

'She has Healthy Oxygen Levels Again'

A young girl in Tonj, South Sudan, received lifesaving treatment thanks to the efforts of VFW members in Panama City Beach, Florida

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Jacob Chapman Sr. was a 39-yearold Army vet who served with the 48th Brigade as a medic in Bosnia. He had a wife and five children when he died suddenly on July 30, 2020, in Panama City Beach, Florida.

With a 70 percent VA disability rating, Chapman was a master woodworker and owned a custom cabinet shop. He was the sole source of income for his family, who was left with immediate financial needs.

VFW Post 10555 in Panama City Beach, Florida, worked quickly to provide diapers, pull-ups and a gift card for food for the family. Post Commander Mary Lemburg, Post Chaplain Robert Lemburg and Post Service Officer John Kittler stayed in contact with Chapman's wife, Kristen, to ensure her family's needs were being met.

In the months that followed, Post members donated more than \$4,000 to Chapman's family. Robert continued to check in on Kristen and her children to make sure they were doing well.

"This was one of my first experiences as the VFW Post chaplain," Robert said. "People opened their hearts and were very generous to help. Our members were more than willing to step forth with money, no questions asked."

As the Post service officer, Kittler worked with the local VA to ensure Kristen was getting Social Security benefits so that the family would have long-term income.

For Kristen, her husband's CPAP machine, a type of ventilator, was a painful reminder of his passing. Robert agreed to pick up the machine, which Jacob had used for sleep apnea, and took it to the Post.

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Kittler's church, Eastgate Christian Fellowship, is involved with In Deed And Truth (IDAT) Ministries. It runs a medical clinic in South Sudan and was in need of a CPAP machine.

Each year, according to Kittler, IDAT sends a container to South Sudan loaded with medical supplies and equipment. With that in mind, Kittler picked up the CPAP at the Post and delivered it to his IDAT contact.

The machine arrived at the medical clinic in the town of Tonj in the state of Warrap in central South Sudan in the spring and was put to immediate use.

Kittler read the following in the IDAT newsletter and later confirmed that the CPAP machine written about was the very one the Post facilitated in getting to South Sudan:

"We are thanking God for our CPAP machine, which is helping save the life of baby Athieng, who has severe pneumonia. Her oxygen levels were dangerously low, even with high-flow oxygen. The CPAP our team started yesterday has opened her airways and now she has healthy oxygen levels again."

Kittler said he confirmed with the head of the ministry that it was Chapman's CPAP that was used.

"We have the most service-oriented Post in Bay County," said Kittler, who has been a VFW Service Officer for three years. "It's what we do. I've seen a lot of Posts in Florida, and this Post is certainly in the tops."

This article is featured in the 2021 November/December issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Janie Dyhouse](#), senior editor for VFW magazine.