

After Action

FEATURES



DOUG PIERCE:

It only took one trip to Landstuhl to expand this civilian's perspective on the military



WARRIOR PROFILE:

Sonny Seyedi conquered many trials after service. Now he's pursuing an education as a lawyer.



BACK ON TRACK:

Can a busy father approaching 40 go back to school? Christopher Kind was about to find out.



WARRIOR PHOTOGRAPHY:

Three warriors are using photography as a hobby to stay engaged with their community.

DEPARTMENTS

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- 18 MY FAMILY'S STORY The prognosis was grim for Janice Huss' son, but she wasn't about to quit on him.
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A DECADE OF SERVICE.



A LIFETIME OF COMMITMENT.

CONTACT

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FCONOMIC FMPOWFRMENT

Dear Alumnus,

At Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) we strongly believe a rewarding career and an excellent education are vital pieces of an injured service member's recovery. That's why we've developed four programs under our economic empowerment pillar that encourage financial peace and foster long-term employment. Christopher Kind, this issue's cover story, is just one example of how warriors have taken those tools and made themselves a success.

Chris' Army career ended in Iraq when a mortar struck the ordnance in his camp. Chris was covered in burns and faced a long physical recovery when he woke up in Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. Almost more devastating, though, was the certainty that he was no longer a soldier. Medical retirement left Christopher drifting through life without a clear purpose.

An introduction to WWP through a doctor eventually led Chris to enroll in our TRACK™ program. TRACK not only provides warriors up to 24 credit hours at a local college, but also health and wellness training, and individualized performance and goal-setting training. Chris, a married father approaching 40 years old, doubted his ability to go to back to school, but he soon discovered the companionship of other combat veterans is the secret ingredient to success in TRACK.

As you flip through the pages, you'll also find a success story from our Transition Training Academy $^{\text{\tiny{TM}}}$, which sets service members on the path to an information technology career through hands-on learning. We've also provided tips to get you started on a path to solid financial planning.

Overall, finances are just one part in our holistic approach to honoring and empowering Wounded Warriors. But it's a critical element, and we're committed to providing you tools for everything from finding the right college to landing a dream job.

Steven Nardizzi

Executive Director, Wounded Warrior Project

NEWS AND NOTES ★ ★ ★ ★

We've got a new way to keep you plugged in to Wounded Warrior Project events. Check out page 25 for more information.



Pull on your running shoes and sign up for one of our 8K runs debuting this fall. Learn more at woundedwarriorproject.org.



Kristian Gaasland, center, enjoys a day in the Tetons with his father and brother.

The annual trip out West for a week of skiing was the Gaasland family tradition for years. But when Kristian Gaasland returned home from Iraq in 2005, the odds of a repeat trip were low. The Army veteran was living with knee and back pain born from months of carrying gear and weapons, airplane jumps, and his cramped position as a Humvee gunner. The first time he tried skiing, "I nearly blacked out from the pain," Kristian says. An invite to a ski event hosted by Wounded Warrior Project and Grand Targhee Resort: Adaptive Adventures changed everything. Kristian was able to take along his brother and father on a ski trip and, with the use of a mono-ski, recapture the family bond. "My dad was proud, even if he had a hard time keeping up," Kristian says with a laugh.



Joshua Langston follows his fellow warriors out of the White House during Soldier Ride® DC after a personal welcome from President Obama. Joshua was one of 50 warriors to participate in the roughly 70-mile ride through the Beltway.



Warriors and the Boston College baseball team recently faced off in the first softball Under Armour Freedom Game. The warriors emerged victorious with a 12-5 score, but they also won big with new veteran



Florida warriors challenged and encouraged each other and Wounded Warrior Project teammates when Tough Mudder came to Jacksonville.

Based in Orlando, Florida, Doug Pierce is a singer/ songwriter who travels several times each year to Germany's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center to play for injured troops. Sharing the stage is a rotating lineup of artists who play with him under the collective band name Willy Pete. All of them donate their time and raise money for their expenses. Doug recently sat down with Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) to talk about Willy Pete's origins and why he keeps returning to Germany.

WWP: Tell me about your first performance at Landstuhl.

Doug: I was invited to the hospital in 2004 while touring Germany. This was right around the time of the battle of Fallujah in Iraq, so the hospital was packed with the wounded. We just went room to room playing, or sometimes we would stand in the halls and perform. I remember talking with some of the troops and saying something like, "At least you get to go home and see your family now." But they wanted to go back on the battlefield and be back beside their brothers in arms. As a civilian that was incomprehensible, but I was slowly learning that is the amazing military mindset.

