

Scholarship Gives Veteran a Chance to Finish College

'To the people who made this scholarship possible, I have to say thank you ... they're allowing me to finish my education and earn my master's degree'

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Andrew Bramsch, 35, of St. Louis, Mo., didn't know what he wanted to do after graduating from high school, but he knew college was not for him. After exploring his options, he felt the military made sense and he enlisted in the Army.

Bramsch served in the Army for almost 11 years in airborne infantry. He was stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., and in Vicenza, Italy. He also spent one year in Iraq and one and a half years in Afghanistan before medically retiring as a sergeant.

As fate would have it, events in Bramsch's military career ended up leading him to college after all. He is now finishing a master's degree in transportation and logistics management with American Public University System.

"I started in logistics in the Army after an injury. I was placed in the arms room and helped with supply. I saw there was a lot of planning and preparation in running a company. After that, I enjoyed being behind the scenes," said Bramsch. "I say that working in logistics means that no one knows what I do, but everyone goes crazy when I'm not around."

In addition to completing school, Bramsch works and he and his wife, Tiffany Canaday, tend to the busy life of his 16-year-old stepdaughter. The family is also expecting a new baby. Getting an education while juggling the demands of a job and family isn't easy, though, even for someone who knows how to coordinate the details of complex operations.

Bramsch, who loves sarcasm, jokes that being an adult is terrible, but the craziness of daily life has made him extremely grateful for the chance to remove financial strain from his list of concerns. For this veteran and VFW Life member, receiving the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" took away the worry of paying for his education.

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

“It always looked like the only way to finish would have been to pay for it myself,” said Bramsch. “To the people who made this scholarship possible, I have to say thank you! They’re allowing me to finish my education and earn my master’s degree.”

As Bramsch looks to advance his career in a field that is always changing, he knows the ethic of hard work from the military and help from people and resources like the VFW will get him where he needs to go. He encourages other veterans to get an education and seek out a support system to do it.

“People are always going to ask why, tell you it’s not worth it or say you’re wasting your time. But it’s your life, not theirs,” said Bramsch. “Just keep going, don’t stop. I always say to people around me, the only one stopping you is yourself.”