



Chicago Booth Veterans:

Armed with Camaraderie and Community

With the help of our generous donors, Chicago Booth has increased the availability of scholarship funds for veterans in recent years—largely through the school’s participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program.

The Full-Time MBA Program in particular has become increasingly popular among veterans from all branches of the military. In turn, our community of veterans is thriving.

“We help each other out just like in the military, and you know you can count on them,” Brittany Albrinck, Full-Time MBA class of 2019, said of her veteran peers and being in the Armed Forces Group at Booth.

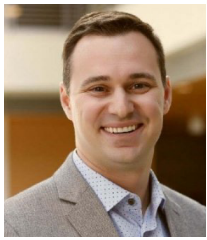
Albrinck and fellow students Alex Panosian, Michael Sanchez, and Aviv Shalgi have different stories and paths to the military and Booth, yet there is at least one commonality uniting them: they each share a deep commitment to building camaraderie and community with other veterans at Booth.



Brittany Albrinck: Albrinck is from Cincinnati, Ohio and attended The Ohio State University. She graduated in 2010 with bachelor’s degrees in finance and mathematics. Albrinck’s father, who served during the Vietnam War, inspired her to join the National Guard. “Being in the service gives you

an understanding of the privileges we are given as Americans. I also have an interest in understanding other people, and it’s a very diverse group in the National Guard. The military gives you a worldly view and a global understanding,” she said.

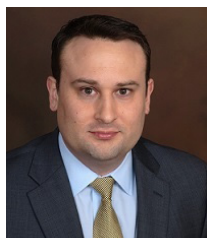
During her six-year stint in the National Guard, Albrinck spent six months in Kuwait as a logistics planner. When she finished her tour of duty, she began working at Accenture and held various positions from 2012-17 before beginning full-time study at Booth. Albrinck is a member of Booth Soccer and the Corporate Management and Strategy Group.



Alex Panosian: Originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Panosian was grateful for the opportunities he was given early in his life and deeply valued the notion of teamwork and community. “I played team sports growing up and always really cared about working alongside others towards a shared goal,” he said. “Being proud of where I’m from and thankful for the opportunities I had been afforded, I knew I wanted to do more after I graduated from high school.” That sense of responsibility and calling propelled him to enroll at the United States Military Academy at West Point. At West Point, he gained acclaim for a paper and multiple presentations on gender equality, as well as for his honors thesis, which he wrote on Google and China. He graduated from West Point in 2011 with a bachelor’s degree in international relations with honors.

Following graduation, he joined the Army as a field artillery officer. He spent five years in the military, serving in Germany, Afghanistan, and Oklahoma. His most impactful experience was leading troops and advising a local governor while serving in Afghanistan. While there, he built relationships amongst the Afghan government, local police, and Afghan Army to increase the effectiveness of their institutions. After returning home and spending a few more years in a garrison environment, he decided he was ready for the next chapter of his career, and he began looking into MBA programs.

Now in the Full-Time MBA Program, Panosian chose to attend Booth because he thought the school’s reputation for academic rigor and quantitative curriculum would provide him with a well-rounded skill set. At Booth, he co-chairs the Armed Forces Group and the Private and Family Business Group.



Michael Sanchez: Born in Miami, Florida, Sanchez grew up listening to stories his grandfather, a retired Army colonel and Green Beret, would tell. He knew at a young age that he wanted to serve in the military, but he didn’t know in what capacity. Sanchez excelled in physics and calculus in high school, which he leveraged to gain acceptance into the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program for a full ride to Florida State University.

During his first two years in college, he lost focus, and his grades slipped. He received an email from the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, offering to pay for his schooling if he entered their program. Within five minutes, he began the application process. Motivated by the admiral he interviewed with to gain acceptance into the program, Sanchez improved his grades, graduated from

Florida State with a degree in chemical engineering, and attended Naval Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island. After completing Nuclear Power School, he was stationed on the fast-attack submarine USS Seawolf (SSN-21) in Bremerton, Washington. When he was 27, he surfaced the \$5 billion Seawolf through the Arctic ice at the North Pole, which he considers a highlight of his military career.

After his tour of duty on the Seawolf, Sanchez became the assistant director of the Navy’s Wounded Warrior Program for Naval District Washington D.C., working with seriously ill, injured, and wounded sailors at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Sanchez loved his time in the Navy but decided to pursue new challenges. He started exploring business schools to further his management skills. “I loved the discipline of engineering, but it doesn’t teach you much about managing people,” he said.

When determining where to pursue his MBA, Sanchez considered other schools, but he ultimately chose Booth because he thought the culture aligned most with his needs. “The way the school is run fits my personality. You’re free to do as much as you want. Booth was also the most academic,” he said.

