

Enlisting in the USAF at the age of seventeen was surprisingly easy. The combination of naivety and wanderlust made signing on the dotted line an exciting task rather than a daunting one. My travels were limited to Texas and Afghanistan but my experiences were vast. My time spent on Lackland AFB allowed me to experience both inpatient and outpatient care. Then, my 6 month deployment to Afghanistan immersed me in emergency and surgical medicine. It also exposed me to the harsh realities of war and tyranny. I witnessed, first-hand, how oppressed the women were and a growing shame emerged as I realized that only thing preventing me from going to college was my fear of failure. Meanwhile, the women I treated every day had no such option. I began to wonder if the world of academia that I had so vehemently avoided was worth pursuing. When it came time to enlist or graciously accept my honorable discharge I made one of the hardest decisions I have ever made; I left a steady career with wonderful people in order to better myself. Unlike my decision four years prior, I was not at all confident. I was terrified. The resulting years of pre and post graduate studies have proved difficult, as I knew they would, but I'm finding that drawing on my previous experiences as a medic have helped to motivate and reassure me. I tell myself that grad school is doable and that the end result of becoming a certified Physician Assistant is worth every struggle. As I embark on my final year, I look forward to the day when I can put both experiences (military and civilian) to work. Specifically, I'm looking forward to contributing to humanitarian missions, ideally, in the very country that convinced me I needed to change ventures.

I entered the military in the year 2000. During the fourth year of my ten year military experience, I had the opportunity to serve on a guided missile cruiser called the USS Bunker Hill. While stationed there I was exposed to direct patient care for the first time performing basic exams, triage, and medical procedures. It became immediately clear to me that I had a deep seated passion for medicine. Three years later I became an Independent Duty Corpsman (IDC). I served in that capacity for four years as primary care medical provider with prescription and minor surgical privileges. My experience onboard the amphibious assault craft USS Juneau provided me the opportunity to practice and apply IDC clinical skills in diagnosis and treatment daily. My time as an IDC crystallized my desire and determination to become a Physician Assistant, and ultimately to work in isolated regions where medical resources are scarce and in high demand. While underway I had to rely heavily on my hands and traditional diagnostic instruments given the absence of modern medical technology on Naval warships. There was a high need for medical services in some of the difficult environments I practiced in, including at sea, at isolated ports abroad, in small villages and at isolated military clinics. I feel in these environments we become better clinicians because we are pushed to take on more complex cases. The guidance of a physician was often crucial in these situations, even if only by phone or email. That process, I believe, somewhat mimics the PA/doctor relationship. I believe that my Navy experience has provided me with insight and practical experience that has guided me towards making an informed decision to enter the profession. The most significant challenge to achieving this end is the cost of tuition.

When I enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2003 as a combat medic, I knew my life was going

to be changed forever. I accurately predicted some of the lessons I would learn, such as an attention to small details and an ability to work as a vital member of a team. However, I would never have envisioned just how drastic a change my career path was going to take after my experiences as a U.S. Army medic deployed to multiple tours of combat.

As an Army medic, I had the pleasure of treating some of the most appreciative patients I have ever encountered. From routine cold and flu symptoms to traumatic amputations, these soldiers looked to the healthcare team for the best medical care we were capable of providing them. I was proud to carry out the medical orders and directions given, but I knew one day I would be the person responsible for formulating the patients treatment, procedures, and prescriptions.

Once finished with my enlistment, I exited the military with a tenacity to accomplish my goal of becoming a PA. In addition to being a full time student, I also volunteered as a mentor for foster children and worked for a team of neurologists. I was able to witness firsthand the incredible relationship of a physician and a PA. Our PAs served as crucial members of the healthcare team and were treated as such.

I take great joy in the fact that the PA profession started with a group of military medics who came home from combat with the experiences necessary to transition from medic to PA; I strive to carry on that same tradition upon my completion of the Yale University PA Program. Veterans from all walks of life make for a wonderful addition to the student body of any PA program given their strong work ethic and dedication to excellence. It would be a great honor to be chosen as a recipient of a Veterans Caucus scholarship; this award will be a great help to me so that I may further my professional and educational goals.

My passion for medicine began during the sweltering chaotic summer of 2006 in Yusifiyah, Iraq. As an infantryman in the aptly named "Triangle of Death", injury and illness were unwelcome companions. On our small forward operating base in the most dangerous country in the world, there was one man who led the battle against all of the ailments suffered by US troops, Iraqi civilians, and even insurgents. This man was hours away from operating rooms, surgeons, and specialists. This man handled everything from allergies to amputations, from gastrointestinal distress to gunshot wounds, from toothaches to multi-traumas. This man was a physician assistant.

This was my first exposure to the profession that I now know is my destiny. The PA was the most versatile health care provider I'd ever seen. He was a medical action hero. He'd seen it all, he'd done it all, and he was respected by all who knew him. The more I researched the role of the PA the more I fell in love with the dream of becoming one myself. After experiencing the tragedies of war, I knew I wanted to do something to *help* people, to make a real difference in people's lives, and to alleviate *suffering*.

I am now half way through my PA education. I am constantly humbled by the vast depths of knowledge required to understand the art of healing; yet I grow more hungry for this knowledge every day. I strive to be the best practitioner possible for my patients. I will be applying for post-graduate PA residencies in

emergency medicine this year. With the help of this scholarship I hope to expand my education in the field I've grown to love, and use that education to better serve my future patients in their time of need.

I am not normal. I am unconventional. I am unlike any candidate you've ever seen. I began my adult life with no intention of becoming a medical practitioner. My first interest was reading suspense novels by Michael Creighton and Robin Cook, which led to an appreciation for critical thinking and problem solving. From there, I developed a fascination with the sciences. I began college in the fall of 2000 with a focus on the sciences. I wanted to get an education and considered pursuing a career in Engineering. After a dismal first semester, I went home with my head hung low, contemplating leaving college. I sought guidance from the father of one of my best friends from high school, Mr. Michael Zurn. He was also an associate pastor at a church in town. He talked with me about having a purpose in one's life. As a Christian, he drew his purpose from the teachings of the Bible, and the most central teaching being to serve God and your fellow man. This resonated within me and gave me a purpose I was previously lacking. I decided that the most functional application for me to serve God would be in a career that would serve the needs of my fellow man, at the hour of their greatest need: illness or injury. I returned to school with a laser-like focus on graduating and pursuing a career in medicine. I had found my purpose and passion, but I soon learned that it took more than that.

After three years in college charged to a credit card I could not pay, I was forced to take a hiatus and work my way back to graduation. It took me two years of working 80+ hours per week to pay off over \$22,000, but I eventually went back to school. I found a five month intensive training program that would certify me as an NREMT-Basic. After becoming an EMT, I found a job right away working as an ocean rescue medical provider which allowed me to feel like I was using the strengths God gave me to serve others. As much as I enjoyed this, I still wasn't satisfied. I needed to get back in school and find my path in medicine. I again sought the counsel of Mr. Zurn. He showed me that military service serves my country and gives me the tools I need to finish what I started.

After researching careers in the military, I enlisted in the United States Army to be a Special Forces Medical Sergeant. Since then, I have successfully assisted mothers with their deliveries in austere environments, including my own son and daughter. I have intubated and started 2 large bore IV's on a multiple trauma victim, while receiving enemy gunfire and rocket attack, using my body and armor as a shield. I have led the training of a support medical staff that would later be an extension of my medical capabilities on the battlefields overseas. My training and experience in the Army instilled confidence in my abilities, perseverance in the face of adversity and dedication to both the mission and the men around me. Most importantly, I was able to see what the true calling of a Physician Assistant is and should be - an extension of a doctor's medical practice. Just as I was an extension of my command Surgeon's medical practice on the battlefield, I will be a PA that is an extension of a family practice or hospital in an underserved community. I am also researching and developing a new ACLS treatment algorithm for the pre-hospital management of stroke patients, and plan to publish my results when complete.

What specifically drew me to becoming a Physician Assistant was a mentor I worked beside during an internship with the military. I worked under Major Gary Reedy, MD, at Martin Army Community Hospital on Ft. Benning for 15 days, assessing and treating patients. It was at that time I realized the essence of modern medical practice in the PA/Physician tandem and I see myself in that partnership after program completion. I aspire to become the most qualified PA that I can be, and I'm enlisting the best institution the United States has to offer to complete that

task. I intend on using my career in medicine not only to serve people in medical practice, but to extend the scientific body of knowledge through research with competence, leadership and faith. It is my honor to be considered for the Chan-Padgett Scholarship for 2015-2016.

My primary motivation for becoming a physician assistant comes from my personal belief that I should use my talents to help others. I developed this belief through my upbringing in the church and my family. I was encouraged to explore the world around me with an open mind and an open heart. My parents have told me they always thought I tried absorbing my surroundings like a sponge everywhere that we moved. My father's career in the US Army spanned two oceans and took me from Berlin to Hawaii. It was a busy childhood, eleven schools in twelve years - but I look back on it as a blessing. We traveled often and got the chance to learn about the different ways that people live. My three siblings and I understood that not everyone lives the same way that we did. Life is worth enjoying and I was taught that there was enjoyment in helping people. In the United States Army I discovered a way that I could help others through medicine. Then in 2011, after five years of service, I decided to commit to becoming a physician assistant. And now I am here in the Physician Assistant program and there are so many new doors that are going to open for me. Of course, that is once I have completed my studies. I learned to love medicine while I served as a Medical Sergeant for a US Army Special Forces A-team. Being part of the A-team was the greatest learning experience of my life. I learned so much about medicine but I also learned how to truly work as a member of team. This meant pulling my weight, taking criticism, being respectful, listening and always performing to the best of my abilities, no matter the conditions. It was in 1st Special Forces Group that I was able to find my first real mentors, my team sergeant and my senior medic. They taught me how to be a professional. Both of those men embodied a professional: they were men of their word, they knew their limits, and they valued planning and preparation as much as execution. Training sites all over the United States to the river villages in Afghanistan, provided me with tools of success: self-discipline, compassion, leadership, and countless technical skills – especially in medicine.

My experiences were both good and bad, and there are many moments that I will never forget. Through the best and the worst moments, the Regiment will always be close to my heart. As the medic on the team I know that I made a difference in hundreds of people's lives all around the world. It was my medical experiences that opened my eyes to other professional possibilities. There was a new sense of excitement and passion as I set-up and worked the rural clinics in Afghanistan, and then in Africa (as a civilian). These feelings compounded, driving me to seek a higher level of education and skill in medicine.

Actually getting a college degree was a long shot for me, but it was a challenge that I really wanted to undertake. I didn't know if I could do it. I had tried college as an eighteen year old and had had a hard time with academics. My goal was to become a physician assistant after getting my bachelor's degree, but I wasn't even sure I could get a degree. Acceptance into a PA Program is a very competitive process and the tough road to get there was discouraging. There was also the fact that I would miss my teammates and all of the great training and missions that they were going to participate

in. Yet, in 2011 I made the choice to try and complete my degree after five years of service. This choice would prove to be a challenge in a totally different manner than the training and combat I had experienced in Special Forces.

When I was twenty years old I decided to join the US Army because our nation was at war and it was my duty, like hundreds of thousands of my fellow citizens have before me. There is no denying the fact that I also joined for adventure. Using helicopters, motorboats, heavy weapons and working with foreign soldiers to complete combined missions provided me with so much great adventure. Beyond fulfilling my need to danger and excitement, I recognized my true aspirations while I was practicing medicine. I was passionate about the story, the processes and the planning involved with treating patients. I knew in 2011 that I made the correct choice, when I enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Becoming a PA would allow me to have the best possible career in medicine. While in college I always tried to explore new opportunities, especially if they involved patient care. In the summer of 2012, in between stressful semester at UNC, I volunteered for Trinity Center for World Mission in 2012. I was the operations manager for a pilot mobile medical clinic throughout Uganda, along the Sudanese border. Once again I worked with local doctors and had the chance to do what I loved most. We went to eight different sites and treated thousands of people. We did what we could with what we had and the smiling faces of the people I was able to help were always motivating me forward.

For two years I spent nights in the library, I went to tutoring sessions, I went to office hours of professors and I pushed myself to produce work that I was proud of. I read and absorbed, brainstormed, crafted thesis, and I solved problems in totally new ways. I got the chance to sit on panels about global issues and help shape a younger generation's future experiences abroad, I was inducted into the Historical Honor Society, I tutored English to children in second language programs and I still found the time to volunteer as a paramedic in Durham. My mentors from my A-team set the bar high in terms of perseverance: they taught me that you have to always keep pushing yourself, even in exhaustion. In Special Forces I had also learned to quickly address my weaknesses so that I could multiply my talents and that helped me in my studies. The professors expanded my interest with dynamic lectures in every subject, but they were also strict in their grading because they were truly subject matter experts and they were passionate about teaching. I am proud of the degree I earned. I developed many new skills and will always be grateful for what I gained as a student at UNC.

I've learned that self doubt, brought on by the long anticipation and hard work of preparation is anyone's biggest road block to achieving a goal: "This is too difficult, there is no way I am the person they are looking for, I could never be competitive." These are all thoughts that go through anyone's mind before taking on a challenge. I will never forget the day that Wake Forest University called me and asked me to join. I made it to the next leg of the trek.

