

My first interest and experience in helping others was in 1992, as a Naval Search and Rescue Swimmer. The advanced first aid training and water rescue operations required for the retrieval of downed pilots and shipboard personnel left me with a sense of accomplishment and purpose. I was proud to be part of a select few whose motto was "so others may live". Then three years later, assigned as a Naval Law Enforcement Specialist and first responder, helping others was again part of my profession. In 1999 the decision to leave active duty to be home for my wife and young daughter was made. Wanting to still serve, I joined the Naval Reserves and began pursuing an education towards a career in medicine as a Physician Assistant.

While finishing my bachelors, there were many obstacles. In 2005 hurricane Katrina forced me to change careers. After serving on active duty as a reservist, I was offered civilian employment training military and civilian law enforcement and security personnel. In 2008 the Navy's Expeditionary Combat Skills Course hired me to start up and train Naval ground force personnel in combat skills. While preparing for our first class of students, I completed a BA in Natural Science and Mathematics.

Over the next five years, I helped train approximately 10,000 sailors, who are serving all over the world. I was also the Leading Petty Officer of Gulfport's Naval Security Forces Reserve Unit, and was selected as NOSC Gulfport's 2011 "Sailor of the Year".

In January of 2013 my dream was realized when I was accepted into the University of South Alabama's PA program. Upon completion, my goal is to continue the privilege of serving in the Navy Reserves, while making the most positive impact on my community, as a health care professional.

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I believe in having goals, dreams, and a purpose for your life. However, discovering these things for yourself can take years. I am very fortunate to have learned what my goals are and I am confident in the direction I am headed: living a life of service and medicine. I chose to pursue a career as a physician assistant for many reasons, but the most important one is how I was brought up. My parents instilled the values of caring for others and serving those in need when I was very young. I lived abroad as a child and was fortunate enough to see poverty first-hand. I say fortunate because I now understand that I am very blessed and need to give back in whatever way I am able. By pursuing a career in the medical field and joining the Minnesota Army National Guard, I am accomplishing this. Medicine has always fascinated me, and the PA profession allows me to have more interaction with my patients and develop relationships, while still having some autonomy in making critical decisions. I chose to join the National Guard because I realize how blessed I am to be an American citizen and I want serve alongside others with the same mindset. I love that I'm able to be involved in my community, while at the same time serve at a state or national level with the military when needed. I'm so excited to finally reach my goals and work as a PA, both in my community and for the US Army. This scholarship would provide me with funds for tuition costs, which are one of the larger burdens encountered on the road to becoming a PA.

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I attend the Masters Physician Assistant program at Samuel Merritt University in Oakland California. I served in the US Air Force from 2003-2007 as an enlisted Security Forces member. Prior to my

service, I struggled to find direction and purpose. The Air Force not only helped to shape me as a responsible individual, but also helped me to identify what I wished to accomplish in life. It became clear early on that my place in society is to help those in need, and more specifically as a member of a medical team.

I honorably separated from the military in 2007 with a clear goal, to complete an undergraduate degree and then proceed directly to a physician assistant training program. I completed my degree within 4 years, at times taking courses at both a 4 year university and a local junior college concurrently. I graduated Cum Laude from California State University San Marcos, and was on the Dean's list at both institutions every semester. At the same time I worked as an emergency medical technician both on an ambulance service, and as a hospital technician, while volunteering at a local Humane Society animal shelter.

The military provided me with the resources I needed to accomplish my goals and find my direction in life. It would be an honor to serve both the members of the military community and underserved populations of California. Thank you for your consideration.

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Raised as the only son to Navy Veteran, I was always committed to joining the military. Shortly after my 18th birthday, I was able to fulfill that commitment to myself when I swore in to the Army. I soon realized that enlisting as a 68W10 Health Care Specialist (Combat Medic) would be one of the best decisions I have made in my life. Completely naive to what a Physician Assistant (PA) even was, I worked directly with them during my training as part of the health care team. It was at this point in my life that I made it a goal to become a Physician Assistant in the Army.

I will confess that college didn't initially come easy to me as an undergraduate student. It wasn't until I became more involved in various sports, clubs, and activities on campus that everything began to make sense. I found myself more focused on my schoolwork and what was important in my life. The satisfaction of organizing various volunteer opportunities, such as Relay for Life, was overwhelming. Once I graduated from Slippery Rock and matriculated at the University of Mount Union, I was able to commission as an officer in the Army, bringing me one step closer to my goal.

As you know, funding for graduate level coursework is limited and I have never received financial aid supporting me in my quest to complete my PA goals. I would greatly appreciate a scholarship from Veterans Caucus and it is my sincere intention to not only use the money for myself, but to further enhance the University of Mount Union's program.

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The way things function in life is amazing. I grew up in a family of engineers, and throughout my life I learned how things worked. If something was broken around the house, my dad would take it apart and fix it. I was always fascinated by the way he could fix anything.

When I was fifteen years old, I had the "unfortunate" incident of tearing my ACL. My parents and I decided the best option was to undergo surgery and have it repaired. The first day of Physical Therapy I fell in love. I fell in love with what my therapist, David, told me I was going to go through. The entire process was a way to "fix" my knee. I quickly learned that I was going to have to do most of the work and David was just there to guide me along. I decided at that moment I wanted to go into Orthopedic Physical Therapy.

After graduating high school I went through college busting my tail to earn a Bachelor's degree while taking pre-requisites for PT school. I worked as a physical therapy technician for three years at an orthopedic office, and after being denied the chance to attend PT school, received the opportunity to work for Dr. Kenneth Weiss at Orthomemphis. I had no idea what I was getting into, but was excited about the change God had presented me with. As a medical assistant I quickly became engaged in all aspects of patient care. I learned things about how the body moves and functions that I never dreamed of. After only a morning of seeing patients with Dr. Weiss, I decided PT school was not for me and there was a reason I had been given this amazing opportunity. While being the cheerleader through the recovery process was great, I never got to learn the big picture while working in PT.

When patients go to the doctor as a new patient, they are undiagnosed. They come in with a bag of problems, and it is the doctor's job to figure out how to "fix" what is wrong with them. After being a part of the orthopedic team for 6 years, I know my life is not complete without the steady pace and engagement of its place in my life. I love both the clinical and surgical settings of orthopedics, and while it is not engineering, becoming a Physician Assistant in Orthopedics is my chance to fix things that are broken.

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The Towers went down in the fall of my freshman year of college and I began to struggle through school, distracted by everything happening overseas and feeling like I had to do something to help out. With the condition that I would finish college, my parents reluctantly offered their blessing and I began my training as an Army Medic. I loved the life, the regimented organization, and camaraderie I felt with my battle buddies. I returned to school wanting nothing else but to finish and go Active Duty. When I did finally graduate, my desire to be in the Army full time had taken its toll. I graduated college with a GPA that left much to be desired and with no real direction except what set before me in the military. Only three months after graduation and just recently married, I was given my orders to deploy to Baghdad, Iraq with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division as a line medic. Nothing I could have done would have prepared me for what I was about to face. I learned what brotherhood was all about, and for the first time in my life I felt what it was like to lose a friend. I returned from Iraq after 15 months of being gone and felt like I finally belonged somewhere. I had forged friendships that would endure a lifetime, and left behind experiences that were preparation for my ultimate test a year later.

