



2014 ANNUAL ALUMNI SURVEY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



WOUNDED WARRIOR
PROJECT®

THIS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY INCLUDES A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY PURPOSE, CONTENT, AND ADMINISTRATION AS WELL AS TOP-LINE FINDINGS FROM THE COLLECTED DATA.

★ ABOUT THE SURVEY ★

SURVEY OBJECTIVE

The 2014 Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) survey was the fifth planned administration of the survey. The first survey, in 2010, collected baseline data on WWP Alumni membership. The subsequent surveys provide updates and allow WWP to identify trends among its Alumni, to compare their outcomes with those of other military populations, and to measure the impact and mix of WWP services and programs. The survey is NOT intended to measure the impact of individual WWP programs. WWP uses each set of annual data to determine how it can better serve its members.

SURVEY CONTENT

The survey measures a series of outcome domains within the following general topics about WWP Alumni: Background Information (military experiences and demographic data), Physical and Mental Well-Being, and Economic Empowerment.

2014 SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was fielded online to 43,096 Alumni in the WWP member database from March 11 to April 27, 2014 (seven weeks). Email communications included a pre-notice message (sent on March 6, 2014), a survey invitation, and seven email thank you and reminder messages. In addition to the email communications, a postal reminder was sent by U.S. mail (first class) from March 1 to March 4, 2014. Respondents were offered an incentive for completing the survey. Those who submitted a completed survey had the option of providing a mailing address to receive a WWP 10-Year Anniversary Edition Tervis® Tumbler.

The final, unweighted 2014 response rate was 49.0% (21,120 completed surveys among 43,071 eligible warriors), compared with 51.9% in 2013, 42.5% in 2012, 39.4% in 2011, and 32.4% in 2010. After data collection, the survey data was weighted to produce estimates representative of the 2014 Alumni population.

TOP-LINE FINDINGS

★ ALUMNI BACKGROUND INFORMATION ★

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The 2014 demographic profile of Alumni is similar to the 2013 and 2012 profiles, but includes a higher percentage of wounded service members younger than 35 years old:



86.2%
ARE MALE



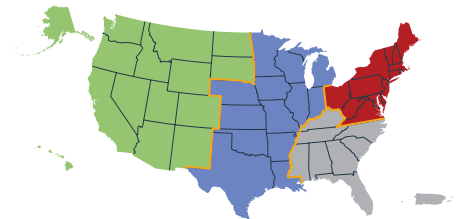
13.8%
ARE FEMALE



55.2%
ARE YOUNGER THAN
35 YEARS OLD



64.9%
ARE CURRENTLY MARRIED



49.0% LIVE IN THE SOUTH

24.3% LIVE IN THE WEST

13.5% LIVE IN THE MIDWEST

13.3% LIVE IN THE NORTHEAST



71.3% ARE WHITE

16.1% ARE HISPANIC

10.2% ARE BLACK OR AFRICAN-AMERICAN

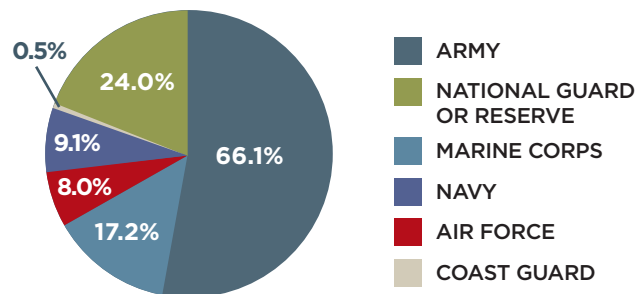
4.0% ARE AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE

2.8% ARE ASIAN

1.2% ARE NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER

MILITARY PROFILE

THE 2014 MILITARY PROFILE OF ALUMNI REPRESENTS ALL FOUR SERVICES, THE COAST GUARD, THE NATIONAL GUARD, AND RESERVE.



*SOME RESPONDENTS SELECTED MORE THAN ONE SERVICE OPTION.

