

VFW Unmet Needs Helps Single Father Provide for Children

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SSG David C. Phariss has been a soldier in the United States Army since 1988 and "loves to serve his country any time it calls." Returning from an eighteen-month tour in Iraq in 2007, Phariss came home to a different life than he had left. His marriage was ending, the economy was headed downhill and as an Operating Engineer in his civilian occupation, he was laid off for the first time in his life. Phariss was struggling with unemployment and a split household and was unable to provide for his three daughters. He was in an unfortunate time of need and volunteered for another tour to pay the bills. He deployed for Afghanistan in December 2008 where he had a soldier's "dream job."



"I worked alongside Afghan Commandos escorting U.S. Army Corp of Engineer civilians into villages and cities where they had job sites. I saw every inch of Afghanistan-the good, the bad, the ugly and the incredible," Phariss explained.

Unfortunately, his tour was cut short due to a virus that damaged his lungs and heart. He was medivaced to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany where he stayed for 30 days of treatment. He was then sent to Madigan Army Hospital in Ft. Lewis, Wash., for another 30 days. When he was released from the Wounded Warrior's Program, he was sent home to California where he was confronted with bills that had accumulated during his stint with the Wounded Warrior's Program that he was struggling to afford.

"So I did what I could, I worked odd jobs for some change here and there, I sold my possessions, I used every benefit I had, I sold my mutual funds, but with no help left, I ran out of money," said Phariss.

Phariss fell two months behind on his rent and couldn't bear the thought of his daughters getting ripped from the home they grew up in, where they felt safe. In his desperation, he found himself searching the Internet for some sort of assistance when he stumbled upon the ***VFW Unmet Needs*** website. He was skeptical but applied for a grant nonetheless.

A month later he received a letter stating his application for monetary assistance was accepted. Unmet Needs sent a check to his landlord for two months worth of rent.



"Unmet Needs paid for my rent with no questions asked and that gave my daughters the stability they needed at the ugliest time possible," said Phariss. "I am so thankful for the support I received. It gave my children the extra time they needed to prepare and plan for changes in their living environment, so it wasn't like being tossed out on their ears, like it would have been if Unmet Needs was not available," concluded Phariss.