

School Closing Leaves Sergeant in Crisis

'The VFW was the only organization I found that took my situation into account ... to get me and thousands of other veterans the help we needed in a desperate situation'

Feb 15, 2017

US Army Sergeant Mingo McCall, 37, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, served active duty from September of 2000 to April of 2013.

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“I decided to join pretty much on a whim, but after joining I felt a real sense of fulfillment,” McCall said.

McCall was looking forward to graduating from ITT Technical Institute and stepping into the professional world this year, but this dream was put on hold when the for-profit higher education institution closed 130 campuses across the country in September.

“That happened three days before my graduation,” McCall related. “This was really devastating, and I still worry about how I’ll be able to repay my student loans.”

After the unexpected closing, he realized he might not be able to buy basic household necessities.

“I had only enough money to make my car payment in October. I had no idea how I was going to pay the rest of my bills and household expenses.”

McCall desperately began searching for organizations specializing in veterans’ issues. He expressed frustration at the lack of support available to veterans in trouble, especially for those like him struggling with PTSD and other mental health issues.

“It’s heartbreaking to know that when you go to war in another country you have all the support you need, but when you’re fighting a different war at home, that support is no longer around.

“The VFW was the only organization I found that took my situation into account, and went up the chain of command to get me and thousands of other veterans the help we needed in a desperate situation,” McCall continued.

The VFW Unmet Needs program provided help paying McCall’s electricity, rent and car insurance bills, as well as a gift card to buy groceries.

“This was so much more to my family and I than just a helping hand. This gave us a newfound sense of happiness and optimism.”

McCall is determined to get his degree, despite the setback he faced at ITT. He will be

starting school at Front Range Community College in Westminster, Colorado, this month, and ultimately plans to earn his bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture.

“To those who donate to the VFW, on behalf of my brothers and sisters in arms, I want to express my thanks for your selflessness, spirit and heart,” McCall concluded. “Your support does not go unnoticed!”