About three-fifths of enlisted Alumni achieved the equivalent rank of Sergeant (E5) or above (**60.1%**). About **6%** of Alumni have never been deployed. Almost one-third (**32.8%**) deployed once, **27.3%** deployed twice, and **33.7%** deployed three or more times. Primary types of current health insurance include Department of Veterans Affairs (**59.2%**, up from **52.7%** in 2013) and other governmental health plans, such as TRICARE, CHAMPUS, and ChampVA.

SERVICE-CONNECTED INJURIES AND HEALTH PROBLEMS

Most Alumni (98.0%) sustained serious injuries and health problems during their post-9/11 military service. Among those with injuries, more than three-fourths (**78.9%**) experienced between three and eight injuries or health problems. The percentage of wounded service members receiving U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability benefits is **72.0%** (up from **62.8%** in 2013). The percentage of Alumni with a VA claim pending or on appeal is **10.3%** (down from **15.2%** in 2013). The percentage with a VA disability rating of 80% or higher rose to **42.6%** in 2014, from **36.2%** in 2013.

THE TOP 5 MOST COMMONLY EXPERIENCED INJURIES & HEALTH PROBLEMS

75.8% have experienced sleep problems

75.2% have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

72.3% report back, neck, or shoulder problems

67.1% report depression

64.2% report experiencing anxiety

WHERE DEPLOYED ALUMNI SUSTAINED THEIR INJURIES & HEALTH PROBLEMS



57.0%
ONLY IN
IRAQ



26.2%
ONLY IN
AFGHANISTAN



16.7%
IN BOTH

These percentages reflect the shift in military operations to Afghanistan in recent years.

ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF ALUMNI (59.8%) WERE HOSPITALIZED AS A RESULT OF THEIR INJURIES AND PROBLEMS.



39.1%

OF ALUMNI WERE ASSIGNED TO A
WARRIOR TRANSITION UNIT (WTU) OR A
WOUNDED WARRIOR BATTALION (WWB)
FOR TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION.



★ **29.4%** ★

**NEED THE AID AND ATTENDANCE
OF ANOTHER PERSON BECAUSE
OF THEIR POST-9/11 INJURIES
AND HEALTH PROBLEMS**

AMONG THEM, **28.0%**
**NEED MORE THAN 40 HOURS
OF AID PER WEEK**

LENGTH OF STAY IN THE WTU/WWB



**BETWEEN
13-24 MONTHS**



**MORE THAN
2 YEARS**



**LESS THAN
6 MONTHS**

HEALTH ASSESSMENT OF ALUMNI



HEALTH-RELATED RESTRICTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

VIGOROUS ACTIVITIES



53.7%

SAID THEIR HEALTH LIMITS THEM A LOT REGARDING VIGOROUS ACTIVITIES.

MODERATE ACTIVITIES

40% OR MORE ARE LIMITED A LITTLE FOR THREE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES:

1



44.7%

MOVING A TABLE, PUSHING A VACUUM CLEANER, BOWLING, OR PLAYING GOLF

2



45.0%

BENDING, KNEELING, OR STOOPING

3



40.9%

LIFTING OR CARRYING GROCERIES

BATHING & DRESSING

MANY ALUMNI (**71.7%**) ARE NOT LIMITED AT ALL IN BATHING AND DRESSING THEMSELVES. BUT **4.8%** ARE LIMITED A LOT, AND **23.5%** ARE LIMITED A LITTLE WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

RESPONSES RELATING TO THE PAST FOUR WEEKS:

- ★ The physical health of **50.8%** of Alumni interfered extremely, quite a bit, or moderately with normal social activities with family, friends, and other support.
- ★ The physical health of **50.1%** of Alumni caused them to cut down the amount of time they spent with their work or other regular activities.
- ★ Bodily pain interfered with normal work (work outside the home and housework) moderately, quite a bit, or extremely for **62.3%** of Alumni.

