



I was born in Strum, WI in 1947. I was the second child of five. I grew up on a farm. Life was pretty good, as far as I remember in those days. We never lacked for food or anything. In high school, early 1960s, recruiters would come to the school because this was back during Vietnam. I spoke with a recruiter and was told that there was a draft and you either enlisted or you would be drafted. I came from Trempealeau County, not too many people, so your name would come up in a quick hurry with the draft. So, I decided to enlist in the Air Force in 1966. I don't really remember why I chose the Air Force. It seemed like the Air Force had the best to offer. Seemed like the best place to go at the time, which I am not sorry about! After basic training, I was stationed in Massachusetts and then from there I was deployed for two, six month tours in Guam, and a two month tour. Tours were all dependent on the rotation you were on. I learned a lot while in the military. My mother used to always do my laundry. In the military I had to learn to survive on my own. It was definitely a good learning experience. In 1970, my four years were up, and I decided to discharge as I had other plans. When you're young you think you will get rich and famous, but not by staying in the military.

After I discharged from the Air Force, I came back to Wisconsin. I drove truck, did construction work, put up cable television, and telephone lines. Eventually, I settled on doing construction long term. Throughout the years, I got married and had two sons. After about 18 years of marriage I got divorced. Following my divorce, I moved to French Island and have lived here for the past 30 years.

In 2016, I was living in my current apartment, but I was struggling to pay my rent as I only had social security for income and had child support payments deducted from my check. My friend mentioned the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program for possible help. My friend told me that I didn't need a quick fix, I needed long term help, and HUD-VASH was just that. I contacted staff in the HUD-VASH program and started the process for housing. Which was a long process, ya know! I had to wait for a voucher and all that, but I got approved and have been on it ever since. I was able to stay in my apartment and receive services.

I had medical complications in 2017 and had to spend significant time in the hospital and at Hillview Nursing Home. While in the hospital and at Hillview, VASH staff came to visit me and worked with my landlord to ensure that my apartment was clean and my utilities were paid. I worked with VASH staff and my landlord on a payment plan for all the back rent I owed from being in the hospital. It will be three years in June, since I lost my leg. I have no problems with HUD-VASH and am grateful for the program. I have a good, good, social worker who is very helpful. Call the VA, they will set you up, and be very helpful!