



Semper Solaris team installing SunPower panels, which will produce 70% more energy.

# I Enlisted Because of 9/11

As their name suggests, Semper Solaris is a solar company that is closely tied to military values. They are locally and veteran-owned, and we only use SunPower panels, which are designed in America. One of the co-founders, Kelly Shawhan, was a Captain in the US Marine Corps. Many Semper Solaris team members are veterans, and employee David Fox notes that the military values of the business “rub off on everybody, former military or not.”

One member of the team, Joshua Odom, has seen how his experience in the military has positively influenced his work with Semper Solaris. Mr. Odom served with the United States Navy for five years directly following the 9/11 attacks.

He grew up in New York, enlisted at seventeen, went to boot-camp in Chicago, and was then sent to the naval base at 32nd St. in San Diego. He shares, “When I enlisted, it was at a young age and I was just a kid. I had to mature, because when you’re tasked with certain things in the military you really have to learn how to think on your feet.”

From there, Mr. Odom was stationed on the amphibious ship, the USS Ogden (LPD-5). The ship was built in 1963 and brought Marines and equipment to the Vietnam War and was also on the task

force for the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. During Mr. Odom’s service, it was used for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The ship carried special operations forces, such as Navy SEALs and US Army Rangers, to the gulf near Iraq to complete their missions.



9/11 memorial to Pentagon victims at Arlington National Cemetery.

Mr. Odom is certain that the values he learned in his service carry on into the rest of his life, especially into his work. “The Navy’s Core Values are honor, courage, and commitment,” he shares. “I think the value that has helped me the most in my life now is commitment—and with that, courage, because it’s not always easy to follow through on your commitments. In a market

like the solar industry, which is so competitive, it’s key to be able to always follow through.”

Now serving as the construction manager for the San Diego branch of Semper Solaris, Mr. Odom has again and again seen the value of his military background.

“While I was on the ship in the Navy, you didn’t really have any other option but getting the job done. There was no ‘I want a break’ or ‘I’m going home.’ You stayed there until it was over. That type of mindset transfers over into a company like this. Many guys just want to show up, work their nine to five, and leave. But we want to stay until the job gets done and gets done right.”



Photo by Dave Z

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