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

For **60.6%** of Alumni, emotional problems interfered extremely, quite a bit, or moderately with normal social activities with family and friends. During the past four weeks, as a result of their emotional problems:

- ★ More than half of Alumni (**57.5%**) cut down the amount of time they spent on work or other regular activities.
- ★ About two-thirds of Alumni (**66.0%**) accomplished less than they would like.
- ★ More than half of Alumni (**56.2%**) didn't do their work or other activities as carefully as usual.

HOW ALUMNI HAVE BEEN FEELING

Many Alumni's military experiences are still adversely affecting them. They reported on problems they experienced during the two weeks prior to the survey.



★ **65.2%** ★

HAD A MILITARY EXPERIENCE THAT WAS SO FRIGHTENING, HORRIBLE, OR UPSETTING THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO ESCAPE FROM THE MEMORIES OR THE EFFECTS OF IT

THE TOP TWO ISSUES THAT AFFECT THEM NEARLY EVERY DAY:

1

SLEEP ISSUES

42.4% either had trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or slept too much.

2

TIREDNESS

35.4% felt tired or had little energy.

TOP PROBLEMS THAT AFFECT THEM MORE THAN HALF THE DAYS OR NEARLY EVERY DAY:



50.4% have had either a poor appetite or overate.

49.4% had trouble concentrating on things such as reading the newspaper or watching television.

44.5% had little interest or pleasure in doing things.

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

Alumni were asked about their use of alcoholic beverages, smoking, importance of a healthy diet, physical activity or exercise, and sleep problems.



ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

- About one-fifth of Alumni (**19.8%**) said they used more alcohol than they meant to in the past four weeks.
- Almost three-fourths of Alumni (**73.5%**) either do not drink alcoholic beverages at all, or did so no more than four times a month during the past 12 months.
- More than a fourth of Alumni (**28.7%**) who reported drinking alcohol in the past 12 months have six or more drinks on one occasion at least once a month: weekly (**11.3%**), daily or almost daily (**3.2%**), or monthly (**14.2%**).



HEALTHY DIET

- For 8 of 10 Alumni (**79.9%**), it is moderately important or very important to maintain a healthy diet and good nutrition.
- The average height and weight of Alumni who reported that information is 5'10" and 204 pounds. The average body mass index (BMI) score is 29.6, at the high end of being overweight. About 4 of 10 Alumni are obese (**42.6%**; BMI score of 30.0 or higher), and another **39.7%** are overweight (BMI score of 25 to 29.9).



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE

- **43.5%** do moderate-intensity physical activity or exercise three or more days a week.
- **36.4%** of Alumni do so less than once a week.



TOBACCO USE

- In the past 12 months, 3 in 10 Alumni smoked cigarettes (**30.6%**), one-fifth use smokeless tobacco products (**20.2%**), about **14.5%** smoke cigars, and **3.2%** smoke pipes.



SLEEP

Sleep is a problem for many Alumni. During the four weeks prior to the survey:

- Only about one-fifth of Alumni (**18.3%**) got enough sleep to feel rested upon waking in the morning a good bit of the time, most of the time, or all of the time.
- A similar low percentage (**19.7%**) got the amount of sleep they needed at least a good bit of the time.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES: ACCESS AND RESOURCES

Many Alumni have ongoing needs for mental health care services, but sometimes have difficulty getting services. In 2014, the list of reasons for difficulties in accessing mental health care was expanded, and the results reflect that change.



★ **54.7%** ★

OF ALUMNI HAD VISITED A PROFESSIONAL TO GET HELP WITH ISSUES SUCH AS STRESS, EMOTIONAL, ALCOHOL, DRUG, OR FAMILY PROBLEMS.



★ **35.2%** ★

OF ALUMNI HAD DIFFICULTY GETTING MENTAL HEALTH CARE, PUT OFF GETTING SUCH CARE, OR DID NOT GET THE CARE THEY NEEDED.

