

‘From the Bottom of My Heart, Thank You’

Without the VFW's support, Navy veteran Juan Preciado wouldn't have been able to achieve his dream of being a commissioned officer

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Navy veteran Juan Preciado, 30, resides in Dallas, Texas, with his wife, Brenda. He served five years as an aviation ordnanceman. Preciado was stationed on the USS America based out of San Diego, California, and was later deployed to South America and Africa. During this time, he earned Sailor of the Year in 2017 and later moved to the rank of petty officer second class.

“The reason I first joined is because I am a true believer in public service. Serving this great nation felt like it was the biggest way I can contribute, serve and give back to a country that has given so much to me.”

After active duty, he joined the Navy Reserves in Fort Worth, Texas. Upon completing his undergraduate and graduate degrees, he was selected for a direct commission in the Navy and currently serves as an intelligence officer at Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth.

Preciado heard about the VFW “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” while getting a haircut. For his undergraduate degree, Preciado attended Southern Methodist University and double-majored in political science and public policy while minoring in economics.

He later pursued a master's degree in public affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. He says the VFW's assistance made it possible to make his dreams come true.

“If it wasn't for this scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to pursue a graduate degree. I wouldn't have been able to attend the school of my dreams and I probably wouldn't have been able to achieve my dream of being a commissioned officer,” Preciado said.

“I have been blessed with this opportunity and because of this scholarship, I am doing

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something I am passionate about — living with my beautiful wife in our beautiful home in Dallas and inspiring others to pursue an education.”

Along with his intelligence officer role, Preciado also works as a management analyst for the CFO for the City of Dallas. He values both of his public service positions and the ability to wear multiple hats. He encourages veterans to take the plunge into education and to earn a door-opening degree they are passionate about.

“Before I enlisted in the Navy, my GPA was 1.0. After the completion of active-duty enrollment in classes, I was a 4.0 student and made it on the dean’s list,” Preciado said.

“I didn’t become smarter while in the Navy. I just learned how to discipline myself, manage my time, pay attention to detail and value hard work. All these skills that were developed during my time in the military are skills all military members possess.”

Preciado has had the opportunity to learn from experts in his field, like Adm. William McRaven. He has also made lifelong connections, which allowed him to meet President Joe Biden. He says none of this would be possible without this scholarship.

“From the bottom of my heart, thank you,” Preciado said. “My wife thanks you. My parents thank you. Because of your contributions I was able to make my parents proud. I was able to focus solely on school and relieve myself of any financial burden.

“It removed so many barriers for me to pursue an education and become eligible to become a commissioned officer,” Preciado continued. “This scholarship made it possible for me to achieve my goals and have a successful career. I will forever be grateful for this kind donation.”

[Learn more about the VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship."](#)