

Purple Heart presented to Grand Island Man Wounded in Afghanistan

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Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Bluhm of Grand Island recently received a Purple Heart he earned seven years ago while serving in Afghanistan.

The Niagara falls native was presented the award by Rep. Brian Higgins, D-Buffalo, Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster and members of the military and Veterans of Foreign Wars, in a ceremony at the Niagara Falls Veterans Memorial, at Hyde Park.

The 2006 graduate of Medina High School was assigned to Company B, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173D Airborne Brigade. during Operation Enduring Freedom. He was injured when his company, which provided border security, was ambushed, suffering heavy casualties. Bluhm was acting as a gunner when his truck was hit by rocket-propelled grenades.

Though he did not seek treatment at the time, it wasn't until his second tour of Afghanistan that he was diagnosed with traumatic brain injury and underwent nine months of rehabilitation and treatment.

After Bluhm was discharged in 2013, he earned several decorations, including the Bronze Star with Valor.

Bluhm is a member of the Charles N. DeGlopper Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, Grand Island.