



The Wounded Warrior Voice

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WHAT'S NEW: Pentagon Rules against Purple Hearts for PTSD

By Philip Paternella, Medical Support Specialist

The Purple Heart will not be awarded to servicemembers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) according to a recent Pentagon decision. The decision was made public on January 7, 2009, and followed months of evaluation by military and outside officials. The evaluation was initiated after Defense Secretary Robert Gates was asked last May whether he would support awarding the Purple Heart to Soldiers suffering from PTSD. At that time, Gates indicated a willingness to review the issue.

This issue also gained significant publicity last May when a prominent Army Psychologist, John E. Fortunato, called for a change in policy to allow awarding the Purple Heart to Soldiers suffering from PTSD. Fortunato is chief of the Recovery and Resilience Center at Fort Bliss, Texas, where he treats Soldiers suffering from PTSD. He suggested that the change in policy would help remove the stigma associated with this disorder which currently affects about 20% of returning combat veterans.

The Undersecretary for Personnel and Readiness, David Chu, decided against making such awards after conferring with the Pentagon's Award Advisory Group, Joint Staff, the military services, the institute of Heraldry and the Center for Military History.

Army Regulation 600-8-22 on military awards, states that the Purple Heart "recognizes those individuals wounded to a degree that requires treatment by a medical officer, in action with the enemy or as the result of enemy action where the intended effect of action is to kill or injure the servicemember." The regulation defines a wound as "an injury to any part of the body from an outside force or agent," such as bullets, explosives and shrapnel.

Historically, the Purple Heart has never been awarded for mental disorders or psychological conditions resulting from witnessing or experiencing traumatic combat events – for example, combat stress reaction, shell-shock, combat stress fatigue, acute stress disorder, or PTSD. Pentagon officials assured troops that it takes PTSD seriously despite the recent decision not to award the Purple Heart to those with the disorder. Officials also reaffirmed that servicemembers diagnosed with PTSD still warrant medical care and disability compensation.

Links to articles:

www.defenselink.mil

www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=54536

www.armytimes.com/news/2008/05/army_purpleptsd_051908w/

www.nytimes.com/2009/01/12/opinion/12mon2.html

www.militarytimes.com/news/2009/01/military_purpleheart_ptsd_010609w/

WHAT'S NEW: Faster Way to Get Access to VA Benefits

The Defense and Veterans Affairs departments announced a [new, faster means](#) for handling troops with "catastrophic" injuries who seek the veterans' status that allows them access to VA medical benefits and other entitlements. The new process is designed to expedite a servicemember seriously injured in combat from military to veteran status, by waiving the standard Disability Evaluation System (DES), resulting in [receipt of benefits in three to four months](#), compared to a recovery and standard DES process that would normally take much longer. The expedited policy differs from the DES pilot program, which DoD is working with the VA staff to [expand](#) in order to simplify the current disability evaluation process for wounded, injured and ill servicemembers.

WHAT'S NEW: VA Home Loan Guaranty Program Helping Veterans in Financial Difficulty

By Jane Dulin, AW2 VA Liaison

Recent changes to the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program are helping veterans in financial difficulty. The new VA Loan Electronic Reporting Interface (VALERI) system provides banks and lending institutions more opportunities to help veteran borrowers retain their homes in this difficult mortgage environment. VALERI is a rules-based system designed to identify veterans who are experiencing financial difficulty. VALERI automates VA's previously paper-based processes. Now, via the Internet, loan servicers can electronically report delinquencies and major loan events, apply VA rules to help borrowers become current, send electronic documents, and file claims. VA completed the transition of all VA-backed loan servicers nationwide to the new electronic reporting system in November. Servicers now report on daily activities for more than 1.2 million VA-guaranteed loans.

