

September 25, 2022

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Tom Ballinger. Tom and I have been close friends for 20 years. In this time, I have known him to be a leader in the military, a leader in his community, and a leader in his family. Many people are able to accomplish being a strong leader in one or two of these areas, but then they have difficulty balancing all three due to the stress, lack of resources, or other concerns. I am impressed that Tom has been able to be faithful in all three of these areas over these past two decades.

We served in Iraq together while assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. He served as a Bradley Commander in my platoon where he was trusted to make difficult judgment calls during important missions. It is often difficult to trust others, especially in stressful situations dealing with life and death. However, I knew I could trust the unit led by Staff Sergeant Ballinger. I remember one incident where a friendly Iraqi contractor had been shot and was bleeding to death. Using his decisive thinking and emergency medical training, Tom and my platoon medic were able to stabilize the man against all odds and swiftly brought him to a life-flight prepped and ready for surgery. Staff Sergeant Ballinger was also a leader who I could trust to understand the intent of a mission. I saw examples of how he appropriately knew when to act forcefully (capturing IED makers before the weapons were detonated) and when to act with restraint (not acting forcefully when we determined that the headquarters' intelligence was incorrect).

Having returned to Ohio as a veteran, Tom continues to use his leadership and judgment skills as a detective and non-profit organization board member. Although the situations are back in the US, there are similarities regarding the need to distinguish between acting forcefully and acting with restraint. Additionally, through all of this, he has been committed to his family by being a loving husband and father. In a world where so many leaders sacrifice family for so-called "success" in business, Tom Ballinger has not chosen "either-or" but the "both-and" by being both a great leader and great family-man. I can honestly look up to him as a servant-leader who demonstrates how to lead by example.

Tom Ballinger is a dedicated public servant. Not only does he say he cares, but he has demonstrated his concern for others by serving his country overseas in the Army, serving his community in law enforcement, and serving as a volunteer in charitable organizations. Any governmental or community organization would be better for having Tom as a leader.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Hansford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "H".

Jason Hansford