Afghanistan was a living hell. During my first month in country, I lost my platoon sergeant and friend of three years to an RPG. He was killed instantly and it served as merely a taste of what my unit would encounter for the remainder of the deployment. On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 our sister company came under one of the worst attacks during the war in Afghanistan. Eight Americans were killed and 27 wounded, but my greatest personal loss came on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 when my squad came under fire. The first shot fired brought my friend and battle buddy to his knees. I did everything I could to save him, but he was mortally wounded and ultimately would not survive his wounds. I didn't take his death well, but as a medic responsible for the care of war fighters you're faced with a choice: Take care of yourself or take care of your brothers. That's when I remembered my mother and the selfless gift of care she gave to her grandfather. I realized it was love that motivated her, and as such it motivated me to be their support when they needed someone to lean on.

Returning home wasn't easy but with unwavering support from my wife and the memories of those who lost their lives, I enrolled in school again so that I could apply for training to become a Physician Assistant. After two years of tirelessly working to improve my GPA to an acceptable level, I was accepted and began my training to carry on the tradition laid by generations of medics and corpsman before me.

Now in my second year of training to become a Physician Assistant, I take every opportunity I can to talk with high school students and college students about what it means to be a PA. I am proud of our profession and the opportunity it will give me to continue that service.

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Since I had information about the Physician Assistant (PA) program during a combat medic training in San Antonio, TX in 2006, I have kept the compassion to become one. After the discharge from the U.S. Army, I have used the Veterans Affairs educational benefit (chapter 33) with the Federal Student Aid for my family support. While taking the prerequisites, I have earned the secondary Bachelors of Science degree in Biology and the VA educational benefit has ended in December, 2013. Therefore, I need to find other financial resources to support three dependents while in this PA program.

I am so glad that I am able to pursue for the professional career here at UTPA as I have dreamt. I plan to complete this PA program in timely fashion and take good care of patients as a primary care provider in a medically underserved area (MUA). As a naturalized American citizen, it is the most meaningful step for me to take in to this PA program.

In conclusion, I need this scholarship for two reasons: continuation of my study and further my family support. I hope that I could accomplish my dream of becoming a PA without any further financial concerns.

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As a young man entering the United States Navy, I did not have a strong understanding of the skills necessary to achieve success in education and/or a career. While serving in the Navy, I grew to understand what it takes for academic and career success. All of the skills that I learned early in my military career provided a solid foundation for my future, and I built upon that foundation at each new point in my career. One of my first training segments involved combat medicine. This was an intense four months of training that taught me how to administer life saving techniques, while under constant pressure. While the training was strenuous, it gave me the confidence I needed to work efficiently during critical situations. My military experience provided me with a solid medical background and high ethical standards; therefore, I strongly believe all aspects of my military experience have prepared me for the physician assistant (PA) profession. I believe medicine is a field that is constantly evolving and I think we will continue to see expansion in light of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Due to the increased number of newly insured individuals, there will be a significant need for qualified healthcare professionals to care for these people. It is my belief that Physician Assistants will fill some of these positions. I have enjoyed caring for others through medicine since very early on in my career, and I would like to continue to do so as a PA. I believe my graduate education will prepare me for some of the expanding roles that healthcare professionals might need to be ready for as healthcare changes. Receiving a Veteran's Caucus Scholarship will help me achieve my goal of becoming a PA by offsetting the expensive cost of graduate school.

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Many people have a single moment when they know what they want to do. For me, it was really a combination of many things. My father's love of medicine as he pursued his second career as a paramedic was the foundation, but it would be my experience as a Corpsman in the Navy that would solidify my passion to

be a Physician Assistant. In a generation that is notorious for being self centered, instead of asking myself what do I want, I asked whom can I serve? I know that my joy as a Navy Corpsman came from serving others. There is a gratifying byproduct that comes from helping others through medicine. This passion is what fueled my love for morning sick call and afternoon minor procedure clinic. It is what gave me enough energy to work in the medical department every day on deployment for eight months straight. This love for practicing medicine and helping patients is the reason I know I want to be a Physician Assistant.

My past service will continue to have an impact on my professional career. As a Physician Assistant I hope to continue to serve the veteran population after graduation. My current mentor told me that the message for my generation of veterans is, "Welcome home, thanks you for your service, we need you to serve again." I hope to serve my fellow comrades again, fueled by the same motivation the military instilled in me; you do not leave anyone behind. This time though my service will be through my profession, my passion, and my skills as a Physician Assistant.

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Martin Luther King said that "Life's most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" Although we were lower middle class, my parents told me to choose a career based on the imprint I could leave on others and not just the money I could accumulate. When I enlisted in the Air Force at 18 I did not know what I wanted to be when I grew up. For many years, I served as an Optometry technician and worked with medical professionals who taught me how to efficiently provide quality healthcare to many deserving beneficiaries. Eventually, I was given the opportunity to lead soldiers and use my academic knowledge to independently make decisions in the clinic. I knew the role I served in the clinic and wearing the uniform was leaving an imprint on many lives. Still, I felt intelligent enough to provide medical care at a more professional level. My commander agreed and introduced me to the PA profession. I was struck by how much they enjoyed their job and how much latitude they had to practice medicine. My plan was to apply for the AF commissioning program but on September 11, 2001 my plans had to be put aside. Months later I was sent to Germany to support the War on Terrorism where I served until honorably discharged in 2004. It took me years to apply to the Wake Forest PA program due to financial concerns. I have 2 children and my husband lives and works in another state. So far I have been able to keep up with monthly daycare expenses and their operational hours have been sufficient. Now, with clinical year approaching, I could use additional monies to hire a babysitter help me when I have to stay late in the clinic with patients.

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I am currently a first-year Physician's Assistant student at Wake Forest School of Medicine, PA Studies. I have always known I have wanted to live a life of service, with one method being my service in the US Army as a Special Forces Medical Sergeant. In my service, I spent a great deal of time under the mentoring and tutelage of an Army PA. It was his leadership and professionalism that I respected, which initially drew me to a career as a PA. My tenuous grasp of medical theory inspired me to desire a more formal training program that would allow me to help others in a more meaningful manner. As an Army medic, there was a great need for the skills I was given, but it was such a small population that I could serve, it only left me wanting more. I spent more and more time in local hospitals, experiencing how the

healthcare team works. I experienced first-hand how important the PA is, alongside the medical doctor, nurse practitioner, nurses and techs. I can also see their necessity in the coming expansion of our healthcare system. PAs from their inception have expanded access to care under the supervision of a medical doctor. Today, access to care is not just a geospatial problem, but a socioeconomic problem. To overcome these divisions, the PA is a more economical addition to the healthcare team without sacrificing the quality of care given. By driving down the cost of healthcare, we can increase the access to care. This is the role I have chosen for my life. Your Chan-Padgett scholarship is will be utilized to directly cover the cost of attendance for me and my family. Thank you for your consideration.