ALUMNI-PERCEIVED ADVERSE EFFECTS OF SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH CARE TREATMENT:

CONCERNED THEIR FUTURE CAREER PLANS WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED

27.5%

CONCERNED THEY WOULD BE CONSIDERED WEAK

24.8%

CONCERNED THEY WOULD BE STIGMATIZED BY THEIR PEERS OR FAMILY

22.9%

FOR ALUMNI EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH CARE, THE MOST COMMON REASONS WERE:

DIFFICULTY IN SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS

42.5%

INCONSISTENT TREATMENT OR LAPSES IN TREATMENT (E.G., CANCELED APPOINTMENTS; SWITCHES IN PROVIDERS)

39.4%

FEELINGS THAT TREATMENT MIGHT BRING UP PAINFUL OR TRAUMATIC MEMORIES ALUMNI WANTED TO AVOID

39.0%

DID NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH EXISTING RESOURCES WITHIN THE DOD OR VA

35.3%

THE TOP THREE MOST USED AND MOST EFFECTIVE RESOURCES FOR COPING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS:

1



62.5%

VA MEDICAL CENTERS

2



59.2%

TALKING WITH ANOTHER OEF/OIF VETERAN

3



50.6%

PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE

These three resources were also most commonly identified by Alumni as the most effective resources in helping them (**17.7%** for both VA Medical Center and talking with another OEF/OIF veteran and **8.8%** for prescription medicine).

PHYSICAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES: ACCESS



★ **39.4%** ★

HAD DIFFICULTY GETTING HEALTH CARE FOR PHYSICAL INJURIES OR PROBLEMS, PUT OFF GETTING SUCH CARE, OR DID NOT GET THE CARE THEY NEEDED

THE TOP TWO MOST COMMON REASONS FOR DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING PHYSICAL HEALTH CARE:



DIFFICULTY IN SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS

48.7%



EXPERIENCED LAPSED AND INCONSISTENT TREATMENT BECAUSE OF CANCELED APPOINTMENTS AND SWITCHES IN PROVIDERS

35.3%

SOCIAL SUPPORT

For the 10-item Social Provisions Scale, more than half of Alumni answered positively about their current relationships with friends, family members, co-workers, community members, and others. And for 8 of the 10 statements, the percentages answering positively in 2014 were the same or similar to those in 2013. The percentages ranged from **68.3%** to **86.2%**.

The three statements with the highest percentages answering positively:

1

“THERE ARE PEOPLE I CAN DEPEND ON TO HELP ME IF I REALLY NEED IT.”

86.2%

2

“THERE IS A TRUSTWORTHY PERSON I COULD TURN TO FOR ADVICE IF I WERE HAVING PROBLEMS.”

80.5%

3

“IF SOMETHING WENT WRONG, SOMEONE WOULD COME TO MY ASSISTANCE.”

79.3%

CURRENT ATTITUDES

Two survey questions addressed current attitudes about resilience in the face of changes or hardships. **As in 2013 and 2012, just over half of Alumni answered positively:**

53.6%

SAID IT IS OFTEN TRUE OR TRUE NEARLY ALL THE TIME THAT THEY **ARE ABLE TO ADAPT WHEN CHANGES OCCUR.**

51.5%

SAID THAT IT IS OFTEN TRUE OR TRUE NEARLY ALL THE TIME THAT THEY **TEND TO BOUNCE BACK AFTER ILLNESS, INJURY, OR OTHER HARDSHIPS.**

A third question asked Alumni to assess the extent to which 13 statements are true in describing their feelings now. For 11 of the 13 statements, at least half of Alumni answered positively (percentages range from **50.0%** to **70.6%**). The percentage with a positive response to the statement “My life has very clear goals and purposes,” is **53.1**. **The three statements with the lowest percentages of positive answers were:**

“I HAVE VERY MIXED FEELINGS AND IDEAS.”

50.0%

“DOING THE THINGS I DO EVERY DAY IS A SOURCE OF PLEASURE AND SATISFACTION.”

44.7%

“I HAVE FEELINGS INSIDE I WOULD RATHER NOT FEEL.”

42.6%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



39.6%

HAVE SOME COLLEGE CREDIT, BUT NO DEGREE



24.5%

HAVE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER



17.8%

HAVE COMPLETED BUSINESS, TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL SCHOOL, OR OBTAINED AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE

PURSUIT OF MORE EDUCATION

★ **33.5%** ★



OF ALUMNI ARE NOW ENROLLED IN SCHOOL



65.6%

ARE PURSUING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER



24.2%

ARE PURSUING AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE



7.3%

ARE ENROLLED IN BUSINESS, TECHNICAL, OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL TRAINING

The two primary benefits Alumni are using to finance their educational pursuits are the **Post-9/11 GI Bill (56.2%)** and the **VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (VR&E)**.

Of the wounded service members using the VR&E benefit, **more than 8 of 10 are using Employment Through Long Term Services – Training/ Education (83.0%)**. Among Alumni currently enrolled in school, **6.8%** are using the Montgomery GI Bill to finance their education.

LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS



★ **67.3%** ★
OF ALUMNI ARE IN THE LABOR FORCE

50.5%

OF ALUMNI ARE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME

19.7%

OF NON-ACTIVE DUTY ALUMNI ARE **UNEMPLOYED**

13.9%

OF ALUMNI ARE **UNEMPLOYED**

7.4%

OF ALUMNI ARE EMPLOYED PART-TIME

THE PRIMARY REASONS ALUMNI ARE NOT IN THE LABOR FORCE:



MEDICAL OR HEALTH PROBLEMS



ENROLLMENT IN SCHOOL OR A TRAINING PROGRAM



RETIREMENT

59.3%

22.5%

10.5%

In addition, **4.4%** of Alumni who are not in the labor force would like to work but have become discouraged about finding work and given up looking, and **3.4%** had family responsibilities.

WAGES/HOURS AND WEEKS WORKED

MEDIAN
INCOME
PER WEEK



\$800

FOR FULL-TIME
EMPLOYEES



\$200

FOR PART-TIME
EMPLOYEES

MEAN NUMBER
OF WEEKS
WORKED



43

FOR FULL-TIME
EMPLOYEES



29

FOR PART-TIME
EMPLOYEES

AVERAGE
WEEKLY HOURS
WORKED



42

FOR FULL-TIME
EMPLOYEES



25

FOR PART-TIME
EMPLOYEES

TOP INDUSTRIES WHERE ALUMNI WORK:



35.1%

THE MILITARY



17.5%

THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT



8.2%

STATE & LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

JOB SATISFACTION

FULL-TIME EMPLOYED ALUMNI
WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH
THEIR EMPLOYMENT

50.3%

PART-TIME EMPLOYED ALUMNI
WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH
THEIR EMPLOYMENT

33.1%

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Many factors make it difficult for Alumni to obtain employment or change jobs. The top 7 of 17 specific factors listed in the survey were:

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES **31.2%**

DIFFICULT FOR ME TO
BE AROUND OTHERS **29.9%**

NOT QUALIFIED OR
LACK EDUCATION **22.0%**

NOT PHYSICALLY CAPABLE **20.2%**

PURSUING AN EDUCATION **19.2%**

NOT ENOUGH PAY **18.5%**

I LACK CONFIDENCE IN
MYSELF AND MY ABILITIES **15.3%**

PARTICIPATION IN TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

To improve their opportunities for employment and better jobs, some Alumni have participated in various programs providing employment-related assistance:

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP): 46% of Alumni participated in this Department of Defense program. 39.5% of TAP participants said the Veterans Benefit Overview was the most beneficial component of TAP. Only 5.5% cited the Department of Labor Employment Workshop as the most beneficial component of TAP in assisting them with their transition to work or school.

