

# Nate Winkler's Run to Home Base

You see them at the grocery store. They coach your kids' football team. You are friends with them on Facebook. They are veterans of the United States military, and many of them struggle quietly from the "invisible wounds" of war. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) affect approximately 50,000 New England Veterans and chances are, you know someone personally who is suffering in silence.



Nate Winkler was part of the initial surge of troops into Iraq during the first days of the conflict there.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Red Sox Foundation and the Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program is hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual "Run to Home Base", with funds raised going to provide brain injury diagnosis, treatment, and support to New England Veterans and their families.

A local South Coast resident, Marine Corps veteran, and PTSD

survivor Nate Winkler is running to “Home Base” to advocate for other vets who desperately need help dealing with this silent killer. Please take a few moments to learn more about Traumatic Brain Injuries and PTSD through our interview with Nate, and help him reach his fundraising goals for his Run to Home Base.

**NBG: Nate, how did you get involved with the Run to Home Base Program?**

**Nate:** This is the 2nd year that the Home Base Program has partnered with the Red Sox Foundation to put on this unique event. I remembered seeing the coverage of the event last year and I thought it was a great way to raise money for something that has directly affected me.

**Running across home plate at Fenway seems like a dream to so many: How does it feel to be one of only 2,500 people given the opportunity to participate?**

**Nate:** Crossing the finish line at iconic Fenway is definitely a great aspect of the event, and I feel honored to be one of the few who is not only participating, but also raising money and awareness for the cause.



Marine Corps  
Veteran Nate  
Winkler

**So you need to raise \$1,000 just for the chance to run this event, how are you doing so far?**

**Nate:** Well, as of right now I've raised \$585, so I'm over halfway there. Because they only allow a small number of runners through Fenway, the \$1,000 goal is a good way for participants to show that they're serious about the event. Of course, my goal is to exceed \$1,000 because the money is being raised for a great cause. If every one of your readers donated just one dollar to <http://www.runtohomebase.org/runtohomebase/NathanielWinkler>, I would easily surpass my goal and even more veterans could receive care.

**You suffer from PTSD. Can you share a little bit of your personal experiences to give readers a better understanding of how this can happen to service members?**

**Nate:** I saw limited combat during my tour in Iraq in 2003, yet I had a hard time coming to terms with the things I was exposed to during that time. My duty in the Marine Corps ended just a few weeks after I returned to the States, and I felt completely alone as a civilian, so I internalized everything. I struggled to keep my life together until I was finally ready to face my traumatic event head-on and learn how to cope in a constructive way. Organizations like the Home Base Program would have been useful to me back then, and that's why I support what they do for troops returning from combat.

**There seems to be a social stigma surrounding PTSD and TBI. Why have you chosen to talk about your personal struggles?**

**Nate:** Many of our troops go through far worse experiences than I did and are never really able to make peace with it. If sharing my experiences can encourage someone to seek the help that is available, then I feel like it's my duty to do so.

*New Bedford Guide thanks Nate for his service and for sharing his story with us. We hope you will take the time to support this worthy cause.*

