



# Combining Passion and Patriotism

One medical student discusses his motivations to pursue a career in health care with the U.S. Army

During his plebe (freshman) year at West Point, the U.S. Army's university, Michael Donohue was forever moved by the events of Sept. 11, 2001. It was on that day while only 45 miles up the Hudson River from New York City, that he made the "hard and final decision that I wanted to serve in the military."

The first year medical school student recalls that it was during his second year as an infantry officer that he decided to pursue a medical career. Serving tours in Iraq, he saw first-hand injuries suffered by fellow Soldiers and the difference a qualified medical officer could make in their lives.

Always wanting to attend medical school, he said "my service in Iraq solidified this desire because I was directly involved in many combat situations that included evacuating wounded Soldiers."

Donohue was accepted into the Army's Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) after graduating from West Point in 2005. He deferred the scholarship until 2008 so he could serve his country. Now he is challenging himself at Georgetown University School of Medicine.



For many of his peers, accepting the HPSP scholarship is their first introduction to the Army. Others have a family background in the military. Donohue's prior service though gives him a unique glimpse into what to expect.

"I have been through Ranger school, lived overseas, and deployed to Iraq where I led 40 soldiers. My perception of the Army and expectations of the Army are probably very different from most other physicians," he said.

Donohue plans to specialize in orthopedic surgery where he will have a direct impact on the majority of Soldiers returning from combat with serious injuries. While some of his peers may be looking at only a minimal commitment to the Army, Donohue plans to remain in areas of medicine that "directly impact the operational ability of U.S. Army maneuver units or Special Operation forces," he explained.

Attending West Point, serving in Iraq and now studying at Georgetown Medical School, Donohue enjoys hard work, pointing out that students who don't do the work now can jeopardize a patient's life down the road. Still, medical school can be a little daunting.

"The information is thrown at you continuously and you must focus to learn as much as possible," he said of his current work load. "The easiest part has been networking with classmates to build study groups and bonds that will last a lifetime. The most surprising is the overall lack of military medical students."



For more information about Army health-care, visit <http://www.goarmy.com/amedd/>