

Navajo Woman Receives VFW 'Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship'

Young veteran chases her dreams

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“Growing up on the reservation, I learned to be resourceful. We hauled our water from the windmill and used kerosene lanterns for light,” said Courtney Etsitty, 28. “A wood-burning stove was our only heat source.”

Etsitty is a former Marine and proud Navajo woman from Teesto, Ariz. Born to two Marines, she and her brother were sent to live with their grandmother on a reservation while her parents served overseas.

The experience changed Etsitty’s lease on life and inspired her to serve her country.

“As a Navajo, I love my homeland and will fight for her,” said Etsitty. “Native Americans have a noble history as warriors and protectors of our home and people. We are a strong and fierce people.”

Etsitty served six and a half years as a Bulk Fueller in the Marine Corps. She served in Africa and Afghanistan before being honorably discharged as a Corporal. Now she’s looking forward to her future career. The VFW is helping to make it a reality.

“I got an email about a scholarship opportunity for veterans, so I applied,” said Etsitty.

Etsitty was awarded a VFW 'Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship,' which she is now using to attend Paradise Valley Community College. Her love of the land she once defended is still her driving force.

“I would like to protect and preserve the land that I swore to defend for my daughter, my people and for the younger generation to come,” said Etsitty. “So I’ve chosen to pursue the path of Environmental Sustainability.”

Etsitty is beyond grateful for the generous support and urges her fellow veterans to never

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stop chasing their dreams.

“If you get the chance to follow your passion and find something that soothes your soul—take it!” Etsitty concluded.