

# **‘If I Can Do It, I Know You Can As Well’**

## **Army veteran Roderick Peterson is grateful for the relief the VFW's 'Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship' provided**

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Army veteran Roderick Peterson, 35, lives in Rogers, Arkansas, with his partner, Francisca Garduno, and their three children, Alonzo, Anai and King. Peterson served five years as a military police officer. During that time, he deployed to Afghanistan and South Korea and later achieved the rank of corporal. Peterson joined the military to experience a different life from his childhood.

“I didn’t like the poverty and violence I was exposed to in Birmingham, Alabama’s inner city. An Army recruiter at my high school told me that the world had more to offer,” he said.

Peterson found the VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” through an online search for aid for graduate-level veterans. He is grateful for the relief it provided.

“This scholarship literally lifts a weight off of my chest, knowing that I have the freedom to pursue my education without drowning in debt,” Peterson said. “It means the world to me and others who make career decisions based on cost or risk.”

Peterson is pursuing his Master of Arts in counseling with a specialization in clinical mental health at Adler University in Chicago. After graduation, he hopes to work in the Department of Veterans Affairs’ mental health branch.

“I feel like my fellow veterans would be more likely to open up to a mental health professional who has actually walked in their shoes and who has similar lived experiences,” Peterson said.

For veterans wanting to pursue education, Peterson says their service already gives them the drive and dedication to follow through.

“Going to school can be time consuming and stressful. But the rewarding feeling that comes

### **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

from completing classes and getting closer to your goals is the best in the world,” he said. “And if I can do it, I know you all can as well.”

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