



Today marks the first anniversary of a great stain on American history: the wholesale abandonment of America's closest allies following the collapse of the Afghan Government. The stain I refer to is not the withdrawal itself; the service members who faced that impossible situation rose to the occasion and completed their mission honorably, and at an immense cost. Rather, the stain is what was perpetrated before and since: the unconscionably callous betrayal of America's most faithful servants.

The servants I refer to were the National Mine Reduction Group; Afghans partnered with Green Berets to detect and disable IEDs. I use "servant" in the exact sense as I do with members of the US military, and without a shred of hyperbole: **How can it be argued that someone who worked exclusively for US Army Special Forces from January 2002 to June 2021 is anything but a servant of America?** Does being an Afghan reduce the significance of what they risked and sacrificed? The NMRG rendered an incomparable service to the United States, and are now abandoned based on their nationality.

The risks in clearing IEDs for America's spearhead force cannot be understated, but ripping the veneer away from their core purpose reveals an unsettling truth: they were employed by the US (not Afghan) Government to hold the minesweeper so that an American didn't have to. While their skills were exceptional, the law of averages clearly indicates that ultimately, **they were to take the IED blasts so that Americans could return home.** I make this claim as a Green Beret who led an NMRG Team in Afghanistan. I further attest to it as the founder and Executive Director of the nonprofit, [Save Team 11](#), where we ensure the welfare of the surviving members of the NMRG and provide advocacy and immigration assistance on their behalf.

As it stands now, their sacrifices are ignored -not forgotten- by our own government.

This July, during a video conference with members of the various NGOs that coalesced due to the continuing crisis, Secretary of State Blinken expressed his gratitude and admiration for our actions. He also fully admitted that "...you all are doing our job... [and] we need you to continue to do so..." In response, I ask only this: **Why? Why is it incumbent on American civilians, veterans and active service members to dedicate our own time and resources to rebuild our nation's honor?**

Indeed, this is precisely what is happening, and Team 11 takes it a step further. Everyone who guides and advises the 300 surviving NMRG and their 1,400 family members is a Green Beret or Explosive Ordnance Technician that is still serving. Of the two dozen of us, all but a few are on active duty. This is [corroborated in a recent New York Sun Report](#).

Because the State Department has relieved itself of leadership in seeing the Afghan crisis through to an ethical conclusion, **Active-Duty Green Berets have been saddled with rectifying the moral injury of America's previous conflict, when they should be preparing for its next one.**

"Habib" worked as a guard for US Special forces compounds from 2002-2013, before joining the NMRG. He was captured and tortured in January.

"Bostan" and "Mohammed" whom I personally managed, both started working for the US in the fall of 2002, joining the NMRG in 2008. They are still alive, unlike many of their compatriots who have been shot, bombed, beheaded, hung, or poisoned in the last year. All were steadfast in their commitment to doing the most dangerous job in Afghanistan: keeping Green Berets like me safe.

Is 19 years of service in advancing American interests not enough to prioritize them for immigration?

We saw our government shirk its responsibility during the Afghan crisis, and we know Americans' focus will ebb and shift to other matters. The reality is that this one-year anniversary is our best chance at creating meaningful progress for the NMRG; those who bore the heaviest load of anyone -American or otherwise- in the War in Afghanistan.

We won't give up on them- we can't. But even our strength will ebb. Bound by our creed of *De Oppresso Liber* - "To Free the Oppressed" - those few of us fortunate to wear the Green Beret will continue the fight though our own government has long since abdicated leadership in this crisis. But we can't do it forever and we can't do it by ourselves.

I now ask that you join us. [Donate](#), [write to your congressman](#), or simply forward this message to your friends' and loved ones. This is perhaps our last, agonal gasp in getting the NMRG the comprehensive help they need, and the recognition they deserve.

Thank you,

Thomas Kasza, Executive Director

On behalf of:

Afghans, Green Berets, EOD Techs and volunteers of Save Team 11