What pushes me is the memory of the good friends I lost in combat. I had the honor of working with the brightest, gifted, most-motivated soldiers. I knew men who smiled in a gunfight and who never quit—they loved their jobs. They were my friends. Some paid the ultimate sacrifice. I was present when some of my friends were killed and yet I could not save them. War's necessity is so painfully unfortunate

because of how evil its face is. I was powerless to the daunting power of modern warfare. I draw hope from their passion because otherwise I would be miserable. I will never forsake their sacrifice by becoming stagnant. I try to honor their memory by making the world that took them a better place. I made the grades and I achieved my goal of getting into a graduate school because I know that my friends that I have lost would never let it go if I quit, if I stopped serving others while doing what I loved. I cannot back down from my goal or make excuses. Every chance I get to relax, I say thank you to my friends who did not come home and I remind their spirit, which is always around me, that I will make a positive difference in this world. I never rest for too long however. There is always another challenge on the other side of the ridgeline.

The best soldiers I worked with were definitely confident. They knew their equipment in the dark and were masters of their craft. They are out there now, moving with a purpose in some jungle or on a desert ridgeline, embedded with tough foreign soldier. They are smiling. The conviction that I acquired through these individuals was one that was forged of iron and is restless, one that was unsatisfied until the job was complete. They don't ask themselves what is their purpose here or what is my duty because they have already asked themselves that question and the answers are now a composite of their bones. Because I am a force of good and I can change the world for the best. These values I hold, my American values that my history (the ups and the downs), the church, my society and my family taught me, do not forfeit integrity or ever capitulate.

I am increasing my capacity to make a difference in the world - to serve - as I train to become a PA in the Wake Forest Physician Assistant Program, and I will make a difference in the lives of the sick, frightened and confused until I can physically no longer do it in any capacity. But I have made financial sacrifices to get here and I need your help. I am going to accrue a lot of debt in my final year of PA school and I need your help lifting the financial burden. Through your assistance I will be able to have a more open future. The less debt I carry, the freer I will be to go where I am needed. The amount of debt I will potentially accrue will force me to miss out on chances to make a larger impact. Working for a government agency, working for a non-profit or mission organization, and serving in a rural underserved area are all paths I want to take but would have to pass up in order to pay down my debt. Ultimately I will work hard and make the best out of where I am called, but there will always be the question in the back of my mind – what could my training, my knowledge and my potential to push beyond the comfort level of most of my classmates have led me to be a part of if I didn't have a financial debt.

My debt by the time I finish will be around fifty thousand dollars. I was able to use my Montgomery GI Bill to cover my undergraduate degree and cover the first year of this program. But it will end in the spring of 2015, leaving me with another year's tuition and expenses. I did not win the National Health Corps Scholarship this year. Helping me take pieces out of this debt will not only open career paths to me but it will also allow me to pursue some of my other goals. I want to play a larger support role in my immediate family and I want to have a family of my own. I want to be able to support other charities for the families of special operations soldiers who have fallen in battle. Beyond the military I would also like to help eradicate hunger and poverty through my tithing. I want to support making my global and local community a healthier one. I want to be a community leader myself. By supporting me you will be engaging in a positive feedback loop that will pay your generosity forward ten-fold.

When I look back on my life there will always be pieces that I wish I could erase or that I wish I could have stopped from happening. Despite that the whole of my experiences has led me to medicine and the instructors and mentors I have had shaped me into a well-rounded provider with the potential to become a great PA. I am so excited about my future as PA because it is literally brining my dream of

greater service to fruition. By helping me financially you will be investing in my future and I don't know if I could find the words to express how grateful I would be. The word that comes to mind is "eternally." Your beyond-generous contribution will only motivate me to work harder, dig deeper and give more back to those who have helped me and those who need help.

First of all, thank you for all the work that goes into securing the scholarships offered by the Veterans Caucus of the AAPA. I have been aware of my financial needs since I was in High School, right when my family moved to the US. Back then, I got a part-time job at a restaurant so I would not be a financial burden to my parents. But, I knew that was not enough, so I tried my hardest to learn English, to get good grades and to work. All of this meant that I would have about five hours of sleep per day. Currently, I do not have the option to ask any family member for financial help and I will not be able to work in order to pay for my expenses.

As a child and adolescent in Mexico I did not have any goals or any guidance that would help me to continue past Junior High. My job prospects would have been to work in agriculture or to migrate to the US to work as an undocumented worker like my father. Fortunately, that is not the whole story because my father gained legal status and he brought us to this country of opportunities. The opportunities I have had have allowed me to become the only person in my family to complete High School. I had the opportunity to take a different route; I enlisted in the Army and then I pursued higher education. The way I see it, scholarships are a way to validate the struggle each of us goes through in order to accomplish our goals. I have been making the decisions to further my personal growth, which also reflect my self-assertion to face challenges and feel good about how I accomplish my goals.

My journey of becoming a Physician Assistant has been a long and less than ordinary one. I retired from the Navy as a Master Chief after 25 years. Upon contemplating my military retirement and the next chapter of my life, I wanted a new career where I could continue to serve others *and* be home with my family. I've had the honor and distinction of becoming a SEAL, Special Operations Combat Medic, and Independent Duty Corpsman.

I choose to be a PA because I simply want to continue enjoying my next career. Something I learned from my father who went on to become a PA in 1976 after serving as a Corpsman during Vietnam. I witnessed some of the things he was able to do for others as I grew up. He loved doing it and I could tell. At one point, I considered becoming a PA in the Navy. My plans changed on 9-11. At that moment, I chose to provide immediate life saving care whenever needed to my teammates that volunteered to protect the Americans back home.

Outside of completing my education, I've enjoyed interacting at the legislative level where I know I have a voice and am not afraid to express it. I recently had the opportunity to speak with five members of the Tennessee House and Senate during the Tennessee PA Day on the

Hill. Given my more mature appearance and life experiences, I was able to hold their attention and represent the PA community well.

If honored with an award from the Veterans Caucus, I intend to continue to pay it forward by helping others as well as set myself up for success as a future PA. I will pay down tuition costs and purchase reference material used to provide evidence based healthcare.

My first impression of a Physician Assistant was during deployment to Iraq in 2006. Major Rivers was our battalion medical officer. Though I thought highly of him in my encounters during training and sick call, it was my observations of him on civil-military operations that thoroughly impressed me. Our battalion staged two missions where our PA and an Iraqi Army physician went to a local village to jointly provide medical services to them. Maj. Rivers displayed the utmost compassion, patience, and expertise with the Iraqi villagers, just as he'd shown towards our own unit's Soldiers. Upon returning home, experiences with my own PA primary care provider only helped reinforced my opinion of the profession.

The factor that started my personal pursuit of a career in medicine was an elective EMT-B certification course taken during undergraduate education. What seemed like an interesting course to help reach full-time status ended up being a life changing experience. I became quite clear during that course about my passion for healthcare, but what career to enter was another matter. What ultimately motivated my decision to become a PA was a strong interest in health science combined with a desire to have the same impact on people as the PA's in my life had on me. Follow-on experiences gained working and volunteering in healthcare, as well as during my first year of PA school, have served to confirm my intention.

