



WTU/AW2 Connection

August 2014

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By: COL Chris Toner, Commander, WTC

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I am humbled and honored to join the Warrior Transition Command (WTC), an organization that has tirelessly served wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, Veterans, their Families and Caregivers for the past five years. I am confident that the other new leaders here at WTC, Command Sgt. Maj. Matthew Brady and Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) Director Col. David Oeschger, and I will



COL Chris Toner, Commander
Warrior Transition Command

collaborate closely to ensure that WTC's mission and the quality of support we provide to those Soldiers, Veterans and their Families and Caregivers remains a priority for our Army and our nation. While we will be proactive and adaptable, we will not waver in our obligation to serve our wounded, ill and injured.

This fall marks WTC's fifth anniversary. As the proponent of the Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) and the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2), WTC covers all aspects of wounded warrior recovery and rehabilitation. As the incoming commander, I'm impressed with WTC's key initiatives over the last few months:

- Soldier and Leader Guide: we are finalizing this manual that helps Cadre, Families and other members of recovering Soldiers' support systems navigate complicated recovery processes;
- Hosting the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials, where wounded, ill and injured athletes from the Army, Air Force and Marines competed to help determine who would attend this fall's Warrior Games;
- Honoring the AW2 10th Anniversary with a major campaign;
- Updating the force structure model to include Community Care Units (CCUs).

I am proud of everything this dedicated team has already accomplished and excited to see what else we will achieve together.

Finally, for the athletes competing in the upcoming International Invictus Games and the 2014 Warrior Games, I know you will

represent Army strength, resilience and values. Army Strong!

CSM Corner

By: CSM Matthew T. Brady

I kicked off my summer at West Point cheering on Army Green as they competed against the Air Force and Marines in the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials, hosted by WTC. Watching these incredible Soldiers and Veterans was nothing less than inspirational as they continue to challenge and focus on abilities not disabilities. Adaptive sports and reconditioning is about establishing a healthy lifestyle that keeps other medical issues in check—like weight gain and diabetes—while increasing participation in the Performance Triad (healthy eating, quality sleep and positive activity). I want to congratulate each athlete from all services on their abilities in physical fitness and competition, but also in their willingness to step up to any challenge and excel. With a total of 104 gold medals and three team trophies—two first-place and one third—in wheelchair basketball and sitting volleyball, Army athletes deserve a special “HOOAH” from all of us here at WTC, as well the entire Army Family.



*CSM Matthew T. Brady,
Warrior Transition Command*

In addition to hosting the first ever Army Warrior Trials, WTC is also in the process of finalizing the Soldier and Leader Guide—a comprehensive manual to help Soldiers, Veterans, Cadre, Families and the general public navigate the Warrior Care and Transition Plan (WCTP). This educational tool is essentially a one-stop shop for all things WCTP. By covering topics ranging from attachment/assignment to the WTU to adaptive reconditioning to Soldier and Family Assistance Centers and everything in between, this guide supports complete Soldier health and wellness. As a former WTU command sergeant major, I know just how helpful this manual is and will be.

Finally, I would like to welcome WTC’s new Commander, Col. Chris Toner, and the new AW2 Director, Col. David S. Oeschger. I look forward to working closely with these great leaders to further promote the health and wellness of our wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans. Please have a great summer! Get out and enjoy the weather in a fun and safe way. For our motorcycle riders: Let’s be sure we are properly trained and riding with the right equipment in the safest manner possible.

AW2 Update

By: COL David S. Oeschger

A lot of people see the words “wounded,” “ill” or “injured” and immediately jump to conclusions. AW2 Soldiers and Veterans have a reputation for disproving these assumptions, and I am proud to step up to this challenge of dispelling myths alongside our nation’s most severely wounded, ill and



COL David S. Oeschger,
Director, U.S. Army Wounded
Warrior Program

injured. I am extremely humbled to be here today, working side by side with the vibrant network of AW2 Advocates located across the country as well as the staff of transition experts here, serving this unique population.

Looking back at my own path that brought me here, from commanding troops in the United States and abroad, to recovering at a Warrior Transition Battalion in Germany, I know I would not have made it here without AW2. After sustaining severe injuries in Afghanistan, I needed the Army's support in recovering and transitioning back to the force. This integrated program included dedicated AW2 Advocates, medical professionals and my own Family to support my recovery. To be able to lead the very program that helped me overcome so much is the highlight of my career. The guidance of previous leaders, the dedication of the more than 200 AW2 Advocates who work tirelessly with the Soldiers, Veterans and their Families and Caregivers, and the support of staff here at headquarters are why AW2 built the legacy it has today. Thank you for your commitment.