As a result of VA's efforts to help veteran borrowers retain their homes, VA's serious delinquency rate (loans more than 90 days delinquent) has dropped over the past six years. According to the most recent Mortgage Bankers Association National Delinquency Survey, VA's serious delinquency rate is three percent, as compared to 17.85 percent for subprime loans. Three hundred VA loan technicians at nine regional offices assist veterans and servicemembers with VA-guaranteed loans avoid foreclosure by helping establish repayment plans, special forbearance, or loan modifications. VA loan technicians also provide as much assistance as possible to other veterans who do not have their home loans guaranteed by VA. Information about VA's home loan guaranty program is available at www.homeloans.va.gov. If you have further questions, please contact Jane Dulin, AW2 VA Specialist at (202) 461-6076 or (703) 325-8673.

WHAT'S NEW: Behavioral Health Assistance Available 24/7

The [Defense Center of Excellence \(DCoE\) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury](#) has developed the [DCoE Outreach Center](#) to provide [24/7 help](#) to servicemembers, veterans, and their Families by connecting them with the resources they need to promote their resilience, recovery, and reintegration and by assisting them with navigation of the system of care. The Center is staffed by behavioral health consultants and nurses, including some former military psychologists and is equipped to handle not only routine requests for information, but also questions about symptoms a caller may be experiencing. Staff also can help a caller find appropriate health care resources within the Defense Department or with other federal agencies. For assistance, contact 866-966-1020 or Resources@DCoEO Outreach.org.

WHAT'S NEW: AW2 Participates in AFAP Conference

By Kyra Davis, Management Specialist

Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR) held its 25th annual Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) conference on January 25-30, 2009, at the Mark Hilton Hotel in Alexandria, VA. AW2 works hand in hand with the FMWR to support the annual AFAP Conference.

Ten AW2 Soldiers, Families, and caregivers served as delegates at the conference. The delegates were **Rosie Babin** (mother of **SPC Alan Babin**), **CPT Nancy Glowacki**, **SFC Shawn Graves**, **SSG Michele Mitchell**, **CPT Elmer Rivera** and spouse **Leyda**, **SSG Terry Saffron** and spouse **Colleen**, **CPT Fayette Frahm**, and **SGT Tony Wood**. During the AFAP conference, delegates were placed into work groups and discussed pre-submitted issues, deciding on the top two issues

from their group. AW2 and other subject matter experts were on site during these discussions to answer any questions.

The AW2 Symposium follows the AFAP process to develop issues as well. The AW2 delegates presented issues that were identified at the 2008 AW2 Symposium. Out of the top 10 issues identified at the AW2 Symposium, four were selected as the top issues from the AFAP work groups:

- Availability of standardized respite care for wounded warrior caregivers
- Career coordinators for AW2
- Collaborative community support of severely wounded, injured, and ill
- Comprehensive strategy for over medication prevention and alternative treatment options for all military health system beneficiaries

All the focus groups came together to present their top two issues, and then vote on the overall top five issues they would like presented to Army leadership. The AFAP top five issues were:

1. Bereavement permissive temporary duty (TDY)
2. Official photographs for all Soldiers
3. Secure accessible storage for Soldiers residing in the barracks
4. Shortages of medical providers in the military treatment facilities (MTFs)
5. Availability of standardized respite care for wounded warrior caregivers (2008 AW2 Symposium issue)

Senior Army leadership is alerted to areas of concern that need their attention, which gives them an opportunity to put plans into place to resolve the issues. Generals George W. Casey, Michael D. Rochelle, and Eric B. Schoomaker were all in attendance during the AFAP report out.

The General Officer Steering Committee also held its meeting with the AFAP Conference to address previous AFAP issues. There was one AW2 issue discussed and completed: #624 - AW2 Welcome Tool Kits. The AW2 Welcome Tool Kits included the six AW2 fact sheets, map, and DVD and were mailed out to all AW2 Soldiers, Families, and Advocates.

For more information on the AFAP conference, visit these links:

- www.army.mil
- www.army.mil/-news
- www.armymwr.com
- www.myarmylifetoo.com
- www.ftleavenworthlamp.com

CAREERS: Disability.gov Provides Links to Valuable Employment Information

- **Initiative Advances Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities:** [The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled](#) recently launched a [landmark initiative](#) to enhance quality work environments for more than 40,000 Americans

employed through [AbilityOne](#), a program that provides employment through the federal procurement process to people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

- **EARNWorks Veteran Initiatives:** Veterans with service-connected disabilities offer technical and leadership skills to support employers' employment, business and diversity goals. [EARNworks Veteran Initiatives](#) assists companies in attracting and hiring these highly sought after talented and experienced individuals.
- **Telecommuting Resources:** TeleworkTools.org is an introductory gateway into the world of Telework for interested jobseekers, service providers, and employers in the United States.

EDUCATION: Training for Military Spouses and Severely Wounded Servicemembers Seeking Health-Related Jobs

Fairfax, VA-based Inova Health System, a major health care provider in the suburbs, is teaming up with the Defense Department to [help military members and spouses pursue medical careers](#). Its partnership with the department is expanding to provide training for military spouses and severely injured servicemembers seeking jobs in the health care industry.

EDUCATION: Veterans with Hearing Loss Can Earn Bachelor or Graduate-Level Degrees

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), with more than 40 years of experience providing technical educations for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, is reaching out to U.S. troops who have [suffered significant hearing loss](#) as a result of exposure to gunfire and explosions during their military service. Veterans with hearing loss can earn bachelor or graduate-level degrees at RIT with access services--such as real-time captioning and notetaking in the classroom--from National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID).

EDUCATION: Scholarship Program Military for Dependent Children

The fourth annual Homefront America, American Patriot Freedom Scholarship program (www.homefrontamerica.org/oohrahome.htm) is now accepting applications from qualified military dependent children. Applications must be postmarked by Friday, April 24, 2009.

EDUCATION: The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities

The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV), first developed through Syracuse University's Whitman School of Management in 2007, has expanded to five consortium partners including Mays Business School at Texas A&M, UCLA's Anderson School of Management, the College of Business at Florida State University, and most recently, the Krannert School of Management at Purdue University. Each of these world class business schools are accepting applications now and each plan to provide courses in the summer of 2009.

The EBV program is available at all five business schools. EBV offers business focused training to AW2 Soldiers disabled as a result of their service supporting GWOT operations (including Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom) since September 11, 2001. The only requirement is to express a strong interest in entrepreneurship and small business ownership/management, or in short, have a passion for starting your own business. For the participating veterans, the program will be entirely free, including travel and accommodations.

The five institutions have committed to a three phase, standardized EBV program format, ensuring that all participants receive a consistent, high-quality experience. Phase I is a self-study

session in which the veterans complete courses through online discussions moderated by university faculty. Phase II is a nine-day residency at participants' EBV university, where they will learn to develop business concepts and understand the basic elements of small business management. Phase III involves 12 months of ongoing support and mentorship provided to the veterans by the faculty experts at the EBV universities. Throughout the EBV experience, students engage in workshops to develop strategies for raising capital, attracting customers, and ultimately writing business plans that are most effective for their business model. Specific dates for the EBV will vary by university. Soldiers will be assigned to an EBV campus following admission into the program. That assignment will be determined, in large part, based on proximity to an EBV campus. Generally however, the schedule is as follows:

1. June/July: Commence online module
2. August: Commence EBV Residency (*nine-day residency at EBV University*)
3. August: Commence one-year mentor program

At least eight AW2 Soldiers have taken advantage of this program since its inception, including AW2 Advocate/Soldier, Clay Rankin, out of West Virginia. Application information can be found at whitman.syr.edu/ebv/Apply/. For more information, contact:

Syracuse University: Barb Buske, Office of the Dean, EBV Coordinator
ebvinfo@syr.edu, 315-443-8736, <http://whitman.syr.edu/ebv/Apply/>

Florida State University: Randy Blass, PhD, Program Director
rblass@cob.fsu.edu, 850-644-7859, <http://cob.fsu.edu/man/ebv.cfm>

Texas A&M: Richard Lester, PhD, Director of Academic Entrepreneurship Programs
rlester@mays.tamu.edu, (979) 862-7091, mays.tamu.edu/

