

# FOR TOMORROW



## *James Rogers... Professional Driver*

His father believes that all a person needs in life is an opportunity. Just a single chance to make something happen; to seize a moment for oneself and make it great. Hearing those words as a child, this *Legend* driver never quite understood the power of possibility. One day, it clicked... his journey from a young farm kid to an Army veteran, and now an owner operator with a promising future as a business owner has proven that with a strong support system and perseverance, life's blessings will continue to surprise us in the most unexpected ways and far beyond our own imagination.

The beautiful climb to the top of this mountain we call life, James Rogers of Pevely, Missouri has made it his personal mission to forge a path for those seeking a second chance. His own fight for redemption is heartfelt and honest. His intentions are real, and his success is deserving. His purpose to help others attain victory over their struggles, serves as a reminder that kind-



ness is all around us.

Each person's battle may not be the same, life can be quite challenging, but receiving an extended hand while at rock-bottom can make all the difference. With poise and faith in humanity, James has withstood days of rain; dark and endless hours of searching and still with a heavy heart, he shares his testimony for us to see that after the clouds of rain have parted, restoration and growth spring up. One cannot grow without the rain. This trucker's biography is for the underdog; the humble and hesitant; the hurting and cautious. The unstoppable. He steps forward for those still in

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silence to know that they are not alone. And, because his story deserves to be told.

Retired US Army, SSG James Rogers broke through into the trucking industry in search of structure and brotherhood. With a military background that is engrained within his soul, he needed to be a part of something bigger than himself. The fight of a survivor, James is very much as strong and empowering as the days he spent protecting our great country. Only now, he wears the uniform of a professional truck driver. Seeing to the needs of our nation's people was and will always be his duty, whether on the ground with his Army boots deep in the dirt of faraway lands or in his truck traveling from state to state.

*"It's what you do with an opportunity that defines who you can become."*

-Greg Rogers, James' father

In later years, James took his father's words to heart and carved his name into the universe as a soldier, a leader, a victor. Fast forward to today, he stands attentive, eyes locked on his eighteen-year old son, Logan as he heads off for basic training. The military branch of choice: Army.

Logan enlisted with the same intentions as his father, to make a difference. Witnessing his son make one of the most important, self-sacrificing decisions he will ever face, humbled James to his core. As a military veteran, he is honored. As a father, he is proud.

Memories flash through his mind: visions of Logan riding in the truck beside him, as young as three-years old. The two of them, without any stress, surrounded by windows and a view of the world passing by. During those precious moments riding in peace, just he and his son, seemed so long ago as the young man before him walks away toward his own destiny of discovery. This was his son's opportunity. *Would it be the*



(L-R): James, Logan,  
Jennifer & Nevaeh



*same, had James never served in the Army? Would James had joined the Army himself, had his father never encouraged him to reach for the stars?*

One can only plant a seed and water it with hope. The rest is up to that individual...

The moment James stepped foot on the campus of Prime Inc., located in Springfield, Missouri, he quickly picked up on the resemblances of his prior life that had been missing, since his days of active-duty.

*"The entire atmosphere of the company; the comradery between the drivers and office staff, the closeness was very family-oriented. I got the sense of mutual respect the first time I visited."*

Currently leased on to Prime, Inc. given his considerably wide-range of experience spanning over fifteen years, James is also a driver trainer. From pulling heavy equipment, flat-bed, and refrigerated freight he is further qualified to operate armored vehicles, military equipment, and propane tankers.

At GATS this past August, James was nominated by Prime, Inc. for the prestigious award: Veteran Rookie Truck Driver of the Year and was selected for

the semi-finals. Soon after the truck show, his name appeared again as a contender for a new truck giveaway, on behalf of the St. Christopher Fund and Progressive Commercial Insurance. The giveaway is respectfully geared toward recognizing veterans whom are striving to excel as professional truck drivers. Along with the winning truck are all expenses paid: fees, taxes, and title to set up his or her own authority. James continues,

*"The second week of December, I received a call saying that I had won the truck giveaway! I remember being in Salt Lake City, Utah, driving in pure shock as I heard the words. I mean, that's like hitting the lottery. For me, winning the truck was another opportunity to put myself in the position to do what I've been wanting to do since I started driving a truck. I want to give more veterans that chance they've been waiting on. I want to show them that they are wanted in this industry and that they are very much needed and valued as a person, even after their services in the military. There is still so much for us to do! Being selected as the first winner to receive this truck giveaway proves to me that I'm on the right path."*

His business, titled; Spartan Direct is modeled after the pla-

toon of soldiers he served with in Afghanistan, the Spartans. Thirty individuals, handpicked due to their specific skillset and efficiency to perform. *"We were very direct in how we operated. The vision I have for my company, I want to carry that same passion over into the trucking industry... how we did business together as a team, everyone did their part. The way we served as a family, formed a bond. Only now, our direct purpose is being out here on the road. By incorporating our services into our jobs as professional truck drivers, just as we did as Spartans, we can offer veterans a positive and productive alternative for the use of their highly trained skills. The trucking industry has become an avenue of choice for people like me for several reasons. The job positions can vary to office work or more independent, and travel over the road. Trucking for me has been the outlet I needed in rediscovering myself,"* James said.

