

From Combat Engineer to Police Officer

The VFW helps fund veteran's pursuit of a badge

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Army veteran Nicholas Edward Fertakis served as a combat engineer for six years. Before he left, he was on a path to become a nurse. He changed his mind and decided to earn a badge and become a law enforcement



officer.

Shortly after returning home from Afghanistan in 2013, he began working to make his dream a reality.

“After my deployment, I realized interacting with people outside and making a daily impact on my surroundings was what I truly wanted to do,” said Fertakis.

Fertakis followed his instincts and moved to enroll in a law enforcement program at North Idaho College. He quickly realized his education would be more expensive than he imagined

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

and started looking for scholarships.

The financial aid office at Fertakis' school told him about the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship." He applied and was awarded \$3,000.

"The VFW and its supporters should know their contributions are not overlooked, and I truly appreciate this opportunity to continue my education," said Fertakis.

Fertakis is able to use some of his military training for college credit and will soon graduate. He plans to work with a local police department after completing training with the academy.

"There are very few people looking for demolition engineers or riflemen," said Fertakis. "You're going to need to rebuild your image to be 'civilian friendly' and school is a good place to do that."

Though Fertakis has hit a few bumps in the road, he maintains a positive attitude and moves forward on a path to achieve his goals.

"I want everyone that reads this to know life doesn't stop after service. The world is still turning. We, as servicemen and women, can still make an everlasting difference in our families and our communities," said Fertakis.

The Help A Hero Scholarship was created to provide service members and veterans with the financial assistance needed to complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. Awarded twice a year, scholarships help cover the cost of tuition and fees. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2016 fall semester. To apply, [click here](#).

Photo caption: VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" recipient Nicholas Edward Fertakis.