



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 29, 2026

AAPG Foundation Honors Eight Students with 2026 Military Veterans Geoscience Scholarships

As the Nation Marks Its 250th Birthday, Foundation Recognizes Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families

TULSA, Okla. — As the United States marks its 250th birthday on Independence Day this week, the Trustees of the AAPG Foundation are honoring the men and women who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces—and their families—by announcing the recipients of the 2026 Deana and Paul Strunk Military Veterans Geoscience Scholarship Program. Each of the eight recipients will receive a \$10,000 scholarship to support their undergraduate geoscience studies.

2026 Scholarship Recipients

Eric Aime — Oregon State University

U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant

Recipient of the Jack C. and Catherine I. Threet Named Grant

Nichole Cornell — University of Idaho

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman – honorably discharged

Eric Estrada — University of Texas at Austin

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman – honorably discharged

Kaileigh Gonzales — Western Colorado University

U.S. Army, dependent

Tristan Ilgenfritz — Louisiana State University

U.S. Army, dependent

Yakira Johnson — University of Texas at San Antonio

U.S. Air Force, dependent

Drake Love — Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

U.S. Air Force, dependent

Tinius Manu — University of Arizona

U.S. Army, dependent

“The grit and determination of these individuals come through in each and every one of their applications. Their stories are as compelling as their academic ambitions, and the future of the geosciences is in good hands.”

— Valary Schulz, Treasurer and Trustee, AAPG Foundation

“It was the leadership of the late AAPG Foundation Trustee Paul Strunk and his wife Deana that inspired the Trustees to create this program. Many donors have joined the Strunks in growing it, and it is our privilege to support these deserving students as they pursue studies and careers in geoscience.”

— Jim McGhay, Chair and Trustee, AAPG Foundation

About the Military Veterans Geoscience Scholarship Program

The Deana and Paul Strunk Military Veterans Geoscience Scholarship Program supports education and career opportunities for servicemembers, veterans, and their dependents (spouses and children). The Foundation awards scholarships ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 to cover the cost of attending an accredited four-year college or university. Recipients may reapply without restriction.

Applications are accepted annually from February 1 to April 30.

About the AAPG Foundation

Established in 1967, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to advancing geoscience education and research. The Foundation supports educational and research programs to benefit the geological profession and the public, with emphasis on petroleum and energy geoscience, energy minerals, and environmental geoscience. For more information about the AAPG Foundation and its programs, visit aapgfoundation.org.

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