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Working as a medic for the U.S. Army Special Forces not only provided me with the educational foundation to become a Physician's Assistant, but also with the determination and focus to achieve this goal. Devoting five years to the military has given me specific knowledge and skills that will help me in pursuing a career as a Physician's Assistant.

In addition to the extensive and rigorous training in advanced combat skills, each Green Beret candidate selects a specialty job within the Special Forces. After choosing to become a medic, I attended a year-long course that not only emphasized training on advanced trauma medicine, but also focused on skills used in surgery, dentistry, optometry, lab work, sick call and orthopedics. Once graduated, I was assigned to a team in B Co 2nd BN 3rd SFG (A) overseeing the health and welfare of the team, ranging from daily sick calls and annual immunizations, to providing medical care and treatment while deployed on missions/in combat environments, including preventative medicine and trauma.

I knew that I wanted my medical profession to extend beyond my military service. After researching many potential health careers before I left active duty, it seems that becoming a Physician Assistant would be the best fit for my background and interests. I ended my active duty in March of 2011 and now serve as a Special Forces Medic in the 19th Special Forces Group West Virginia National Guard.

My wife and I are expecting our first child in April, and every penny will be crunched as I continue to complete my education as a Physician's Assistant. This scholarship would make a significant impact on the financial burden we will face during the clinical aspect of my studies. Your time and consideration is sincerely appreciated.

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Physician assistants provide a quality of care that reflects passion and gains the trust of the patients they serve. There is truly nothing I enjoy more than providing care to patients who are in dire need of it. In the military, it becomes ingrained in us to take care of one another. As my journey through life brought me back to being a civilian, I feel it would be a natural transition to be in a career field that will allow me to provide care for others. During my nursing clinical rotations, I witnessed first-hand just how in depth a physician assistant can be embedded in the medical community. I was able to observe and talk with several physician assistants in many different medical care setting and they helped me understand their roles and the versatility of their job on a day---to---day basis. These conversations provided me with valuable advice and information that helped establish my pursuit as a physician assistant. The drive I have to pursue a vocation as a physician assistant is a reflection of the persistent motivation that has propelled me through my life thus far.

I have a desire to learn how to heal those in need and change lives through excellent medical care as part of a team of providers with the same goal. If I were awarded a scholarship I would utilize the money on future textbooks and living expenses. I am married, with a four---year---old daughter, and

attending PA school is busy and expensive. The money would not only help with my education but also with my family. Thanks for your consideration.

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My desire to be a PA stems from a long-standing, intrinsic desire to assist people when they are in need. After entering active military service as a Civil Engineer in 2004, I found that I was still looking for a purpose, something that would provide a rewarding feeling; the feeling that I did something significant. In 2006 I tried out for and joined the Air Force's special operations rescue and recovery teams, known as Pararescue. I quickly learned that I loved the medical portion of the job from the very first day of training. Since then I have deployed to Afghanistan twice and have seen countless casualties, while having the great privilege and responsibility of treating wounded service members. The most rewarding memories of my life are those of my direct involvement in preventing those men and women from making the ultimate sacrifice.

My passion for medicine is even more deeply personal. Throughout my military career I have sustained my own injuries: from various sports injuries, a mid-shaft spiral femur fracture, to septic bursitis of the knee. As a patient, I have witnessed firsthand the spectrum of competency and care. I can appreciate that there is a massive difference between people who embrace what they do and truly care for the wellbeing and recovery of their patient, versus others that are simply disengaged. Luckily, I have had more good experiences than bad. I have extreme gratitude and appreciation towards the professionals who made solid assessments and aggressive, yet thoughtful, treatment plans for my recovery. I could tell that they cared about my outcome as they worked diligently to help me. That is the type of PA I want to be for others.

In closing, if awarded this scholarship I would put it towards paying for my tuition.

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On December 29, 1994, at 10:03 a.m., I walked into my parent's bedroom and found my mother lying lifeless in her bed. Her grueling 5-year battle with Hodgkin's disease had ended. As a child, I was, at first, incredibly confused about why my mom died. Then I was simply angry that she died, and blamed her medical team for not saving her. As I grew into an adult however, I realized that in order to be at peace with my mother's death, I should celebrate the many days she lived rather than focus on the single day she died. I stopped being angry at doctors and nurses, and instead became grateful that my mother's medical team had helped keep her alive for as long as they did, and thankful that in her final days, they were able to keep her pain free and at peace. Because of this experience, I decided that I wanted to become a part of the medical community, and do for others, what my mother's health care team had done for her. After completing high school, I enlisted in the Navy and became a Hospital Corpsman. I thrived in this environment, and took pleasure in not only diagnosing and treating my patients, but also in taking the time to get to know them as individuals. I never looked at being a corpsman as a job because I loved what I was doing, taking care of my fellow service men and women. Whether it was fixing an ingrown toe nail or pumping the stomach of someone who had overdosed on drugs, every day brought excitement and new challenges. As a corpsman, I really valued the camaraderie that was present in the hospital I worked at. The corpsman, doctors, nurses, and physician assistants (PA) collaborated with each other to give each patient the best care possible. As my enlistment in the Navy was nearing an end, a PA I worked with encouraged me to go to college and then join his profession. I knew this would

be the right choice for me because the role of a PA is very similar to the role I had as a Navy corpsman. After my discharge from the military I pursued my Bachelor's degree in Biology. My coursework in classes such as human genetics and cellular biology deepened my already present interest in health and disease in the human body. As I learned more about the way the body works, my desire to have a career in medicine grew more intense. While attending college, I worked as a medical records clerk at the university's student health center. This provided me with a deeper understanding of how a health care center operates as a whole. I also had an internship working as a laboratory technician at the student health center. While I enjoyed having an active role in diagnosing patients, I missed developing personal connections with patients. With my experience as a Navy corpsman and what I have done at the university's health care center, I feel I would make an excellent addition to the PA profession. I have proven myself to be responsible and dedicated in my past health care employment positions. This sense of professionalism will only become greater as a PA.

If awarded a scholarship from the Veterans Caucus it would be applied to the debt that has accrued since starting graduate school. As you may know, graduate school and debt is a packaged-deal, providing a lot of stress in an already stressful environment. This scholarship would alleviate the stress of worrying about finances and allow me to focus on my studies.

I would like to thank the Veterans Caucus Scholarship Committee for this opportunity. I hope you give my application serious consideration.

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A main reason for my entrance into the medical field is a genuine desire to help others and to serve my community. I have a demonstrated commitment to community service: I served active duty in the army for five years, in the Kentucky National Guard for three years, and in a multitude of volunteer positions. My desire to become a physician assistant (PA) began while serving in the military as my unit's Combat Lifesaver (CLS). During my undergraduate education, my desire to become a PA grew as I learned more about the profession while hosting health science professions informational sessions, as the President of the University of Kentucky's Honors Biological Society.

