



## **One Bike at a Time. One Hero at a Time. Introducing our Third WI Veteran Receiving a Harley:**

“I cannot lead a normal life now because of all the stresses and things I saw and experienced in Iraq. I, with the help of my psychiatrist and doctors, try my best to move on. I am grateful I am alive and able to function. I have all my limbs and I look normal on the outside. Unfortunately, I hurt on the inside.”— Meet Marine Sergeant Brian Kvittek.

In 2005, almost 10 years after completing his 4 year contract with the Marine Corps and playing tuba in the prestigious Marine Band, Brian was living a comfortable life with his wife and girls, a 6 year old and a newborn, in Kenosha, WI. Repeated and violent news of our Armed Forces in conflict pulled hard and frequently at Brian’s heartstrings. Knowing the sacrifices others were making, Brian felt compelled to rejoin them. Although serving previously, Brian states “I didn’t do my part”... fighting, that is. Wanting to do more for his Country, he voluntarily deployed in 2006 to Fallujah, Iraq for a 7 month tour that would ultimately damage the husband, the father, the friend, the co-worker, the relative, and the man himself with the all too common yet invisible wounds of war: PTSD and depression.

There is no front line in war anymore; no safe zone or role in an area of conflict. Seven months as Sergeant of the Guard, Supply & Armory, with Field Artillery and Cannoneer expertise and no formal training in the role he took on, it was Brian’s job to support and supply his unit. Seven months, around-the-clock, of ensuring your unit had every thing they needed to not just do their job and fulfill daily life needs, but to survive situations we can’t begin to imagine. Seven months of violence and sights that can’t be unseen. Seven months of supply convoy missions where you are a highly sought target. Seven months on high-alert knowing your enemy is everywhere trying to destroy you and your base. Seven months toll...and 11 years out, Brian still feels the daily ramifications of being 100% disabled with PTSD and depression. Despite achieving a dual business major with honors in 2013, he cannot maintain gainful employment. He misses events as he remains insecure in groups and public places. Panic attacks, frustrations, fear, and sleeplessness coupled with the chronic pain from a back injury while serving, all continue to fester and alter his daily life and that of his family. His children know there are days when “dad just can’t be dad”. His wife looks for and cherishes the occasional “flickers” when the man she married shines through his changed persona. It’s painful and hard.

Fortunately, Brian has a deep sense of fight within him, a stirring patriotism and most important, a strong, loving family to support him. His wife, April, is a kind, rock of support and the family glue. The mention of his three daughters brings a sparkle to his eye; an obviously proud dad. He’s a “pretty simple guy” who loves splitting firewood for sale, the Cubs, and camping. He does what he can to assist others and volunteers almost 6 weeks every summer at Camp American Legion for Veterans. He’s participated in funerals, escorts and parades to honor Our Fallen. Inspired to begin riding years ago by the American Legion Riders, he’s now found amazing support and opportunity to give back within his Legion family. He’s also had a 32 year old Gold Wing that he’s been cobbling together for years in a desperate need to keep riding in his life. Last year the bike became unsafe to ride and the repairs too costly. The thought of not riding and losing his freedom was devastating to Brian. This year, in a nod to his tenacity to apply for each of our three bike offerings, and in a nod to keep a deserving Veteran on the road...Hogs For Heroes is making sure his healing continues.

Owning a Harley has always been his dream, but never in the realm of possibility on a tight family budget. In fact, his shopping trip to Ukes H-D in Kenosha was his first visit ever to a Harley dealership; not just because he couldn’t afford the legend, but because he couldn’t afford to taunt himself with something he never felt worthy of. He was emotional and overwhelmed, and the great team at Uke’s generously helped him find the bike of his dreams and a perfect fit. Brian chose a pre-owned, fully loaded, 2015 Ultra Limited Low in Red SunGlow. It’s beautiful...and he is deserving.

Brian will be receiving his keys at a special presentation generously hosted by his American Legion Riders District 1 family. Please join us on Saturday, May 13, 2017 at The American Legion Hall Post 171, in Union Grove, WI between 12-3, with the Ceremony at 1:00 as we honor Brian and share in the gratitude we have for all of our Veterans.

