



## Building for the Brave: A Story of Repair and Gratitude

By: Whitley Klatt- Marketing and Communications Manager

### Connecting with a Local Hero

This fall, we had the unique opportunity to connect with and assist Richard, an 84-year-old Marine Veteran living in Burnett County. Richard became involved with Wild Rivers Habitat for Humanity through his daughter, Trudy, who was searching for resources to support her father's home maintenance needs. After discovering our Home Repair Program, Trudy reached out to our Housing Programs Specialist, Jami Roux, to see how we could help.



Shown: Richard

### Richard's Remarkable Service Story

Richard's journey began when he enlisted in the Marines at just 17 years old. "I couldn't get there fast enough," he shared, reflecting on his eagerness to serve. As a Lance Corporal, Richard was often on the front lines, explaining that "the Marines were the first to go ashore. If there was trouble, they picked on the Marines."

One of Richard's most vivid memories involved being aboard aircraft carriers testing the atomic bomb. Unfortunately, his service took a toll on his health, particularly his hearing. "They never gave us hearing protection," Richard explained. "They didn't think about things like that back then." Today, he relies on hearing aids to communicate effectively.

### Life After Service

After his military service, Richard returned to the Midwest, where he worked as a realtor in Rochester, Minnesota, for 20 years. Later, he moved to Burnett County, where he owned a bar on North Sand Lake for several years before retiring and settling closer to his daughter.

### Richard's Home Transformation

Working closely with Richard and Trudy, we are in the process of replacing nine older, single pane windows and a malfunctioning patio door in Richard's home with energy-efficient upgrades. These improvements not only enhance the safety and security of Richard's home but also increase energy efficiency, keeping it warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

### About Our Home Repair Program

Our Home Repair Program is designed to assist Veterans with limited incomes by addressing critical health, safety, and accessibility issues in their homes. By providing essential modifications and repairs, we aim to ensure that all Veterans can live comfortably and securely for years to come. Services include installing accessibility ramps, weatherization, energy efficiency upgrades, and exterior repairs. Contact our office about eligibility requirements and how to apply.

### Making a Lasting Impact

With the support of grants designated for Veterans, we are proud to provide Richard with the home repairs he needs. These upgrades ensure his home remains safe, secure, and efficient as he continues to age in place. Richard expressed his appreciation for our efforts, saying that our services were "Surprising! That, boom, it's there, you know. It's right there."

We are honored to help Veterans like Richard and are committed to making a difference in their lives. If you or someone you know is in need of home repairs or would like more information about our Home Repair Program, please call us at 715-939-1390 or visit our website at <https://wildrivershahabitat.org/home-repairs>.