

VFW Helps Single Dad Avoid 'Rough Road'

'The VFW treated me like a person and let me know my situation mattered'

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For Jamie Biddix, 40, of N.C., a military career just made sense. His father, a veteran who served in Korea and Vietnam, was his hero. G.I. Joe and drawing helicopters filled his childhood. By the time he reached high school, he was working on diesel engines. Biddix saw the Army as an ideal career choice and enlisted, ready to take on training, education and life experiences while living his dream of being a soldier.

Biddix trained at Fort Jackson, S.C., and Fort Knox, Ky., as an M1 Abrams Tank System Maintainer. He was stationed in Germany and deployed to the Balkans with the 1st Armored Division. But the hope of a career in the Army was cut short – he was honorably discharged after three years and diagnosed with PTS and tinnitus.

Civilian life hasn't been easy for Biddix. He's ended up as a single father with two teenage daughters and had to leave a well-paying job due to service-connected health issues. As bills piled up, he didn't know what to do. A hospital bill not fully covered by the VA was his breaking point.

"I was financially strapped, and I honestly wasn't sure how I could pay that bill on top of all the other things. Single fathers work their tails off to make stuff happen and I was looking at a rough road of uncertainty," said Biddix.

Biddix happened to hear about the VFW Unmet Needs program through a Facebook group for veterans. He decided to apply but didn't think he would get help.

"The criteria was quite specific and I assumed it was a lottery situation. To my surprise, I was called and notified that it was being looked at and they would be in contact with me soon. Two days later, I received an email that it was approved, and someone would be calling," Biddix said.

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Biddix is very grateful for the help. Not only for paying a hospital bill but because he felt people truly cared and wanted to make his situation better. He hopes more people will give to Unmet Needs so more veterans can get help like he did.

“Thank you to every person for sticking to their word, for being fast and helping handle something that I couldn't,” said Biddix. “The VFW asks for very little, but it is these types of organizations that fill the gap between government RESPONSIBILITY and veteran ABILITY. It isn't a handout. Sometimes veterans don't know where to look for help or have too much pride. The VFW treated me like a person and let me know my situation mattered. All veterans matter.”