Clinical year curriculum at Northwestern will have students sent to a variety of sites around Chicagoland and beyond. I intend to use the VAAPA scholarship money to help further my pursuit by obtaining reliable transportation and helping with living expenses in my clinical year of PA school.

Growing up in a third world nation inspired in me a sense of social awareness. My career in the United States military began much like that of Physician Assistant did back in the early 1960s. I joined to become a Combat Medic and later a Physician Assistant. From a very young age I had developed a passion for medicine and I had a great devotion for helping those in need. Thus, when given a chance to join the military and serve this wonderful republic, I did not think twice. I enjoyed every minute of my training and upon graduation volunteered to deploy to the combat zone.

Once in Iraq, I did everything I could to go out in every mission, meet with my physician assistant to learn as much as I could, diagnosed and treated the Soldiers in my Platoon, volunteered for extra missions with the United States Air Force, and volunteered in the tier

three hospital located in our Forward Operating Base (FOB). My passion for medicine and helping others never ceased but instead effervesced with each passing day and my devotion to practice medicine is my everlasting dream. I not only think this is what I am meant to do but I know to my very core that I can do it and I can do it well. As a newly commissioned officer in the United States Army, I have served my country for seven years and would love the opportunity to continue serving it as an Emergency Physician Assistant.

As my GI Bill benefits elapse and resources are scarce, all funds granted will be crucial for the continuation the remaining four semesters of study. Scholarship grants will be applied to tuition and fees first and any remainder funds use for housing.

I was a Marine for eight years and achieved the rank of Staff Sargeant. I cannot say it was an easy journey, but it is one that certainly changed my life. In 2007, I deployed to the Al Anbar Providence in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Unfortunately a fellow service member became sick and was hospitalized under care of a Physician Assistant, this is where my initial interest of the career had begun. Upon completion of my enlistment I moved back home to New York and completed my Bachelor's degree at St. Joseph's College. Thereafter, in 2012 I successfully completed St. John's University's EMS course. I then applied and was offered a position as an Emergency Medical Technician at North Shore LIJ Hospital. I've been working for North Shore LIJ as an EMT ever since. After completing the admission requirements for Touro, I was granted a seat for the Physician Assistant Program.

The Marine Corps has given me the strength to be confident in myself when facing adversity or challenge. In healthcare we must also have a selfless attitude and have The courage and fortitude to dedicate our lives to the service of others. I want to apply my appreciation of how precious life is by working as a Physician Assistant towards prolonging life, as well as improving the quality of people's lives. I plan to seek employment at a military or veteran installation. I also plan to be involved in international medical missions.

The journey to becoming a Physician Assistant has been challenging; there have surely been many obstacles to overcome. I understand that PA programs are designed to be challenging and not everyone is able to remain steadfast and motivated through such rigors, but I am one who has proven I can rise to the occasion: From being a full---time Marine and an evening student for many years, to now being a full---time student completing Touro's PA program while also working as an EMT to support my living expenses. My academic workload has significantly increased to a level that I have not yet experienced in the past. I had to decrease my hours at work in order to remain focus and ensure the success of my academics. This scholarship is important in contributing to my success in this program. At the early age of 17, I was proud to become financially independent and continue to do so with hard work and dedication.

I respectfully request consideration of my application and will be honored to be a recipient of this scholarship.

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; leading me to consider answering a new calling. I just returned from an 18 hour patrol when the 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 medics with the other casualties until the CASEVAC helicopters landed.

It was experiences like that, treating casualties on that day and others, that ignited my interest in medicine. After my return from Afghanistan I began looking into healthcare careers and discovered the Physician Assistant field. I was immediately enticed by its origin; a profession intended to utilize and build upon the medical skills veterans brought home from Vietnam. The more I read, the more I realized that becoming a PA was the natural culmination of all my previous experiences. If I were to receive a scholarship from the Veterans Caucus, I would use it to help pay down some of my school’s fees and some other debts I have accrued while living as a full time student after leaving the military. Thank you for this opportunity, I applaud the Veterans Caucus for their continued support of veteran PA students and their enduring promotion of veterans in the PA profession.

My decision to become a Physician Assistant did not come suddenly; nor has it been a lifelong plan. The idea took shape while transitioning from military service to college. Reflecting on my past experiences, it became evident that I wanted to become a Physician Assistant.

My first assignment in the Air Force was on a surgical ward as a medic, where I learned patient care and had the additional duty of preceptor to new medics. I enjoyed teaching and was recognized as top trainer at Wright-Patterson hospital. Teaching and the skills it required were a major impact on my desire to become a PA.

Outside of my first assignment, I served two deployments and worked with many PAs. My favorite PA to work with was my supervisor, Army Major Tom Hettich. I was in charge of an aid station in Iraq a few hours away from his. Due to the circumstances, I had a high level of autonomy similar to a PA. Tom gave me standing orders and let me operate independently; in fact, the more I proved my competence, the more autonomy I had. This style of mentorship combined with self-sufficiency left me with a fondness for the occupation and a desire to be a part of it.

I paid for my final year with personal finances in order to use the Post 9/11 GI Bill to cover graduate school courses. Unfortunately, the GI Bill has a cap each school year and my current program’s tuition exceeds this amount. All the money that I may be awarded would be used for tuition. Additionally, my GI Bill coverage will expire in eight months and any extra assistance I am able to

find will be greatly appreciated and applied to living expenses as well as school. Thank you for your consideration.

Becoming a Physician Assistant has been a dream of mine since my time serving in the Army from 2006-2010. Seeing brothers in arms getting hurt in the line of duty was one of the toughest challenges for me to deal with while deployed in Afghanistan from 2008-2009. This is when I really came to appreciate the physician assistants and doctors serving. The skills they possess, professionalism they displayed and impact they make on soldier's lives while treating them is something that I've wanted for quite some time. My ultimate goal is to finish my education and care for retired or separated veterans.

I've worked hard for everything I've gotten in life. Being a hard worker is something I think is common in any soldier past or present. In high school I had a part time job to help support my single parent household with three sisters. Also, during my four years of undergraduate schooling I took extra classes to complete my prerequisite classes on time while I worked a part time job to obtain enough health care experience to be considered for the top PA programs in the country. My hard work paid off as I'm now in a top 10 PA program at Baylor College of Medicine. This scholarship would help ease the financial hardship of going to a private school to obtain one's education and would bring me one step closer to my goal of serving fellow veterans.