UCLA-Anderson: Hasmik Stepanian
ebv@anderson.ucla.edu, (310) 206-7476, www.anderson.ucla.edu/x20207.xml

Purdue University: Dr. Richard Cosier
rcosier@purdue.edu, (765) 494-4366, <http://www.mgmt.purdue.edu/>

EDUCATION: Army Vocational/Technical Program Provides Expanded Education Opportunities

Congress has selected the Army to participate in an education pilot program designed to provide expanded education opportunities for Soldiers, officers and Wounded Warriors serving on active duty -- to include National Guard and Reserve Soldiers on extended active duty.

The intent of this short-term pilot program is to provide training in high-demand career fields to help Soldiers find employment after they transition out of the Army. Army Education is working with technical and community colleges throughout the United States to build upon existing programs and develop new pilot re-training programs in high demand career occupations, such as rehabilitation, nursing, medical technology, and other health care occupations.

The [Army Vocational/Technical \(AVOTEC\) Program](#) was announced January 15, and Army Education Centers and Soldier and Family Assistance Centers will begin assisting Soldiers with enrollment beginning February 1.

EDUCATION: Program Provides Free Training and Certification Opportunities

The CompTIA Educational Foundation's "Creating Futures" program provides free training and certification opportunities to populations who have historically been under-represented in the information technology (IT) workforce, including U.S. veterans, individuals with disabilities, women, minorities, at-risk youth and dislocated workers. Creating Futures works directly with employers to identify their hiring needs, then tailors its training to help individuals obtain the skills employers require. The Foundation received a \$210,000 grant from Major League Baseball and the McCormick Foundation to expand its Creating Futures' outreach to disabled veterans (www.newsfactor.com/news/CompTIA-To-Train-Disabled-Veterans/story.xhtml?story_id=102001S7LMD6).

MONEY MATTERS: Legal Pro Bono Program for Military Family Members

By MAJ Senna Austin, Assistant Command Judge Advocate

There's a pro bono program for military Family members through The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). To find out more about this program or to refer a client to the AILA MAP, please go to: www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=24108.

MONEY MATTERS: Military OneSource is Providing Free Tax Consultation and Filing Services

Military OneSource will once again provide [free tax consultation](#) and filing services to military service members and their Families during the tax season. As in the three previous years, users will have free online access to the TaxCut Basic program. Severely injured service members or Family members handling their affairs are eligible. For more information contact Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647.

FAMILY: Military Families Cope with Change

Sesame Workshop will air a PBS special on April 1 aimed at [helping military Families cope with changes](#). Actor/singer Queen Latifah and singer John Mayer will join Elmo to present, *Coming Home: Military Families Cope with Change*. The special carries a message for children whose parents suffered a physical or psychological wound in combat.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Assistance Dogs:** East Coast Assistance Dogs (ECAD) trains and places dogs with people that have physical disabilities and Soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The dogs are trained to retrieve, carry items, balance a person, alert them to various situation or noises, and offer comforted when needed. They have placed over 120 dogs and have 45 dogs in training at any given time. ECAD is an accredited program with the Assistance Dogs International. If interested in learning more call (914) 693-0600 x 1953 or visit www.ecad1.org/.
- **Free Disney Park Ticket for Soldiers:** Walt Disney World has just introduced a special Armed Forces Salute Ticket for 2009 (www.disneymilitarysales.com/). Each qualifying military servicemember will receive a complimentary 5-Day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute

Ticket" for visits through January 4 - December 23, 2009. To find out about this offer and other military discounts offered by Disney, visit Disney Information Station (www.wdwnfo.com/discounts/discounts-military.htm).

