

# VFW Unmet Needs Lends Hand to Retired Soldier

## An error in the system proved costly for a soldier and his family.

Mar 15, 2011

Retired SSG Eugene Schoen knows what it's like to get lost in government red tape. Schoen faithfully served his country for 23 years before retiring from the Army Reserve. Unfortunately, an error in the system proved costly for Schoen and his family.

Schoen learned his retirement pay was being garnisheed in order to repay a reenlistment bonus he received in 1993. Schoen knew he shouldn't have to repay that bonus because he fulfilled his service obligation. Although the VA ultimately realized this error, for Schoen, the process to resolve the issue took far longer than he could afford.

Schoen was unable to work due to a neck injury, but he wasn't approved for disability pay. On top of that, he was a single parent. He struggled to keep up with necessities like rent and utilities.

Schoen resorted to selling most of his possessions. When even that wasn't enough, he turned to a friend for help. That's how he learned of **VFW's Unmet Needs** program. Schoen visited the program's website and promptly applied for an emergency grant.

When he learned he would be a recipient, Schoen was thrilled. He said his experience with the program was "awesome."

"I was so grateful. It made for a happy holiday for my family, knowing we would not be homeless over the holidays," he said.

Schoen wants to make sure other veterans don't experience what he went through. He volunteers his time to help other veterans navigate the VA system, and supports the work the Unmet Needs program does.

Once he's back on his feet, he plans to donate to the program that helped him when he had

### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
Office 816.756.3390  
Fax 816.968.1157

### WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
Office 202.543.2239  
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org  
www.vfw.org

nowhere else to turn.