

VFW Scholarship Aids National Guardsman as He Reaches Toward Career

Military-gained skills transfer from battlefield to school

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Like many teenagers, Anthony Smotherman didn't have post-high school career plans. At 18-years-old and with no desire to attend college, Anthony wasn't sure what his next step in life would be. He did know that he was raised to put others before himself, had a strong desire to help defend America from future attacks and recognized America's need for proactive and vigilant leaders. So, Anthony thought the Army National Guard was a good fit.

The Guard played a major role in changing Anthony's attitude and his vision of his future. His service in the Guard helped him recognize the importance in higher education and gave him the confidence he needed to enroll at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

After hearing about the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" program through his school's military and veteran services office, Anthony hurried to apply. "There are many individuals out there who will never get the chance to receive higher education due to lack of funds or presented opportunities. That is why it is paramount that I do not squander the chance that I was given from the military," Anthony said in his scholarship application essay.

Over 700 service members and veterans applied for the Help A Hero Scholarship program's 2015 spring semester. Anthony was overjoyed after being notified that he was one of 70 selected recipients. "I couldn't believe that they had awarded it to me. I took the ideal behind pay it forward and told many of the soldiers I know to apply," said Anthony.

In his last year of college, Anthony's \$3,200 Help A Hero Scholarship will ensure he is able to complete criminal justice, information assurance and computer programing degrees. Anthony's military experience has also helped him develop the skills and credentials that,

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together with his college education, will make his future career with a law enforcement agency like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) possible.

Established in 2013, the Help A Hero Scholarship is designed to provide service members and veterans with scholarships of up to \$5,000 to complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. The application deadline for the 2015 fall semester is April 30. To find out more about the Help A Hero Scholarship or to apply, visit: www.vfw.org/scholarship.