I've desired to be a medical professional ever since a Corpsman from my unit in Iraq pulled shrapnel out of my face. When I was discharged from the military, I went to college with the intentions of becoming a doctor, as I was unaware of any other medical profession. I served multiple times (15+) with my local church on medical mission's trips to the inner city, rural places, and third world countries and I really desired to have a profession that would allow me to serve with more responsibility in a primary or emergency setting. Some of my military friends were also interested in becoming medical professionals but they were all interested in becoming physician assistants, which I was completely oblivious to. I was currently working on a research at Johns Hopkins and trying to bolster my resume for medical school and decided to get some experience in different medical fields to see if I had any particular interest, and also to find out what a physician assistant does. I found the emergency room thoroughly enjoyable and urgent care exciting, and I found a surprising number of physician assistants in these fields. The urgent care practice was eye opening, because the doctors and physician assistants worked together, and the doctors often consulted with the physician assistants that formerly worked in the ER due to their experience in the field. I became a medical assistant and a laboratory technician to work with them. I worked closely with one physician assistant who unbiasedly laid out pros and cons for both professions and found my career goals and life aspirations were leading me to become a physician assistant. I currently serve my class as class president. I plan to use this scholarship to pay down my tuition and for housing.

People change after being seasoned with years of life; however, one thing that hasn't changed is my passion and drive towards medicine, particularly as a physician assistant. I am a husband, a father, and currently a PA student at the University of South Dakota. I enjoy the challenges faced with the evolving field of medicine, and what future impact I as a provider will be able to bestow upon my patient's health.

Growing up in a small town, I understand the need and impact health care providers, or the lack thereof has on a rural community. Working as an EMT and CNA, I found it rewarding developing personal, yet professional relationships with co-workers and patients. I am anxious to complete my education as a PA and return to the Dakotas to help fill this shortage of providers in rural medicine.

Two other life-long dreams have inspired my drive to become a PA; serving as a medical provider in the military, and providing health care to the underserved through missions. After serving in the military for 15 years, I know how important a healthy fighting force is, both physically and mentally. Being active in missions, as a PA I will be able to help those who are unable to afford healthcare and don't have access to it. In Africa and Mexico, I saw firsthand this shortage of healthcare professionals. I am enthusiastic at the opportunity to return to Africa, as my mentor currently works there as an infectious disease doctor in Tanzania.

My wife and I have two children and currently live in separate states due to her job, daycare, and the location of PA school. Any financial assistance received would go to the cost of tuition for graduate school and living expenses accrued by myself and my family.

Having served as a Medic in the US military for over 20 years, I have had the opportunity to work with many physician assistants (PA). The mentoring I received instilled a deep respect for the PA profession and fostered my decision to pursue this career path.

In 2004, I completed US Army Flight Medic training and went on to serve with the Michigan Army National Guard (MIARNG) as the Senior Flight Medic for Detachment 1, Co C, 3/238th GSAB (Michigan Dustoff). I have served on two deployments as a helicopter Flight Medic; Bosnia in 2005-2006 and again Iraq in 2009-2011. During my deployment to Iraq, I performed more than 25 aeromedical evacuation missions aboard the Blackhawk helicopter while over enemy territory, and at times under hostile fire. I have earned the "Senior Aviation Crewmember Badge" and have logged over 500 flying hours. I am also the recipient of the "Sikorsky Aircraft Rescue Award" and the "Air Medal" for duties performed while in Iraq.

I received a direct commission in 2013, and am currently a 2nd Lieutenant, Medical Service Officer with the MIARNG. I am also a full time second year student in Western Michigan Universities' Physician Assistant Program. Upon graduation, I plan to continue my military service as an active duty PA. My areas of interest are emergency medicine, refugee health, and emerging infectious diseases. My long term goals are to become published within my specialty, retire from active duty, and upon retirement, engage in disaster relief and refugee health missions.

It is my sincerest desire to practice medicine as a competent, forward thinking physician assistant and continue the tradition of military medicine. Thank you for taking the time to consider my candidacy.

Last year, my boyfriend's father had surgery for his throat cancer. While my boyfriend and I were visiting his father in the hospital, one of the physician assistants came in to check up on him and introduced herself by her first name. When the physician assistant realized he was not getting the correct dosages of his medications, she corrected the mistake and simply notified the doctor of the changes she made after she left the room. This experience made me realize that a physician assistant

has a more active role in patient health care than I originally assumed. Physician assistants are able to treat patients, make their own decisions, and can be more personable with their patients. It was at this point I truly began to consider becoming a physician assistant.

During the summer of 2012, I became an ER scribe with the company Scribe America. In the ER I have seen things from minor stomach aches to appendicitis, mild headaches to full hemorrhagic strokes, sprained ankles to subcondylar fractures. Regardless of the severity of the illness, it is the best feeling in the world to know that I have helped someone. The PAs get their own patients, make their own medical decisions, help the doctor's workload, and even give advice to doctors in some cases. With my experiences so far, I realized becoming a physician assistant is the perfect career for me. I am hard working and enjoy working individually and as part of a team.

Every PA program is very time consuming, it is even recommended not to have a part time job because of the academic demands. This scholarship will help me pay for books, traveling to clinical rotation sites, and may even lower my loan debt. The smallest amount would even be helpful.

When choosing what division of medicine to study, I investigated a variety of programs. I worked at Children's Hospital of Michigan as a recreational therapist and was ready to dive in further. I was interested in many aspects of medicine making it hard to choose. After speaking to physician assistants and visiting local program informational sessions I was ready to begin researching. The more I learned of the rich history, beginning with Navy Corpsmen at Duke, I was sold. A profession that spans virtually all specialties of medicine with a history that rings true with my upbringing is the perfect fit. My father served in the Army, a veteran of the Vietnam War. He brought many of the values he gained from the military to our family. Demonstrating nothing but kindness and humbleness he is someone to look up to. He taught me to be kind, advocate and defend those who cannot, do your duty and fulfill obligations, give respect to get respect, and most importantly maintain integrity because at the end of the day it is who you are. At his encouragement and example, I believe I have the key values to be an excellent physician assistant. The Physician PA model delivers healthcare in an efficient and patient centered way. Often a physician isn't able to spend the time they wish with patients, but PA's ideally has more interface time. I'd like to continue work in underserved regions because of the connection with patients that would have otherwise been turned away for lack of payment or written off for low health literacy.

A scholarship will assist in payment of tuition and fees associated with the program. The program is rigorous and demands dedication, which makes providing funds including financial aid difficult to obtain.

During the first four years of my military service, I experienced two active duty deployments as a combat medic. I was aware that a great deal of my effectiveness during these tours depended upon the amount and quality of training I received. During the 2009 Iraq deployment, I served as a line medic within an infantry unit as part of the 41st Combat Brigade providing medical

care during combat missions. Between missions, I volunteered in our medical treatment facility in order to gain additional medical experience such as assisting in surgery and treating patients in pre- and post-surgical settings. Upon returning home from Iraq, I continued development of my medical knowledge by resuming my academic studies, and earning a paramedic certification. During this time, I was accepted into a MEDEVAC unit as a flight medic, a capacity in which I served in the 2012 Afghanistan deployment.

