



STRENGTH IN SERVICE

An institution with a rich Catholic Benedictine heritage, The College of St. Scholastica seeks to build and nurture a community that lives by its values. One common thread running through these values — community, respect, love of learning, hospitality and stewardship — is the sense of service, elevating others' needs and strengthening the College as a whole. Individuals actually bring the concepts to life.

St. Scholastica is proud to welcome and recognize military veterans, current and former military members, national guard and reserve members as an integral part of the College community. Their experiences in the military have equipped them with a unique set of skills and perspectives that enrich

classrooms, academic programs and entire communities in countless ways. From 1943, when many nursing students were called overseas through the Cadet Corp Program, to today, St. Scholastica has experienced firsthand the many strengths veterans bring to the College.

To celebrate and honor the service members in the community, four students — Jon Whaley '24 (Army), Macy Sunnarborg '24 (Air Force), Daryl Baumann '25 (Marines) and Nick Wink '25 (Navy) — have offered a glimpse of what it looks like from their perspectives as Saints with unique journeys to the start of their academic careers.



JON WHALEY «★

Growing up near Fort Benning, GA, Jon Whaley '24 never pictured himself following in his father's military footsteps. That all changed after the events of Sept. 11, 2001. "It made the decision for me," Whaley said. "I was more sure than ever of my decision to serve the country." Whaley joined the

Army following his high school graduation and went on to spend 12 years on active duty as a medic before receiving medical retirement from wounds received. "I did my job and came home," he reflected.

Whaley also never pictured himself over 1,300 miles from home at St. Scholastica. However, after looking for a small college close to his wife's family that offered a graduate program in PA Medicine, it was a no-brainer. Whaley is receiving his second degree in Psychology and is hopeful to join the PA Medicine program following graduation.

Now, Whaley continues his service in another capacity as a Veteran Affairs Work Study student in the Veteran Resource Center (VRC). He works alongside fellow

staff members Jessica Johnston, director of Academic Access and Support, and Jack Lee, a military student support specialist, to support military-affiliated students. "The VRC staff deeply care and are there to support you in every way you need," he noted. "We serve students from the beginning stages of admissions to crossing the finish line at graduation."

In his role specifically, Whaley works with interested students to ensure they understand and maximize potential military benefits. As both a recipient of services and a student worker, it is clear that Whaley's call to service extends beyond the service to his country. "I do what I can to support other students," he shared.



MACY SUNNARBORG «★

For Macy Sunnarborg '24, the journey to St. Scholastica started with a simple conversation at the 148th Fighter Wing Air National Guard Base. She was intrigued by the possibility of enlisting as a way to afford college but has since realized she has found so much more than that: a potential lifelong calling.

Since enlisting in March 2020 and completing basic training in July 2021, Sunnarborg has worked in the Aircraft Armament Systems unit. Her hard work is noticed by colleagues and Sunnarborg has built trust. She is one of the few women in her unit. "There has been an increase in females from basic training lately, but working in a male-dominated environment can be hard," she said. Even in such an environment, Sunnarborg has managed to find a sense of community at the base. "There's a true sense of camaraderie."

Sunnarborg looked for that same sense of community when searching for the right college where she could continue her education. She resonated with the Benedictine values of St. Scholastica because of her military background. "The military values are integrity first, service before self and excellence in all you do," she explained. "I think those values align well with the Benedictine values."

She also sought flexibility in her schedule, especially since she still travels with the Air National Guard. In combination with her hybrid schedule, Sunnarborg has built close relationships with professors who understand her accommodations. "When deployed, school sometimes needs to take a back seat," she shared.

A major in Business Management and a minor in Human Resource Management at the College gave her all that and more. As Sunnarborg continues her educational journey, as well as her years of service in the Air Force, she looks forward to making the most impact she can. "I always want to move forward and never be stagnant."



DARYL BAUMANN «★

The son of a Marine, Daryl Baumann '25 grew up with the possibility of military service on his mind. "Even though 9/11 was surely a motivational force to enlist, joining the military had been on my back burner since early high school. This was merely an inflection point in the direction of inevitability for me," Baumann said.

Retiring from the Marines in 2013, Baumann slowly but surely re-entered civilian life, enjoying time with his wife and family. "It took a while to find a new 'normal,'" he shared. "I know there are things I experienced, things I saw, that will never leave me. The transition was hard, but I am thankful I was able to be with my kids and family during that time."

While searching for the right fit to complete his bachelor's degree, Baumann was drawn to St. Scholastica because of the combination of a small, close-knit community and the course offerings. As part of the new Global Sustainability and Justice Studies program, Baumann is also pursuing a minor in Native American Studies with a concentration on Indigenous Studies.

Participating in and supporting the revitalization of Ojibwe culture is one of Baumann's driving forces. "As an Anishinaabe, it's important to me to learn the language. There are only about 1,000 native Ojibwe speakers left, and most are more than 75 years old," Baumann shared. "I want to be part of keeping the language and culture alive."

Talking about his future plans, Baumann's heart for advocacy is clear: "I want to help folks how I can, and even though I know I'm not that close to it yet, I want to be prepared to be an elder in the community. There is important work to do now, and I want to be part of it."



NICK WINK «★

Nick Wink '25 may have started on his path to military service later than the average recruit, but once he decided and signed on, he was at boot camp within two months. From there, Wink surprised himself with a 20-year Navy career that spanned the globe. Stationed in various locations around the Pacific and constantly on the move, he embraced opportunities to connect with people worldwide. "Living [abroad] opened my eyes to so many different things; it changed me in a positive way."

One of Wink's career highlights was finding a passion that would outlive his time in the service: teaching. His three-year role as a classroom instructor was the first time he had a job that did not feel like a job; even though it included hard work and long hours, the personal fulfillment he received made up for the tough parts. He explored teaching and found the BA in Educational Studies at St. Scholastica.

While initially planning to earn the degree and use his skills to teach adults, Wink is also considering working toward licensure for teaching K-12. "I've got to say, I am inspired by classmates," Wink said. "Teaching in schools is a hard job, and even though they know exactly what they will be walking into, they are going into it wholeheartedly. It makes me wonder if I should join them."

"One thing that's very different for me is that, not only am I back in the classroom, which I enjoy, but everyone in my cohort is going for the same degree. It feels like a team effort; we're all there for the same reason," Wink shared. "We know we're not alone because we're in this together."