

# Scholarship 'Catapults' Veteran Forward

## 'This scholarship catapulted me forward ... I am extremely grateful'

Sep 02, 2025

Nathaniel Juarez is a member of VFW Post 8116. He lives in Cape Canaveral, Florida, with his wife, Amelia, and their three children, Carolina, Nathaniel Jr. and Alexander.

After serving in the Air Force for 13 years, he transferred to the Space Force. Today, Senior Master Sgt. Juarez is the senior enlisted leader for Assured Access to Space. He oversees the intelligence operations responsible for safeguarding 22,000 personnel across Space Launch Delta (SLD) 45 and SLD 30.

His family inspired him to enlist when he was younger.

“My grandfather was in the Army and is a Vietnam veteran. My mother, stepfather and uncle were also in the Army, and I saw how proud they were to have served,” Juarez said. “They are the reason I decided to apply for the Air Force at the age of 17. I graduated from high school in June 2007 and was enrolled in basic training in July.”

Juarez heard about the VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” while he was stationed in South Korea.

“A supervisor told me about it because I was taking so many classes that I ran out of tuition assistance but wasn’t able to pay out of pocket for additional classes,” he said.

Juarez was awarded the scholarship in 2017 and has been grateful ever since to the donors who provided the financial aid that allowed him to pursue a higher education and earn a degree.

“You are the reason I was able to get on the right path,” he said. “This scholarship catapulted me forward. I am extremely grateful.”

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Juarez's earlier degree, coupled with the past generosity from VFW donors, put him on the trajectory to recently earn his Doctorate of Information Technology from Walden University.

Juarez is still on active duty with the Space Force and plans on continuing his military career.

"I want to apply for the astronaut program now that I have completed my doctorate, which has allowed me to work as a part-time professor," he said. "I'm enjoying being on the instructor side. But in the future, I want to be part of a company that does space debris cleanup."

Juarez encourages other veterans to use what they learned in the military to chase their own dreams.

"Your skillset and life experiences will help you because you'll have a unique viewpoint," he said. "Keep taking steps toward your goal, and you'll achieve it."

[Learn more](#) about the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship."