

Injured Service Members See Seals during Sailing Excursion

BRANFORD, Conn., April 8, 2016 [/PRNewswire-USNewswire/](#) -- Soaking up the sun and drinking in the salty air of the sea, a group of wounded veterans recently experienced a seal watching tour at Thimble Island. The event hosted by Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is part of its Alumni program, which gives wounded service members a chance to deepen their bonds through camaraderie at welcoming events in relaxed environments, free of charge.

Many WWP Alumni face similar challenges, and events like this offer them a chance to come together and connect with other wounded veterans and family support members. For WWP, there is a distinct philosophy behind using the term "Alumni" - it indicates a mutual experience with other combat veterans, which is why there are no membership fees or dues at WWP - those were paid on the battlefield. As a result, all of WWP's direct programs and services are offered to Alumni free of charge.

"It was a chilly day, but it was such a nice outing," said Eric Ely, WWP Alumnus and Marine Corps veteran. "We saw seals while we were offshore, and the boat ride itself was a lot of fun. I took my kids and my wife with me and they loved it. The scenery out there on the water was beautiful."

During the two-hour boat tour, attendees observed seals around Thimble Island, where these sea creatures are known to congregate. A stunning view of the other islands that dotted the water in the area was an added treat. It provided a serene outing for wounded veterans and their family members, and a good networking opportunity, according to Eric.

"It was a great chance for my family to become part of WWP and meet some other WWP families in our area," he said. "There was a fast connection among the families on the boat tour. I don't know many veterans in the area, so having the chance to connect and make friends was a nice bonus for the day."

The outing also provided an opportunity for Alumni and their families to become more familiar with the direct programs and services available to the more than 100,000 wounded veterans, caregivers, and family members that WWP currently serves.

"We had a chance to discuss some of the programs with WWP staff," said Eric. "I had questions about what is available to me in this area, and the WWP team had all the answers I needed. I'm excited about the interaction at upcoming events."

Among the programs and services that WWP offers is Project Odyssey®, which helps injured service members and veterans design their own path from surviving to thriving. With its name derived from Homer's epic poem about overcoming adversity and finding the way home, Project Odyssey helps wounded veterans overcome combat stress through outdoor, rehabilitative retreats that encourage a connection with nature, their peers, Project Odyssey staff, and trained counselors. Through outdoor, recreational activities, WWP Alumni discover their inner strength and find the courage to continue their journey to recovery. The experiences gained from Project Odyssey help veterans work through challenges related to combat stress and improve mental attitudes and outlook. Activities include horseback riding, canoeing, whitewater rafting, kayaking, rock climbing, a high ropes course, fishing, skeet shooting, sled hockey, and skiing at retreats held in various locations across the

country.

In February 2016, through Project Odyssey, 122 WWP Alumni utilized the great outdoors to begin their road to recovery. To find out more about WWP's programs and services, please visit:

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs>.

About Wounded Warrior Project

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. The WWP 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](https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org).

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For further information: Mattison Brooks - Public Relations Specialist, mbrooks@woundedwarriorproject.org, 904-451-5590

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