‘It Was a Long Road, but I’m Finally Here’

Army Reservist is working to help other veterans overcome barriers to employment

Dec 26, 2022

Marcello Lynch, 33, has been a member of the Army Reserves for 11 years.

“I enlisted following in the footsteps of my father, grandfather and uncles,” he explained. “My grandfather served in the Navy during World War II. My father was a Marine during Vietnam, and my uncles all served in the Army. I wanted to keep the tradition alive.”

A senior at the University of Houston-Downtown, Lynch is majoring in sociology. He also works for the Texas Veterans Commission, helping veterans overcome barriers to employment. He discovered the VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” at work.

“I know the VFW has always been a reliable resource when taking care of veterans. As I was referring a veteran to the VFW, I was doing some research as to what they assist with when I came across the scholarship,” he explained.

Lynch did not receive any financial aid to attend college. He knew the assistance would be helpful in his last semester and applied.

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart!” he said. “You are helping a veteran get to a place in his career where he can continue to help other veterans.”

After graduation, Lynch plans to become a counselor to work with veterans experiencing mental health issues like Post Traumatic Stress, anxiety and depression.

“I understand firsthand how being in the military can take a huge toll on your mental health. Sometimes we feel as if we don’t have anyone to talk to that understands us,” he shared. “My goal is to be that understanding person and help get veterans back on a healthy path, mentally and emotionally, so they can excel in their everyday lives.”

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He urges other veterans to use education to pursue their dreams and insists that there is help along the way.

“Do it!” he said. “There are so many people out here rooting for veterans and wanting to see us succeed, and there are so many resources to get you through it, financially and mentally.”

Lynch is grateful for the assistance that is helping him reach his goals. It means a great deal not only to him but also to others.

“This scholarship made it possible for me to obtain my degree. This has made many of my family members so proud, as I am a first-generation college graduate,” he explained. “Getting my degree is a huge deal. It was a long road, but I’m finally here.”

Learn more about the VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship."