

Dean's Medalist, Marine turns a new leaf at ASU West Valley

Andrew Borseth credits New College, NROTC and family for helping him chart a new path toward teaching

By Mariana Lozovanu, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [fall 2025 graduates](#).

When Andrew Borseth signed up for Officer Candidate School, he never imagined it would eventually lead him back to a classroom at Arizona State University's [West Valley campus](#).

After nine years of active-duty service as a U.S. Marine, including time as a ground electronic transmission systems maintainer and combat marksmanship trainer, Borseth earned a coveted spot in the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program, packed up his family and moved from North Dakota to Arizona to finish his degree.

A first-generation graduate, husband and father of two, he balanced schoolwork with military responsibilities, early-morning mentoring sessions with ASU's [Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps](#) unit, and late-night study marathons after his children went to sleep.

As part of the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program, he served as a mentor to future officers. In 2024, he helped coordinate ceremonial operations for the USS Arizona submarine launch, representing the university and the U.S. Marine Corps at a national level.

At ASU, he worked on independent research on military and political transitions in classical civilizations. Borseth's capstone project, "A Promising Plan on Fragile Ground: U.S. Officials and Colombia's Plan Lazo," showcased his ability to connect historical research with modern military and geopolitical contexts.

With support from [New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences](#) faculty, a scholarship through NROTC and a newfound love for classical and ancient history, Borseth completed his [Bachelor of Arts in history](#) with a minor in classical civilization. He's also the [Department of Naval Science's](#) fall 2025 Dean's Medalist.

Here he shares more about his college journey.

Question: What was your “aha” moment, when you realized you wanted to study the field you majored in?

Answer: There wasn't a single defining moment. I'd tried college before and initially studied psychology, but my heart wasn't in it. When I came back to school I decided I wanted to commit to something I was passionate about. I've always loved history, and once I chose it, everything clicked.

Q: Why did you choose New College?

A: I chose New College because of the smaller-campus atmosphere. Class sizes are smaller, you get more one-on-one time with professors and staff, and it's easier to build relationships with fellow students. That sense of community made a big difference for me.

Q: What's something you learned while at New College that surprised you or changed your perspective?

A: I didn't expect to become so interested in classical and ancient Mediterranean history, things like ancient Greece, Rome and Persia. I took a course on Cyrus the Great and the way the professor taught it made the subject come alive.

Q: Which professor taught you the most important lesson while at New College, and what was that lesson?

A: Professors like Matt Simonton and Julia Sarreal were huge influences. They taught me that history isn't just dates and facts, it's about perspective, analysis and understanding how events fit into a larger human story.

Q: What's the best piece of advice you'd offer to someone considering applying for college?

A: Major in something you're passionate about rather than chasing a paycheck. If you genuinely care about what you're studying, you'll be more motivated, the work will feel more meaningful and you'll be excited to finish projects and papers.

Q: What are your plans after graduation?

A: I'll return to the fleet and attend The Basic School in Quantico, Virginia, then go where the corps sends me. Down the road I hope to earn a master's and eventually a doctorate so I can teach history; that's something I'm passionate about.

Q: If someone gave you \$40 million to solve one problem on our planet, what would you tackle?

A: I would like to support youth sports, especially in overlooked or underprivileged areas. I wholeheartedly believe that team sports are a vital tool in promoting a healthy lifestyle, teaching leadership skills and building confidence.

Q: Part of New College's name is “New.” What does the word mean to you? Describe how you feel “new.”

A: "New" means a fresh start. My first attempt at college nine years ago didn't go well because I lacked discipline. New College gave me a second chance, and I've done better than I ever thought I would.

Q: How do you think you embody ASU's charter through your actions and experiences?

A: I'd point to inclusivity. As a "back-to-school" student who came back after a rough first attempt at college, New College offered a supportive environment that helped me succeed. Faculty, staff and campus resources made that possible.

Mariana Lozovanu and Megan Neely contributed to this article.

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Main image



Andrew Borseth will graduate this fall with a bachelor's degree in history and a minor in classical civilization from ASU's New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. He is a double Dean's Medalist — for both the ASU Department of Naval Science and for New College. Photo by Danielle Castillo/ASU

Gallery



Andrew with wife Leah, daughter Brynn and son Bjorn dressed up for Halloween.



Drew Borseth is the Department of Naval Science's fall 2025 Dean's Medalist and a Dean's Medalist for the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. After graduation, he will continue to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps. Once his time in the service is over, he hopes to teach history.



Andrew (and his wife, second and third from left) and fellow Marines in the program at an NROTC gathering.



A proud Borseth holds his son on ASU's Tempe campus.



Andrew Borseth's favorite study spot at the West Valley campus: Fletcher Library.