Upon initial separation from active duty military, I recall the obstacles and anxiety faced when navigating the VA system to gain the medical and mental health attention necessary to effectively transition into civilian life. Since that time, and while serving as a squad leader in the Kentucky National Guard, I have talked to many current and transitioning soldiers who have been confronted with similar challenges. I am very aware of the mental health issues that affect our nation's warriors and recognize that mental health is a vital part of overall health. I have seen firsthand the substance abuse and poor life choices that can occur when mental issues and disorders are neglected and left untreated. My personal experiences and experiences with others in the military community make me especially empathetic to the veteran population and their struggles.

I have continued to serve my community during PA school by volunteering at the George Washington University healing clinic that provides healthcare services and an opportunity for students to connect with the local community. I also served as member of a Veteran's Work group with the SAAPA. In this group, I worked with two other PA students to develop a list of veteran resources and advocate for the importance of implementing veteran's health and mental health issues into PA program curricula. I have

a strong desire to continue to serve the veteran population and help ensure that they get the mental and healthcare they deserve.

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My professional goals are rooted from my value and belief system. I am a man of integrity, scholarship, perseverance and uplift. These are values I have used to guide me through my career and to help me live life in a respectful and caring manner. My desire to help others is unrelenting and my passion for this profession began over 15 years ago and has only evolved since then. I have been fortunate to work alongside medical professionals who have positively changed patient's lives during medical procedures or just a reassuring conversation. I know I have the drive and motivation to do the same. All my goals are applicable to the PA profession and living a life in a caring and fulfilling manner. I have done many jobs both in the navy and as a civilian, but none more fulfilling as the years I spent as a hospital corpsman. However, my potential was limited in how I could help patients. As a result, I needed to go back to school and be further educated which led me to the PA profession. I am also a divorced dad of two amazing boys who live exactly 7 hours and 37 minutes away. It is equally important for me to be a responsible father and be an active part of their lives. Financially, would help me ensure my personal life is functioning as well as my professional life. Striving in one area while the other is lacking would only create problems as I move forward.

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The desire to become a physician assistant (PA) did not come in a moment of blinding revelation, but as a result of various experiences. As I sat in a convoy in Afghanistan, I studied the gunner; he eagerly served; ready to defend his team. At that moment I looked inward and questioned my situation, contemplating servitude and fulfillment. The dissonance peaked. I decided I was ready to let go of serving in the Air Force (AF) to serve patients.

Though my interest in medicine sprung in high school, it was strengthened by volunteering, medical experience, and job shadowing. I wanted, however, a deeper understanding of medicine and patient-provider relationship. My experience showed me that I desire what a challenging PA career offers: patient care, variety, collaboration, a learning continuum and balance with other components of life.

I am dedicated to serve people and the profession. My goal is to provide primary medical care to underserved communities, military active duty, or veterans and contribute to the profession. Thus, I plan to provide job shadowing and preceptor opportunities and participate in community and/or PA professional organizations. This path allows me to continue to live by my core values: integrity, service, and excellence.

During my four years of service, my active duty spouse and I were not afforded joint spouse in the same state. Thus, I made the difficult decision to separate from the AF after my service commitment and am not eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill as a combat veteran. This scholarship would help finance tuition as we couldn't save enough money while supporting two households and serving country.

Regardless, we will continue to loyally serve wherever the AF plants us as it's our character. I appreciate your consideration and would be honored to be recognized by this prestigious scholarship.

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Opportunities and options motivated me to become a Physician Assistant (PA). The degree is a tool vital to my life's goal of helping others through strengthening communities. The profession's emphasis on providing underserved populations with access to quality care and the opportunities to work in a myriad of clinical settings solidified my choice to pursue a PA degree.

My background and training as a U.S. Coast Guard Officer has provided me with valuable life experience, readily applicable to my chosen field. I am a confident, adaptable, compassionate and decisive leader in high stress situations, tested by years of search and rescue cases, counter-narcotics operations and response to environmental and natural disasters. I invested the time to properly train my teams to accomplish their goals. I consistently served in positions such as Medical Action Officer and Health Promotion Coordinator, and led teams to deliver health care, train first responders, minimize occupational hazards and educate people on nutrition and exercise. My most recent jobs as an EMT and a Medical Assistant allowed me more exposure to emergency and primary care in the private sector, and I was able to complete required physical examinations for reservists to ensure that they were ready to deploy.

In my free time, I have engaged with diverse communities by teaching swim lessons, assisting at retirement homes and mentoring young people. I volunteered for international trips to bring aid and gain a better understanding of cultures other than my own. My work has taken me to unique settings and I have encountered many physician assistants who are providing health care in these settings; these individuals are having a positive impact on their respective communities. My goal is to acquire proficiency in evidenced-based medicine, thereby increasing access to quality health care for those in need.

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On August 7th, 2010, a bomb exploded outside my patrol base in Helmand Province wounding seven people and killing three. This moment sparked a "sea change" in my life; it opened my eyes and led me to consider answering a new calling. At the time I was a Marine ANGLICO team leader and Combat Lifesaver, so in addition to my leadership responsibilities I augmented a Navy Corpsman in his duties and performed them in his absence. This duty required advanced first-aid and live tissue training which is where I discovered my interest in medicine.

On the day of the explosion, I had just returned from an 18 hour patrol when a huge blast shook the ground and a huge plume of black smoke arose outside the perimeter. As we scrambled to head back out and investigate the blast, casualties began showing up to the gate of the patrol base. I knelt on an old man's gushing leg wound to apply pressure as I radioed the casualty evacuation report; transmitting our location, number of wounded, and a description of the injuries. I applied a tourniquet, stuffed the gash with gauze from my med bag, and got another Marine to keep pressure while I assisted the other medics with the other casualties until the CASEVAC helicopters called landed.

Experiences like that, treating casualties on that day and others, peaked my interest in medicine and opened my eyes to a whole new set of possibilities. Shortly thereafter I began looking into careers in medicine and learned about the Physician Assistant field. I was intrigued by its origin; a program intended to bring veterans emerging from the Vietnam War into the medical field. The more I researched, the more it seemed that becoming a PA was the natural culmination of all my previous experiences.

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I have always wanted to make a difference and believed strongly in community service. It started with serving in the US Marine Corps. Despite having a very successful career as a governmental accountant and being involved in many volunteer activities, I felt my life was not in alignment with my life's mission. At age 40, I went back to school. Over the past 10 years, I completed the basic prerequisites for a healthcare degree, obtained an RN license, built up my direct patient care hours and got into a PA program with a mission that resonated with me. The Stanford Primary Care Associate Program emphasizes providing primary care to underserved populations in rural communities.

Due to my experience with a mentally ill family member, my particular interest has always been mental health as evidenced by my volunteer activity. So naturally, I gravitated towards mental health nursing. My work as a psychiatric nurse led to my working in the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. It was there, that I found I could make a real difference.

My most rewarding work in that capacity was working with veterans that had encountered the criminal justice system. Quite often, mental health issues were a significant contributor to their getting in trouble with the law. While so many in the criminal justice system are beyond help, that was not the case with veterans. Vets could be motivated to summon the self discipline they acquired in the military. They could be guided to recall the memories of how they overcame the many obstacles they encountered during their time in service. With the right treatment interventions and being put in touch with VA resources, they could redirect their lives.