James remains in touch with



all the men and women of that unit. In fact, one of his closest of the Spartans, Toby Hunt is currently training as his student driver. Once Toby is on his own, James intends to bring him on as a driver and business partner. Stating, *"The reason we all worked so well together is because we all shared the same mindset, we all were focused. With Spartan Direct, we want to grow small and grow the right way. I want to keep that closeness with each driver, but most importantly I want to be sure we give the right people this opportunity. The ones that want to take advantage of it."*

James' childhood consisted of strong, male role models and plenty of farming equipment to keep a young boy's attention, until he entered high school. He laughs, saying, *"Then, came sports and girls."*

Born in Bellaire, Ohio; a village located along the Ohio River, not quite large enough to be designated as a city. By elementary school, James' family relocated to North Carolina where he remained until adulthood. Growing up, his mother's family owned a dairy farm in upstate New York. For vacations and all other times school was not in session, James often stayed at the farm. The men; his



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grandfather, father and uncles all pitched in, whether it was driving tractors or farm trucks, each had their responsibilities. By age thirteen, James was operating tractors pulling trailers of hay bales and any other farming equipment he could get his hands on.

The farming life no longer appealed to James once he identified with sports as a teenager. A natural athlete, his future seemed bright as he was later offered a scholarship to play football. Realizing the college scene was not his forte, instead he landed an assistant coach position at his former high school. Over his course of four years on the coaching staff, the team brought home a state championship.

As a means of more income, he began driving for a local propane company whose work hours were flexible, allowing James to balance his coaching schedule and drive a truck. Soon his fever to drive bigger trucks led him to pulling flatbed, running over the road. Referring to himself as a late-bloomer, with college, coaching and trucking under his belt, James felt that he was still holding back. He needed to do more...

In 2003, at the age of twen-



*James' co-pilot, Sergeant*

ty-seven, James joined the Army serving in the 82nd Air Borne Division for eleven years. From 2007 to 2011, his unit, Special Troops Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division was stationed at Fort Bragg, located in North Carolina. After his retirement in October of 2014, his transition back to civilian life he described as; a long road to recovery, physically and mentally. Accustomed to daily work, his urgency to find a way to stay busy led him back into trucking. Stepping out of the shadows from a dark period, James admits that the man he was a few years ago would be unrecognizable standing beside the man we know today.

*"At first I saw the opportunity to drive a truck again as a service back*

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*to my country. Then, as I began to transition into my role, it was like a breath of fresh air. That alone time as I traveled the country lost in my own thoughts allowed me to heal. I was able to see everything clearly again. I remember thinking, this is why I did what I did... this is why I wanted to join the Army. Serving as a soldier outside of my country and now being able to drive all over the states, from coast to coast has breathed life back into what was once a broken body, it rejuvenated me. It's that sense of peace that only truck drivers can understand."*

Surround yourself with people who can create goodness for themselves, and for those around them. Owner operator and close friend, Tiffany Hanna is among James' group of influential people from which he gains inspiration. Their friendship transcends trucks, as Tiffany is also a military veteran; stating, her vibrant personality is uplifting and the many obstacles that she has overcome in life are profound. James adds, "...and I also have to credit my father, Greg. He was a blue-collar worker that did whatever it took to provide for our family. Plus, I have my wife, Jennifer that has stuck with me through it all. I keep these strong people closest to me to keep me strong. I firmly believe that to achieve success, you must have a

*strong family base. These people can be family by blood or by choice, but with the support and encouragement from loved ones, anything is possible. I'm living proof of that."*



James speaks with veterans, men and women daily, often conversating as a friendly ear or sometimes as an intermediary; putting people in contact with different sources if further assistance is requested. He hopes to break the stigma associated with asking for help. Identifying a need for guidance is not a form of weakness. In the case of new drivers or military veterans, asking for help enables courage.

**Do it for you.**

**Do it for the ones that love you.**

**Do it for tomorrow, and each day gets better.**