WWP: After that first trip you made an effort to go back as often as possible. It wasn't until 2010, though, that you organized under the banner of Willy Pete and started booking through the USO. Where did the name Willy Pete come from?

Doug: I asked a good friend of mine who was a former Army Ranger to give me some military terms. He was going down a list when he mentioned Willy Pete, which is what all of the military branches call white phosphorous. I liked it because it was not only a general military term, but it was also broad enough to encompass all of the different music genres we play.

WWP: What are some memorable experiences at Landstuhl?

Doug: There are so many. I remember a Purple Heart ceremony and a 10-year-old son of a soldier in a wheelchair who sang every word to our songs. But the most memorable experiences have been meeting all the grateful warriors who have come back to Landstuhl through WWP.

WWP: Tell me about your education in military culture since that first trip to Landstuhl and how you've applied it to your tour.

Doug: I've learned a lot since then about the sacrifices our military members make. I used to see pictures of people reuniting after deployment and think it was a nice ending, but now I know that's just



the beginning of a different war. There are things like WWP hosting a hospital staff appreciation day at Landstuhl, and you suddenly realize the sacrifices the medical staff makes. That knowledge allows me to talk intelligently with the troops and let them know we genuinely care. We tell them from the stage it's not just a gig for us at all; it's really more of a mission.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Wounded Warrior Project has dozens of events going on around the country. Learn how to get involved on page 25.

MILLOPETES

OVERCOMING TRIALS

Sonny Seyedi had the courage to reenlist during a time of war.

He survived combat and a bomb blast and discovered a new inner strength after his mother passed away. But when it came to asking for help in school, Sonny's confidence suddenly abandoned him.

"I didn't realize at first how hurt I was with my traumatic brain injury (TBI)," Sonny explains. But when he failed his easiest classes at Park University's Los Angeles, California, campus, Sonny knew something was wrong.

Sonny had turned down previous offers for help from disabled student services, but his degree was now at stake. A newly humbled Sonny approached his student counselor again, and she gave him an ultimatum: Accept the assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the university or drop out.

Sonny chose the help, and it changed his life in more ways than he imagined.

For three months Sonny was coached and trained by other disabled students, many of whom were confined to a wheelchair. His new mentors eventually became friends, and they shared with him their struggles with accessibility and the heartbreak of people taking advantage of them. It was an eye-opening experience for Sonny and inspired him to become a champion on their behalf.



"I decided, 'You guys need a voice,'" Sonny recalls. "I have the GI Bill at my disposal, and I'm able-bodied. So why not?"

Those months started Sonny down the path toward becoming a civil rights attorney. But inspiration isn't enough to keep up grades, so Sonny accepted the assistance of a tutor and a note taker. The latter drew curious looks from other students at first because Sonny physically appears normal. It's a challenge sometimes as a student-veteran to explain the memory loss caused by a TBI, why bright lights hurt your eyes, and the pain caused by long periods of sitting.

"What you see is not always what you get," Sonny says.

In spite of the challenges to his academic progress, Sonny persevered and graduated in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in marketing and management. Today he still relies on a tutor to help him prepare for his Law School Admission Test in October, but he's comfortable now accepting the help.

On the days he gets discouraged, Sonny turns to the memory of his mother and his early mentors for inspiration. He is also encouraged by an internship at the law office of attorney David Hoffman in Woodland Hills, California, which provides Sonny an opportunity to observe civil trials.

Sonny wants other warriors to learn from his experience and encourages them to seek help early in the pursuit of their dreams.

"Stop being in denial and know your limitations," Sonny says. "Once you know that, then it's up to you to accept the tools at your disposal."



\star UP AND ACTIVE

CYCLE THIS SUMMER

Cycling is a great way to stay active and healthy during the long days of summer, even with certain physical limitations. A hand cycle, recumbent cycle, and upright cycle each have

their own advantages for your stage of recovery. Check out the photos below for instructions on how to best ride the cycle of your choice.

Exercises demonstrated by Alumnus Nathan Lane

UPRIGHT INCORRECT

- 1) Seat is not properly fitted
- 2) Arms are locked
- 3) Helmet is unsecured



UPRIGHT CORRECT

- 1) Seat is adjusted
- 2) Arms are bent at 45-degree angle
- 3) Helmet is strapped on



Interested in learning more about the cycling resources in your community? Contact us at bikeclinic@woundedwarriorproject.org.

RECUMBENT INCORRECT

- 1) Heels are on the pedals
- 2) Legs are too high
- 3) Safety flag is missing
- 4) Helmet is missing



RECUMBENT CORRECT

- 1) Boom is properly extended for warrior's legs
- 2) Helmet is on
- 3) Toes are on the pedals
- 4) Safety flag is installed



HAND CYCLE INCORRECT

- 1) Legs are bent
- 2) There is no safety flag
- 3) Helmet is unsecured
- 4) Brake cables are twisted



HAND CYCLE CORRECT

- 1) Helmet is strapped on
- 2) Safety flag is attached
- 3) Legs are straight
- 4) Brake cables are untwisted



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a battle plan for Healthy Finances

Just as a plan directs every step of a military operation, personal finances also need a plan of action. Managing money and balancing competing needs is easier when priorities are clearly established. While personal situations vary between warriors, here are some general strategies that can fit any income situation.

CREATE A BUDGET

Regardless of your goals, creating a budget and sticking to it will help you achieve them. This is especially true for longterm financial planning.

CREATING A BUDGET

Creating a budget is the first step toward maximizing your financial well-being. While effective budgeting requires both discipline and sacrifice, your goal should not be to stop all discretionary spending and deny yourself the things you enjoy. Instead, draft a budget so you better understand where your money goes each month.

TO CREATE A BUDGET WORKSHEET:

Write down all sources of income, including your VA compensation, your work paycheck, your spouse's salary, and any additional income you receive from rental properties, investments, etc.

Record all purchases to get a better grasp on how you are spending your money on a day-to-day basis.

Organize your expenses into "fixed" and "variable" categories to identify areas you can cut back expenses.



No matter how well you plan, unexpected expenses, such as new tires and house repairs, will occur from time to time. This fund should be separate from what you use to pay bills and day-to-day expenses.

If you would like personalized financial coaching to assist you with managing debt and creating a budget, contact the Wounded Warrior Project Resource Center at resourcecenter@woundedwarriorproject.org.

A financial goal may be as immediate as paying

next month's rent or as far into the future as having

the money you will need for your children's college education. How much money do you need? How much time do you need? These are the guestions

to identify in setting goals.

DEFINE

AFTER ACTION REPORT • SUMMER 2013





'Don't worry about a thing, 'Cause every little thing gonna be all right."

Really?

Even when you've been burned over 50 percent of your body? Even when you're immobilized in a hospital bed for months; your arms and legs swollen five times their normal size and mummified in bandages from head to toe? Even with fractures in your hands and feet?

Sergeant Christopher Kind had those questions as he stared at the crack in the ceiling at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio. After 30 days in a coma, and now with the Bob Marley song revolving in his head, Chris wished he could join Marley in death.

Chris doesn't remember anything about the incident that put him there in 2004. In his last moment of consciousness, he was in Iraq, talking to his supervisor. Warriors like Chris who work logistics in the Army never stop planning ahead. So he was up that night getting ready for the next day while the combat unit slept. He knew his job helped keep them alive.

Then, he's been told, there was a massive explosion.

"The attack hit the ordnance," says Chris. "I was dragged out of there on fire. They got me to the combat hospital on base, then to Landstuhl to be stabilized, but I never woke up until a month later at BAMC."

His ears were ringing, and he could hear people talking, but it sounded like they were underwater. Although he thought he

was in Iraq, the distinctive odor that wafted to his nostrils took Chris back to his first deployment in Afghanistan.

"You never forget the stench of burning flesh. In Afghanistan, I was tasked with helping transport body bags containing warriors, civilians, women, and children. When you unzip those bags so the families can identify the remains, you smell the death."

Chris soon realized it was his own burnt flesh invading his senses.

"I had tubes going in me everywhere. There were doctors and nurses and people wearing scrubs that covered everything but their eyes. I felt God had deserted me. So I leaned on Marley to calm my mind."

"Oh my little darlin" don't shed no tears. No woman no cry."

"You look just like my wife," Chris said to the nurse. "She has the same pretty eyes and the same beautiful smile."

She flashed that smile and said, "Everything is going to be all right, Chris."

Was she reading his mind, Chris wondered, because that's the lyric he'd been singing to himself. What he didn't know was the "nurse" really was his wife, Marcia.

"I was so loopy on pain medication I didn't realize it was her," says Chris. "When I found out, I was overjoyed." But it was difficult, too, because they couldn't touch.

"I wanted to sit up so I could hug her, but I couldn't move. They had my hands and arms elevated on stands, sticking straight out to the side. They didn't want the skin grafts touching anything. Plus, I had suffered inhalation burns, and the doctors had performed a tracheotomy."

After about 10 days, Chris improved enough to start rehab. That's when two burly men would come to his room, help Chris sit on the edge of the bed, and stand him on his feet. Chris' task was to not fall over.

"Then they'd put me back down in bed, and that was all I could do for the day. I had been unconscious for so long the muscles deteriorated. Every moment was painful, frustrating, hopeless, and depressing."

So much so that Chris told Marcia she would be better off leaving him. After all, she had to do everything — feed him, clean him, and take care of him like a baby.

"What kind of husband could I be for you?" Chris remembers asking Marcia. "I didn't want her to leave, but I told her to."

Marcia stuck by his side and pushed him to try harder. She knew Chris is a fighter.

"We're both in the military, so we're accustomed to doing more than what's expected of us," says Marcia. "At first, we didn't know if Chris was going to make it. I couldn't bear to think that I was going to lose him. That's why I pushed him so hard. It was for us. We need each other."

She says the struggles of Chris' healing actually improved their relationship in a way that wouldn't have happened otherwise. It made them stronger and brought them closer together.

"He's a big teddy bear," Marcia says with a laugh. "I think I'm tougher than he is."

"Only the strong will continue. I know you have it in you."

So — with the lyrics of Bob Marley's son Damian Marley circling his mind — Chris kept pushing forward.

"They'd tell me to take a step, and I'd give them two steps. My wife got me to challenge myself — for her and for my family. And, I must say, I had the best rehab team any man could want."

It didn't happen overnight. Two long years of rehab meant steps forward and steps back — like when he first saw himself in a mirror, skin all scarred, face all pink, hair burnt off.

"I went into shock," remembers Chris.
"And when they'd clean my wounds, the pain was unbearable."

Eventually, by 2006, Chris was strong enough for the family to move back to Micronesia, where Marcia's parents lived. Every morning he would grease himself up and slide into a whole body suit he wore 20 hours a day to safeguard his skin. Even so, Chris tried his best to adjust to his new normal.

"We lived there for four years. I traveled back and forth to Hawaii and Guam for my health care. Marcia's dad outfitted his boat with a special canopy to shelter me from the sun, and we'd go fishing all the time. But I was really just sitting around, getting fat, and waiting to

die. I needed to find something."

Micronesia was good for Chris's stress level, and he got better at handling his traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Yet there were no military veterans of Chris's era in Micronesia, and he often felt no one around understood what he was really going through.

So the family moved back to San Antonio, where Chris finally found the "something" he was yearning for.

'Don't lose track of yourself. Don't be just a stock on the shelf."

"I was introduced to Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) when we were in San Antonio while I was at a health appointment at BAMC," says Chris. "I met Mike Owens, the dean of students at TRACK, and he told me all about it."

TRACK is the first education center in the nation specifically for Wounded Warriors. Students enter the program as a team and continue to learn together for 12 months. Although it was tough for a man almost 40 years old to get the hang of going back to school, Chris persevered and found personal empowerment through the program.

"I remember the civilians in Afghanistan would come up to me and ask endless questions. They had such a hunger for knowledge. I wanted to have that same hunger. TRACK has so many programs — education, life skills training, peak performance enhancement, health and wellness. I felt like I had really started living again."



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Chris found himself changing in a positive way. At first, he shied away from other students. He was hyperaware of his surroundings and made sure he always sat in the back of class where he could see everyone and every exit.

"But you discover you've got other vets in class with you," says Chris, as a big smile cracks his face. "We've got a vet in back of the class, in the front, on the left, on the right, and so on. And you realize we've all got each other's back — just like in the military. That's when I started to relax, and TRACK became a really powerful tool in my life's toolbox."

The biggest stride Chris made through TRACK was his connection with other injured service members.

"Others can only understand you to a certain point. But another injured brother, he or she knows what you're going through because they've been there. They know about the nightmares, the flashbacks, the depression, and the anxiety. We stand on each other's shoulders — the shoulders of giants."

"David slew Goliath with a sling and a stone; Samson slew the Philistines with a donkey jawbone."

Today, Chris is a proud graduate of TRACK. He says it has put him in a better place in life. He does things now he never thought he'd do, like visiting other burn victims in the hospital and ushering in church.

"Marley had it right. In a way, we are all David, and we have our own personal Goliaths to battle. WWP is like a stone God gave me for my sling. And I'm a better man today. I realize now God never forsook me. I was the one who forsook him."

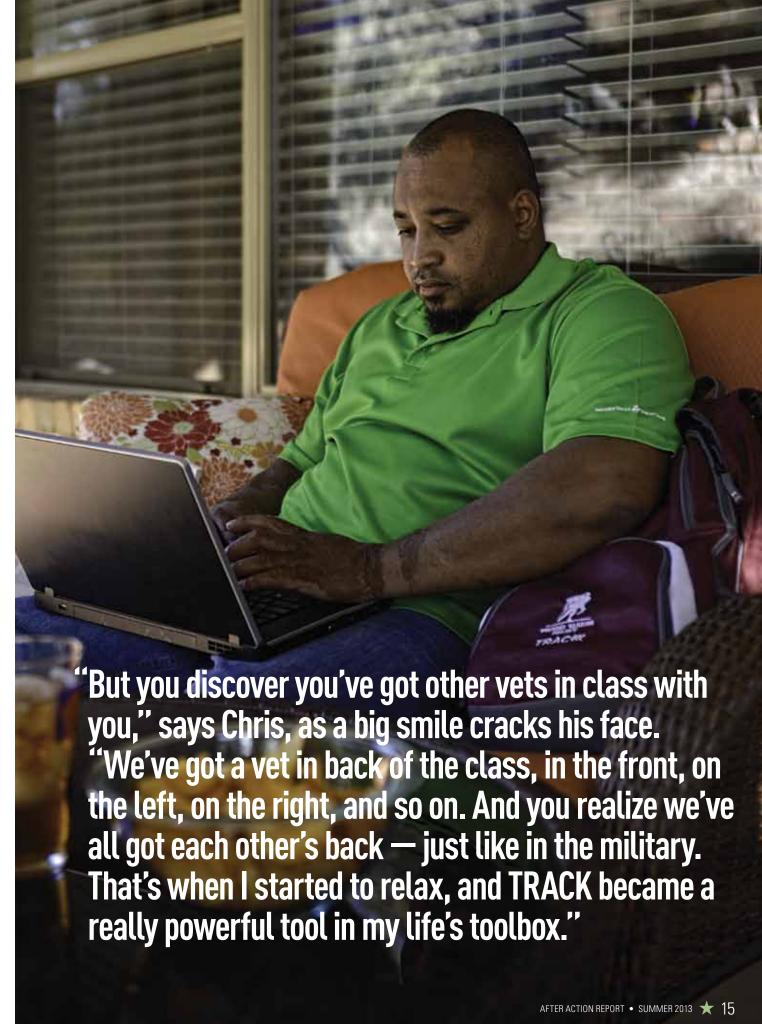
Chris looks forward to building on his TRACK education, particularly in a way in which he can help other Wounded Warriors.

"I tell my fellow vets to keep pushing forward through your darkest hours. You can get to the light. You can find that better place. Think of your fellow brothers who can't because they are in the dirt. Any day you're breathing above ground is a good day."

And if that's not enough motivation for Chris, he says he can always look to his wife, Marcia, and their children D'Shaun, Maria, Marisa, D'Andre, and their newest inspiration, five-year-old D'Markus, who nobody thought was possible.

"I live for them," says Chris, "because they never gave up on me. Don't worry about a thing. Exhaust all of your means and never give up."

TRACK is a 12-month education program offered by Wounded Warrior Project. Eligible warriors have served in combat, qualify for vocational rehab from the Department of Veterans Affairs, possess fewer than 20 college credit hours, and must be willing to relocate (at no expense) to Jacksonville, Florida, or San Antonio, Texas. For a full list of eligibility requirements and to apply, visit woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/track.aspx.



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BOOK REVIEW TRANSITION TRAINING ACADEMY

"Leading with Honor"

LESSONS FROM VIETNAM FOR TODAY'S WARRIORS

Retired Col. Lee Ellis was serving as an Air Force pilot when he was shot down and captured November 7, 1967, on a mission over North Vietnam. He spent most of his 1,955 days as a POW incarcerated near other American captives — U.S. Senator John McCain among them. By his March 14, 1973, release, Ellis had honed a keen sense of leadership, and his experience later led to four books on the topic. The latest. "Leading with Honor: Leadership Lessons from the Hanoi Hilton", tells his POW story in detail and explores the lessons he shares today with corporate leaders.

WWP: What advice do you have for veterans returning home on turning their negative combat experiences into positives?

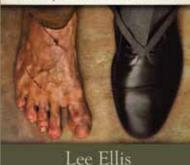
Lee: The biggest challenge is a plane lands, and two days later you're home. Even the wounded soldiers immediately come home, and they're at the dinner table with family. They haven't had time to decompress. The hypervigilance of war and anger at buddies who have been wiped out is still there. My advice is to find other veterans who can relate to your experiences and help you sort through those feelings.