INCOME

Alumni reported on income they received from work (a category including wages, salary, bonuses, overtime, tips, commissions, profit, second jobs), service in the military Reserve, and rent from roomers or boarders during the past 12 months:



51.3% FULL-TIME EMPLOYED
RECEIVED LESS THAN \$45,000

55.5% PART-TIME EMPLOYED
RECEIVED LESS THAN \$15,000

Alumni reported on income they received from various benefits, cash assistance, and disability programs during the past 12 months:



32.5% RECEIVED \$20,000 OR MORE

24.5% RECEIVED NO INCOME FROM
THESE SOURCES



**NEARLY 59% OF ALUMNI ARE
SHARING HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES
WITH A SPOUSE OR PARTNER.**

- FOR **14.3%** OF THEM, THEIR SPOUSE OR PARTNER HAD NO INCOME.
- FOR **35.5%**, THEIR SPOUSE OR PARTNER HAD INCOME RANGING FROM ONE DOLLAR TO LESS THAN \$25,000.
- **25.7%** SAID THEIR SPOUSE'S OR PARTNER'S INCOME WAS AT LEAST \$25,000, BUT LESS THAN \$50,000.

CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT



43.0%

CURRENTLY OWN THEIR OWN HOMES
WITH AN OUTSTANDING MORTGAGE



3.4%

OWN THEIR OWN HOMES WITH
NO MORTGAGE BALANCE



33.5%

RENT THEIR HOMES

HOMELESSNESS

★ **5.8%** ★

OF ALUMNI WERE HOMELESS OR
LIVING IN A HOMELESS SHELTER
DURING THE PAST 24 MONTHS

AMONG THOSE WHO WERE HOMELESS,

68.9% WERE HOMELESS FOR 1 TO 24 MONTHS

31.1% WERE HOMELESS FOR FEWER
THAN 30 DAYS

MEAN NUMBER OF
DAYS HOMELESS

139

HOMELESS WHO
RECEIVED GOVERNMENT
HOUSING ASSISTANCE

15.2%



DEBT

TOTAL DEBT

Alumni were asked about monthly mortgage payments and monthly payments toward total debt the wounded service member and spouse or partner pay.



69.5%

OF ALUMNI WITH MORTGAGE
DEBT PAY LESS THAN
\$1,500 A MONTH.



33.1%

OF ALUMNI WITH OTHER
FORMS OF DEBT PAY LESS
THAN \$1,000 A MONTH.



39.8%

OF ALUMNI MAKE MONTHLY
DEBT PAYMENTS RANGING
FROM \$1,000 – \$2,500.

AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS OF THE SURVEY, CAR LOANS AND CREDIT CARD DEBT ARE THE MOST COMMON FORMS OF DEBT IN 2014, FOLLOWED BY HOME LOANS OR MORTGAGE DEBT, STUDENT LOAN DEBT, AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD DEBT.

RATIO OF MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD DEBT PAYMENTS TO MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Among all Alumni, the percentage who own their homes with outstanding mortgages and who answered the three income questions in the survey is **35.3%**. Among this group, **63.8%** have a debt-to-income ratio greater than 41%, the general VA mortgage qualification ratio. Among Alumni who currently do not own their homes (with or without a mortgage) and who answered the income questions (**40.6%** of Alumni), **90.3%** have a “non-housing” debt-to-income ratio of 8%, a common ratio used by commercial mortgage lenders for non-housing-related debt when “housing-related costs” will be about **28%** of income.



★ **31.2%** ★
OF ALUMNI HAVE AN
EMERGENCY FUND

Within this group, **59.7%** said their fund would cover three or more months of household expenses. This group with three or more months of “rainy day” savings makes up **18.5%** of the total Alumni Survey population.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF FINANCIAL STATUS

Alumni were asked whether they would say their financial status (and that of family living with them) is better now, the same, or worse than a year ago.



SAME
38.2%



WORSE
34.9%



BETTER
22.9%



DON'T KNOW
4.0%

“I WENT TO A FOREIGN COUNTRY
AND WHEN I CAME BACK,
**THIS WAS THE
FOREIGN COUNTRY.**
I AM LOST, SCARED, AND
DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
TO MAKE IT BETTER.”

★ DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE SURVEY AT ★
woundedwarriorproject.org/survey



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