

KEITH FROMME

A Soldier Fights His Hardest on a Farm Serving the Country for What He Truly Believes

Graduate: Class of 2007 Occupation: Soldier and Farmer
By Amanda Braunecker and Kathi Fromme, Spring 2010

An American soldier, Keith Fromme, can be found on Fromme Farms in Ferdinand, Indiana. As a child, Keith worked on this farm with his parents and siblings. Becoming a farmer was the last career he wanted as a child. The farm needed Keith for its future. Therefore, as a senior in high school, Keith came back to the farm and decided that he would have two jobs-as a soldier and a farmer-for his life long careers.

A 2007 graduate, Keith did not have much time to work on the farm before he had to go overseas to the sandy deserts of Iraq. "The most rewarding thing about my work is knowing that I have a positive effect in people's lives. For example, one mission I remember in Iraq was giving this Iraqi girl a teddy bear. It's hard to explain the look of joy I saw on her face, like I just gave her the best gift anyone has ever given anyone," explained Keith when asked about his most rewarding part about his job. Proud of his accomplishments, Keith has had the amazing opportunity to spread the gift of freedom to people who are not free.

A specialist in the Indiana National Guard, Keith has been active in this field for three years and two months now. His battalion, based out of Jasper, locates him there along with wherever else he may be deployed. This job consists of fighting and defending the freedom of the Americans and helping people out in the case of a major natural disaster. Influenced by his father, Keith took the same path as his father in fighting for the freedom of our country.

On October 25, 2005, Keith, a junior, began his career in the Army National Guard. On August 31, 2007, he completed basic training. Then, on December 10, 2007, he was deployed for Iraq. This surprised him, considering less than a year ago he graduated; however, now he was headed out to fight in a place where he was unfamiliar with the surroundings.

While in Iraq, he accepted the following leadership roles: the lead gunner in the lead vehicle, the inspector for bombs or other items that looked suspicious or seemed out of place, and the escort and patroller of the supply routes in his area.

Keith encountered many close calls along the way as well. For example, on June 6, 2008, an enemy sniper shot at him. He stated, "The bullet hit a bulletproof glass window about two feet away from my head--a window that I had just had installed about a week earlier." Calling it his hardest bump in the road, Keith encountered another scary situation. On August 17, 2008, he was wounded by a roadside bomb. "I am still working to overcome the effects of it. I have what is called traumatic brain disorder. My thought process is a little slower, and even typing this is helping me overcome the injury," states Keith. Keith returned home from Iraq on December 3, 2008. Serving a full year overseas, he received the Purple Heart after receiving injuries from the bomb. Since his return, he immediately began working on Fromme Farms.

When his dad Pat had to leave for Afghanistan in December of 2009, working on the farm turned into longer hours. Keith now has to take care of the cows--three hundred head--with his wife, Amanda. He does not have to check the thousands of turkeys on the farm because Lori, his mom, checks them. The winter is much simpler on Keith than any other time of year. He often works from eight in the morning to nine in the evening during the warmer months. In the spring, Keith and his family have to chop silage, finely cut grass, for the cows to eat during the winter. When the ground is dry in the summer, he has to mow fields for bailing hay. In the fall, Keith works calves and hauls them away to the market for the auction. Winter then serves him as a break from the hectic times of the year. He also has many other projects: fixing broken equipment, cleaning out turkey and cattle barns, and helping his mom with the turkeys. Happily, he works hard and long hours on the farm. Keith says, "Working on a farm is easy; it is just time consuming."

To find Keith not on the farm is highly unusual, but as much as he wants to stay at the farm, to advance in the military, he has to attend college at VUJC in Jasper, Indiana. According to Keith, he found the perfect path for him. He would like to share some of his best advice: "It does not matter how much money you make as long as you love what you are doing with your life."