VFW Scholarship Helps Vet ‘Put Letters Behind His Name’

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“I find when you’re doing something that’s right for you, everything else eventually falls into place,” said 25-year-old Cody Taylor of Crouse, North Carolina. He understands the importance of hard work and an education to achieve the things he sets out to do.

As a drilling Navy Reservist for five and a half years, Taylor voluntarily mobilized to Iraq to support Operation Inherent Resolve. He enlisted after his second year of college to gain valuable work and leadership experience.

Service also allowed Taylor to pursue an education and a meaningful civilian career. After his initial training, he returned to Appalachian State University to complete his bachelor’s degree.

Today, Taylor is earning a graduate degree in Public Administration. He is serious about working toward goals and making the world a better place while doing so. Importantly, he realizes that success requires opening up oneself to new experiences and people.

In fact, Taylor might not be where he is today had it not been for a helpful stranger. During the demobilization process, he met a woman who provided him a list of scholarships available to veterans seeking their master’s degree. It led him to the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" and he’s grateful to now be a recipient.

“I would love to thank the people who made this possible in person,” Taylor said. “This scholarship has made it easier to concentrate on school and not have as much stress from the burden of student loans. I am able to work a part-time job while taking classes rather than being forced to balance a full-time job and school. It’s made it easier to pay attention in class and keep my grades up.”

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE
200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719
info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

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Once he graduates, Taylor is optimistic about the possibilities that lie ahead. He intends to continue serving others.

“I’ve found I’m interested in a variety of topics that affect people’s daily lives,” said Taylor. “Public Administration is such an interdisciplinary field. It can really lead you to work almost anywhere.”

Taylor urges other veterans to find programs as he did and to trust generous individuals offering help along the way.

“I encourage them to search and network. Ask questions of people working to support veterans. Then, share what you learn with others,” Taylor said. “Someone once told me an education is one of the only things in this world that people can’t take from you. Get one that puts some letters behind your name and sign it as much as you can.”

Taylor took that advice to heart and hopes other veterans do the same.