My pursuit of learning as a lifelong endeavor intensified while attending the University of Virginia. There, students are “first-” through “fourth-years,” not “freshmen” through “seniors,” as founder Thomas Jefferson believed learning should not stop after four years. After graduating and joining the Army, I had to quickly adapt to a steep learning curve, new environments, and interacting with a diverse array of new people. After months of establishing my unit’s arms room, the high-security padlock we required finally arrived. Moments later, a Soldier inadvertently broke the lock. I knew nothing about locks, but when faced with a challenge, my insatiable desire to learn pushes me to generate creative solutions.

I mistakenly decided to disassemble the padlock further—springs and pins exploded across my office. I combed the internet, consuming everything I could find, from lock enthusiasts’ videos to technical specifications. I was engrossed in this new, high-security-padlock world; this particular six-pin design allowed for 46,656 different orientations. Painstakingly, I used tweezers, duct tape, and my newfound knowledge to reassemble the pieces. I emerged the next morning with the padlock, miraculously fully repaired and functional.

In the Army, I learned to pivot often, and taught myself things I never thought I would need to know. The MMM program provides an opportunity to hone my problem-solving skills, how to think about customer-product experience, and how to apply those to design better products. Whether it’s from the MMM faculty, peers, or community, I’m excited to continue my relentless pursuit to never stop learning.