As a PA, I hope to have a greater impact with the underserved mental health and corrections populations.

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Prior to beginning my transition into the physician assistant profession in summer 2012, I was an active duty U.S. Army Special Forces medic until I retired to pursue my goal of becoming a physician assistant. After 9/11, I deployed as an operational detachment medic for 1st Special Forces Group in support of Operation Enduring Freedom to the Philippines. I have subsequently deployed on five combat deployments as a medic within the U.S. Army Special Operations Command to Iraq, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and the Arabian Peninsula. Serving as an independent medical provider and caring for our nation's special operations soldiers was incredibly professionally rewarding, and an experience from which I am eternally grateful.

After 20 years of military service, I retired from active duty in order to attend the University of Washington and transition my career of service to the physician assistant profession. Practicing a P.A. is an intellectually challenging career that provides opportunities to directly serve my local community in the most meaningful and compassionate ways. A scholarship from the AAPA veterans caucus, including the Chan-Pagett scholarship, would support my goal of becoming a P.A. by assisting with the expense of equipment, reference material, and travel expenses incurred during my clinical year of training.

It is an exciting time in the history of healthcare, and I strongly believe that physician assistants will be the critical enablers that help our communities develop sustainable systems, expand access to care, and provide quality primary care to patients. Physician assistants have tremendous potential to be key team members in patient-centered healthcare models, and the opportunities to serve patients and our communities will be limitless. I am humbled to have the opportunity and responsibility to continue my career of service in such a critically important role.

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At the time I was in High School, nobody in my family had a college degree. I had average grades in high school, and my father made my options clear: join the military or pay rent. Given these options, I signed up for the submarine fleet and left a month after graduation. I had always planned on using my GI Bill money to attend college, but until I attended Navy Dive School, I did not know what I wanted to study. As soon as we covered Dive Medicine and vascular injuries, I knew I wanted to learn more medicine.

In 2003 I left the navy to pursue my education. Due to my prior performance in school I started at the bottom. First, as an Ocean Lifeguard, then an EMT, and shortly after, in 2009, I was accepted to nursing school at San Diego State University. I was happy to have a chance to be a RN, but I was attracted to the autonomy and scope of practice of physician assistants. I knew the pre-requisites were similar and I needed to decide which path would better suit me. I was forced to make a decision: finish RN school, or switch to a Kinesiology degree and hope that I could get into PA school after graduation. I respectfully declined my seat in nursing school and switched my major.

In 2012, I graduated Magna Cum Laude and minored in Psychology. Thanks to MEDEX, I was given the opportunity to train as a PA in 2013 and I couldn't be happier with my decision. If given a scholarship from AAPA I would use the money for clinical books and unexpected travel costs of my clinical rotations next year. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to apply and considering me for this scholarship.

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I am becoming an Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant (PA) with the goal of joining the active component of the Army or the Air Force. I am currently attending the UC Davis PA program, and have been a member of CA Army National Guard since 2012. I am a current member of SEMPA and after my graduation in September 2014, I am seeing an NCCPA Certificate of Added Qualifications in Emergency Medicine.

I initially joined the Army Reserve in 1998 to become a Medical Specialist. Soon after, I got commissioned as a Medical Service Corps officer, and specialized in healthcare information systems. In 2009, I was deployed to Joint Base Balad, Iraq, to work in medical logistics. During my off-duty hours, I volunteered over 500 hours as a medic on the floor of Balad's Air Force Theater Hospital.

There, I assisted with the care of hundreds of coalition forces, contractors, third country nationals, detainees, and local villagers. After more than six months of direct exposure to trauma care in a combat zone, I knew that the military PA profession is where I belong.

I have native fluency in English, French and Persian, and will be a good candidate for the Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC), the U.S. Army Africa (USARAF), or even the Air Force International Health Specialist (IHS) program.

My eligibility for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits was only for one year and ended in June 2013. Ever since, I have been using student loans and my savings to pay for school. The Veterans Caucus Scholarship will be entirely used towards tuition and living expenses. I am confident that with my dedication and experience I will be a strong candidate for your scholarship program and thank you for your support.

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To me, becoming a PA is an extension of my service in the Air Force. During my clinical experiences I always try to remember that I am there to serve the patient's needs. My desire to serve also motivates me to practice in primary care after graduation because that is where I see the greatest need. Primary care is where I can do the most good for the most number of patients.

Before I started PA school, I studied public health while still in the Air Force. It was during these studies, while writing about physician maldistribution, that I first really learned about the PA profession and its unique role in relieving physician shortages. This is also when I became passionate about primary care.

Furthermore, I had the opportunity to immerse myself in health policy and health reform during an internship this past summer. As a member of an inter-professional leadership and advocacy course, I worked with a medical student at a local non-profit that coaches primary care practices to become Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH). We produced a report for state-level leaders and policymakers on the impact of the Affordable Care Act in Colorado and how practices and the state can meet the increased patient demand. From this internship I was able to get an Op-Ed published in the Denver Post advocating for PCMH. What I learned furthered my resolve to practice in primary care and I have since joined Primary Care Progress.

Whether I receive a scholarship or not, I am committed to primary care; but a scholarship will make that road easier to take. I plan to continue my advocacy for both primary care and the PA profession. The future is bright for PAs and I think veteran PAs have a unique perspective and obligation to lead.

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Throughout my training as a SEAL, I was always very interested in diving physiology and the extensive combat medicine that were part of our curriculum. In combat, I was impressed with how medical knowledge and procedure could save lives that would otherwise be lost. While recovering from my own injuries, I was attended by a Physician Assistant who was very skilled, knowledgeable, and had an unforgettably pleasant bedside manner. She confidently managed all aspects of my care, from personally changing my dressings to ordering and performing diagnostic tests. She seemed to have significant autonomy and enjoy her job. With the rigorous deployment schedule's toll on family life and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan coming to an end, I decided to look for a new career about which I was equally passionate. PA education has proved to be both challenging and rewarding. Though the tools and techniques are different, the mission remains the same: saving and improving lives. Upon graduation I intend to practice locally in a family, emergency, or surgical setting and spend time with my family. For the future, I am considering working for the VA hospital or in a military reserve capacity as a PA to give back to our community. The transition from military to civilian life has also been very challenging. With the intense pace of the PA program, lack of salary, and a wife and three young children to help support, expenditures often exceed income. My family and I would be truly grateful and appreciative of any assistance that your scholarship could offer us. Your generosity would bring our family a significant measure of security and peace of mind as we count down the months to graduation.

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There were many times throughout my life where I was scared and wondered if I was making the right decisions. Whenever moments of doubt would arise I would remember a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt, "You gain Strength, Courage, and Confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do." I continue to take life one day, one

obstacle at a time. Every obstacle I have faced has brought me one step closer to my ultimate goal of becoming a physician assistant. Ever since I can remember, I have wanted to help those in need. I started my path taking care of my grandfather, becoming a lifeguard in high school, joining the Navy as a hospital corpsman, working as medical assistant and then working on studies in clinical research. These experiences have strengthened my love for the health care field.

