



Tyler Samuelson, Marine Corps veteran and BLM firefighter.



Samuelson ponders markers honoring the fallen members of the Granite Mountain IHC at NIFC's wildland firefighter monument.

## Veteran's Crewmember Provides Insight

Tyler Samuelson served four years in the Marine Corps as an engineer. The 26-year old Nebraska native now has his eyes set on a career in wildland fire management, and he is gaining indispensable experience as a member of BLM's Vegas Valley Handcrew, one of four 20-person BLM veteran's hand crews. He has been on the Vegas Valley crew for two and a half years.

### What is your job with the BLM?

I am a firefighter on the Vegas Valley Handcrew. We are based on the Southern Nevada District in Las Vegas. My precise role on the crew is a swamper.

### What skills transferred from military to firefighting?

A lot of the skills transfer. Physical fitness is a big one, along with being comfortable in dangerous conditions, and a strong work ethic in general.

### What do you like best about firefighting?

Probably the camaraderie with all the other guys. It's great to be working with a group of vets, because we have a lot in common.

### How does firefighting stack up against work you've done in the past?

Firefighting is very demanding compared to any regular job. It's even demanding compared to garrison duty in the military.

### What is a "swamper"? What kind of work does that entail?

Mainly, I work with the sawyers to clear away the fuel they've cut. It's an essential step in constructing fireline. I also help carry saw fuel and oil, and help dig fireline if we don't have that much saw work to do.

### Are you interested in making wildland fire your career?

Yeah, I'm interested in a fire career. Wildland fire challenges you, and makes you a better person. It's a good career choice.

We've done a few different things on fires [this season]. We set up some large hoselays in Alaska earlier in the summer, and helped called in birds (helicopters).

