

VFW Awards Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship to Big-Hearted Veteran

Jordan Soderman continues the call to serve as firefighter, Air Force Reserves staff sergeant and graduate student

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Marine veteran Jordan Soderman wears many hats. Everyday he is a full-time firefighter for the city of Minneapolis, Minn., father to 7-year-old Hunter and 5-year-old Caleb, husband to wife Jessica, Staff Sergeant in the Air Force Reserves and master's student in Emergency Management. It's a lot of responsibility and he takes great pride and care in each role.

Soderman was extremely grateful to be a recipient of the VFW's "Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship," especially because his family depends on his salary for a living.

Soderman grew up in the rural Midwest on his family's farm. He joined the Marines in 2006, right out of high school. He felt called to enlist because his parents taught him how much respect service members deserve, even though they were civilians themselves.

"The military was on a pedestal to me, and I wanted to give back to my country and travel outside my small town."

Soderman was deployed three times between 2007-2010. During the first two deployments, he was assigned to a Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team (FAST) in Cuba and Bahrain. His final deployment was spent in Afghanistan as a scout sniper in the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines.

Now, his purpose as an Air Force Reserve staff sergeant, is to train his crew in emergency fire training for missions overseas. Every few years he voluntarily deploys out of the country to stage and set up firefighting resources. He also trains locally in Minneapolis.

Soderman is very passionate about his roles in both the military and civilian world.

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“I once again found something more I could do to give back. The fire department is paramilitary, so I have the same type of camaraderie working with my brothers and sisters here ... and that’s hard to find elsewhere.

“I have an exciting career in the fire service and I help people. I get off work and I feel I made a positive impact for people facing serious events.”

Soderman immediately experienced the benefits of his scholarship at both of his jobs. He knows in the future he could stay in the military longer and move into upper leadership, or pursue his dream of becoming a district chief within the local fire emergency management system.

His scholarship has been extremely helpful in alleviating financial strain. Even with his busy schedule, he doesn’t take the gift lightly, spending 15-25 hours of each week studying and reading for his accelerated schedule.

Soderman stresses a huge thanks and tremendous respect for the patriots who support the VFW’s programs. And he is so impressed with the work of the VFW that he joined Post 8729 in Lake City, Minn.

“Because of the people who contribute to this program, I have a long-term vision for my career.”

Interested in applying for a Help A Hero scholarship? The application deadline for the 2018 fall semester is April 30. [See the eligibility requirements and apply online today.](#)