- **Shades of Green Resort Caters to Servicemembers, Retirees, and Families:** [Shades of Green](#) is a resort hotel, located on Walt Disney World Resort, exclusive to servicemembers, retirees, DoD civilians, and their Family members. Shades of Green is an Armed Forces Recreation Center, run by the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command based in Alexandria, Va. FMWRC's mission is to provide Soldiers and their Families with the same quality of life they are sworn to protect. Rates are set on a sliding scale, based on rank, and with no shareholders to answer to or profits to be made, the rates are kept remarkably low.
- **Free Ski Instruction for Wounded Warriors at Whitetail Ski Resort:** [Whitetail Ski Resort](#), located in Mercersburg, PA, is increasing its instruction programs for adaptive skiers and snowboarders. The new program, "Two Top Mountain Adaptive Sports Foundation," is one of the newest chapters of Disabled Sports USA, headquartered in Rockville, Maryland. Whitetail's proximity to Walter Reed and the large number of veterans in the area gives the foundation a natural focus on wounded warriors. Instructor volunteers receive special instruction from Major David Rozelle, an amputee Iraqi veteran, and other skiers with disabilities. For additional information and to make reservations with the Two Top Mountain Adaptive Sports Foundation, call Bill Dietrich, Director, at (717) 328-9400, Ext. 3582 (office), (717) 507-7668 (cell), or e-mail him at wtadaptive@skiwhitetail.com or twotopadaptive@yahoo.com, or visit www.skiwhitetail.com/index.htm.
- **Year-Round Sports Programs:** The Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project is a partnership between Disabled Sports USA (DS/USA), its chapters, and the Wounded Warrior Project to provide year-round sports programs for severely wounded service members from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts and the global war on terror. To see what events are coming up, visit Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project Calendar (www.dsusa.org/calendars-wwdsp-calendar.html).
- **Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) Peer Mentoring Program:** WWP Alumni may serve as mentors to other wounded warriors during their recovery. WWP Peer Mentors are trained to be resources, listeners and "hospital buddies" who can share their understanding and perspective based upon their own real-life successes. For more information on the WWP Peer Mentor program, email jmayer@woundedwarriorproject.org.
- **VFW to Sponsor Eight Veterans in Golf Classic:** The Veterans of Foreign Wars will sponsor eight Purple Heart recipients who served in the Persian Gulf, Iraq or Afghanistan wars in the Annual Veterans Golf Classic in Myrtle Beach, S.C. The trip, May 17 to 20, will include free airfare, hotel accommodations and the tournament entry fee for each winner. Meals will be included. Players must have a U.S. Golf Association slope handicap or be able to validate five or six of their most recent scores to be eligible. In addition to the golf event, veterans will enjoy several opportunities to meet other players and an awards dinner the final night of the trip. For a chance to win one of the eight free trips, Purple Heart recipients from the Gulf, Iraq or Afghanistan wars must submit an entry form (www.vfw.org/pdf/Golf%20Trip%20form_web.pdf) by mail in time for the April 1 drawing.
- **We Want Pictures:** If you are participating in any opportunities such as the above, please take high resolution photos and/or write a blog and send them to AW2Stratcomm@conus.army.mil.

AW2 SOLDIER STORIES: AW2 Soldier SGT Jacque Ballay Runs Mardi Gras Marathon
By Cori Cabell, AW2 Advocate Serco Contractor, Ft. Polk, Louisiana

AW2 Soldier SGT Jacque Ballay completed the Mardi Gras Marathon with his wife Stella in February. Ballay just recently got involved in marathons with his wife when a friend encouraged him to take his training to another level. "I think it is a great confidence booster for Jacque, I think it gives him another sense of stability," said Mrs. Ballay. "It is something fun that Jacque and I can enjoy together."

His motivation to do the marathons since his injuries was the need for something to relax his mind. "Talking about it just does not work for me," said Ballay. "I found myself participating in these types of activities and now this is my therapy." He encourages other Soldiers to get involved in activities as well, "You're stronger now than ever before, what didn't kill you only made you stronger. As stupid as it sounds it's true and you must always believe it! If that doesn't work, let me know what I can do to help."

His ultimate goal is to just keep pushing himself. "I'd like to do a full Iron Man in the year 2010, and I hope to qualify and participate in the Boston Marathon," said Ballay. "I'm sure AW2 will be behind me 100%."