Sanchez is a co-chair of the Armed Forces Group and a member of the Investment Banking Group and Hispanic American Business Students Association.



Aviv Shalgi: Born and raised in Israel, Shalgi joined the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) after graduating from high school in 2004. Although it is mandatory to join the military in Israel, Shalgi believes it was his obligation as a citizen to support and protect his country and give back. He conducted intelligence work in the IDF as an officer in the satellite unit from 2004-08.

In 2008, he began studying electrical and electronics engineering at Tel Aviv University. During his studies, he also was employed as a project manager and system engineer for the IDF, as well as a hardware design engineer for Intel Corporation. In his third year of studying, Shalgi realized that engineering was not his passion; it was business and innovation he wanted to pursue. After receiving his bachelor’s degree in 2012, he held positions in business at TASC Consulting and Capital, Taptica, and Google. He currently is a second-year student in Booth’s Full-Time MBA Program and a Venture Capital Associate for the Innovation Fund. He co-chairs the Armed Forces Group and the Jewish Business Student Association. He’s also a member of the Booth Technology Group, the Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital Club, and the Dean’s Student Admissions Committee.

Coming Together

At Booth, many veterans opt to join the Armed Forces Group, which emphasizes the importance of community and 'paying it forward.'

For example, Shalgi was impressed by the responsiveness of Booth students and alumni he contacted when he was a prospective student trying to gauge if Booth was the right fit for him. He said that everyone went above and beyond—from offering to speak with him on the phone when he was a prospective student to calling to congratulate him after he was accepted to Booth. "Everyone is so helpful and communicative with one another," he said. "It feels more like a family. You always have people to talk to."

Panosian noted he even felt cared for by his fellow classmates against whom he was competing for the same job during the recruiting process. "Everyone was incredibly supportive and friendly during the interview process," he recalled. "There was a lot of camaraderie among everyone. Even though there was high competition, nothing about it felt cutthroat. It cemented my feeling that Booth was the best place for me."

The Armed Forces Group also provides a platform for those with shared experiences and perspectives. Veteran students have experienced challenging, high-pressure situations with heavy ramifications—sometimes between life and death—that many outside of the military never face.

"Being in the military and being asked at school how to explain what you did [in the military] is hard when what you did is confidential," Shalgi said of his work in intelligence. "But with the Armed Forces Group here to understand that, I feel extremely supported."

"On top of having these kinds of responsibilities and learning how to effectively handle high-stakes situations, we realize that if everything doesn't go perfectly for a slide or homework assignment, it will be OK," Panosian explained. "I think we are a steadying balance on the community."

Paying It Forward

Since 2011, Chicago Booth has provided increased scholarship support for US military veterans, namely through its participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program. This program offers institutions of higher learning to voluntarily enter into an agreement with the US Department of Veteran Affairs to fund tuition and fee

expenses that exceed the established thresholds under the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

A number of donors have contributed to Booth's expanded efforts to provide scholarships for veterans, including Eric Gleacher, '67, who made a \$10 million commitment in 2016 to fund a groundbreaking scholarship program for US veterans. The Gleacher Veteran Scholars Fund serves as a permanent source of scholarship support, allowing Booth to sustain and expand its financial support for veterans. Of his gift, Gleacher said, "I hope my gift will make pursuing an MBA at Booth significantly more affordable for many of these veterans. A Booth MBA can inspire veteran students as future business leaders, preparing them for successful careers as entrepreneurs and executives in major companies."

Through a combination of scholarship support that includes Yellow Ribbon funding, the GI Bill, and merit scholarships, Panosian, Shalgi, Albrinck, and Sanchez are among the veteran students who are able to attend Booth's Full-Time MBA Program with fewer financial constraints.

"A BOOTH MBA CAN INSPIRE VETERAN STUDENTS AS FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS, PREPARING THEM FOR SUCCESSFUL CAREERS AS ENTREPRENEURS AND EXECUTIVES IN MAJOR COMPANIES."

—Eric Gleacher, '67

"For a Booth degree, whatever I have to take out in loans is worth it," Albrinck said. "Having the extra money allows me to take full advantage of my MBA. I don't have to worry so much about cost when I am considering things like going on a trek. The Booth degree will be invaluable for me in the future."

Scholarship support for our veterans has been critical in attracting and enrolling the best students from around the globe. For Shalgi, the scholarship offer solidified his decision to attend Booth.

"I was awarded my scholarship a month after I was admitted, so this gave me time to really consider which school I wanted to go to," he explained. "I had decided that Booth was the school I wanted to attend. Then when I got the scholarship offer from Booth, it cemented my decision to go here."

We would like to thank
the following donors
for their support of
veteran programs at
Chicago Booth.

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