

‘An Amazing Opportunity’

The VFW's 'Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship' allows Army vet to pursue doctorate

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Army veteran Andrew Cox didn't understand why some people he served with would become addicts or homeless after leaving the military.

The Iraq War veteran left the Army in 2012, and, noticing that not everyone makes a “good transition” out of the service, decided more needed to be done. He said the services available to veterans “just weren't the right services,” so he earned a bachelor's degree in human services at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Ga., and currently is pursuing a doctorate in community counseling with a focus on traumatology at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

“I wanted to keep serving after the Army and social work was a good fit,” Cox said. “When I saw how much the friends I'd made in the service and my family struggled with life after the military, I knew it was the right decision choosing social work as a career and focusing on veterans. It's hard watching people you love struggle with addiction, homelessness and depression.”

Cox, who served in the Army as a human intelligence collector from 2007 to 2012, with two deployments to Iraq (2008-09, 2010-11), said a “big” part of his decision to attend Liberty came down to veteran services.

“Liberty [University] was the only one that offered a waiver to some of the associated fees, and half off of their tuition price for veterans,” said Cox, an at-large VFW member with the Department of Georgia.

But without assistance through the VFW Help a Hero Scholarship program, Cox said he wouldn't have been able to attend Liberty University. A woman he served with who had received the scholarship in the past mentioned the program to Cox. He received \$3,000, which has covered about two semesters' worth of tuition.

“Getting the scholarship was the difference between being able to go to school and not,” Cox

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said.

As a scholarship recipient, Cox said, he now has a chance to “give back” to the veteran community through publishing papers, as well as his current role as a social worker. VFW’s program has been an “amazing opportunity,” the Army vet said.

“When I was looking for ways to help pay for my doctorate degree, it was the Help a Hero and maybe one or two others that were the only thing out there for vets,” Cox said, “and it really lets you know how important agencies like the VFW are.”

For more information on, or to apply for, the VFW’s Help a Hero Scholarship, visit vfw.org/scholarship.

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