VFW Unmet Needs Grant 'Can Save A Life in More Ways than One'

Marine Corps veteran David Edger was 'taken aback by the support' he received from the VFW

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“I joined the Marine Corps for the challenge but stuck around due to pride. I am proud to be a Marine.”

David Edger of Elmira, New York, took pride in serving in the Marine Corps for over 16 years. Edger was first stationed in Okinawa, Japan, and went on to serve in Iraq, Afghanistan and
Kuwait.

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His years of service took their toll on Edger's physical and mental health. Edger was diagnosed with PTSD after serving in Iraq in 2003, and in the years following he found that the more his body wore down, the worse his mental health became.

Edger looked forward to returning home, especially because it meant more time with Kristen, his wife of 14 years, and their 5 children, ranging from 8 to 14 years old.

"What I didn't expect after retiring was the delay in VA compensation," Edger recalled. Though he had a proposed rating of 90%, he found out a month after he was supposed to receive compensation that his claim had been cancelled, and he needed to re-submit. "August was a really tough month for my family and I, and I struggled with the transition from military to civilian life."

Fortunately, Edger's social worker with the VA told him about the VFW Unmet Needs program. "The process was straightforward, and I was able to complete my portion rather quickly."

Edger was approved, and the grant he received helped him keep a reliable source of transportation, covered two months of mortgage payments and helped him keep up with insurance payments.

The grant also came with the surprise of a $500 gift card to Wal-Mart, which Edger and Kristen used to buy groceries and other household supplies.

“It is hard to ask for help to begin with. With that said, I was taken aback by the support I received. It went far beyond what I imagined; my family and I are very grateful. I honestly do not know where we’d be without it.”

When asked what he would say to someone considering donating to the VFW, Edger offered simple but poignant words.

“It can save a life in more ways than one.”