While serving in Baghdad, Iraq, Ballay received shrapnel injuries to his arm, both legs, and face. As a result of the facial injuries, his left eye was removed.

AW2 SOLDIER STORIES:

- AW2 Soldier [SPC Jake Altman](#), featured in DefenseLINK, has returned to the 9th Engineer Battalion after losing his hand. He is continuing his service and eager to take on future challenges, such as deploying again in January and fulfilling his desire to "stay in the fight."
- Several AW2 Soldiers, including **SPC Robert Andrzejczak**, **MAJ Bruce Gannaway**, **SFC Johnathan Holsey**, **SGT John Hoxie**, **SGT Kelly Keck**, **SPC Nicholas Koulchar**, **SGT Paul McAlister**, **SSG Ramon Padilla**, **SSG Juan D. Roldan**, **SFC Juanita Wilson**, and **SGT Travis Ryan Wood**, were featured on the "OPRAH" show on February 27 (www.oprah.com).
- *Field and Stream Magazine* (December 2008-January 2009) profiled several wounded warriors who are involved in hunting and fishing. AW2 Soldiers included are **Nick Beintema**, **David Walker**, **Brad Alexander**, and **Brad Gruetzner** (www.zinio.com/pages/FieldStream/Dec-08-Jan-09/322011254/pg-61).
- AW2 Soldiers **Dennis Cline** and **Sam Floberg**, featured in *The Miami Herald*, have become certified open-water scuba divers (www.miamiherald.com/sports/outdoors/story/910859.html).
- During the Presidential Inauguration on January 20, AW2 Soldiers were invited to attend the People's Inaugural Project Ball in the historic J.W. Marriott Hotel in Washington DC thrown by the Stafford Foundation, based in Reston and founded by Fairfax resident Earl Stafford. The *Reston Connection* reported that wounded veterans, former drug addicts, battered women, people with mental and physical disabilities and men and women living in shelters shared dances with business, community and government leaders. (AW2 Soldiers invited were **CPT Tommy Davis**, **David Folkerts**, **SFC Johnathan Holsey**,

SFC Jacque Keeslar, Scott Quilty, Alvin Shell, Matthew Staton, and Aundrea Tanner.)

- AW2 Soldier **Sean Donahue** is featured in *The Salem News* in an article about his injury and recovery (www.salemnews.com/punews/local_story_033094525.html?keyword=secondarystory).
- Illinois Veterans Affairs Chief **MAJ Tammy Duckworth** has been nominated by President Obama to be an assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs according to *Chicago Tribune* (www.chicagotribune.com/news/chipresidential_digest_04feb04,0,1631773.story) and “CBS News” (www.cbsnews.com/blogs/2009/02/03/politics/politicalhotsheet/entry4772440.shtml) articles.
- AW2 Soldier **SFC John “Mikey” Fairfax** graduated with 70 graduates from 3rd Special Forces Group’s demanding jumpmaster course in November. He became the first amputee to graduate from any Army jumpmaster course and is featured in *Army Times* (www.armytimes.com/news/2009/02/army_jumpmaster_021609w/).
- AW2 Soldier **Jerrod Fields** has become a champion sprinter and hopes to compete in the 2012 Paralympic Games in London according to *Los Angeles Times* (www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-army-golf4-2009feb04,0,1262412.story).
- AW2 Soldier **Danielle Green-Byrd**, was featured on DoD’s Wounded Warrior Diaries, said she believes her successful transition comes from traveling on the road of hard knocks. She was also featured recently in WNDU.com in a two part series called “Catching up with Danielle Green-Byrd, Part 1 and 2” (www.wndu.com/specialfeatures/headlines/34232479.html).
- AW2 Soldier **Ramon Guitard** was featured in *inMotion*, a publication of the Amputee Coalition of America, discussing how help from others gave him independence and joy (November/December 2008 issue at www.amputee-coalition.org/inmotion_about.html).
- AW2 Soldier **SFC Johnathan Holsey** is the first wounded warrior to apply and be accepted into warrant officer school.
- AW2 Soldier **SGT Nathan Hunt** is featured in *The Guardian* helping place the battle streamer earned his unit’s Soldiers on the guidon during a redeployment ceremony on January 23 on Fort Polk’s Honor Field.
- AW2 Soldier **Derick Hurt** met with officials at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to discuss amputating the second leg. If he goes forward with the procedure, Hurt will have gone the longest between injury and amputation of any Iraq or Afghanistan veteran treated at Walter Reed. STLToday.com has several articles featuring Hurt (www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/stlouiscitycounty/story/F96CB3D7A88C1CB88625755D00158D36?OpenDocument).
- AW2 Soldier **2LT Richard Ingram** is featured on **DefenseLINK** and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* for graduating from North Georgia College and State University and becoming a second lieutenant after surviving the amputation of a portion of his left arm www.ajc.com/metro/content/printedition/2009/01/11/ingram.html).
- AW2 worked closely with *Ft. Carson Mountaineer* staff on an article highlighting AW2 and **SGM Jurgensen's** leadership on page 8 (January 29, 2009). *Army Times* featured him in an article on the "Taking Care of Business" initiative (www.armytimes.com/news/2009/02/army_casualty_prep_022209w/).

