



WTU/AW2 Connection

December 2012

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CG Corner

In this first WTU/AW2 Connection, which combines the three electronic newsletters previously published by Warrior Transition Command into one comprehensive publication – I'll share with you my observations during my first five months on the job. I continue to be amazed at the resilience of our Soldiers and the professionalism of my staff. I want to thank COL Timothy Karcher for his service as Director, AW2. Although he served for a short time, he made a big impact on everyone. I wish him the best at his new assignment at Fort Hood, and welcome COL Colin Greene as the new director.



BG David J. Bishop, Commander, U.S. Army Warrior Transition Command and Assistant Surgeon General for Warrior Care and Transition

I believe the quality of an army can be determined by how it takes care of its most wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers. Our Army is doing a great job. I've traveled to several locations and received warm receptions from all of you. A couple of things have stood out — Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) are probably the best model in the world for healing and reintegrating Soldiers back to the force or into civilian communities — the gold standard. I hear this from our allies and from people in our own government.

Maintaining this standard and ensuring recovery and reintegration of wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers and Veterans is a difficult challenge. Working as WTU cadre is one of the hardest leadership jobs we can give someone in the Army, and these Soldiers are doing an exemplary job. An example is the Fort Campbell WTB. The Senior Commander, MG James C. McConville, Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) ensures the Fort Campbell WTB is fully staffed and that positions are filled with the highest quality people — quality Active and Reserve Component Soldiers. His commitment is evident and supported by results.

I share this same commitment. We recently conducted an assessment of Cadre selection, training and support. Warrior Transition Command is committed to ensuring Cadre needs are met. I'll share the assessment results

and the way ahead after we evaluate the results.

We have already made changes. As a result of my initial visits to WTB's last summer with CSM Mark Dennis, we launched a Cadre Resilience Course (CRC) to further prepare WTU cadre to handle their tough assignments. This five-day course arms squad leaders and platoon sergeants with resilience skills for coping with and managing stress, not only in their personal lives but in the lives of their Soldiers and Soldiers' Families. These courses were conducted by Performance Enhancement Specialists from the Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness Office at Fort Sam Houston, TX. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the nearly 120 Cadre members who completed our first two courses. Moving forward, we plan to include the CRC in all Cadre Residence Courses.

Last month we observed Warrior Care Month by reaffirming our commitment to quality care, education, and employment for WTU Soldiers and Veterans. We launched the "Hire a Veteran" Campaign at the National Press Club and focused on debunking three myths that impede the employment of Veterans: concern of PTSD/TBI on job performance, cost of accommodations, and transferability of military skills to the civilian workplace. The launch was covered by the *Washington Post*, *Washington Examiner*, *Army Times*, *HR Magazine* and the *Military Times*. But most importantly, two companies, Orion and URS, contacted us to see how they can help our Veterans find jobs.

Focusing on the significance of adaptive reconditioning, the Warrior Transition Command also hosted a sitting volleyball tournament at the Pentagon Athletic Center. All the services participated along with Veterans Affairs, and the Army team took home the winning medal. We will continue these efforts during the 2013 Warrior Games, May 11-17, at the U.S. Olympic Training Center and the Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs. The Army team boasts strong performances at the games, and I'm counting on WTU commanders and Soldiers to continue this tradition and go for the gold.

For all our Soldier's assigned to WTUs, your sole mission is to heal and successfully transition back to the Army or to your community as an accomplished Veteran. I encourage you to continue the mission with vigilance and the fighting spirit you all are famous for.

As I reflect back on the past few months, I am inspired both by the resilience of our Soldiers and the dedication and professionalism of our staff. That spirit is what successful transitions are made of. You make this program viable and help make us the best Army in the world. I look forward to serving with you in 2013.

CSM Corner

We are looking forward to 2013 at the Warrior Transition Command. I came onboard the Command in April 2012 and the train hasn't slowed down. We conducted the Warrior Games in Colorado Springs April 30 through May 5, 2012 which was a great success. And, we are looking forward to the 2013 games. The opening ceremony is scheduled for May 12, 2013. Our adaptive sports and reconditioning team has been working hard in preparation for the competition, but it really is a combined effort of



many across the Warrior Transition Units and all the sponsors for this program. The Warrior Games are a fantastic event for all of our wounded, ill, and injured and their Families across all the branches of service. The competitive spirit is great. But most of all, it builds confidence in ability over disability, and the capabilities of many in our ranks. We are looking forward to May 2013.



