



## **Introducing Our 15th Veteran Recipient: Staff Sergeant Marine Veteran Trent Endicott, Sr. of Wisconsin Dells!**

Marine Staff Sergeant Trent Endicott, Sr. grew up a fearless, thrill-seeking child who later found himself on a rough path littered with bad choices and trouble with the law. Despite a solid job in construction, he knew he needed to clean up his act and, at age 20, chose the Marine Corps to help him do just that. In 2006, he entered boot camp uncertain of his decision...but the minute he put on that uniform, Trent felt instantly transformed and knew it would be a life-long calling.

The Marines said he could be a cook...and Trent suggested Amphibious Assault. He started out in Amphibious Assault Vehicle Maintenance and trained at every opportunity to learn more and push himself physically and mentally. He deployed to Afghanistan's Dewagal Valley in 2008 as an embedded Training Advisor to Afghanistan's National Army and worked with Paratroopers deep in the mountains. He loved the rough conditions and survival tactics required. His advanced skills on patrols, raids and night missions were consistently validated. He thrived under the pressure that tactical precision and experience demanded, and quickly recalls dozens of firefights not with pride, but as the impetus behind his desire to further his career in the military. He knew he could offer more to support and protect America's efforts, as well as those of his fellow servicemen and women, and he set his sights ahead. It was also here, during his 9 months of combat, that he suffered four different, significant Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) from mission incidents and combat blasts that began silently forming irreversible brain damage.

Upon returning from deployment, he trained further in the Amphibious Assault School and attended the School of Infantry in 2009. Wanting more, in 2010 Trent "survived the cut" to become a Marine Force Reconnaissance team member. Half of those who apply to this elite Marine Corps Special Force don't make it through the 12 weeks of training hell where they turn Marines into razor-sharp weapons with a mental toughness like no other. Recon Marines go in before large combat troops to covertly scope out the enemy and battlefield. They go in to stealthily address, rescue or remove a critical situation. They are made from the strongest to be specialists in advanced air, land and water tactics and to be specifically placed in the most difficult situations. Trent had found his purpose. From there he trained further to become a Free Fall and Static Line Jump Master, a Helo-Ropes Suspension Master, a Specialist in Search & Seizure, Breacher and Assault skills, a Scout Swimmer and Marksman Coach to highlight a few of his qualifications. He's been in places we can't begin to imagine, under conditions that nightmares are made of, and on assignments that movies glamorize. As a Recon Marine, he's been in at least 25 countries, conducted night raids, ate a repertoire of exotic survival "foods", repelled from helicopters onto ships, provided humanitarian assistance, parachuted into challenging terrains and has detonated over 500 charges/explosions... all in the line of Force Recon preparedness. Although never deployed to a combat zone as a Recon Marine, he deployed to four different Marine Expeditionary Units, living on ships and ready to respond to critical incidents. And he loved every minute of this; in fact, he thrived on the adrenaline and pressure and still wanted more. Trent repeatedly pushed his body and mind, dreaming of a Master Gunnery Sergeant rank... and unaware the physical ramifications of such were further compromising his underlying brain damage to ultimately affect almost every aspect of his young life.

Trent was in Djibouti, Africa, in 2015 when he was affected by several close range blasts and over-pressures in training exercises, subsequently receiving another TBI. Although he seemed to recover without incident, two short months later he found himself in Germany suffering symptoms of a stroke at age 29. He had developed a spontaneous cerebral bleed and while most of his neurological deficits eventually cleared themselves, he continued to endure migraines and dizziness. Further evaluation of a second bleed and stroke showed that he had developed a Cavernous Malformation in his mid-brain, exacerbated by his

multiple TBI's, altitude and pressure effects. Surgery was not an option given the mass location and risks... nor was returning to his life as a Recon Marine.

He immediately lost his purpose, his identity, his dream, his brotherhood and his future in a way he never expected. In 2017, he was medically retired at age 30 and declared 100% disabled with the VA. Every bone in his damaged body suddenly allowed themselves to ache with the devastating news. Every emotion suppressed through the years rose to the top and PTSD, nightmares, and hypervigilance worsened. Cognitively, he is sharp and witty, but impaired language skills occasionally affect his speech, memory and word recall ability, and reasoning. Anxiety wasn't a word in Trent's vocabulary before 2015; now he struggles emotionally with panic attacks, depression and anger, each exacerbating his chronic migraines, fatigue and just about every facet of his life.

Thankfully, Trent had the good fortune of swiping right on Tinder in 2014 and met his beautiful wife, Stacey, whom he married five months later. She's a smart, steady rock of support and the glue that keeps their family organized and on track. Trent's life wasn't the only one impacted with his cerebral bleeds as Stacey, who nominated her husband, now wonders daily which version of the man she married she will encounter. Together they navigated their life change and moved to the Wisconsin Dells three years ago to enjoy a quiet, rural life close to the VA's medical services. With two young children under three, Trent has embraced the role of stay-at-home dad, noting he's had "the best two jobs ever". He's paternal, tender and hands-on with his children and their strong, loving bond is clearly noticeable. Jokingly, he calls it "future warrior training", but it is a giant departure from the role he once had. He now loves mowing his lawn, remodeling their home and working the small crops they grow. He taught himself to hunt, is training his bird dogs and has done some volunteering with a Veteran's hunt group to pay it forward. Though his days are full with household and family demands, his circle is small; and both he and his wife urgently feel the need for Trent to reconnect with a piece of who he was.

Five years of figuring out their new normal has been even harder since Trent sold his Harley. Riding has been in his life since he first sat on his dad's bike. He learned to ride his own at 12 and kept riding throughout service, even having a bike while stationed in Japan for five years. Riding was his lifeline: an escape, release and social connection during the most intense parts of his life. When he suffered his strokes and was told his prognosis, he sold his Harley to minimize his risks. He still describes that as his deepest regret, particularly since his brain injury has stabilized and is well controlled with medications. Every day he listens for the roar to go by or searches for a cheap bike, dreaming of his chance to ride again. And while their family is able to make ends meet and enjoy a comfortable life, affording a bike for his own personal use wasn't an expense he could justify at the cost of his children's needs. Not one aspect of Trent's life has been the same since 2015, and he constantly searches for some aspect of "normalacy". Hogs For Heroes felt that regaining the rush of the wind, the control behind the bars, and the companionship of riders would help Trent reconnect with a piece of his former self and rebuild his new normal.

We surprised Trent at his home and were quickly indoctrinated into the Endicott family as their sweet children fed us cheeseballs. He was thrilled, and humbled, and excited to teach us about what he did and what he's worked to accomplish. Looking to shop local, and in what we believe to be a beautiful twist of fate, a killer 2018 Street Glide Special in Bonneville Salt landed on Reel Brother's showroom floor the day we went shopping, and immediately stopped him in his tracks. "She's glorious" he said; and she, will now be his.

Trent, a lifetime member of the Oxford VFW, will receive his keys at his Post on **Saturday, August 1, 2020** during their VFW 6003 Annual Celebration event! Hogs For Heroes will be on site spreading word of our mission from 1 - 6. Come on out and enjoy the afternoon— Maggie May and The Heartland Country Band will be playing from 2-5, and the star, herself, is letting us take her stage at **3:00 pm start for our Presentation of Keys Ceremony** to honor Recipient #15, Trent Endicott, Sr. Please, ride on over and welcome this Veteran back to the road and back to the rider community.