

WWP News & Media: Veteran Group Outings, Charity Events, Helping Vets

Historic WWII Ship Explores New Horizons: Wounded Veteran Recovery

ALBANY, N.Y., May 10, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- Decommissioned and restored to its World War II destroyer escort structure, the USS Slater serves a new mission as a National Historic Landmark, recently taking aboard wounded veterans from this generation, including their caregivers, and families during a Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Alumni event. The USS Slater is the last of its kind still afloat in the United States, and its war history serves as a flagship of honor for military service members across the country.

"My husband has always been excited to show our kids Navy ships, but his poor health made it difficult for him to show them around," said Rebekah Hogan, wife and caregiver of James Hogan, U.S. Navy injured veteran and WWP Alumnus. "We had so much fun on the USS Slater tour. Hogan was in his *glory* showing the kids the weapons from World War II, and explaining what it was like to sleep in racks, shower on ships, and eat in mess halls. Hogan is a history buff, so he loved sharing that aspect, too."

WWP sponsored the tour as part of its Alumni program, which provides activities that are not only fun and educational, but also therapeutic by helping reintroduce injured veterans and their families to the crucial bonds they once had during their service to our country. These relationships are built from a trust and loyalty that is rarely duplicated in the civilian world, yet their restoration is essential to the healing process. During these events, WWP staff closely interacts with attendees, learns their stories, and advises them of additional programs that can assist their recovery.

Rebekah previously attended a caregiver retreat through WWP's Independence Program (IP), which helps injured veterans who rely on their families or caregivers maintain self-reliance.

Additionally, IP provides respite care to warriors when their caregivers are absent. A caregiver's role in these warriors' lives can wear heavily on the caregiver, making it essential to ensure they are also receiving the care they need. During the retreat, Rebekah and other caregivers in similar situations received a few days of relaxation away from their everyday stressors. "We had fun. We laughed. We cried. We did *a lot* of yoga," she joked. "Mostly, we just gave each other the chance to breathe for a bit."

Thanks to the support of generous donors, Rebekah is one of nearly 500 caregivers enrolled in IP as of March 2016. <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/independence-program>

"WWP has been amazing to us," said Rebekah. "WWP always gives us – even our kids – a safe place to escape. At every event attended, we are reminded of other activities and options available to help us. From filing benefits claims to receiving the counseling needed for combat stress and other issues our warriors and families deal with daily, WWP has been here for us," said Rebekah. "Every single time."

The USS Slater served as a familiar background to another turning point in the Hogan family. Rebekah and James met at her best friend's wedding aboard the USS Underwood at Naval Station Mayport, Florida. After spending five days together over the course of almost eight weeks, the couple eloped. Their story shares common themes from other Alumni families—deployments, separation, service injuries, and medical separations—but each family has its own unique path to recovery.

The Hogan family are among more than 100,000 wounded veterans, caregivers, and family members to receive access to WWP's free life-saving programs and services that help with physical rehabilitation, mental and emotional recovery, educational and employment goals, maintaining independence, and building stronger connections with their families, communities, and each other.

"It was fun to see other families. Whether we knew each other or not, we are all in the same boat – no pun intended," Rebekah said. "Seriously, Wounded Warrior Project changed our lives. We only wish we got involved earlier and became a part of the WWP family sooner."

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.

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