Empowering Injured Veterans, Family Members, and Caregivers to Successfully Transition to Life after Injury

Wounded Warrior Project Benefits Service Helps Navigate the Complex VA, DoD Systems

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (October 7, 2015) – When Robert Williamson was injured in combat during an extremely difficult deployment in Al Taji, Iraq, in 2004, the physical injuries were extensive: a back injury, an arm injury, and a traumatic brain injury (TBI). However, when he eventually made it home from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, it was the invisible wounds that he struggled with most.

“When I came back, I didn’t realize how bad I was mentally. I kept asking the doctor when I could get back to my unit,” says Robert, a U.S. Army Reserve and U.S. Navy veteran. “When I got back, it felt like I was coming home to a foreign country. You want to go back, because you understand it – the rules, the order, what you’re supposed to do.”

After being wounded and medically separating from the Army, Robert struggled to navigate his way through the complex disability application claims process at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). He spent nearly 20 months waiting for his first disability payment, which still did not adequately address his injuries or include his family members as dependents. After a series of confusing and frustrating VA encounters, a fellow veteran recommended he contact Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) to work on his claim with a WWP veteran benefits liaison.

“Best advice in a long time,” says Robert. “My claim was completed at the end of September, 2015. One hundred percent [disability compensation]. Total and permanent. It was a big relief; VA benefits for my kids’ college, life insurance, vocational rehabilitation… the difference is amazing.”

The WWP Benefits Service provides injured veterans, family members, and caregivers with the tools they need to navigate the complexities of the Department of Defense (DoD) and VA. The WWP Benefits Service team works closely with each agency so they can walk injured veterans, family members, and veteran caregivers through every step of the transition process and ensure that claims are filed and processed correctly the first time.

In fiscal year 2015, the WWP Benefits Service team filed over 13,000 benefits issues and secured over $66 million in annual and retroactive benefits for this generation of injured veterans and their families.

Unlike traditional models of veterans’ services, the Benefits Service team takes a holistic approach to the claims process. Each teammate works individually with injured veterans to understand their unique needs, provide information and education on the claims process, advise them of their benefits options, file benefits claims, and stay connected with them through the lifecycle of the claim.

“Wounded Warrior Project went beyond what I expected from a service organization,” says Robert. “They work together as a team with one goal: to help the warrior and the warrior’s family and ensure the warrior receives what he or she has earned. I am indebted to this organization for its support, encouragement, and assistance with my VA compensation for service-connected disabilities.”

If you or someone you know are in need of DoD and/or VA benefits assistance, please contact the WWP Benefits

Service team at wwpservice@woundedwarriorproject.org for help.

Contact: Amanda Jekowsky

Email: ajekowsky@woundedwarriorproject.org

Phone: 202-644-9150

About Wounded Warrior Project

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP's purpose is to raise awareness and to enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members, to help injured servicemen and women aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs. WWP is a national, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit woundedwarriorproject.org.

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