During that year in Afghanistan, I treated over 300 patients as a flight medic as well as assisting trauma physicians and the physician assistants in my free time. Out of the hundreds of patients that I cared for in that deployment, one mission galvanized my desire to gain as much medical training, knowledge, and experience as possible. During that mission, I provided medical care to six badly-wounded soldiers as we transported them in our Army UH-60 Blackhawk to the forward surgical team in Farah. After the most critically-wounded soldier underwent four hours of surgery, the surgery team determined that transport to a higher treatment facility was necessary. The patient was intubated, on a ventilator, with bilateral chest tubes, multiple medications running with a central line in place, and a pre-transport blood pressure of 92 systolic, and a temperature of 95 despite warming blankets. Upon take off, the vitals monitor was giving highly fluctuating readings due to the vibration of the aircraft and shortly after takeoff, IV pump failure occurred. I performed trouble shooting procedures on the equipment while pushing medications at the proper time intervals and started giving units of blood as his blood pressure dropped. Our aircraft started to receive enemy gun fire and we went lights out inside the cabin. As a result of the exogenous enemy conditions, the initial fragile medical condition of the patient, and despite my best efforts, the patient's status deteriorated and he died on the operating table in Camp Bastion. During the post-mortem review of that outcome, it was determined that the patient should not have been transported and that I had performed medical care in an adequate and reasonable fashion. Those facts notwithstanding, I have frequently reflected on that flight with the nagging question, "If I had more medical education, would that soldier still be alive?" The never-to-be-known answer only increases my longtime desire to receive the high-quality medical training that is available in a physician assistant program.

After the Afghanistan deployment, I was accepted into the Physician Assistant Program at Thomas Jefferson University, thus allowing me to continue my medical training. Over the last several years of pursuing my goal of becoming a physician assistant, I have deftly juggled work, school, marriage, fatherhood, military duty, deployment, ROTC, school officer responsibilities, and extracurricular activities as well as community involvement. I have excelled in my PA program and have obtained a GPA of 3.62. Despite my success within the PA program and the satisfaction gained in pursuing my lifelong aspirations, the financial burden on my family has been great. This scholarship, if awarded, will greatly relieve this burden and enhance my success within my studies, ultimately helping me to become a more adept practitioner, allowing me to follow my passion to serve where the need is greatest.

Medicine was never in the forefront of my mind while I was in school. In fact I graduated from school with a Criminal Justice degree. I was not until years later in after I had joined the military and was selected to become a Special Forces Medic, that I was exposed to medicine truly for the first time. After learning and practicing medicine for several years in the military I realized that there was a limit to how much I can gain from life in military medicine. It happens to every medic at some point. Either they choose the military as a career and abandon medicine, or they choose medicine and abandon the military. Even though I love the military and honestly reflect positively on my time in service, I chose to elevate my medical knowledge and follow a path that will help more people in need.

My mother was one of the wisest people that I ever met. One thing that she said while she was alive that always stuck with me was, "If you are not helping people with your life, then what are you doing?" For some reason that comment always stuck with me, and one of the final things that I said to her was that I would make something of my life. I am the only person in my family to go to college and graduate, but for me I feel that I can rise higher than that. While I am not exactly reaching for the brass ring, I am setting my sites well above my station.

I have never applied for a scholarship before; I always work while I am in school. However, the demands of the program that I am currently in prohibit me from working and being successful. This is why I am applying for this scholarship. I am attempting to go to school and support my family with basically no income. For the moment I am making things work, but a little buffer would be nice as well. Thank you for your consideration.

My path to PA school, like so many before me, started in the Army. I graduated high school in 2002 with my associates degree and knew that I wanted to be in healthcare. I enlisted as a 91W "health care specialist" and began my short Army career on November 21, 2002. One week after going to AIT, I had severe pain and numbness in my legs and was diagnosed with exercise induced compartment syndrome. I opted out of surgery and was discharged home, thoroughly discouraged.

It took a lot of soul searching and growing up until I finally started PA school nearly 11 years later, and there are many reasons why I chose this as my career. Most important to me is that PAs help give better access to health care by helping fill the gap in provider shortages, something I see prominently here in New Mexico. I want to be a part of the solution, I want to share the joy of good health news with my patients as well as be there to hold their hand through the bad. I also want to support my profession, to advocate for PAs and improve our laws so that our patients will continue to have better access to our services.

I am the President of our student society and we have only 17 students in each graduating class. I try and provide our class with as many outreach opportunities as we have time for to connect us to our community as well as opportunities to become involved at the political level as advocates before we start our career. If I were awarded the scholarship I would use the funds to continue my growth as a PA student, including attending the annual AAPA conference, and as an advocate for our profession.

I wish to become a Physician Assistant because I believe I was born to serve. In the Bible, Romans 12:6-7 states "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving then give generously." I believe my gift is serving. I took pride in serving my country and plan to continue serving in the Air Force Reserves as a Physician Assistant. As a Physician Assistant, I hope to serve in communities with limited access to health care. I decided to become a Physician Assistant specifically because of the focus on patient care and the flexibility of the career. I hope to close the gap of health literacy between the patient and their health. Before my father died, I saw the health literacy issue and his appreciation when that rare health care worker took the time to explain.

I also plan to use the knowledge obtain from my Masters in Professional Studies Homeland Security Public Health Preparedness to help the community I serve respond to natural disasters. Natural disaster response in our country is not at the best level of planning and preparation. Not only do I want to provide needed healthcare, I also want to use the knowledge gained as a Physician Assistant and future Air Force Reserve officer to improve disaster response.

I plan to use the scholarship to help with financial aid costs and living costs during my time as a Physician Assistant student

Obtaining a career in the medical field became my life goal while I was working at the Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston. One day, I was assigned the task of delivering silvadene cream to the burn ward. Nothing could have prepared me for the sight of the severe---burn victims in their predicament. Some of the patients were unrecognizable beneath the burn wounds that covered most of their bodies. I saw one of the patients struggling to eat; his fingers could not wrap around a spoon. I felt dearly for these patients, whose lives had been drastically altered by horrible tragedies. That very moment, I resolved to get more involved in patient health and help others in similar situations by joining the medical field as a physician assistant. I wanted to do more than just prescribe medication to my patients. I realized that I want to help heal and save as many lives as I can, whether it is on the military or civilian side. My years in the Army have allowed me to develop life skills. As an enlisted soldier, I was taught to constantly pay attention to detail and to perform to the best of my ability. After commissioning, I became

confident of my abilities as a leader and as an analytical decision-maker. After completing my Physician Assistant Program, I plan to become an active duty Physician Assistant so I can once again return to serving my comrades. I plan on using the scholarship to fund my education and purchase books

Herding Angus cattle and farming corn on my family's farm in rural Nebraska taught me many life lessons, but did not necessitate the formation of a critical personal philosophy. In the aftermath of direct participation in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars during my enlistment in the Air Force, I experienced an existential crisis which spurred the formation of my current worldview. I was forced to reconstruct a more critical philosophy, one that minimized reliance upon assumptions and made sense of the world. In retrospect, I think that my starting point was an understanding of the implications of the second law of thermodynamics, that the universe will trend toward increasing disorder and chaos. If life and the universe are simply ephemeral, if anything that I build will eventually crumble, then what truly matters? The answer I arrived at was that this brief flash of brilliance which is the human experience is all that can actually have any value in and of itself. If this is indeed true, if self-actualization itself is the ultimate reason for being, then any aspect of life which facilitates this pursuit constitutes the true good. I cannot think of a more significant contributing factor in this respect than health, both the fostering of good health and the remedying of poor health, and consequently I believe that I can act as a catalyst for the self-actualization of others through the practice of medicine as a Physician Assistant. I would like to be considered for the scholarships for which I am eligible, including the Milner Scholarship. Any funds awarded would be used to finance the tuition of my education and provide more financial freedom from debt when choosing my future position as a Physician Assistant.