*CSM Mark Dennis, U.S. Army
Warrior Transition Command*

We continue to strive for improvements everyday in how we conduct operations in our Warrior Transition Units. We have made improvements in our Cadre Training Course with the addition of the one week resiliency training course, and we continue to look at processes for cadre selection. Cadre must be passionate and compassionate about their mission of leading our Army's wounded, ill, and injured. We have an outstanding standard operating procedure in our Comprehensive Transition Plan to assist Soldiers in transitioning back into the force or as productive civilians in our society. Our Soldier Family Assistance Centers provide the best in staff for education, counseling, and transition. I encourage our Soldiers and Families to make the best use of these assets.

Our Army Wounded Warrior (AW2) Advocates continue to do an outstanding job in supporting and assisting our Soldiers, Veterans, their Families, and Caregivers. We have more than 200 Advocates in the field (CONUS and OCONUS) supporting more than 14,000 Veterans and Soldiers in their transition and independence.

I am always impressed with the units I go out to visit. In the past eight months I have visited more than half of the 29 Warrior Transition Brigades and Warrior Transition Units and nine Community Based Warrior Transition Units and the Soldiers, Cadre, staff, and support teams. I always depart feeling great about the importance of the mission, and what we are doing as a team. I look forward to what we will do in the future for our wounded, ill, and injured in 2013, and I look forward to getting out and visiting all of our Soldiers and Veterans to discuss how we can continue to improve and set them and their Families up for success. Have a happy holiday season!

AW2 Update

AW2 Director Introduction COL Greene, AW2 Director

On November 20 I was afforded the honor of assuming the duties of the Director of the Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2). As the Warrior Transition Command Surgeon, I was aware of new services provided by AW2. Since sitting in the Director's chair, I have become more impressed every day with the quality, variety, and broad scope of services our AW2 Advocates and support staff provide to the most severely wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers and Veterans. My professional background lies in Family medicine and public health, which, along with operational and leadership experience, I intend to leverage and build upon the successes



*COL Colin Greene, new
Director of U.S. Army
Wounded Warrior Program*

of previous AW2 Directors. I look forward to traveling to as many sites as feasible to meet AW2 Advocates, Soldiers, Veterans, and Families and to gather the thoughts, wisdom, and ideas that will bring us to new levels of effectiveness and success. The Army Wounded Warrior Program is widely known for setting the standard for Soldier, Veteran, and Family support; and it is my privilege to lead it.

*Wounded Warrior Program
(AW2)*



CW2 James Hughes in front of Blanchfield Army Community Hospital at Fort Campbell. BACH is where many of the Warrior Transition Battalion Soldiers receive portions of their medical care. WTB Soldiers also receive their primary medical care services within the Warrior Care Clinic which is located adjacent to a Soldier Health Clinic.

A Soldier's Thoughts

CW2 James Hughes Alpha Company, WTB, Fort Campbell, KY

James Hughes, Chief Warrant Officer, Fort Campbell, KY

I have had the honor and privilege to serve my country as both a Soldier and sailor since May of 1997. During that time, I worked with the most professional men and women this great country has to offer. But none matched the dedication of those within the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU). I was assigned to Alpha Company, Warrior Transition Battalion in Fort Campbell, Kentucky on April 15, 2012 after a neck injury that unfortunately ended my military career.

As a wounded Soldier, I was faced with many physical and mental trials, most significant of which was undergoing the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) process and the transition from Soldier to civilian. The officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) assigned to the Alpha Company, WTU made that transition much easier, and were always dedicated to my medical and emotional needs at any time, on any day. Not only is the WTU motivated to help Soldiers with their medical needs, but they also encourage us to further our education while assigned to the WTU. The WTU also encourages Soldiers to take time off to enjoy extracurricular activities through the "Hooah

Program," which raises money for wounded Soldiers to attend professional sporting, hunting, and fishing events all over the United States. It is impressive that the WTU only concentrates their energy on the Soldier's medical and emotional needs, but they also never falter in continuing to reward Soldiers for their military achievements. No Soldier leaves a WTU without being recognized with an end of service award, or the appropriate award in recognition for their service while assigned to the WTU.

