



JULY 2019

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH!

Recognizing Coalhurst residents that go above and beyond!

On June 10th, the Coalhurst Legion Branch No. 273 proudly awarded Brandon Gorthum with a Sacrifice Medal. The following is a submission from Brandon. Brandon has aided in an incredible service for this Country and we are so proud to honour him as a Resident of Coalhurst. Although this isn't a typical nomination - his volunteer service goes far beyond the town limits and he has given so much of himself in the process, and for this and so much more - we wanted to recognise him in this month edition and thank him for his service to this great Nation.

I am originally from Niagara Falls, Ontario. I joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 2008, and served with the 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Shilo, Manitoba from 2009-2015 where I was medically released due to an injury sustained on a military exercise, after I was released we moved to Lethbridge in 2015 so that I could attend Lethbridge College for Renewable Resource Management, and moved out to Coalhurst in June 2017 when we bought a house out here to better aid my recovery and feel a part of a small community again. I served on 3 domestic operations here in Canada. Operation Podium (the Vancouver 2010 Olympics where we served as security and patrolled the back country behind the events to ensure the athletes and spectators were safe and secure), and operations: Lustre and Lyre (Flood relief efforts in Portage La Prairie and Souris, Manitoba in 2011) I also served on one tour of duty overseas on Operation Attention: Task Force 2-13 to Kabul, Afghanistan from July 1st 2013- 13 December 2013 serving with other Patricia's attached as Force Protection for the Battlegroup Transport Platoon.

On October 22nd, 2013 in the evening, during my third vehicle convoy patrol of the day - we encountered a suicide bomber in a vehicle that detonated just as we were passing him - it was approximately 2500-3500lbs of explosives packed into a Toyota corolla. He injured 6 American soldiers who were immediately behind us and 10 Afghan soldiers at a checkpoint beside our convoy. An innocent Afghan family weren't so lucky; the parents, cab driver and 2 out of 4 children were killed. Thankfully none of us were severely injured and our vehicles were still operational - we then headed for the nearest camp.

Since that day I have had to live with the brutal Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms and a possible Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) caused by the concussion of being in extremely close proximity to the blast. That moment has affected and continues to affect my life; my employability and my relationships with friends, family and my children.



On Monday, June 10th, 2019, I was honoured at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #273 among Comrades and Veterans; where I was presented the Sacrifice Medal by the Legions former Board President and fellow veteran - Comrade John Coombes. Her Majesty the Queen approved the Sacrifice Medal in August 2008. It was created in the context of increased casualties in overseas operations to fulfill the desire of Canadians and the Government to provide formal recognition, through the award of an official medal emanating from the Crown, to those who die as a result of military service or are wounded by hostile enemy action. The Medal may be awarded to members of the Canadian Armed Forces such as exchange personnel, civilian employees of the Government of Canada or Canadian citizens under contract with the Government of Canada, on the condition that they were deployed as part of a military mission under the authority of the Canadian Armed Forces, and have, on or after October 7th, 2001, died or been wounded under honourable circumstances as a direct result of hostile action. It may also be awarded posthumously to those who die as a result of military service.

"For the veteran, thank you for bravely doing what you're called to do so we can safely do what we're free to do".

~ Anonymous