- AW2 Soldier **SGT Ryan Kahlor** and his parents are featured in *The Boston Globe* for their struggles and road to recovery with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) (www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2008/12/21/a_soldiers_story_war_affects_whole_family/).
- AW2 Soldier **SGT Kelly Keck** is featured in CNN.com's hero segment. He suffered severe wounds and is now recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center supported by his loving Family. (Originally aired January 23, 2009, visit loudobbs.tv.cnn.com/2009/01/28/hero-sgt-kelly-keck/.)
- AW2 Soldier **Jonathan Lucas** received a Purple Heart in a ceremony at the West Virginia National Guard Charlestown Armory in December.
- AW2 Soldier **Latoya Lucas's** book "The Immeasurable Spirit...Lessons of a Wounded Warrior about Faith and Perseverance" has been published (forward by Tom Brokaw). She also was presented an award from the State of Colorado.
- AW2 Soldier **Armando Mejia**, featured in *The News Tribune*, is now the military outreach director for the Boys & Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound, a job that is a bit of salvation for him after he struggled with a grueling physical recovery and a severe case of post-traumatic stress disorder (www.thenewstribune.com/news/military/story/577632.html).
- AW2 Soldier **MSG Jeffrey Mittman**, featured in Army.mil, was the guest of honor at a kick-off event for the latest Overhead Armor protection for the Army's Up-Armored Humvee.
- AW2 Soldier **CPT Ray O'Donnell** was a featured Soldier patient at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons "Extremity War Injuries Symposium," January 21-23, in Washington DC.
- AW2 Soldier, **Bradford Taylor**, assisted the director of the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center cut the ribbon officially opening the new Post Deployment Clinic. The Post Deployment Clinic located in Jackson, MS provides services to our Nation's newest veterans returning from military tours in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- AW2 Soldier **Patrick Tutwiler** and Family received an ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" (aired on January 25). The ABC crew, and thousands of volunteers, built a new two-story home for the Family, built a new community center, remodeled a park, and did work on other homes under construction in the community (www.ksallink.com/?cmd=displaystory&story_id=7236&format=html).
- AW2 Soldier **Jay Wilkerson**, after stays in four different hospitals, including the VA Hospital in Palo Alto, re-entered civilian life. According to the *Contra Costa Times*, he was welcomed to his new hometown with a small celebration and a larger citywide welcome celebration was planned for March 4, 2009 (www.contracostatimes.com/search/ci_11693486?IADID=Search-www.contracostatimes.com-www.contracostatimes.com).
- AW2 Soldier **SGT Travis Wood** and his Family, featured in *The Spectrum & Daily News*, received a house built specially for them in Cedar City, UT, with help from their AW2 Advocate Carol Menichetti (www.thespectrum.com/article/20090218/NEWS01/902180310).