As far back as I can remember, I have wanted to work in the medical field. It wasn't until my senior year of high school that I first heard of physician assistants and even later, sophomore year of my undergraduate education, before I decided on this profession. Other than working with/serving people, one of the biggest reasons I chose to become a PA is the human anatomy. The body is amazing. Everything is so delicate and intricate. The way your body takes care of itself and adapts to fight certain infections, or just how it responds to normal environmental stimuli, is unparalleled. Even the activity at the most molecular level requires such specific design and detail. In addition, I admire the autonomy and responsibility available to PAs. So much has changed for this profession since its inception approximately fifty years ago. PAs are able to see their own patients, diagnosis and treat disease, perform many procedures, order tests and first-assist in surgery. While I appreciate the autonomy, I also appreciate the fact that PAs must practice under a supervising physician. This gives me the assurance that if I come across a difficult case or am uncomfortable performing a certain procedure, I will have the ability to consult with my supervising physician. Finally, the shorter amount of time in school and the flexibility of the profession are extremely attractive to me. I want a family one day, and to be involved in my community. As a PA, I feel like this dream is more attainable than with other professions.

I would use any scholarship received to help offset the cost of my graduate education, currently paid for by an increasing amount of loans. I would be indescribably grateful for any financial assistance. I am applying for all scholarships for which I am eligible for, most specifically the Milner Scholarship.

In 2001 I became a respiratory therapist in the US Army Reserve, and was deployed to Iraq in 2006 & 2010. My service in Iraq has been one of the most significant events of my life. While deployed I took care of fellow soldiers, Iraqi people, and insurgents. Unfortunately I witnessed several of my fellow soldiers die. Watching a fellow soldier die changes you. No amount of training can prepare you for the sense of loss, or the sense of hopelessness. I was able to cope with this difficult experience by finding ways to do more for the soldiers we took care of. I soon began to cross train, and soon I was able to do IVs, place leads, and perform basic EMT tasks. Although we still lost soldiers, the fact that I did all that I could helped to reduce the sense of loss. After my last deployment I went back to being a regular civilian respiratory therapist, and found that the job was no longer challenging. I began to research possible careers paths and I came across the PA profession. After talking to PA's and researching the job I decided that becoming a PA would be a perfect opportunity to do more. I want to serve my community, and my fellow soldiers in a greater capacity, by becoming a PA in the US Army Reserve.

I am from a place where people don't have a lot of hope. When I finish PA school I will be the first person in the history of my family to obtain a master's degree. This scholarship would help me to continue my dream, and become a source of inspiration for others. I want to show the people of my community, that hard work and dedication can lead to success.

My first encounter with a PA occurred during an EMT course as a senior in high school. I remember being not only impressed, but also inspired by the story of a PA named Jim. He had been a Navy Corpsman assigned to a Marine unit in Vietnam. He explained how his military training and experience had translated into a rewarding career in the civilian world as a PA. When he described his scope of practice and skill set, I knew that was going to be my goal.

The first step for me was enlisting in the Air Force upon graduation from high school. Early in my career, I was trained as an Independent Duty Medical Technician (IDMT). Although the scope of practice of an IDMT and a PA are vastly different, there is one important similarity -- IDMTs are trained to work autonomously in austere conditions under the guidance of a physician. This methodology simultaneously promotes independent practice and a team concept.

During my 20-year military career, I was deployed numerous times, from the first Gulf War to Operation Iraqi Freedom. I was always proud of my service because I knew I made a difference and without me some of those men and women might not have come home. I chose to retire after 20 years and 7 months of service in order to fulfill my goal of becoming a PA.

Upon graduation from PA school, it is my intention to apply for a job with either the Veterans Administration or with a military facility as a contracted provider. I know I have more to give back to the military and feel the best way to do that is to continue to provide the best healthcare possible to the men and women of the Armed Services and our Veterans.

The Physician Assistant profession is challenging and most rewarding. I look forward to improving access to exceptional care in this career. I am dedicated to my studies so I may provide the very best care in a multitude of situations. I thrive on interpersonal relationships and conversing with other providers to best aid a patient. I am excited to continue down my path and soon begin clinical year. I know there will be challenging days ahead. Yet, when I have truly helped relieve pain or offer educational guidance, I know I am where I should be. I was a therapeutic yoga instructor at the Fisher House at Ft. Sam Houston. I interacted with battlefield burn victims with long term health issues. Connecting with them to address their needs opened my heart. Soldiers are my passion. I would like to continue as a Physician Assistant at the VA or at an active duty clinic. Currently, I shadow at Robinson Clinic on Ft. Bragg which cares for active duty soldiers. I am now re-experiencing the positive impact of interpersonal communication with patients about their condition. I have the opportunity to use my life skills as a veteran and as a current PA student to better the field of medicine, especially for this demographic I am so excited to serve. I look forward to leveraging my skills and potential to improve their care. Currently I live in North Carolina, but fly back and forth to Wisconsin for school. My husband is active duty and we have a daughter which continues to challenge us on many fronts. Should I be awarded a scholarship, I will apply it to our additional expenses related to PA school, flights, and childcare.

In everything I do, I strive to show that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " (Acts 20:35)

Me and my wife as Christians, we believe that life is not only about taking and promoting oneself position in life, it is also about giving back to the people around us. Not just your family, relatives or friends, but to as many people as you can reach out to. This is how we will build a better place, with real solid values for ourselves and our children. That is one of the main reasons why my wife decided to join the US army national guard and for me to specialize in the medical field.

As a paramedic; I have enjoyed serving my community and giving people in emergency medical situations the best pre hospital care I can, and have been recognized for my efforts by the EMS department. Still, I have found myself craving to know and do more in terms of following patients throughout their treatment. I have encountered several situations throughout my work that confirmed my desire to be a physician assistant. One of these experiences was: We were called for a man having severe abdominal pain in a truck stop. The man was in his 50's, sitting in his truck screaming in pain. He told us he was sitting ready to take off to Florida when all of a sudden a severe abdominal pain hit him. The guy did weigh around 300 pounds and the nearest fire truck was 10 minutes away; so we decided to take a chance and pick up the guy and race toward the nearest hospital. We arrived at the hospital and the ER team did exemplary efforts to save his life since he had internal hemorrhage. What annoyed me was the fact that I could not give him any pain medication per our protocol; because we did not know what was going on or what we were fighting against. That was an eye opening experience for me as I figured out that my current

scope of practice and knowledge was limited. At that moment I wished that I had more knowledge and experience to help him more than just pre hospital care. I looked at the PA and I knew deep down that this is something I want to do and accomplish in my life; this is the level of knowledge I want to master.

