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SPORTS, 1B

Oshkosh Northwestern

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'There's a reason for it'



United States Army veteran Adam Alexander poses with his Disabled American Veterans award Friday at his home in Oshkosh. WM. GLASHEEN/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

Oshkosh man named Disabled Veteran of the Year for work with those who served

Bremen Keasey Oshkosh Northwestern | USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

OSHKOSH – Early in his life, Adam Alexander said military service was the “furthest thing from his mind.” • Alexander grew up in Potosi, in the southwest corner of the state, where he played baseball and football in high school and kept busy outside of sports by playing in a garage band. • Alexander said things changed while he attended University of Wisconsin-Platteville. During his time there studying criminal justice, he said he talked to a lot of veterans and felt his life experience compared to theirs was pretty “mundane.” • During a career fair, Alexander met with a recruiter for the U.S. Army who convinced him to meet. After talking further, he “liked what he heard” and started basic training in 2008, where he went into the reserves as a civil affairs specialist. • His decision became a fateful one.

See ALEXANDER, Page 6A

Marquette Poll's 10th year taking Wisconsin's public pulse

Bill Glauber

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

It started with an election Charles Franklin never saw coming.

Discussed informally for around four years and set up over several months, the Marquette University Law School Poll made its debut in January 2012, just as the state was plunged into Gov. Scott Walker's historic recall race.

“I hadn't anticipated how much we would be stepping into the maelstrom of the recall and then the fall election,” Franklin said. “After that, I sort of became numb to the pace.”

And that pace has never let up as Wisconsin remains at the epicenter of American politics.

The Marquette Poll is marking its 10th anniversary under the guidance of Franklin, the poll director, and several other key players.

They take a just-the-facts-approach to providing a snapshot on the political attitudes and choices of Wisconsin voters.

In the heat of the political season, the poll makes news, its release watched by the campaigns, the media and the public, all seeking the numbers on the state of the races.

In all, there have been 71 polls on Wisconsin; nine on the U.S. Supreme Court and national issues; and a single survey on public opinion and regional issues in the Chicago Megacity.

There have been interviews with 61,228 Wisconsin registered voters. And 1,279 questions have been asked.

What distinguishes the Marquette Poll from most other public polls is its lengthy history, frequency, transparency and focus on a single state.

The results are fully accessible to

See POLL, Page 2A

Wisconsin will replace license plates older than 10 years

Drake Bentley

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

Over time, due to environmental factors, license plates begin to fade and become illegible — which could result in a citation.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has processes in place for drivers looking to replace these illegible plates.

Most replacement orders are made online through a Wisconsin DOT portal, although the process can be completed

at the DMV or through the mail.

And the Wisconsin DOT will soon start to send drivers fresh plates if theirs are older than 10 years.

Here's what to know.

At what point, according to Wisconsin law, do I need to replace fading license plates?

The Wisconsin state statute states: “Whenever a current registration plate becomes illegible, the owner of the

See PLATES, Page 4A



The Wisconsin DOT has processes in place for replacing license plates.

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Alexander

Continued from Page 1A

Three years later, he was shot in the head while deployed and suffered major injuries. But Alexander turned it into an opportunity by finding multiple avenues to give back, including joining a local veterans organization and co-hosting a local access show in Oshkosh that allows veterans to share their stories.

His work since that day has earned him multiple accolades, including being named the 2022 Disabled American Veteran of the Year by the Disabled American Veterans organization. He was presented with the award Aug. 6 at the DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Orlando, Florida.

“Adam’s story is not one of struggle, but triumph,” said DAV National Commander Andy Marshall. “His lights may have gone out across the world during a battle for his life, but they unquestionably came back. And now he’s putting them, and the cameras, into action.”

Alexander said the impact he’s been able to make on other veterans gave him a huge sense of purpose despite the long road to recovery.

In his words: “It gave me a sense of worth and sense that it wasn’t just a random tragedy that happened (to me).”

