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## **USF Student Veteran Awarded Tillman Military Scholarship**

*USF recipient aims to help other veterans with a career in health sciences.*

**TAMPA, Fla. (June 16, 2016)** – University of South Florida student and Bronze Star Medal recipient Jeffrey Sargent is among the 60 U.S. military service veterans and military spouses from throughout the nation recently named 2016 Tillman Military Scholars by the Pat Tillman Foundation. Sargent, who is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in health sciences, has been awarded a \$15,000 scholarship for the 2016-17 academic year.

The Pat Tillman Foundation recognizes individuals for “their military service, leadership and academic excellence.” This year’s group will receive over \$1.8 million in scholarships to pursue higher education and continue their service in the fields of medicine, law, business, policy, technology, education and the arts.

Feeling a deep passion for his country, even in his childhood, Sargent enlisted in the U.S. Army Infantry following high school in 1999. He served two tours during Operation Iraqi Freedom, becoming a squad leader during his second tour. While serving in Iraq, Sargent experienced the loss of several members of his unit, including his platoon leader, which had a deep impact. During the ceremony to promote him to Sgt. 1st Class, he suffered his first panic attack stemming from his time in the battlefields. It signaled the start of his symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which led to his honorable discharge in 2011 after 12 years of service.

Over the past five years, Sargent has learned how to effectively manage his PTSD with medication, an intense fitness regimen, counseling and family support - a holistic approach he would like to use to help fellow veterans with combat related mental health issues. He hopes to achieve that goal by becoming an occupational therapist.

“In the military, I learned what selfless service means and to never give up,” says Sargent. “I plan to work at the VA and hope to change the current mental health paradigm by focusing on the body as a whole with nutrition, fitness and physical and mental health counseling. I believe that it only takes one medical professional to change a person’s life — I will be that professional. Thanks to the Tillman Foundation, I will honor the life of Pat Tillman in my second career in service to veterans.”

In addition to being a student, Sargent works part-time in the USF Office of Veteran Success. Director Larry Braue, a retired U.S. Army veteran, is well acquainted with current and past Tillman Scholars.



“As a Tillman University partner, we are thrilled to welcome Jeff to our cohort of Tillman Military Scholars on campus,” Braue said. “As the fifteenth USF scholar since the start of the program, our veteran community is well represented. It will truly be a pleasure to watch Jeff achieve his educational aspirations this coming year. Given his passion and ability to inspire others with PTSD on campus to seek treatment, there is no doubt that he will achieve his life goals.”

USF is consistently ranked among the most veteran-friendly schools in the nation, including No. 1 by Money magazine and No. 2 by Military Times.

For the full list of 2016 Tillman Military Scholars, including service branches, institutions and fields of study, visit the [Pat Tillman Foundation website](#). For more information about USF’s Office of Veteran Success, call (813) 974-2291 or visit [www.usf.edu/veterans](http://www.usf.edu/veterans).

### **About the Pat Tillman Foundation**

In 2002, Pat Tillman proudly put his NFL career with the Arizona Cardinals on hold to serve his country. Family and friends established the Pat Tillman Foundation following Pat’s death in April 2004 while serving with the 75th Ranger Regiment in Afghanistan. Created to honor Pat’s legacy of leadership and service, the Pat Tillman Foundation invests in military veterans and their spouses through academic scholarships—building a diverse community of leaders committed to service to others. For more information on the Pat Tillman Foundation and the impact of the Tillman Scholars, visit [www.PatTillmanFoundation.org](http://www.PatTillmanFoundation.org).