WWP: Why was mental strength such an essential ingredient in surviving during your experience and also



LEADING with HONOR

Leadership Lessons from the Hanoi Hilton



Lee: We had to be mentally and physically tough. Mental toughness governs physical toughness sometimes. Being mentally tough inspired me. When you're sitting alone for hours and hours, your mind can do amazing things like memorizing poems and scripture, learning Spanish, working math problems in my head.

VWP: You cite many gredients for success, ut emphasize the

Lee: Courage is like the

enzyme to press on in a hard situation. It's Leadership 101. If you see a problem, run toward it, not away from it. If you wait, it gets more cancerous and worse. Don't have a knee-jerk reaction. But start moving ahead, clean it out. I don't think you can have good character without

and how do you use that in a positive

Lee: It's a part of me. For many years, I wanted to ignore the POW part of me. I just wanted to do the job and be like everybody else — no special favors or sympathy. But it's always there,

a reservoir of my life experience that I'm always drawing from without realizing it.

PATH TO SUCCESS By Stephanie Masterson

Six months ago I was in a difficult place. I was facing medical retirement from the Army after six years as a soldier. I was a single mother with no plans for life after service. It was all very

discouraging.

Then I heard about Wounded Warrior Project and the Transition Training Academy at Fort Stewart, Georgia, through an Army Career and Alumni Program class. Before I started the TTA classes I was very intimidated and unsure about computers, but two weeks later I was enrolled and learning more about information technology.

I soon learned the instructors genuinely care about their students and they eventually became valuable friends as I struggled with medical retirement and the unexpected death of my fiancé. What made the biggest impression on me came when we reached the mentoring and internship stage of our training. When I got my first interview, my instructor took myself and another student to a department store at the Savannah Mall. It was a dream come true for me and the other student. I felt very empowered and confident about my interview when I put on the

suit that we picked out. I was very nervous when Monday arrived, but I made it a point to first visit the instructor who gave me the skills and confidence to even receive an interview. When I arrived at the classroom, she gave me a hug and told me how great I looked and assured me I would get the job. The interview went very well. I called my instructor before I ever left the parking lot. I was cooking my children dinner when I got the call that I had the job and would start the next Monday. What's more, I received power tools and boots through Wounded Warrior Project and the Warriors to Work program. With my financial situation as it was I could not have purchased these items on my own and I would not have been able to begin work.

I am now much more confident and proud, and I owe a lot of that to my instructor. She is not only our instructor, but she is also our mentor, inspiration, and a friend. I am very blessed to be in her class and to have such a truly caring and wonderful person in my life. I am very thankful to have found the Wounded Warrior Project as they have truly empowered all aspects of my life.



Learn more about free training to develop a career in the IT field by visiting our website: woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/transition-training-academy.aspx.

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CELEBRATE IT ALL

By Janice Huss

My oldest son, Morgan, has always been big on seizures during physical fitness training. The adventure and slow on following rules. I guess that's what happens when you name your son after the famous Wyatt Earp's brother.

We should have seen the Army was in Morgan's future when he started the "hand-over-hand" combat crawl as a baby, but it wasn't until high school that Morgan mentioned joining the service. I knew the Army would give Morgan the adventure he wanted and help him mature, but I was concerned about the war in Iraq. I didn't want Morgan to be involved, but infantry was what he wanted, so in October 2006, we said good-bye to our son as he headed for boot camp. After his first duty station in Korea, Morgan went to Fort Benning, Georgia, and trained in airborne school. I worried about him jumping from airplanes, but, of course, he thought it was awesome.

Both of our worlds derailed the morning of March 20, 2009. I was working at school as a teacher assistant in kindergarten when I received a call from a sergeant at Fort Benning. I was horrified to learn Morgan had collapsed with

drive from my town to Fort Benning had to be the six longest hours of my life.

I realized when I walked into the intensive care unit that Morgan's condition was critical. The doctors came and told us Morgan had a heart condition called Wolff-Parkinson-White, which causes extra pathways from the brain to the heart and accelerates the heartbeat. In Morgan's case, it was more than 200 beats per minute, which starves the brain of oxygen and causes brain injury. The only thing we knew for sure was we had to wait to see if the seizures would stop and Morgan would wake up.