There is no doubt in my mind that I would not have been as successful as I have been transitioning into civilian life if it were not for the dedication and professionalism of the officers and NCOs who took care of me and my Family's needs while assigned to the WTU. I would like to say a special thank you to the warrior leaders for taking time out of their extraordinarily busy schedules on more than one occasion to help me in this transition.

Did You Know... **CTP Guide for Leaders**

The Warrior Transition Command Comprehensive Transition Plan (CTP) Guide for Leaders and the Summary of CTP Changes (effective October 1, 2012) were mailed to all Warrior Transition Units and Community Based Warrior Transition Units (WTUs/CBWTUs) in October 2012. The Leader Guide is a portable smart book adaptation of the CTP guidance that is in an easy-to-understand format that WTU leaders at all levels can use. An even more convenient method of reading the CTP guidance can be found in the new complementary eGuide that can be accessed from a Smartphone at any time and from anywhere. Instructions and a limited number of identification codes (ID) on how to access the eGuide will be mailed in late December 2012 to each WTU/CBWTU and to individuals who attend the Cadre Resident's Course. The cost for each QuickSeries download ID card being provided is about \$5.00. Because the availability of ID Codes is limited, units are encouraged to purchase QuickSeries CTP eGuides with unit funds. Changes to the CTP guidance (found in the October 1, 2012 summary) are already included in both the pocket guide and the eGuide.



1st Lt. Michael Hawker, executive officer for Bravo Company at the Fort Campbell Warrior Transition Battalion, speaks to Bravo Company 1st Sgt. Timothy Richard Sr. December 18, 2012 about the transition plans for the Soldiers assigned to their company.

WTU Spotlight

Squad Leaders Important to Soldier Success

Fort Campbell, KY

Stacy Rzepka, Public Affairs Specialist, Blanchfield Army Community Hospital

Soldiers in every Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) rely on a team of people who help them successfully transition either back to a unit or into the civilian world as honored Veterans.

The day Soldiers arrive at a WTU, they begin getting to know their Triad of Care, composed of a squad leader, nurse case manager and primary care manager. This team works to assist Soldiers as they set personal goals and work toward meeting them. Soldiers set goals in six areas: career, physical, emotional, social, family and spiritual. They meet with their Triad of Care within 30 days of arrival at a WTU and continue meeting regularly to stay on track to succeed.

1st Lt. Michael Hawker, the Executive Officer for Bravo Company at Fort Campbell's Warrior Transition Battallion (WTB,) said that squad leaders are integral to Soldiers' success.

"Squad leaders take time to get to know each of their Soldiers and their Families or support system so the line of communication remains strong," said Hawker.

Squad leaders are typically assigned 10 Soldiers, which allows them to build a strong working relationship with each individual. At the Fort Campbell WTB, squad leaders speak with their Soldiers every day, either in person or by phone. "When squad leaders really know their Soldiers, it builds a level of trust that helps Soldiers feel comfortable turning to them," said Hawker.

Hawker said that it is important for Soldiers and their Families to know where to turn. "I have seen what happens when a small concern is not communicated," said Hawker. "It can quickly grow into a nearly unmanageable issue."

"Every squad leader is ready to take a call at 3 a.m. to help a Soldier in need," Hawker said. "That is what they do."

Hawker said that he advises the Soldiers in his company to take advantage of the opportunities that the WTB presents. This can include career resources, education fairs, and internship opportunities. "Soldiers should really try to use anything available to better themselves and pave the way for a smooth transition," said Hawker.

The leadership of the WTB, Blanchfield Army Community Hospital and 101st Airborne Division are all focused on helping Soldiers experience that smooth transition.

"Here at the Fort Campbell WTB, we have such a great working relationship with the 101st Airborne Division's command team," said Hawker. Just as the Triad of Care meets regularly with Soldiers to ensure they remain on their path to success, the Commanding General of the 101st Airborne Division or one of his deputies personally visits the WTB each month to address any issues and see what he can do to help ensure WTB Soldiers have a smooth take off.

With such a strong focus on helping Soldiers heal and transition, Hawker said that the time spent at the WTB can fly by quickly. "The Soldiers who worked toward a defined goal and took advantage of all the resources we offer are better prepared for the next step in life," he said.

The unique Triad of Care model offers a well-coordinated team to help Soldiers as they continue on their path to success. "The squad leaders here really care, and it shows," said Hawker. "I see it every day."



