

## feature story

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BERT VANDERVEEN

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# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE MILITARY FRIENDLY?

**I**t's a good thing that Zin Maung '23 (Information Systems and Supply Chain Management) was a Division I track and field athlete because he has spent a lot of time running – to class, sports practices, military obligations, and his work as a graduate assistant with the Bryan School of Business and Economics before recently landing a full-time job.

Recognized nationally as a veteran student athlete, Maung believes his achievements have been fueled in part from UNCG's deep commitment to supporting military students and veterans – the university has been named both a Best for Vets and Military Friendly school, and is a Yellow Ribbon Program participant, proud to offer a variety of benefits for veterans, active-duty military, and military-affiliated students.

"UNCG offers the flexibility for vets to attend school fully online and still live on campus if they choose," Maung says. "When I had military commitments, I would send my professors an email to let them know my situation, and they helped me through all of it. That's honestly why I got the GPA that I did."

### Running Down a Dream

Maung graduated with a 3.8 in May 2023. Now, he is working toward an MBA and a post-graduate certificate, recently landing a full-time job in procurement. Eventually, he wants to pursue a PhD.

His dedication to his studies and the military are rooted in his history.



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**ZIN MAUNG**

'23 (Information Systems and Supply Chain Management)

Grateful to be in the U.S., Maung carried with him a desire to give back as his family moved from Pittsburgh, PA, to Chapel Hill, where he attended high school and became an All-State track runner. Once at UNCG, he got involved with the men's club volleyball team, spending two years as club president and helping the team take on some Division I matchups, before successfully trying out for track and field.

As he thought about his future, Maung decided to reach out to the U.S. Marines as well as the U.S. Army. "The Army picked up right away," Maung says with a laugh. So, the Army it was.

As soon as he finished his sophomore year, he traveled to Fort Jackson for three months of basic training that included 25-mile hikes with 60 pounds on his back. After scoring well on Army aptitude tests, he then went to quartermaster school in Fort Lee, where he honed skills related to warehousing, inventory management and automated logistics.

But by now, he was starting his junior year in college too, and that's when UNCG's support really kicked in. Maung attended the first part of his semester online so he could finish his time on base. "I had 4 a.m. wakeups for PT training; did Army school from 9 to 5; then more athletic training; and from 7 to 8 p.m. and on the weekends, I did as much UNCG school work as I could squeeze in," he said. Carrying a load of four Bryan School courses, he kept his grades up at UNCG while finishing second in his Army class. All the while, his professors were supportive, and the university held a dorm room so he could return to campus.

### Hard Work Pays Off

Today, Maung serves in the Army Reserve while working for a medical technology manufacturer near Research Triangle Park. Before landing the role, he served as a Bryan School graduate assistant and graduate student ambassador, talking with prospective MBA students and helping international students navigate the application process. He received many compliments in his role as a GA, says Jennifer Kiger Chapman, assistant director of graduate recruitment.



"As a minority-serving institution with applicants from across the globe, the Bryan School relies on students like Zin, and he was one of the most gifted and devoted graduate assistants that I have worked with," she says. "He goes above and beyond by spending extra time meeting with prospective students, sharing advice and recommendations, and encouraging applicants. He was a leader on the team and motivated others through his example."

Chapman was so impressed that she successfully nominated him for recognition as a 2024 Student Veteran Athlete of the Year from GI Jobs Magazine. Maung continues to train with the Army Reserves, learning tactics, radio communications, weaponry and battle assembly. His military service makes his mom a little nervous, he admits, but his dad is thrilled.

"My dad's motto is: Never let good enough be enough," Maung says. "I can see all the hard work that my parents put in for us. My goal is to pay back all my family's debts and be able to take care of them and then be financially stable enough to support my own family one day. And I know none of this would have been possible without the support of my fellow veterans, coaches, mentors and professors. I look forward to continuing to represent the veteran community both on and off the field."■

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