

# Veteran Strengthens Hope of Her Community with VFW Scholarship

**'The scholarship meant so much to me ... I can pay it forward by helping people in the community with legal services'**

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Veteran Portia Bethea of Neptune, N.J. values community. She first found the value of the VFW community when she exhausted her GI Bill benefits, but still had three semesters left at St. Thomas University School of Law.

“The VFW’s ‘Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship’ definitely affected my life. I didn’t have full knowledge of our community and once I did, it made me want to give back more — and give back to other veterans around me,” Portia said.

She is committed to spreading the word about the VFW's assistance programs to other veterans. Portia began her military life in 2010 with the Army National Guard. She deployed to Qatar for Operation Enduring Freedom and managed to successfully complete her bachelor’s in political science while there in 2015.

She has since returned home and has been honorably discharged as a sergeant. Upon completion of the LSATs, Portia entered law school.

“The scholarship meant so much to me. I can pay it forward by helping people in the community with legal services. There are people who can’t afford legal services, yet they deserve quality legal counsel,” she explained.

Portia is driven toward public interest work, especially assisting indigenous people. She feels her success and service in the community wouldn’t be possible without supporters of the VFW.

“I don’t know how I could put my gratitude for people who donate to the VFW into words. 1,000 ... 1 million thank yous!”

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Portia wants fellow veterans not to be discouraged when looking at the cost of higher education to achieve their dream career goals.

“Don’t ever feel financial burden should get in the way of your goals because there is help. Financial obstacles shouldn’t get in the way of your education,” she concluded.