Gary Bolton, an advocate with the Army Wounded Warrior Program at the Fort Campbell Warrior Transition Battalion, speaks with MSG Michael Negron December 18, 2012 about his upcoming transition out of the Army. Bolton helped Negron lock in a federal internship with a Fort Campbell agency which could culminate in a job offer.

AW2 Update

Advocates pave the way to success Fort Campbell, KY.

Stacy Rzepka, Public Affairs Specialist, Blanchfield Army Community Hospital

"It feels great to know I get to keep helping Soldiers, whether they are still in the Army or have transitioned out of the military and into their civilian lives as honored Veterans," said Gary Bolton, an Advocate with the Fort Campbell, Kentucky, U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2).

Bolton is one of four AW2 Advocates at Fort Campbell who assist severely wounded, ill, or injured Soldiers at Fort Campbell's Warrior Transition Battalion and the surrounding area. AW2 Advocates help pave a path for more than 50 Soldiers each.

"It is kind of like being a 1SG again," said Bolton, who served 24 years in the Air Force. "I help Soldiers and their Families with something different every day." He helps Soldiers arrange hard-to-get medical appointments, connects people with local resources and non-profit groups, and ensures his Soldiers and Veterans are working toward their education, career, and medical goals. Bolton said that while he does not know all the answers, he certainly knows

where to turn to get them.

This requires Bolton and his fellow AW2 Advocates to maintain strong working relationships with outside organizations such as the Social Security Administration to navigate benefits, other federal agencies to set up internships, and the Veterans Administration (VA) to pave the way for Soldiers as they begin receiving their medical care outside the Army's healthcare system. "It puts a lot less stress on Soldiers when they know these things are already in place or they know how to access them before they ever leave Fort Campbell," said Bolton.

"Partnering with the Veteran's Administration has been a big help to our Soldiers and their Families," said Bolton. "While our Soldiers go through their medical board process, we work with the VA and the Army to ensure they have a disability rating and their first VA appointments are scheduled before they leave the Army." Bolton explained that this helps ensure each of the Soldiers he works with experience a seamless transition as they begin receiving their medical care from the VA.

Bolton said that he feels grateful to be able to help Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families meet their needs and goals. One day Bolton matches people with a non-profit organization to arrange flights so an ailing Soldier can see his or her Family. Another day he assists a former infantryman who is applying for the University of Missouri to pursue his law school goal.

"I just do my best to make transitions seamless for these Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families by providing the tools and resources they need to help build their path to independence," said Bolton. He acts as a liaison between his clients, the military, and the civilian community to navigate all the resources and benefits available.

Not every wounded, ill, or injured Soldier has such a complex case that they would need assistance from AW2. AW2 is intended to provide extra assistance for Soldiers who incurred a wound, illness, or injury in the line of duty after September 10, 2001 and either have at least a 30 percent rating from the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) for one of the conditions listed below, or receive a combined 50 percent IDES rating for any other combat or combat-related condition:

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Severe traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Severe loss of vision/blindness
- Severe hearing loss/deafness
- Fatal / incurable disease with limited life expectancy
- Loss of limb
- Spinal cord injury
- Permanent disfigurement
- Severe burns
- Severe paralysis

Bolton added that he hopes people will spread the word about AW2. "So many people are eligible for this assistance, even if they have never been in a Warrior Transition Unit," Bolton said. Bolton and AW2 Advocates like him are ready to assist Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families meet their goals. Whether those goals have to do with careers, education, medical, physical, emotional, behavioral, social, Family, or personal spiritual goals, an AW2 Advocate can help.



CSM. James C. Smith wears his newly awarded Order of Marechaussee while he speaks to wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers about overcoming obstacles September 28 during a Fort Campbell Warrior Transition Battalion award ceremony. During Smith's four years of active duty service in the Army, 20 years of service with the Tennessee Army National Guard and 19 years with the Clarksville Police Department, he has exhibited outstanding professional competence in the Military Police Regiment. This led LTC William Howard, commander of the Warrior Transition Battalion, to submit Smith for one of the highest awards in his regiment.

Kudos Corner

Top award presented to WTB leader, Clarksville Police Captain

Stacy Rzepka, Public Affairs Specialist, Blanchfield Army Community Hospital

He takes care of wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He also takes care of the Clarksville community.

He recently earned one of the highest awards in the Army Military Police Regiment, the Order of the Marechaussee, during a Fort Campbell Warrior Transition Battalion award ceremony on September 28.