Being accepted into a physician assistant program was the beginning of an amazing new challenging chapter in my life. I am truly honored to hold up a tradition where a hospital corpsman can utilize years of hard work and training. Using this scholarship toward the cost of tuition, books, and supplies would help me in being able to afford to participate in our programs medical mission trip to Belize.

The military was the ultimate test of character for me; through which I gained self-confidence, learned about honor and respect, and became courageous. It has prepared me for the rigorous schedule of the physician assistant program. Being awarded a scholarship would truly be an honor. Thank you for your consideration.

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I was born and raised in a small town in Nebraska. I could count the number of times on one hand that I had been to the doctor by the time I graduated high school, and most of those visits were for school physicals or immunizations. I have seen first hand the effects that lack of medical care availability can have on families and communities. In places like the one where I grew up, you were raised to think that you did not need medical care unless you were ill. I want to help communities see differently. My father went so long without a physical that he didn't realize he had high blood pressure until the day he had a stroke. If he had had access to routine medical care and screening, that may not have happened. I want to help change the way people view medical care, and becoming a Physician Assistant is the perfect way for me to do that. I'll be able to work alongside a group of people with a common goal, as a team. I want people to understand that it's ok to see your provider every year even if nothing is currently wrong! The flexibility that becoming a PA will give me to have a family and a fulfilling career is invaluable. From the moment I graduated from radiographer school in 2008 and began working with PA's, I knew it was my new goal. I've not stopped working for it since! Physician Assistants have the ability to play important roles in the patient care process, while at the same time having the flexibility to spend extra time with patients or their families if necessary. This role is the perfect one for me in the healthcare field.

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I want to be a PA because it's a profession with the perfect mix of humility, critical thinking, dedication, selfless service, and science. In 2005, Captain Jeff Rodieck, PA-C, sat me down and asked what my plans were for the future. I said I wanted to be a high school history teacher, he said I should become a PA. Later that evening I wrote myself a note that said, "Become a PA. You'll be good at it." That note still resides in my memory box and now I am only four short months away from achieving that dream.

As an Army medic I loved working with my hands, learning about anatomy and physiology, diagnosis and treating my fellow soldiers, and applying those critical thinking skills I am still developing. Being a PA requires a great deal of personal sacrifice and dedication to others. It's a profession born of necessity that continues to rise to the challenges of an ever developing healthcare system. My long term goals are to teach future PAs the lessons I have learned over time and embrace them as our future.

The scholarship I receive will once again go toward offsetting the cost for some of my classmates and me to attend the IMPACT conference in Boston. By that time, I will have graduated, but our junior class is thirsty for the opportunity to experience the best PA conference in the world. I am honored to assist in financing that trip. Last year, without the Veterans Caucus scholarship I and three classmates would not have been able to attend. Seeing the enthusiasm and comradely that developed from our short trip to Washington D.C. there is only one thing I can think to do with the funds.

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As a former US Army Special Forces Medical Sergeant, I am applying for the Chan-Padgett Special Forces/Veterans Caucus Scholarship. I intend to use this to cover education expenses and help support my family while I continue my medical education.

My father first introduced me to rural medicine on our family dairy farm in Pennsylvania. It was an additional duty for a jack-of-all-trades farmer, gained from a mix of book learning, gleanings from actual veterinarians, and the use of I've-always-done-it-this-way reasoning. Most of it was indelicate, messy and field-expedient, but my involvement with caring for our animals planted roots for my growth toward becoming a healthcare provider in rural CO.

A native of Gunnison, CO, my wife shares my desire to live and work in the mountains, close to her parents who still reside in Gunnison. I am eager to learn to provide long term primary care and preventive medicine practices in a small town setting like Gunnison, where provider shortages have made recent headlines and create an urgent need for PAs. By joining the local Search and Rescue team, I can also use my military Special Forces medical training and my recently completed Wilderness First Responder training to provide care in demanding emergency situations.

The greater autonomy, lack of resources and longer distances to definitive care create special challenges for rural practice that I can competently address. First, I know how to function on a medical team, and, in more austere environments, establish and use a support network when confronted with medical problems beyond my skill level. Second, I know how to evaluate prehospital medical scenarios and plan for likely illnesses and injuries. Lastly, I can make difficult decisions and improvise solutions or treatments in stressful situations.

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In 2008, after returning home from OIF, I knew continuing a life of purpose was my prioritized goal. I decided to become a Physician Assistant with hopes of continually training military and law enforcement throughout the years. This will allow me to somewhat "hang up" my offense-based military role but continue to share my gained knowledge with the future of America's defense forces. I stayed in the Marine Reserve Forces until 2011 (formally discharged as E-5), while continuing my formal education and military combat casualty care experiences. In 2012, I worked in my local Emergency Department and gained full appreciation for the level of medical care needed in the civilian sector as well. I hope to continue working full-time in Emergency department settings as a PA, but remain involved in a local DOD training facility (Direct Action Resource Center). I was extremely blessed throughout my military service. If I can share even part of my experience/knowledge with others, lives will be saved and families will remain intact. Besides the trauma care aspect, I also have developed a passion for furthering research/outreach concerning Post Traumatic Stress Disorders. Two of my Marines took their own lives within months of each other, and we realized that current diagnostics/treatment is far lacking in the wide spectrum of PTSD.

In order for me to reach this first step, becoming a PA, I am currently relying on large student loan debts and 60% of the GI bill (only accounts for overseas deployments). My wife works full time, but our income is only enough to cover living expenses and mortgage payments. ANY amount of financial assistance received will be considered a blessing towards lowering my school debt. THANK YOU for any considerations given on my behalf.

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I enlisted in the Marine Corps intending on becoming a career Marine. During my time as a Special Operations Reconnaissance Marine, I was fortunate to work alongside Navy Corpsmen whose commitment to mission success was overshadowed by their commitment to patient care, knowledge of medicine, and education. One such Corpsman, who I admired and respected, died in combat. After his death, I left what I thought would be a life-long career in the Marine Corps to become a Paramedic in hopes of emulating my dear friend.

After being honorably discharged I was on my way to becoming a licensed paramedic. I worked in the Boston area until I was recruited by the State Department to work in the area of high-threat protection for US Diplomats abroad in Iraq and the West Bank. I was able to work with and shadow Physician Assistants, which motivated me to expand my scope of practice. Working full time I began taking courses to complete my Bachelor's Degree.

My wife Tania and I married in November of 2008, and our daughter Falyn was born shortly thereafter. With the support of my wife, I instituted a plan to become a Physician Assistant, intending to complete the required prerequisites and apply for a Physician Assistants Program by 2013. Due to the sudden, unexpected death of my wife, I found myself needing to fast track this plan for the future of my family. I resigned as a diplomat for the Department of State, and applied to Franklin Pierce's Physician Assistant Program where I was accepted to the class of 2014. I am currently enrolled into the Physician Assistant Program while raising my daughter and grieving the loss of my wife. I know that despite the challenges I face, I will achieve my goal of becoming a Physician Assistant. It is my hope to someday work as a Primary Care Provider for the Veteran's Administration to help returning Veterans transition to civilian life.

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The why?

