

Eric Marts' Key Ceremony

As reported earlier this summer, Homes for Our Troops working with the HBA of Fargo-Moorhead and the Home Builders Care Foundation have constructed a new home for Eric. We had a story on a day-long laying of sod event with many people helping lay sod on nearly an acre of land surrounding his new home. Now the home is finished and Homes for Our Troops will be holding a key ceremony on Saturday, 19 August 2017 at 10:00 am. Shuttle buses will run from O'Leary's Irish Pub, 808 30 Ave S, Moorhead going to the home from 9:00 – 9:50 and returning between 11:30 am and 1:00 pm. Homes for Our Troops extends an invitation to all to attend the celebration. Preregistration for the event can be done at <http://www2.hfotusa.org/site/Calendar?id=100222&view=RSVP>. Registration will also be available at O'Leary's that morning. Eric's family will be hosting a "Pay it Forward" fundraiser at O'Leary's immediately following the ceremony.

Two improvised explosive device (IED) blasts during Amry MSG Eric Marts' 2006 deployment serving with the 2-136 Combined Arms Battalion, 34 Infantry Division in Fallujah, Iraq took his vision. Shortly after the first blast, he started losing vision in one of his eyes. He continued to serve, but after being in another blast, the condition worsened. The traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused swelling in his optic nerves, resulting in him going blind in both eyes. He has also undergone surgeries for neck and shoulder injuries and experiences balance issues.

Speaking of grants, the VFW applied for and received a grant from Home Depot to do some upgrades at the Post. The grant award was in the form of two \$1500 gift cards to Home Depot. Post members used the funds very wisely and with all volunteer labor, the Post is now much more attractive. Some of the upgrades included a new floor in the dining area, new paint, flags for all the service branches in the lounge and two TVs displaying all deceased Post members, auxiliary and gold star families on one and all active and life Post members, auxiliary and gold star families on the other. Stop by and check it out, have something to eat, some refreshments or play bingo. You can even purchase pull tabs if you are so inclined.

I'm writing this week's column from the Walhalla city park in ND. My Sweetie, Bev is on an archaeological dig at the Pembina gorge site. I grew up on a farm and have had enough 'digging in the dirt' for a lifetime, so I'm enjoying the park and relaxing. We've never been to this part of ND before and I must say, it is perhaps the most scenic area of all of ND. They even have a downhill ski area here.