

VFW Member Receives Home Remodel

A Gulf War veteran in Pennsylvania received life-changing home alterations thanks to the efforts of well-intentioned volunteers, including a VFW member from Maryland

Jun 25, 2021

For four years, Persian Gulf War vet Jason Wenton couldn't sleep in the same room with his wife, Georgette, in their home in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. He was confined to a wheelchair which wouldn't fit through their bedroom door or into their master bath.

That all changed last summer when Jim Rose with the Rose Family Charitable Trust (RFCT) gathered volunteers and contractors to undertake a renovation project on the Wentons' home.

Rose said the renovation consisted of a new master suite, air conditioner and deck. His trust kicked in \$75,000, Home Depot donated \$15,000 and Operation Homefront contributed \$12,000 to the completion.

"It was overwhelming because I didn't expect anything like that," Jason said. "When it all started going down, it became a reality. It really hit me that they went out of their way to do this for me."

One of the volunteers who spent a weekend helping build the deck was Jay Reckard, a VFW Department of Maryland member.

Rose is Reckard's brother-in-law and invited him to come help out with the Wenton build.

A recently retired Army colonel, Reckard said this is the first time he has had the opportunity to volunteer on a project such as this.

"Jim knew I cared about former soldiers, so he asked me to assist," said Reckard, who served in the Persian Gulf War among other tours of duty in his 28-and-a-half years in the Army. "It was personally rewarding to spend time with someone who served their country so

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

very, very well and give back my time.”

Rose said he first learned of the Wentons from a friend in Colorado who is a disabled veterans advocate.

RFCT is a donor-advised fund which supports disabled veterans as well as the Boys and Girls Clubs, among others.

“One of the biggest regrets of my life is not serving,” Rose said. “There are not a lot of ways for me to contribute like I should have then. It’s pretty rewarding and makes me feel good to do something for someone else.”

‘A STRANGER WHO IS NOW FAMILY’

Jason, a former Army combat engineer with A Co., 299th Eng. Bn., has long been an avid outdoor enthusiast. He served in Saudi Arabia and Iraq from August 1990-April 1991.

He was outside his home in 2016 admiring a three-legged deer he had named Miracle when he shifted his weight and broke his foot — but he didn’t realize it at the time.

He walked on the fractured foot all that weekend, not realizing what had happened. Just a week later, his other foot broke while he was walking. When he went to the hospital, he learned he had broken vertebrae in his back as well.

In 2020, he underwent a below-the-knee bilateral amputation due to severe bone loss attributed to Gulf War Syndrome. He suffers from gout and psoriatic arthritis, too, both of which have worsened since the surgery.

To make matters worse, he is allergic to the prescribed gout medicine.

Until the addition of the master suite, Jason had been sleeping in a hospital bed in the living room. Georgette helped him shower since there wasn’t a way for him to do it on his own.

“After the room was done, I was in our old bedroom that we had turned into an office,” Georgette said. “Jason rolled by the doorway and was gone for a while. He came back by and said, ‘Guess what I did? I showered on my own.’”

Georgette said that since then, Jason has been able to access the master bedroom on his own. He also can pick out his own clothes instead of her running back and forth to bring him clothes.

“When Jim Rose came out and said he wanted to do something to make life better for us, I thought this really can’t be real,” said Georgette, who writes a blog called The Woman Behind the Warrior. “He was a stranger who is now family.”

Jason, a VFW member with the Department of Pennsylvania, said the work done on their home has really changed his outlook on life. He said having the workers there building the deck turned out to be a good time.

“When Jim brought the guys out, it was a laugh fest,” Jason said. “It was pretty cool.”

This article is featured in the June/July 2021 issue of [VFW magazine](#). It was written by [Janie Dyhouse](#), senior editor for VFW magazine.