“There’s a reason for it,” Alexander said.

After an attack on his post, six harrowing days where the “lights went black”

After basic training in 2008, Alexander said he served in the reserves with weekend drills and other trainings before his first deployment to Afghanistan in 2011.

Alexander’s unit, the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, was in the Paktia Province, an area about 80 miles south of the capital Kabul.

On Nov. 10, 2011, he was in a special forces fire base when alarm bells started ringing while he was on the phone with a deputy back at the main base.

“I said ‘sorry sir, but I’m going to have to bug out. We’re being attacked, I gotta get on a gun truck,’” Alexander said. “He said ‘OK, be safe, keep your head down.’”



United States Army veteran Adam Alexander is pictured in his Oshkosh home. WM. GLASHEEN/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

Alexander joked he “didn’t follow that order.”

While defending the base, he said he learned he took a sniper’s round right under the brim of his helmet. From then, the “lights went black.”

He was later told what happened over the six-day journey to bring him home. After the firing stopped, a medivac helicopter was called. The pilot was ordered not to land because of the heavy fire but apparently the radio was “misprogrammed,” so the pilot did not hear that message, fortunately for Alexander.

Alexander was taken to a field hospital where he was stabilized, before he was flown to Germany for more procedures and then to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, where he finally met up with his family.

The attack left Alexander with substantial damage to his right frontal lobe and right eye, which ended his military career. The frontal lobe is responsible for initiation and initially Alexander had issues getting simple tasks finished.

“I’ve found telling my story cathartic and healing. I hope that other veterans can as well.”

Adam Alexander
2022 Disabled American Veteran of the Year

After a 10-month rehab at the veteran’s hospital in Minneapolis, Alexander was able to get back on his feet, moving to Oshkosh and getting married after he left the hospital.

He is now a full-time, stay-at-home dad with their young son, a role he said can sometimes be “more terrifying than combat was.”

Alexander still has some struggles with memory and tasks, but he’s taken it in stride and is able to make jokes about his injuries.

“If my wife sends me to the store with a list of five things, she’s pretty lucky if I come back with two,” Alexander said. “My running joke is ‘I got shot in the

head, do you want bread or freedom?’”

A chance meeting leads to opportunity to change lives

After the move to Oshkosh, Alexander was looking for a way to get involved in the community. A chance email put him in contact with Mike Hert, a former veteran with the Oshkosh DAV chapter.

Hert was actually the man on the phone with Alexander before he was shot in 2011. Alexander said Hert got him involved with Winnebago County DAV Chapter 17, where he quickly got heavily involved.

Alexander said he missed the sense of being part of a team and being a leader he got from being in the Army. Joining the DAV helped him feel that again.

“I found a little of that comradery and became part of a brotherhood again,” he said.

In 2021, Alexander said Hert approached him about potentially co-hosting a show with him on Oshkosh Media about veterans issues.

Alexander said wouldn’t say no to a “new adventure.” For almost a year now, Alexander and Hert have helped provide a platform for veterans with their show, “The Outpost,” on Oshkosh Media.

“I’ve found telling my story cathartic and healing,” Alexander said. “I hope that other veterans can as well.”

One of his favorite episodes was with his friend and neighbor Chuck DeMunck, an Army veteran who served in Vietnam as a green beret and won three Purple Hearts.

Alexander said that was the first time DeMunck opened up about his service in Vietnam, and he felt good about giving him the opportunity “get it off his chest” in some ways.

As part of his work with DAV, Alexander also has testified in Madison in support of a bill that would give disabled veterans property tax credits.

He said he’s felt humbled by the attention of the DAV and the award he’s received, but he is happy to have found his space to help members of his team to live their best lives.

“It’s nice to know what you’re doing is being noticed and appreciated,” Alexander said.

Contact Bremen Keasey at 920-570-5614 or bkeasey@gannett.com. Follow him on Twitter at @Keasinho.

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