andrea about how cool it is that this program is ran by a combat vet. I felt an instant kinship with John because of this. I remarked to her the difficulties I had sometimes trying to put what I've seen into words during therapy with the VA. I never felt understood, and it was because they had never seen it.

John has a wonderful ability to put what he knows about, war, PTSD, Horses, and recovery together into powerful metaphors.

through which ^v showed me sides of myself hidden by the PTSD. The very powerful and moving connection with the horses is one of the most amazing experiences I've had, and it's served as an amazing conduit to recovery.

instantly The best part of this experience is seeing the progress during the therapy. I feel weight lifted, I can see clearer. The future looks more bright, I work through the week still processing my therapy. With this program I am more of a part of my recovery. Not just talking, not just taking pills, but actually doing the work, and seeing results. Because of this I feel more accomplishment.

Combat Veterans Cowboy Up Program is the reason I have hope for my recovery. It's something proven, it's something new, and I know it works. I feel it, I'm told I show it. I'm not out of the woods yet but I've found my trail.

The selfless people that keep this
program running. From the bottom
of my heart, thank you for showing
Billy the trail.

Now I need your help. I've found something that has made my life struggling with PTSD a lot better, and I know it will work for the rest of our service members. John Nash and the Cowboy Up program need funding. I want my brothers & sisters in arms who suffer the effects of PTSD to be shown the same guiding light I have been shown.

Sponsor a soldier, make a donation, help us save our combat vets. This program has a group of amazing people who tirelessly push to expand so they might have the chance to save another soldier. Help them please.

Thank You,

Hi my name is andrea. Before I met Billy I had never heard of PTSD and I'm sad to say neither have alot of people I know. I have now come to realize the seriousness OF the disorder. When I first met Billy I could tell he was a strong willed & very put together person, little did I know the inner turmoil he suffered & the strength it took to put on this facade. As our relationship progressed I started to notice things about him that I couldn't make sense of. I knew nothing about the symptoms including the sudden outbursts of rage and the constant feelings that he was trying to push me away, or detach himself completely from what was going on around him. ~~He had to see somebody suffering and not know what's going on & worst not know how to help.~~ Billy continuously had to remind me that he wasn't acting this way because of me, but I couldn't help blaming myself. I have always been very empathetic but putting myself in his shoes is almost impossible. The hardest part for me was watching him ~~take so many different ^{prescribed} medications,~~ or rather "testing" them to see which ~~would help.~~ It was truly heartbreaking. I knew that Billy had been going to therapy through the VA. and I could see that it was giving him direction

I suffer & not know what's going on & worst. help

but it wasn't solving the problem.

That's when I stumbled across an article in the newspaper about this program.

I was hesitant to bring it up at first, knowing that "change" being difficult for anybody, is especially harder for people w/ PTSD to accept. ^{PTSD} Seeing that Billy was trying so hard to make his current therapy work for him. But I knew he had an affinity for animals, ~~and I saw that it wasn't always best for him to talk because he would struggle for words, this would only frustrate him and that and he would leave on it for hours afterward~~

So... we decided to give it a try.

We both believe strongly in the healing powers of animals and I knew after his first session that he would continue to go back. It has now been a year since he started at combat veterans cowboy up and I can only begin to tell you the genuine changes I have seen in him. The most important change, to me, is how his eyes that were once expressionless are now full of life. He has become more aware of himself and his PTSD, in turn helping me understand more clearly what he's going through. There are so many more subtle changes that make a huge difference in how he sees himself and what he wants in life and I can truly say that this progression that I've seen is largely due to Combat Veterans Cowboy Up and all →