



# WTU/AW2 Connection

December 2014

CDR Corner

## Commander's Corner

By: COL Chris Toner, Commander, WTC

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Since 2009, the U.S. Army Warrior Transition Command (WTC) has carried out the enduring mission to support the recovery and transition of wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, Veterans, their Families and Caregivers. Soldiers assigned to Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) are recovering from complex medical conditions. These Soldiers work every day to establish a new sense of normal as they recover and transition either back to the force or to civilian life.



Soldiers in the Army are trained to live the Army Values, treating all with dignity and respect, and those who work within WTC are no exception. Disrespect, abuse, hazing and harassment are not tolerated in the Army. As part of Cadre training and leader development, WTC works to educate and train every Cadre member to prevent abuse and disrespect. WTC has systems in place to ensure we are properly assessing the program to reduce variance and provide world class care to our Soldiers and their Families. If a Soldier or Family member believes they have an issue, there are no less than eight avenues for them to have their concerns addressed: chain of command, equal opportunity officers, inspectors general, town halls, chaplains, hotlines, ombudsmen and even their Members of Congress.

In conjunction with normal training, all personnel in the Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) will execute a "Stand Up Day" during the month of December. This day will focus on medical profile compliance, dignity and respect, Comprehensive Transition Plan, issue resolution, and the Barracks Life and Safety program. Each WTU will offer classes and facilitated discussions for Soldiers and Cadre, and Families are invited to attend. "Stand Up Day" will be used as an additional process to recognize improvements and reinforce critical policies and procedures.

The past five years have allowed for the development of a program that provides world class care for the Army's wounded, ill and injured Soldiers.

Here are some key accomplishments of the WCTP under WTC's leadership over the past five years:

- More than 69,500 Soldiers have recovered at our WTUs
- 45% returned to the force
- 77% of eligible Soldiers are participating in Career and Education Readiness activities, such as internships, college classes, Army training and professional certifications

Moving forward, WTC will continue our mission of supporting wounded, ill and injured service members, and living the Army Values. WTU Cadre and Soldiers are expected to treat others with dignity and respect and receive the same in return. I look forward to serving alongside each of you in 2015.

Have a safe holiday season, and Happy New Year.

## CSM Corner

**By: CSM Matthew T. Brady**

I've spent the past month traveling to multiple installations and visiting with Soldiers, as well as many of the key leaders who are crucial to Soldiers' recovery. While visiting, I was able to see how the Warrior Transition Units were commemorating Warrior Care Month.



*CSM Matthew T. Brady,  
Warrior Transition Command*

In late October, I headed to Joint-Base San Antonio, Texas, and watched the change of responsibility. Congratulations to Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald Ecker, incoming U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) Command Sergeant Major. During this trip, I met with Soldiers from Advanced Individual Training, Brooke Army Medical Center and the Warrior Transition Battalion (WTB) who represented the Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) during the ceremony.

After this visit, I met with Soldiers and staff at Fort Bliss, Texas, as they prepared for their Warrior Care Month kick-off celebration. Back in Washington D.C., I spent some time with the Team Army athletes touring the Capitol and White House. In the process we got a surprise visit from my brother, Rep. Kevin Brady (Texas). It was a great way to soak up the history before the Sitting Volleyball Tournament.

During the tournament, I cheered on Team Army as they competed against other service branches wounded, ill and injured athletes. We made it to the championship game, but took second place. Doesn't matter, I couldn't be more proud of this group of Soldiers and Veteran athletes, many of whom I'd met during the Warrior Games and Invictus Games. Their determination and resilience amazes me time and time again.

If you want to keep up with my travels, along with all my selfies, check out my Facebook page. Be safe these next few weeks, and happy holidays. HOOAH!

## AW2 Update

By: COL David S. Oeschger

### Recognizing the Hidden Injuries of War –

For the thousands of brave men and women returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the wounds of war are most noticeable in those Veterans who have suffered external injuries such as amputations, spinal injuries or burns. What is most often unrecognized but equally deserving of our nation's attention are invisible wounds such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, traumatic brain injuries (TBI), and internal injuries (i.e. organ damage/loss).



In late November, I visited a Soldier at Walter Reed who sustained gunshot wounds that forever changed his life. After multiple surgeries, he lost his spleen and most of his small and large intestines. He also lost the ability to use one of his legs. Although recovering from some of the most severe injuries, he still experiences barriers to his recovery because most of what he now has to live with are not physically visible.

Hidden injuries of war can go unnoticed. These injuries affect a Veterans' transition from military service back to civilian life, with a large percentage of the affected population having difficulty with social functioning, employment, or relationships. Nearly 20,000 of WTC's AW2 Soldiers and Veterans experience PTSD, and almost 2,000 have a TBI. I am proud to be a part of an organization that provides support to all severely wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans, for both external and internal injuries. I challenge all organizations and institutions to exemplify this principle.

## Soldier Success Story: Warrior Care Month 2014

By: WTC Communications Division

Service Member Profile: Sgt. Suzanne Lindsey  
Status: Active Duty  
Hometown: Phoenix, Arizona  
Injury: Breast Cancer

Sgt. Suzanne Lindsey is a wife, a mother and an active duty Soldier. She is also a survivor. On June 28, 2013, Lindsey was diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent treatment and recovered at the [Warrior Transition Unit \(WTU\)](#) at the Balboa Navy Medical Center in San Diego, California.

Wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and Veterans have one mission: to heal. The 25 WTUs located across the country provide wounded, ill and injured Soldiers a dedicated space to focus solely on recovering and rehabilitating so that they can transition either back to active duty or to civilian status.

"I would not have been able to heal as well as I have without the ability to focus solely on my treatment," said Lindsey. "The WTU has allowed me to manage my stress which directly affects the effectiveness of my

cancer treatments. The WTU programs and personnel gave me amazing support,” she added.

Soldiers recovering at WTUs have access to many programs that enhance and compliment recovery and transition. Lindsey found the [Career and Education Readiness \(CER\)](#) programs to be particularly useful. “They were especially helpful in preparing me for my return to active duty, but also gave me a contingent plan in case I transitioned out of the military,” Lindsey said. CER activities may include internships, vocational training, professional certifications and continuing education opportunities. For Lindsey, “readiness activities reduced my level of stress by making sure I have a plan for my future for both scenarios.”

Now recovered, Lindsey looks to the future. She plans to continue to serve her country and to become a warrant officer as a 922A Food Service Technician. Looking back on her experience at the WTU, Lindsey said, “I really felt like I had a whole other family at the WTU that was equally concerned about me, my well-being and my future. I’m very grateful to them.”



*Adaptive reconditioning activities helped Sgt. Suzanne Lindsey feel stronger and more like herself during her recovery at Balboa Navy Medical Center, and Career and Employment Readiness programs empowered her to focus on returning to duty.*

## **Warrior Care Month 2014 Activities**

**By: Caitlin Morrison, WTC Communications Division**

This November marked the seventh annual Warrior Care Month. Each year, Warrior Care Month is a time where the military community reaffirms their commitment to the best recovery and reintegration for the nation's wounded, ill and injured service members, their Families and the professionals who support them. The theme for this year's joint observance was “Show of Strength,” and our Soldiers, Veterans and Families did just that. Warrior Transition Units and Army leaders across the country hosted more than 115 events, such as employment fairs, professional development sessions, open houses, media days, adaptive sports and reconditioning demonstrations and other events celebrating the resilience of wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and their Families.

Two key events during Warrior Care Month in the National Capital Region were the Joint Services Facebook Townhall on November 12 and the Sitting Volleyball Tournament and Rehabilitation Expo on November 20. The Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) Director Col. David Oeschger represented the Army in the Joint Services Facebook Townhall, where he answered the public's questions about remaining strong as a wounded warrior alongside Navy Lt. Chet Frith. The audience asked these two service members, who now work for their respective wounded warrior programs, about topics such as battling the stigma behind PTSD, peer to peer caregiving and their future goals.

The Rehabilitation Expo at the Pentagon displayed and demonstrated a wide array of rehabilitative and reconditioning activities. Each service's wounded warrior program featured artwork by wounded, ill and injured service members embracing art as a primary rehabilitation activity. Sgt. 1st Class Angelique Stephens and Staff Sgt. Jonathan Meadows represented WTC with their artwork at the Expo. These Soldiers, who recovered at the Warrior Transition Battalions in Fort Knox, Kentucky and Fort Belvoir, Virginia, cite art as a fundamental part of their recovery, and were eager to share their work and their stories with others. Sgt. 1st Class Stephens now serves as Cadre at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Warrior Transition Battalion.

WTC hosted the annual Sitting Volleyball Tournament that same day at the Pentagon—an event that gathered teams of wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans from each service branch to compete head to head in this exciting adaptive sport. Team Army was an excellent representation of Army strength and resilience.