He is CSM James C. Smith. Soldiers know him as their top enlisted leader at the Warrior Transition Battalion while Clarksville residents know him as CPT Smith of the Clarksville Police Department.

In Smith's four years of as an active duty servicemember and the following 20 years he has spent with the Tennessee Army National Guard, he said that he has always tried to live by the Army values and the NCO Creed. "Now, as a member of the Order of Marechaussee, I hope I can continue to honor the MPs of the past, now, and in the future," Smith said.

The Order of the Marechaussee is highly selective. According to the MP Regimental Association website www.mpraonline.org, only 10 percent of eligible servicemembers will be selected. Those selected must exhibit outstanding professional competence in their field; dedicate time, effort, and distinguished service to the Regiment and must have qualities which set them apart from others in their field.

"Throughout my 21-year career, he is the best non-commissioned officer I have served with among all the military services and their components; active duty, National Guard, and Reserves," said LTC William Howard, commander of the Warrior Transition Battalion. "CSM Smith stands out for his sheer professionalism,

excellence in his field and the experience he brings to the battalion from serving 19 years with the Clarksville Police Department.”

“I try to share with my Soldiers that the path to success involves working hard, doing what is right and getting back up every time you are knocked down,” said Smith. “It is the way we overcome obstacles that makes us who we are.”

Warrior Care Month Update

WTC Stratcom Update: Employment Campaign Recap

Cait McCarrie, Stratcom, Warrior Transition Command

Warrior Care Month, initiated in 2008, is observed by the military services each November. It's a time to reaffirm a commitment to quality health care, education, and careers for our nation's wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers. This year's theme, "Success through Transition- Education, Employment Entrepreneurship" highlights the importance of empowering, educating, and encouraging Veterans through their recovery and transition.

In support of Warrior Care Month, the Army launched the "Hire A Veteran" employment campaign, which aims to eliminate misperceptions that impede the employment of disabled Veterans. Based on research from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the Center for New American Studies, and on Career and Education Readiness Branch expertise, the campaign focused on debunking three myths that impede the employment of Veterans: concern of PTSD/TBI on job performance, cost of accommodations, and transferability of military skills to the civilian workplace. The event was launched at a press conference held at the National Press Club and was covered by the *Washington Post*, *Washington Examiner*, *Army Times*, *HR Magazine* and the *Military Times*.

Veterans bring leadership, discipline, and direction to the workplace, and the campaign uses a variety of tools to communicate how Veterans can positively impact the workforce and set employers up for success. Tools include a new Career Tool Kit and a ten minute educational video which can be found at the new employers section of our website at <http://www.WTC.army.mil/employers/index.html>.

Make sure to visit the WTC website <http://www.WTC.army.mil> and blog <http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil> for resources, information, and stories for wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers, Veterans, Families, and Caregivers. Providing the most accurate information on warrior care is our mission not only during Warrior Care month, but every month. If you have any information you would like to share, please contact us at Warriorcarecommunications@conus.army.mil.

We Want to Hear From You...

WTU/CBWTU Cadre Collaboration Portal now LIVE

The Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) and Community Based Warrior Transition Unit (CBWTU) Cadre Collaboration Portal is now "LIVE" on milBook. This site was developed as a secure online method for the WTC staff and WTU Cadre to collaborate, exchange information, share best practices, and store knowledge. It

is available at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/wtucadre> and also includes links to the WTC PCM Forum, NCM Professional Forum and WTC TC Group.

Follow the directions below to access the Cadre Collaboration Portal:

1. Open the following URL: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/wtucadre>
2. If not yet logged in to milBook, you will be required to authenticate. Click on the 'I AGREE' button and, if prompted, select your CAC certificate and enter your pin number.
3. If you already have a milSuite account, skip to step 5. Otherwise, click on the link that reads 'Click here to register!' Your personal information will be pulled automatically from DEERS. If all data appears correct, click on 'Create New Account'.
4. You will receive a confirmation page stating that 'You have successfully created a milSuite account!' At this time, you will need to reenter the URL found above.
5. Before you can view any site content, you will need to be approved to join the group. Click on 'Ask to join this group' on the right-hand side of the page.
6. You will receive an email notification when your membership has been approved.
7. Use the URL above; also found in the email you will receive, to access the portal.

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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>