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Media Relations

March 26, 2015

Medal of Honor Recipient and Alumnus Ryan Pitts is 2015 UNH Commencement Speaker



The ninth living recipient of the Medal of Honor for his combat actions in Afghanistan, former U.S. Army staff sergeant Ryan Pitts '13 will deliver the University of New Hampshire commencement address Saturday, May 16, 2015.

DURHAM, NH – The ninth living recipient of the Medal of Honor for his combat actions in Afghanistan, former U.S. Army staff sergeant Ryan Pitts '13 will deliver the University of New Hampshire commencement address Saturday, May 16, 2015.

Pitts was awarded the medal on July 21, 2014, for his actions July 13, 2008, during the Battle of Wanat. As part of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, Staff Sgt. Pitts served as a forward observer. Pitts is the third recipient of the Medal of Honor from the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment. He was medically discharged in 2009.

A 2013 graduate of the university's business program in Manchester and a member of the UNH Alumni Association advisory board, Pitts graduated summa cum laude, with a near-perfect GPA. Named a Presidential Scholar, he also received the Brennan Award for character, perseverance and academic excellence and one of the UNH Awards of Excellence, as well as several student leadership prizes.

While at Manchester he gave the college's honors convocation address, confessing that he had always planned to attend college following his military service, but was "scared about returning to school. I was worried I would fail after an almost six-year break from academic pursuits." Born in Lowell, Mass., he moved with his family to rural Mont Vernon, N.H. and attended Souhegan High School, where he described himself as an "unfocused" student who never really applied himself.

The [University of New Hampshire](#), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,300 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

Image for download: <http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2015/03/images/pitts-4936.jpg>

Caption: The ninth living recipient of the Medal of Honor for his combat actions in Afghanistan, former U.S. Army staff sergeant Ryan Pitts '13 will deliver the University of New Hampshire commencement address Saturday, May 16, 2015.

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