After four days Morgan woke up. I think I took my first deep breath when he opened his eyes. Heart surgery followed, then rehabilitation. We were moving inches, and I wanted leaps. Morgan had to learn everything over again: how to talk, swallow, walk, shower. It took eight weeks of physical, occupational, and speech therapy before Morgan was able to come home and return for outpatient therapy. The day he walked

without any aid was a leap that did this mother's heart good.

Morgan reached the limit of his recovery after two years and was medically retired. It breaks my heart even now thinking about all the things Morgan will not be able to achieve. He wanted a career in the Army, a wife, and children. He wanted to see the world and fight for his country. I still grieve for the son who died on that terrible day, but I also love the new Morgan. Morgan is now 25 and physically recovered, but unable to drive. His memory remains poor, so we set alarms on his phone for medications and appointments. The music part of his brain works well, so we try to attach songs to things he needs or wants to remember.

Two organizations have made a difference for Morgan, including Hind's Feet Farm in Huntersville, North Carolina. He's made great friends there, and they do everything from community volunteering to horseback riding.

The other program is offered through Wounded Warrior Project, and it matches Morgan up with a "buddy" who comes and takes Morgan out two days a week for activities such as hikes, working out, and Frisbee golf.

So much has changed for us as a family. Just as we were looking toward an empty nest, Morgan returned home for the foreseeable future. I resigned my job at the school to become Morgan's caregiver and guardian. We don't qualify for caregiver pay because Morgan's brain injury is classified as a disease, but hopefully that will change with time. WWP has allowed me to go on retreats, and I have been blessed to meet others who are going through the same things. Retreats give me hope for the future, because no one can tell you exactly how a person with brain injury will recover. Patience can be your friend but it can also be your enemy. So celebrate it all. It's all part of the journey you are on together.



If you are a family member or caregiver of an injured service member, you are eligible for a wide range of benefits and programs from Wounded Warrior Project. Learn more at woundedwarriorproject.org.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED:

When Morgan reached a plateau during his therapy they told me it was normal, but I knew he needed more. This happened around the time Morgan was moved to a local outpatient clinic. What I didn't realize at the time was that the plateau was the therapist's fault, not Morgan's. They just didn't fit well. Don't be afraid to say you want another therapist if the one you are working with is not getting the response needed to move forward. I wish I had spoken up more.

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Asked & Answered

1. Am I eligible to receive the post-9/11 GI Bill if I did not contribute to the Montgomery GI Bill while on active duty?

Yes, provided that you meet the service requirements for the post-9/11 GI Bill.

2. How long does it take after enrollment to receive my education benefits from the VA?

Typically it takes up to six weeks or more for you to receive your benefits.

3. Are advance payment of my education benefits allowed?

Yes, advance payments are available for all GI Bill programs, except the post-9/11 GI Bill.

4. Am I eligible to receive the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) while enrolled in distance (online) learning?

Yes, the rate for distance learning is \$684.00 a month for the 2012–2013 academic year. That rate will increase to \$714.50 effective August 1, 2013.

Questions about benefits? We can help. Contact us at resourcecenter@woundedwarriorproject.org.

WWP IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD: SEATTLE



Staff Size: Five

Location: 2223 Alaskan Way, Suite 220

Seattle, WA 98121

Phone: 206.441.7096

Fun facts: Watch for darts from Nerf

guns when you visit the Seattle office. The toys debuted in 2011 when teammates began searching for ways to keep work fun after the long commutes many of them make to the office. You can also enjoy a view of Puget Sound from the office's location on Pier 66, where water traffic

from cruise ships to tugboats chug by during the day.





BAJA-STYLE FISH TACOS

Put the ingredients for this classic fish taco out on the table and let your family and friends build their own. The combination of fish and coleslaw is heady and robust, a perfect match to the rich taste of salsa and sour cream.

Makes 8 servings

2 pounds mahi-mahi

½ cup vegetable oil

3 tablespoons lime juice

5 teaspoons chili powder

1½ teaspoons ground cumin 1½ teaspoons ground coriander

1½ teaspoons minced garlic

Salt, to taste

8 flour tortillas, 8 inches in diameter Southwestern Slaw (recipe below)

Salsa (optional)

Sour cream (optional)

- Preheat a gas grill to medium-high. If you are using a charcoal grill, build a fire and let it burn down until the coals are glowing red with a moderate coating of white ash. Spread the coals in an even bed. Clean the cooking grate.
- 2. Cut the mahi-mahi into 16 equal slices.
- Combine the oil, lime juice, chili powder, cumin, coriander, garlic, and salt. Coat the mahi-mahi with the marinade.
- Grill the fish on the first side over direct heat until the flesh is firm and well marked, about 2 minutes. Turn the fish and grill until cooked through, about 1½ to 2 minutes more.
- Grill the tortillas until they have light grill marks and are heated through, about 15 seconds on the first side. Turn the tortillas and grill them until they just start to bubble, another 15 seconds.
- 6. Center two pieces of grilled fish on each tortilla, and top with the Southwestern Slaw and salsa. Add a dollop of sour cream, fold in half, and serve immediately.