## **Adaptive Reconditioning Update**

**By: COL Victoria Kilcawley**

*"In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future" – Alexander Haley*

Adaptive reconditioning programs are essential for successful Soldier and Family transition and reintegration. This year continues to be an eventful year for adaptive reconditioning athletes. Their successful performance at Invictus and Warrior Games, as well as the Pentagon Sitting Volleyball Tournament, exemplifies the importance of Soldier involvement in Adaptive Reconditioning sports and activities. Adaptive sports and adaptive reconditioning activities, while different, offer avenues for Soldiers to find something in which they can excel, thereby increasing their self esteem.

With astronomical support from the Fisher House and Bob Woodward Foundation, the Families of our Soldier athletes were able to share in their experiences of Invictus and Warrior Games. While the athletes and Families were in the United Kingdom, Families were treated to sightseeing trips and special events which included the Tower Bridge Museum. This museum is available on special occasions and for special groups. The Families supported their "Soldier heroes" by cheering them on to victory at events and sharing meals with them at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

A Soldier's successful transition and reintegration are the true measure

of the Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP). One of our many sporting success stories includes an athlete with a lower limb amputation who recently accepted a position at a Class 2A College as the Assistant Basketball Coach. Other success stories include our athletes in the World Class Athlete Program training for the 2016 Paralympics.

During Warrior Care Month (WCM), Soldier and Veteran athletes participated in the 2014 Warrior Care Month Rehabilitation Expo and Sitting Volleyball Tournament at the Pentagon. Soldiers provided artwork they created after learning new skills at their WTUs through Adaptive Reconditioning programs. These artists work in different mediums including sculpture, painting, and mixed mediums. The participation in the sitting volleyball tournament allowed our athletes to form bonds with players from other military services, improving sportsmanship and collegiality.

We are anticipate great adventures in 2015 for Soldiers participating in Adaptive Reconditioning programs across the Warrior Care and Transition Program. We are evaluating Adaptive Reconditioning best practices, current policies and procedures to provide the best adaptive opportunities for our wounded, ill and injured Soldiers. Families are vital to a successful transition and reintegration, and we will continue promoting healthy competition with regional trials, Army Warrior Trials, and Warrior Games.

## Policy Update

**By: COL Francis Frazier**

WCTP Policy Memo 14-012: Process for Submitting Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (SCAADL) Packets was approved and released on November 7, 2014. The policy was issued in support of personnel at Regional Medical Commands (RMCs), Warrior Transition Offices (WTOs), Warrior Transition Units (WTUs), and Medical Treatment Facilities that have been designated as points of contact for submitting SCAADL packets.

SCAADL was originally authorized in the FY10 National Defense Authorization Act for service members who incur a permanent catastrophic injury or illness. SCAADL offsets the loss of income by a primary Caregiver that provides non-medical care, support and assistance for the service member.

This new policy memo (14-012) provides operating instructions and identifies roles of those personnel involved in the submission of SCAADL packets to RMC WTO SCAADL Teams and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS).

To review the information in WCTP Policy Memo 14-012 and the latest policies, visit WTC's webpage on [Policy and Guidance](#).

## COMMS UPDATE

**By: Lauren McCullough, WTC Communications Division**

Quite a few myths have emerged since WTC and the Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) were established. We want to kick off WTC's

fifth anniversary by busting a few of these myths.

**Myth #1: All WTU Soldiers will medically separate from the Army.**

Some WTU Soldiers do medically separate from the Army, but this is not true for all WTU Soldiers. Almost 45 percent of the more than 69,500 Soldiers supported by WTUs since 2007 have returned to the force.

**Myth #2: Soldiers do not have enough to do in the WTU.**

Soldiers assigned to WTUs stay busy. They can participate in professional internship programs, complete Army training requirements or participate in external education programs. In fact, 77 percent of eligible WTU Soldiers participate in Career and Education Readiness (CER) activities. Eligible Soldiers are encouraged to engage in adaptive reconditioning activities, including sports and non-sports activities.

**Myth #3: WTC's primary role is to execute the Warrior Games.**

The Warrior Games are an opportunity to emphasize the impact of adaptive reconditioning at local and national levels. However WTC's primary role is to develop, coordinate and integrate the Army's Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) for wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, Veterans and their Families and Caregivers to promote success in the force or civilian life. WTC ensures standardization of care throughout the WTUs, provides training courses for Cadre and oversees the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2).

Learn the facts about WTC on our [website](#), on WTC's [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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