

My name is Tricia English, and I am the widow of U.S. Army Captain Shawn English.

Shawn was born and raised in Ohio, a graduate of New Albany High School and received his commission through the ROTC program at Wright State University. Shawn spent 16 years serving his country as both an enlisted soldier and as Deep Sea Diving Officer. On December 3, 2006, ten months into his deployment as an advisor on a Military Transition Team embedded with the Iraqi Army 9th Division, Shawn was killed when an insurgent detonated an Explosively Formed Penetrator into his vehicle. At the time of his death our three sons, Nathan, Noah and Austin were 3, 5 and 7.

Losing Shawn, and having three young sons to raise alone was at times, paralyzing. What many do not consider is the simultaneous loss of community that takes place for surviving military families after the death of their loved one. Following the notification, the Casualty Affairs business matters, and the funeral, our families try to create a new normal without our loved one and no longer an active duty military family. In an instant we were no longer part of the community that had directed, and been our entire world, for many years.

I learned about Major Dan Rooney and the Folds of Honor mission from a fellow widow in 2008. The knowledge of the opportunity for financial assistance to help with my sons' education provided tremendous relief. As I grew to know those involved with the mission, Folds of Honor began to provide even more. We became part of a community again- a community that understood what we had experienced and were there to help us stay forward focused through the difficult times. Through Folds of Honor, the boys and I have developed relationships that have helped us carry the load as we navigate this journey without Shawn. I am most grateful that Folds of Honor is there to remind my boys, as they become young men, that their father is remembered and that his sacrifice matters.

My name is Nathan English. I am the oldest of Shawn English's three sons and a Folds of Honor Scholarship recipient. This scholarship has allowed me to attend school to pursue a degree in Business and has relieved some of the financial burden of college for my family. This was especially helpful this past school year. Although I am eligible for educational benefits through the VA because of my father's service and sacrifice, these benefits were not paid as promised because of internal issues within the VA. This caused my school and room and board to go unpaid for many months. Had it not been for the assistance from Folds of Honor I would have been unable to remain at school. Folds of Honor has also given me many mentors I can rely on for advice and encouragement. There have been many times in that past two years where I have wanted nothing more than to hear my dad's advice. I know his advice is something I will never get to hear again. But having people to turn to, who understand and care enough to offer their own, has made this a little easier. I am grateful for all Folds of Honor has provided for my mom, my brothers and I.