

# Scholarship Pushes Sailor to New Heights

## When assistance ran out, the VFW was there

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“I wanted to work where I made a difference and served a greater purpose,” said Konstantine Rudenko, 24, of Midland Park, N.J. “And with the attitude I had out of high school, I knew I wouldn’t succeed in college. The answer was the U.S. Navy.”

Rudenko enlisted in 2007 and is currently working as a Yeoman First Class Petty Officer at the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, R.I., where he also volunteers as Assistant Cross Country Coach. Rudenko has previously served tours in Iraq and Kuwait.

After a year in the Navy, Rudenko decided to start college. He began taking online classes through Saint Leo University. Today, he has an associate degree in liberal arts and is working toward his bachelor’s in business administration.

Unfortunately, the funding from Rudenko’s Navy Tuition Assistance program was about to run out.

A fellow veteran at VFW Post 5390 in Portsmouth, R.I., told Rudenko about the VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship." His application was accepted.

“Because of this scholarship, I can finish my degree on schedule,” said Rudenko. “I would like to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who made this opportunity possible. VFW and Sport Clips allow people to further themselves personally and professionally.”

After college, Rudenko has many plans. He hopes to apply for his master’s in business administration and two commissioning programs: Limited Duty Officer and Officer Candidate School. He also plans to continue climbing the enlisted career ladder to become a Chief Petty Officer.

“It sounds like I have too many paths, but I’m young and the world seems full of

### 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

opportunity,” said Rudenko.

“My goal is to serve my country in a greater capacity, contribute to my community and improve the lives of our servicemen and women.”