

VFW Members Join Together to Help Wounded Warrior

Members go above and beyond to accomodate hero

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Tucson, Ariz. — VFW Ladies Auxiliary Post 10188 President Kim Sloan received a call from Janina Lagatutta seeking VFW's help. Janina thought VFW may be able to help her son Jeremy attend his grandfather's funeral. Jeremy stepped on a land mine in Afghanistan, losing both legs, and was recuperating in San Antonio. His grandmother's house in Indiana was not handicap accessible, so a temporary ramp needed to be built.

Sloan contacted Terry Bruning at Indiana VFW Headquarters. Bruning discussed the idea of building the ramp at the next District meeting, and Department of Indiana District 5 Commander Herb Mullen volunteered to spearhead the project. Not only would they build the ramp, they would also meet Jeremy and his family at the airport and handle all the transportation needs. Mullen even found a pilot who provided the plane, fuel and time to make two round trips to San Antonio for Jeremy.

"I went to Jeremy's grandmother's house, Mrs Creamer, to confirm exactly what was needed," explained Mullen. The project got rolling that day. Local VFW Post 266 Commander Lew Goodwin rounded up help and offered to have his Post cover the cost of materials.

A professional carpenter took the day off to help, and the ramp was built in a way that it could be reused for future similar circumstances.

The ramp was completed a few days before Jeremy and his family arrived. Several VFW members met Jeremy's plane and drove him and his family to his grandmother's house.

After the funeral when it was time to take the family back to the airport, Mullen arrived early with a surprise. Outside were about 75 motorcycles and over 100 people lined up to thank Jeremy for his service and sacrifice. "I noticed I wasn't the only one in a tough crowd with dust in the eye," said Mullen.

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Jeremy was excited and took a quick ride on the back of a Harley trike. More motorcycles arrived to escort Jeremy to the airport, and by the end, the entire convoy stretched nearly a half mile.

These VFW and Auxiliary members went above and beyond to assist this wounded warrior. Mullen was happy to help, and noted how much he admires Jeremy for his strength. “Jeremy is a fine young man of 34 and will do just fine,” he said.