SOUTHWESTERN SLAW

Makes 8 servings

2 cups fine-shredded green cabbage

2 teaspoons lime juice

2 teaspoons honey

2 tablespoons minced red onion

2 teaspoons minced jalapeños

2 teaspoons chopped cilantro

Salt, to taste

Combine all the ingredients. Allow the mixture to marinate for at least 30 minutes and up to eight hours before serving.



Source: The Culinary Institute of "America's Grilling" cookbook. The Culinary Institute of America (CIA) is a program provider for WWP.

For more information on the CIA, visit ciachef.edu.

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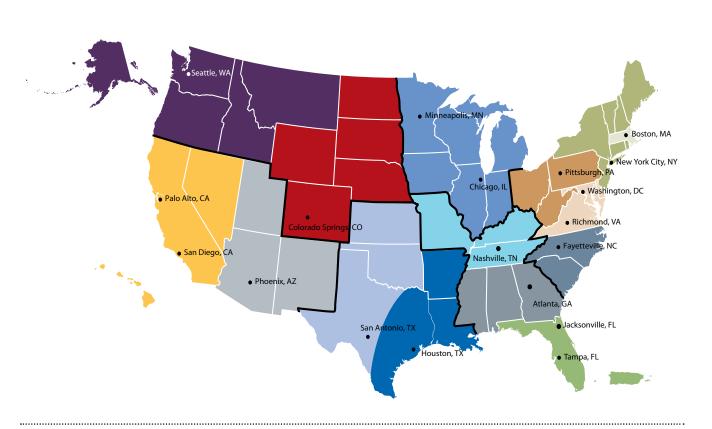


It started with a tattoo of the enduring symbol of a Kevlar helmet propped on a rifle, flanked by empty combat boots. Army veteran Dane Kaimuloa got the tattoo on his calf as a tribute to the friends he lost in combat in Iraq. In some ways it helped with the combat stress and survivor's guilt the San Diego resident still lives with. But Dane wanted to do something bigger. "America is forgetting about

the war," Dane explains. "It's fading away." To keep the memory alive, Dane has created a rolling tribute to every service member killed in Iraq and Afghanistan through the end of 2012. Each of the 6,774 service members has his or her photo on the field of red, white and blue wrapped around Dane's truck. "I want everyone who sees this to know that this is why America has its freedom," Dane says.







Looking for opportunities to engage with veterans in your area? Check your inbox for the weekly issue of "The Post", an interactive email from Wounded Warrior Project highlighting events specifically in your region. Not only does "The Post" keep you up to date on events, but it also lists job opportunities and direct contact information for the WWP teammates in your area.

If you're not registered as an Alumnus or receiving "The Post", contact the Resource Center at 888.WWP.ALUM or resourcecenter@ woundedwarriorproject.org.

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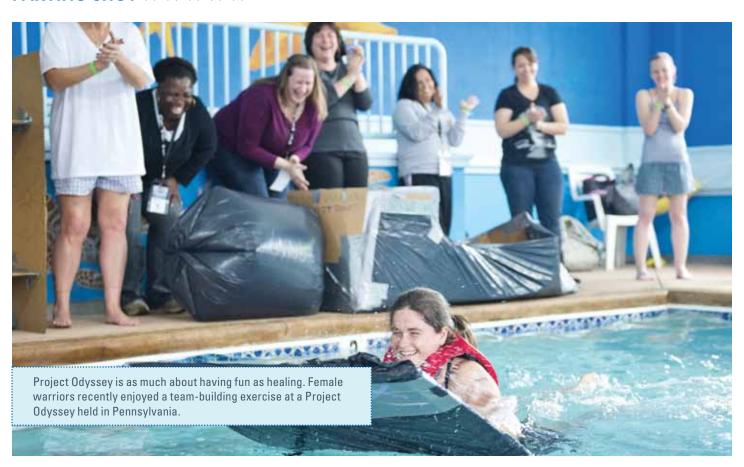
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Regional teams can be contacted through the main office.

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE: 10 Years of Service, a Lifetime of Commitment