I believe that a great avenue to gaining understanding of my Community is through service. After secondary school I hopped into the trenches between the homeland and a ubiquitous enemy, neither of whom I fully understood! "Plan A" out of school was medicine, but the priority was our national security. A decade of great experiences later, I am no longer an individual out to save the world. A Golden Knight with endless safety, security, and provisions for all does not exist, and where is the satisfaction in that? I now have this to say; a person can only contribute to a Community with her or his expertise, and together, a Community can pull itself up or do the opposite.

I treated wounds as a kid, ran with the ambulance and in the ER as a young teen, and collaterally operated as a combat medic during my active duty years. I am fortunate as the need for my passion is great! There is only one way to guarantee excellent healthcare in our communities, by selecting and encouraging dedicated, intelligent, and compassionate people for the position. A MPAS degree will permit me to gain the knowledge to serve and lead my Community to healthier lives. My plan is to go

where the need is greatest, and to keep my eyes open. I am thankful that before my fourth decade, I have found personal satisfaction in what I do every day. If I receive a scholarship, it will be used to pay the debt I have accrued to pay for my MPAS.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

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As a young child, out of sheer curiosity, I spent countless hours examining the pages of advanced medical textbooks, observing portraits of doctors and other health care providers who exhibited a deep sense of passion and satisfaction for their lives. Fascinated by the pictures of humanitarian healers in third-world countries along with detailed images of medical and surgical procedures, I felt an instant connection to the field of medicine.

During my early college years, I began working various positions such as nurse tech, nurse aid and phlebotomist in hospitals in order to immerse myself in the healthcare environment. My enthusiasm towards the field of medicine began to grow considerably year after year. After completing my first Bachelor's degree in Health Science, I spent a couple of years pursuing entrance into physician assistant programs. Unfortunately, at that time, the odds appeared to not be in my favor. Faced with the challenge of having to re-evaluate my career goals during this time, I decided to pursue an accelerated Bachelor's degree in nursing. The experiences that I've gained as a registered nurse have prepared me immensely for the challenges of a physician assistant program. My career as a registered nurse has allowed me to reach higher levels of knowledge and leadership in the field of healthcare. I've had the privilege of providing direct patient care to highly acute and complex populations at University of Michigan. I have also embarked on a journey with the United States Navy Reserve as a registered nurse, which has allowed me opportunities to provide high quality healthcare within and outside of the country. Although, I have gained much success in the field of nursing, my desire to practice as a physician assistant remains my ultimate goal.

Seeking higher levels of education has allowed me to strengthen my academic credentials. After completing almost two semesters of graduate school working towards a degree as a nurse practitioner, there remained a missing component; the medical model of education. I interact closely with physician assistants on a daily basis and have a firm understanding of their role as healthcare providers. With a broad scope of practice and career flexibility, I am confident the physician assistant profession will continue to challenge and stimulate my interests in the field of medicine while allowing time for life outside of a career.

Through the years, I've received nothing but continued support and encouragement from my family and professional colleagues. These individuals have always held me to a higher level and continually motivate me to further my education as physician assistant despite being turned away multiple times. The strength and experience that I have acquired over the past two years has prepared me for the rigor of a graduate level medical program. My academic success has strengthened and I possess a deep sense of professional integrity and compassion. At this time, I am fully prepared to set aside my career as a registered nurse to focus entirely on my preparation as a physician assistant.

If awarded this scholarship, the funds would contribute to ever increasing tuition fees, helping to ease the burden of financial debt; allowing me to focus entirely on my education.

Thank you for your consideration. God Bless America!

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I remember going to my local clinic as a child, where the wait for a school checkup could take up to a full day. Ignorant to the financial burden this mandatory visit had on my father, I whined and fidgeted in hopes that my behavior would expedite the process. Everyone had questions in English my dad could barely understand. Each visit was filled with fear of strangers with cold instruments probing without warning, but that was the only facility my father could afford. The lack of health insurance, education and cultural differences all contributed to the minimal health care my siblings and I received.

At the age of seventeen, I signed up with the Army NG to alleviate the burden of tuition. My experience abroad highlighted an even greater disparity in healthcare among the Iraqi people. Unlike other women my age, at twenty-one, my priorities were well defined and included a more global understanding of society and our individual roles in shaping it.

My purpose became clearer while volunteering in the Emergency Room. There, I found myself speaking to individuals with stories similar to that of my childhood. I can still remember the pregnant Hispanic female complaining of lower abdominal pain and vaginal bleeding. She had a miscarriage that could've been avoided with routine prenatal care.

Through my experiences I have learned the importance of healthcare and education in under-served communities. During my first semester in PA school, I have achieved a 3.6 GPA while being a member of various organizations and mentoring prospective PA students as a member of the PA club. I believe my life experiences, commitment to society, and desire to learn are all vital assets to the profession. I hope to improve the lives of those underserved by providing the care and empathy I would have wanted.

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After a rather difficult childhood, I have worked incredibly hard and devoted all of my time to excelling at everything I do. I served in the military, as a Hospital Corpsman, so that I could better myself and be someone my siblings could look up to. My time in the service showed me that there was so much more I could do and challenged me to achieve my full potential. Service during combat provided an experience unlike anything else I have experienced. During my first deployment to Iraq, a young Marine was brought into the field hospital I was working in after he was hit with shrapnel from an explosion during a convoy. I vividly remember the fear and uncertainty on that Marine's face, but he trusted us to take care of him. He trusted me and, as that trust grew, the fear and uncertainty faded. We successfully removed the shrapnel and got him to a higher level of care ultimately saving his life. It was at that moment I knew I was in the right field. I made a decision to fulfill my contract with the Navy and go back to school. While completing my bachelors, I worked part-time in the emergency department of a local hospital. Working in the emergency field reminded me of my time in the military; never being able to predict what would come through the door. I worked closely with the physician assistants in my department and witnessed their passion towards helping others, the same quality I see in myself. It was then that I knew I was going to become a physician assistant. I applied, and was accepted, to George Washington University. The money offered by this scholarship will be used towards my tuition, helping me to one day help others.

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I have always wanted to work in health care, I wanted to help, I wanted to matter. I joined the Navy in 2001 knowing that this prestigious organization would lead me here. As a Hospital Corpsman I found myself where I belonged, surrounded by medical professionals eager to teach and guide me on my path. I attended school and attained my AA while enlisted. My time in the Navy came to an end in 2009, at which point I lunged full force into my educational goals. I finished my BSHS within the first year of my civilian life. Soon after I began focusing on completing prerequisites for PA Programs while maintaining a full-time job as a Health Technician for the Naval Hospital.

In the process I have managed to remain a loyal, supportive and encouraging wife to my husband who continues to serve our country. I have been a devoted and loving mother to my 2 year-old twin daughters. All while managing to succeed in my program, resulting in selection for the Deans List all four quarters of my didactic year. I have been a devoted, determined, and focused student continuing to dedicate all my efforts at performing well not only in the program but in my future career as a PA.

With the scholarship money I plan on paying back school loans that I have inevitably accumulated in the process. The military has provided me with a life full of opportunity, I am forever grateful to the military for providing me the financial support as well as being a guiding light in my ever-evolving career. I look forward to one day providing health services to our underserved population of military veterans.

