

Scholarship Sends Veteran on his Next Mission

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John Bradford Yarbrough, Jr., 27, of St. Louis, Mo., has always wanted to serve others, serve his country and find a way to make a difference in the world.

“I had a deep desire to serve after the attacks of September 11. I still remember being in 8th grade in 2005, and a Marine who had gone to my grade school and was on the cover of Time magazine [“Street Fight: Inside the Battle for Fallujah”] came to speak to my class. I wished I could’ve joined right then,” said Yarbrough. “I’ve always had the view that it’s your duty as an American citizen to serve in some capacity. And the military breeds leaders. Joining seemed like the easiest way to forge my own path.”

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Yarbrough enlisted in the Missouri Army National Guard after high school in 2009 and was in an infantry unit while attending the University of Missouri. He deployed with the 220th Engineer Company to Afghanistan in 2014 and finished his degree after returning home. After seven years, he was honorably discharged and is now enrolled at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law with dreams of serving in a new way.

“I hope to work as an attorney in the public sector. I want to continue to serve my community after law school,” Yarbrough said. “Deploying to Afghanistan really solidified my future decision to attend law school even as my goals seemed distant at the time. The feeling of duty to serve others and be part of a mission bigger than myself has driven me ever since.”

Yarbrough found that paying for law school is difficult for someone who wants to help others more than pursue a large paycheck upon graduation. Looking for a way to avoid crushing debt, he turned to the VFW to see if there might be a program to help him reach his goals and found the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship."

“I always knew they were a great help to veterans, so I decided to see if they offered any type of academic assistance,” said Yarbrough. “I would like to say thank you with the utmost sincerity to the people who made this scholarship possible. These people have undoubtedly

given me a better chance at success. The scholarship has enabled me to focus on my classes instead of the constant financial pressure tuition and loans can have on you.”

Ready to take on his next mission thanks to the scholarship, Yarbrough hopes other veterans will pursue their dreams and seek out the help to do so, even if the future seems a long way off.

“Think of the person you want to be in five or ten years,” Yarbrough said. “If some type of education is required to be that person, then start that process today!”