

Motivated Veteran Chases Dreams with VFW Scholarship

'Higher education allows us to truly integrate all of the life lessons we learned in the military to our civilian careers'

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Veteran Tyler Walsh, 30, of Middlebury, Conn., believes higher education is incredibly important for veterans.

"The military teaches us lessons that cannot always be cleanly transferred into the civilian world. Higher education allows us to truly integrate all of the life lessons we learned in the military to our civilian careers," he said.

And he doesn't take the bridge to better his civilian life for granted. Walsh thanks everyone who supports the VFW because it makes programs like the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" possible.

Walsh joined the Marine Corps right out of high school because he believed he would have a more profound experience than what college could offer him. He's had a strong desire to chart his own course from the very beginning.

His interests led him to be a dog handler and working with a Labrador Retriever, Woody, to detect explosives when deployed to Iraq in 2007 and Afghanistan in 2011. He left the Marines a sergeant and began to set his sights on what would come next.

Currently, Walsh attends the University of New Hampshire as a graduate student seeking a master's degree in social work. Woody sadly passed while Walsh was in the demobilization process and they were never reunited. However, Walsh is now the proud owner of another Labrador, Mack, who has been instrumental in showing him the therapeutic impact animals offer. After this discovery, Walsh became involved with equine assisted therapy.

He's still pondering exactly where his path should go but is currently leaning toward

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combining his environmental studies undergraduate experience with a wilderness therapy program.

Walsh's path toward a meaningful career has been made a little easier with assistance from the VFW.

"This scholarship has alleviated a great deal of stress in finding work throughout my graduate program. I am better able to focus on my studies with financial support," he explained.

He found the VFW's scholarship easily by searching online and hopes that others will discover the feeling of accomplishment that comes from achieving an advanced degree.

"You will never regret being better trained and more educated. Find a field that allows you to come alive and chase it with all that you have," he concluded.