Thank you for affording me and other veterans this wonderful opportunity.

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It was during my first deployment of a 15-month tour in Iraq when I realized I wanted to become a Physician Assistant. I was honored to be “the medic” on numerous patrols, flights, or medical missions, but I wasn’t successful alone. I will always remember the people who took the time to teach me the essential life-saving skills prior to every mission: the PA’s. I will never forget their persistence in teaching, incomparable patience, their belief in me, their leadership, and their overall ability to stay calm under pressure. I can honestly say that many of my patients are here today because several PA’s did exactly that. I am also here today because many PA’s and nurses believed in me to be exactly where I am: en route to becoming a Physician Assistant.

I am currently living my dream as a mother of two young boys (1 and 2.5 years). I am a wife to a current PA in the US Army who inspires me every day to be the best person and PA I can be through his example. As one of nine siblings, I am the first person to attend college in my family. Lastly, I am the first of my cohort of peers and former military peers to attend a PA program. I continually strive to be a great example of where hard work, patience, and persistence can get you. I have made it my personal mission to continue to guide my former Soldiers and combat medics into becoming PA’s, and so far I have been successful in one, with the hopes of more. This scholarship will help my family financially, and enable me to “pay it forward”, as many of my former PA’s have done for me.

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As a child growing up in Trinidad and Tobago, all I ever wanted to do was practice medicine. I have always been fascinated with this field and the ability it has to impact someone’s life. Upon arriving in the United States, I joined the army as a medic with hopes of continuing my education and beginning my healthcare career. As part of my initial assignment, I was deployed to Iraq. I worked under the supervision of several PAs and saw firsthand the difference they made treating the wounded and sick at

a level I could not as a medic. It was this life changing experience that led to my decision on becoming a PA.

While I am no longer in the service, there is currently a huge need for PAs to help fill the healthcare shortage, especially in medically underserved communities. This is an issue I take to heart. I have many family and friends that are classified as medically underserved. I have also spent time volunteering at medically underserved clinics in the Dallas metro area and the experience was an eye opener about the difficulties that many of these patients face and the severity of this problem. It gives me great joy and a deeply felt sense of fulfillment helping the underserved thus becoming a PA will provide me with the ability and capacity to serve these communities on a much larger scale.

If selected as a scholarship recipient, the money will be used to offset tuition and living expenses. I have currently exhausted most of my Montgomery GI bill funding and will be relying entirely on student loans to pay for my tuition and living expenses until I graduate.

Thank you for considering my scholarship application.

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Descending the dark steps into the basement of my family's cold, rented, Long Island duplex, I search for the one source of light in the room. A small fluorescent lamp is the only thing that illuminates the figure crouched over a pile of books. I quietly approach this stress-wracked person as he runs his highlighter-covered fingers through his prematurely balding head of hair. "Daddy", I say, as I climb up into his lap, "Can I color in your skeleton book?" "Ah, I'm sorry June Bug, I'm studying that one for a big test I have tomorrow. How about after I make a good grade, huh?"

This is the vision and memory I have of what it means to attend a Physician's Assistant program. When I was six years old my father uprooted our little southern family to attend P.A. school near the "Big Apple" in order to achieve his dream of becoming a medical officer in the Air Force.

Through hard work he achieved that dream and in 2008 my family's world came a little unraveled, when my father received deployment orders to the war in Afghanistan because his skills were needed. During his time in Afghanistan my father and I exchanged numerous emails and heart-to-heart discussions which led me to accept the reality of where my heart was leading me- toward a career as a physician assistant.

It is my wish to serve our community of veterans, just as my father has done and upon graduating from the UCPA program I hope to commit myself to working in the Veteran's Affairs healthcare system. I have had the privilege of living with a P.A. who served his country for most of my life, which means I fully understand what the job entails and what it takes to succeed.

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Why do I want to be a Physician Assistant? The road to that decision has been long and winding, influenced and supported by many people, experiences, and jobs. My career choice was not a simple one. I grew up fast after my father passed away when I was in the eighth grade. I had responsibilities that most people my age did not have. My mother supported all of my dreams while working hard as a single parent. I graduated and attended Georgia State University with a major in music. That road turned, and I ended up with my own freight company. Finding this unsatisfying, I moved on to home

improvement and eventually working for Fayette Fire Services. Here I felt God led me to help others as a paramedic. This road led to working in the ER at Piedmont –Fayette Hospital that guided me onto my desire to learn and do more. I have always believed in learning and being the best at whatever I chose to put my soul into. Even though I have a lifetime of experiences and may be considered “older”, I feel that learning, growing, and helping others has no age barrier. I am excited to be on the journey to be a PA. I have two sons in college right now, and I am the example that you are never too old to achieve the dreams and plans in your life. My wife is supporting our family financially, and this scholarship money would help offset the financial burden of PA school. Gail Devers says, “Keep your dreams alive. Understand to achieve anything requires faith and belief in yourself, vision, hard work, determination, and dedication. ” I am living this quote for all the days I am blessed to be on this earth.

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My interest in chemistry and biology was quite higher than most kids during my childhood. I remember studying the field of biology and becoming overwhelmingly interested in it. From a young age, I have been exposed to my grandfather’s Parkinson’s disease. Personal experience and taking pre-medical classes have initially sparked my interest in medicine.

I always want to bring changes into my community and provide better quality service to people. This desire initiated me to volunteer at various fields of medicine including Bellevue Hospital where I was a pharmacy technician and at VA hospital for VIST department (visual impairment services) where as a social worker my job was to provide support and supplies to the veterans who lost their vision due to war events. Moreover, I spent plenty of hours volunteering at my husband’s Fort Drum unit events. However, the most valuable and influential experience of my life was shadowing the physician assistant at Continental Medical Group. I had a unique opportunity to explore the medical field and fully understand the vital role of a physician assistant. It is truly amazing how much a physician assistant can do to help patients to fight their illness and improve health condition starting from basic diagnosis, treatment plans and ending with a psychological support. I always knew that my mission was to help people. I observed the power of human support and medical knowledge especially when I dealt with cancer patients. There is no better enjoyment and reward for me than seeing people who were sick get better. My dedication to work and desire to assist patients reconfirmed my goal to become a physician assistant.

My determination and passion towards becoming a physician assistant will result in contribution to well-being of humans. I believe that my experience in the hospital gave me the motivation and commitment to withstand demanding tasks and will enable me to succeed as a valuable and continuously growing member of the limitless medical world. At Touro College, I learned how to be an excellent student due to great support from faculty and school representatives. I aim to always do my best in all areas of my potential, and try to help people as much as possible. Leo F. Buscaglia once said, “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

I know that receiving financial aid in the form of a scholarship towards completion of the Physician Assistant program at Touro College will help me to achieve and get this much closer to my career goals. Furthermore, a scholarship would tremendously assist me in concentrating on my studies and volunteer work during the program because it would reduce stress levels associated with finances and family situations. I am conscientious, dedicated and always give one hundred per cent to everything I do. I would gladly accept and relish the opportunity of a scholarship.

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