AW2 welcomes our new WTC leadership, Col. Chris Toner as Commander and Command Sgt. Maj. Matthew Brady. I look forward to working closely with both of these leaders to impact meaningful change in the lives of the most severely wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans.

AW2 Success Story

Live life tough: Army Warrior Trials athletes show resilience through sports

By: Anna Eisenberg, WTC Communications Division

Specialist James Taylor's tattoos cover his left and right arms, shoulders to wrists—commemorations of Family and friends and odes to his football star days in high school. "Live life tough or not at all" runs across his left shoulder, his grandmother's response to whenever he would come complaining to her about something.

"Before I joined the Army, I was an athlete in every sense of the word," said the former basketball, football and track star. "Hearing the doctors, I thought I would never walk again," he said, and for the first six months of his rehabilitation at the [Warrior Transition Battalion \(WTB\)](#) at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, they were right. Taylor entered the WTB in July of 2012, after sustaining injuries while deployed in Afghanistan. He does not remember much of what happened after his vehicle struck an improvised explosive device (IED)— just waking up in a hospital to a diagnosis of two bulging disks in his back, two in his neck, ligament damage to his left ankle, spinal stenosis and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

“Being injured depresses you. You start to think ‘I can’t do the same thing, I can’t reach the same goals,’” said Taylor. Six months into his rehabilitation, Taylor was introduced to the WTB’s Soldier [Adaptive Reconditioning Program](#), or SARP-Elite. The program matches recovering warriors with a sport or activity that they enjoy, and demonstrates how adaptive reconditioning positively impacts rehabilitation.

Master Sgt. Rhoden Galloway is part of the brains behind SARP-Elite. Also injured in Afghanistan and recovering at the WTB at Fort Sam Houston, he found that swimming helped him both physically and emotionally. Encouragement from coaches and others at the WTB led him to register for the 2011 [Warrior Games](#). Three Warrior Games later Galloway is a 12-time medalist: five gold and seven silver.

After participating in the next three Warrior Games, Galloway and a handful of other wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans wanted to bridge the gap between participating in adaptive sports at the WTB and competing at the high level that Warrior Games demands. The team of Soldiers and Veterans wanted to prove that adaptive reconditioning can motivate wounded warriors to start to pick up the pieces and get their lives back on track. “SARP-Elite is a program that really, truly works,” he said. “It shows how sports are not just something for fun. Sports can lead to life after the military.”

Taylor, who was recently scouted and offered a college scholarship for his prowess in track, uses sports as his outlet as he recovers. “When I’m running track, I’m a track star. When I’m doing archery, I’m an archer. Nothing else matters. I don’t have to worry about my TBI, all I have to do is focus on the task,” he said.

Galloway and Taylor competed at the [2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials](#) in shooting and swimming, and field, sitting volley ball, swimming and track respectively. More than 100 wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Veterans faced off in archery, shooting, cycling, track and field, swimming, sitting volleyball, and wheelchair basketball June 15-19, 2014. The Army Warrior Trials help determine the athletes who will represent Team Army in the 2014 Warrior Games slated for Sep. 28-Oct. 4, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

While both Soldiers feel that camaraderie is important, they are also fueled by competition. “I can guarantee you five medals in swimming,” said Galloway. For Taylor, “making the Warrior Games team is a dream come-true. I’m going to fight for it, and I plan on making it.”

Another similarity between the two Soldiers: both want to give back to the Army. Taylor plans on pursuing a degree in physical therapy. “It would be amazing to work with the military, to coach patients and tell them injury is not the end,” he said.

Galloway wants to continue on as a member of the Cadre at the WTB, helping wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans discover activities that can aid them as they recover.

“Live life tough” is more than a tattoo, more than wise words from Taylor’s grandmother. It’s about resilience and motivation. “You have to push you,” he said. “You can do anything that you want to do, just say you can do it. Don’t take no for an answer.”

[Read more about the athletes and stories from the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials here.](#)

WTCP Leadership Summit

By: Becky Wardwell, WTC Communications Division

The Warrior Transition Command (WTC) is hosting the 2014 Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) Leader's Training Summit to standardize execution of the WCTP and improve operations across all Warrior Transition Units (WTU), including Community Care Units (CCU), addressing WTU Soldier issues, develop solutions for persistent program challenges, exchange ideas and share demonstrated best practices to improve how we care and provide services for our wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and their Families.

The Training Summit begins Monday, 4 August 2014 at 0800 in the Mackenzie Room of the Kingman Building, Humphreys Engineer Center, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. It concludes on Thursday, August 7 at 1800.

This training is mandatory for Warrior Transition Office Directors and Warrior Transition Unit command teams (all colonels and lieutenant colonel commanders and captains commanding separate companies and their senior enlisted advisor).

"We are excited that all of our command teams have confirmed that they will attend," said Renee Jenkins, summit coordinator. "This is the first time in several years that we are able to bring in all of our leaders to train, and we are looking forward to the opportunity to interact and hear what they have to say."

To learn more and to follow coverage of the 2014 WCTP Leadership Summit, visit: www.WTC.army.mil.

CSN Update

By: LuAnn Georgia, Program Manager, CSN

Three registered Community Support Network (CSN) organizations, American Legion, Hope for the Heroes®, and America's VetDogs recently provided adaptive reconditioning and resiliency support for athletes participating at Army Warrior Trials held at West Point Military Academy and Prep School. During the week of training, representatives from each of these organizations met individually with many of the wounded, ill and injured athletes from different branches of the services to provide information and various types of assistance in support of resiliency, improving lives and quality of life. At the conclusion of the events, each organization was asked to provide feedback regarding the athlete's feedback, the training event itself and the activities. The representatives felt it was a "great experience" and while they were helping the athletes, they also benefited by gaining a whole new appreciation for the commitment required to compete, the intensity of the training and the importance of adaptive reconditioning and how it impacts the athlete's ability to cope with life's daily challenges.

The CSN, which re-launched its webpage at

www.wtc.army.mil/community now includes many enhanced features including 31 search categories and more than 200 sub-categories of goods and services which are available to wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, Veterans, their Families and Caregivers. All goods and services listed on the CSN site are offered by more than 130 registered, vetted organizations and are free of charge, or significantly reduced in cost or are covered by insurance.

Policy Update

By: Vivian Robinson, Policy Analyst

Warrior Transition Command is in the process of finalizing the Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) Soldiers and Leader Guide. It will offer helpful how-to instruction and practical guidance to facilitate the recovery and transition of Soldiers and their Families. The guide will provide updated standardized tools and information to respond to the unique circumstances of wounded, ill and injured Soldiers that call for an awareness of options to resolve individual issues. The Soldier and Leader Guide will be a companion guide to the AR 40-XXX Warrior Care Program, which is currently being updated.

While the Soldier and Leader Guide will emphasize the importance of the Comprehensive Transition Plan, Attachment/Assignment/Transfer, Community Care Units, Adaptive Reconditioning and the Career and Education Readiness Program, it will also offer information of topics such as a commander's perspective on commanding a WTU, Family programs, facilities, and gifts and donations.

The guide is designed to be a compilation of lessons learned, insights from and observations by WTU Soldiers and Families and recommendations from other organizations collected over the past seven years.

Comms Update

By: Lauren Fletcher, WTC Communications Division

"Wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans are _____."

This simple post (with photo, shown below) generated 240 comments from WTC's Facebook followers. Responses included:

- Inspirational
- Selfless
- Unstoppable
- Heroic
- Courageous
- Priceless
- Guardian angels
- Indestructible
- Remarkable
- Determined
- Army Strong
- Impressive
- Beyond amazing
- Undaunted
- Priceless
- Still a priority



This Facebook post reached more than 39,000 people, received more than 2,600 likes and was shared more than 260 times--an all-time high for WTC. WTC's digital media presence and engagement with users has steadily increased since the launch of the redesigned website on January 15, 2014 which also brought about new tactics to engage wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, Veterans, their Families and Caregivers, and those who support the mission.

In addition to the above, WTC posted the #1 most engaging tweet across all government accounts for the day of June 20, 2014: "Afghanistan didn't beat me. I still matter,' said Sgt. 1st Class Holland #ArmyWarriorTrials bit.ly/1rbnUEU." On its first day, this tweet received 100 retweets, 125 favorites and reached a potential 517,977 people.

WTC Communications will continue mixing new tactics with tried-and-true methods for engaging Soldiers and Families to provide them with relevant, timely, accurate and useful information and to allow WTC and its stakeholders to engage with each other.

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US Army Warrior Transition Command
Wounded Soldier Family Hotline: 1-800-984-8523
Online www.WTC.army.mil Blog <https://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil>