

News Release

Alan Mart goes full circle from the Army to UMN Crookston

By Cassandra Morthera on Wednesday, December 2, 2020

For Alan Mart, class registration day at the University of Minnesota Crookston, took place in August 2009. However, unbeknownst to Mart, that same day he would be recruited to go to the U.S. Army and his life would change forever. Although Mart decided to go to the Army, later in his life he found his way back to UMN Crookston.

During his time in the Army, Mart spent most of his time at the duty station in Fort Bliss, Texas. Mart also completed some basic training in Fort Knox and he did some training missions in Arizona and Fort Irwin.



"On Christmas day 2012, we landed in Afghanistan," recalls Mart, "We were there until the end of August, almost nine months later." Mart's main role while in Afghanistan was sergeant and team leader of his platoon. He was responsible for the wellbeing of six men. "I had to ensure that they were well taken care of and staying in good health," stated Mart.



In his role as sergeant, Mart did a lot of reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, and flying of helicopters. "I am grateful every single day for my time serving. I learned so much about how to be professional, how to make individual decisions, and how to be an outstanding leader," mentioned Mart.

When Mart got back to the United States after serving in the Army, he found himself lost. He did not know where to go from there, but needed a means to keep himself afloat, so he began working at H N Quality Plumbing in Crookston. "I have a family of mostly trade workers, for example my dad is a carpenter, so working in that area has always been familiar to me," said Mart.

Fortunately, Mart knew the owners of the plumbing business in town and worked for them for six years.

After many years in the plumbing business, Mart decided he wanted to change directions and open up a world of opportunities for himself. "After six years, I decided to go back to school to get my degree," continued Mart. His fiancé, Beth Novak, and the Novak family all encouraged him to go back to UMN Crookston as they are all proud alumni and knew that Mart would thrive here. "I am currently majoring in business and management as I hope to own a business someday," said Mart.

Mart truly believes that his time in the Army prepared him for his future because he had exemplary leadership to look up to and he learned many valuable life lessons while serving. "I feel like I really grew up in the Army and I try to be the responsible, professional person I learned how to be," stated Mart. He also found friendships that are hard to find elsewhere.

It may have taken a whirlwind path from 2009 until 2020 to find his way to UMN Crookston, but he would not be nearly as ready for his life ahead of him without his decision to go to the U.S. Army. Eventually Mart found his way back to campus and made a second life changing decision that will set him up for a successful future in business. Mart's story is proof that it is never too late to pursue your education and chase your dreams.

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