

# Injured Veterans Dive with Whale Sharks and Manta Rays

## Wounded Warrior Project Teams Up With Georgia Aquarium for Special Opportunity

ATLANTA, March 29, 2016 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- For a group of wounded veterans, no experience was needed before they dove into a six-million-gallon tank to swim with whale sharks, fish, and manta rays.

"I am not an experienced swimmer," said My Nguyen, a National Guard veteran, and Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Alumnus. "I was nervous at first jumping off the dock, but the instructors gave thorough directives. It comforted me knowing the swim was slow paced."

WWP took the injured service members to swim at Georgia Aquarium to provide an opportunity to bond with other wounded service members. WWP's Alumni program helps provide shared experiences -- wounded veterans learn they are not alone in facing challenges, and they can create personalized support structures. More than 100,000 wounded veterans, caregivers, and family members receive access to 20 direct WWP programs and services, all of which are free of charge.

"It was really awesome," said Daniel English, Marine veteran and WWP Alumnus. "Words cannot really describe it. A whale shark actually swam over to me, and bumped me."

"One of the large manta rays really enjoyed breaching right near the swimmers," Army veteran and WWP Alumna Michelle Goodnight said. "One time, she tried to roll me over with her wing."

"It was amazing how close the rays and whale sharks got," My said. "It was breathtaking."

For Daniel, the event brought back memories and created new ones.

"I used to watch nature shows with my dad while growing up," Daniel said. "This brought that all back. To be able to swim over one of the tunnels over my children and wave at them, it was really neat to see their faces."

That unique experience serves a purpose for My, Daniel, and the other wounded veteran participants.

"It is nice to have your brothers by your side," Daniel said. "People who know what you are going through."

"I'm glad that I am part of WWP because it helps me do different activities outside of the everyday struggle with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and dealing with people," My said. "I can't wait for my next opportunity to engage with WWP!"

Just in February, WWP served more than 25,000 injured veterans, their families, and caregivers through programs and services. One of the programs, Physical Health and Wellness, helps reduce stress, combat depression, and promote a healthy and active lifestyle by encouraging participation in fun, educational events.

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/physical-health-wellness.aspx>.

### **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](http://woundedwarriorproject.org).


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