I was confident I would be a good fit for this program through my extensive education backgrounds both overseas and in the U.S. The skills that I acquired during the last two years as a paramedic have increased my ability to work under stress; have helped me build up critical thinking abilities to make life changing decisions in chaotic conditions; and have helped me gain more confidence in my clinical skills. Also, my insight into the need for physician assistant in rural areas was broadened while volunteering at a Charlotte community health clinic. I learned a lot about the finances and level of treatment available; I also learned about the shortage of patient providers. As a physician assistant I look forward to meeting the need for cost effective patient care.

So far I've been in the program for about 13 months and still have 14 more months to go, I've had my ups and downs through the past year, but this never stopped me from learning from my mistakes and jump back on my feet fighting my way back to achieve my dream being a PA. What was shocking to me and my class mates at the beginning of this program is how competitive and hard it is to keep up with, especially when I saw a few of my colleagues gave up and quit on the first semester. I've seen all of us struggling to be where our professors need us to be.

The reason I am applying for this scholarship is primarily because of my wife, who joined the army national guard a few years ago believing that she is doing something great for her country and family. She showed me dedication and resilience not by words but by acts. In all the trainings she went through and in every post she served, she did an extraordinary job and was always recognized by her superiors as you will see in all the achievement medals she received. I wish this scholarship would be one way to show her that her sacrifices and leaving her home and family were not in vain.

As I look back on my life, I see each experience as a stepping stone that has guided me to the place I am in today. From education to medicine, it took some time to figure out exactly where I was meant to be. Starting out as an educator, I found the most rewarding part of teaching to be the ability to help students. With my mother being a nurse and my father being in the military, it was no surprise that I was born to help people. Although teaching was rewarding, I needed something more fulfilling. I entered a Vascular Ultrasound program and it was here that I truly realized my love for medicine. Working with surgeons on a daily basis gave me great insight and I quickly began to love what I was doing. As I watched them in surgery, I was fascinated by what they were able to do and knew I wanted to be more involved.

Reality hit home when my grandmother was diagnosed with diabetes and needed to have her leg amputated. I viewed her reports, discussed her treatment plan with her doctors, and explained everything to her. Being involved with her medical care solidified my decision. With the encouragement of colleagues, I applied and was accepted into the New York Institute of Technology Master of Science Physician Assistant program.

My grandmother has since passed away, but I carry that experience with me every day. There is a large demand for health care practitioners and I am lucky to have the opportunity to be a part of something so rewarding. Your scholarship has personal meaning to me because I come from a long line of military men that I am very proud of. It will provide me with the means to buy books and medical equipment that will help prepare me for a future of giving back to my community. Being in a full time program is demanding and leaves no time for a job. Your scholarship would bring financial relief to an already stressful work load.

They call me Man Ye. I grew up in Dayton, Ohio. We were the only Asian family in the area, and we were subjected to a lot of racism. The rejection I felt instilled a deep need in me to belong. This drove me to join the military. I reasoned that as a soldier, no one could question my right to live in America. I chose the infantry because it was the toughest job available. I was in Kosovo when the World Trade Center was bombed. Later, in Iraq, I lost several of my close friends. Seeing so many lives lost has given me a great appreciation for those who save them.

After returning from Iraq, I earned a B.S. in medical imaging. While I enjoyed medical imaging, I had always felt something was lacking. I learned about the PA field and discovered I enjoy having more interactions with patients and more of an influence on their treatment.

At the start of the PA program I quickly realized the high intensity of PA school was not exaggerated. I knew I would need to dedicate one hundred percent of my focus to my studies. I am not as intellectually gifted as many of my classmates, so in order to keep up, I spend all day at school until its time to retire for the evening. On both weekends and weekdays, I bring all my meals so I do not have to leave to eat.

I have exhausted all of my veteran's benefits, and I am unable to work while in school. I am currently living off my savings. If I am awarded the veteran's caucus scholarship, all of the money will go towards offsetting my tuition, mortgage, and living expenses. Thank you for your time and consideration

My interest in pursuing a career as a physician assistant stems from my career experience spanning 32 years in the fire/EMS field, as well as my involvement with disaster medical response and allied health education.

My career experience includes serving as a crash rescue firefighter in the US Air Force, serving as member of the Red Cross Medical Assistance Team, and serving as Director of EMS at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG). I also served on a coalition under the Federal Emergency Management Agency called the Regional Medical Response System, which was responsible for developing interagency operational plans for mass casualty incidents, public health emergencies, and other events that had the potential to overwhelm the local healthcare system.

In addition to my emergency response duties, I was an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati, teaching Special Operations Management for UC's College of Engineering & Applied Science, Applied Anatomy & Physiology for the Biology Department, and a Gross Human Anatomy lab through the College of Medicine for paramedic and allied health programs.

I retired from CVG Airport in 2012, and am currently in my second year of physician assistant training at the University of Charleston. I continue to hold a profound interest in emergency and disaster medicine, and am eager to continue to broaden my knowledge and scope of practice. I believe my education and life experience will give me a unique perspective in my future role as a physician assistant, and hope to become a learned colleague and an asset to the PA profession. This scholarship will greatly assist achieving this goal, and help reduce the financial burden of living away from home and attending college on a retirement income. Thank you for the opportunity.

My commitment to my professional goals is driven by my motivation to defend and serve. It is something I am proud to have initiated after graduating high school. I signed an active duty Army contract when I was 16 years old and joined the ranks of the infantry during a time of war. The infantry is where I built my foundation. This is where I pushed myself beyond barriers and accomplished goals I never would have thought possible.

It was during my deployment to Iraq that I began to transition into the medical field. The combat medics and the battalion's Physician Assistant were captivating in their dedication to providing medical attention to the line units. I wanted to be part of that medical team and serve the soldiers on the front lines in the same manner. My initial intuition was to become a combat medic and learn the healthcare system, but the Army was not offering a considerable change of MaS at the time. Our senior combat medic informed me of the PA route that he was working on for the Army and gave me some resources and foreknowledge to direct myself towards a future career as a medical officer. The Army Reserves offered me a position to train and serve as a medical technician.

After graduating from the Army's medical technician program, I pursued for my bachelors. I went to school and worked full time as a med tech in order to support my family. The commitment was intense, but I didn't accept defeat. The PA role is where I set my primary goals. I want to get back to the soldiers and provide the best healthcare. I plan on supporting my family with the scholarship during the remainder of my PA program.
