

Wounded Veterans Breeze Along on Two Wheels

KAHUKU, Hawaii, April 25, 2016 [/PRNewswire-USNewswire/](#) -- Crashes and falls from rookie riders only broke the ice and added instant laughter for wounded veterans and their families, when they set out for an amazing tour along the North Shore at Turtle Bay. Aboard Segway® Personal Transporters (PT), the group prepared to 'hang loose' on the adventure hosted by Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP).

"This was my first time on that particular Segway PT and the quick 'do this' and 'not that' instruction from on-site experts was just enough to get us moving around," U.S. Army injured veteran and WWP Alumnus Franky Hernandez said. "I'm surprised how natural it became to control the machine once you got the hang of it, which only took about 5 minutes. I truly underestimated myself."

Upon arrival, WWP staff provided a brief on WWP programs and services and the nonprofit's mission to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. Alumni also shared feedback on their experience with WWP programs, giving fellow wounded veterans firsthand accounts of the positive impact.

Franky said, "Before the tour, we talked about WWP programs that I had no idea existed. I plan to engage with a few of them soon."

This North Shore tour is part of the WWP Alumni program, which creates support through shared experiences and brings injured veterans together to build camaraderie. By bonding through events and programs, wounded veterans learn they are not alone. The WWP Alumni program is one of 20 direct programs and services offered free of charge to wounded service members, their caregivers, and families.

The small group travelled along off-road trails, through the woods, and near the ocean, taking in views of Turtle Bay on the North Shore. Riders were awestruck when the wooded trail widened and landed them in a secluded, scenic area with an ocean view, set-up for them to 'talk story' and enjoy lunch together.

Shayne Kahuanui, U.S. National Guard veteran and WWP Alumnus, said the entire day was amazing. "What a great day with the ocean views, sun and cool breezes, and healthy lunch shared with friends. The grilled vegetable panini, fresh bruschetta-like pizza, salad, fried banana bread, and fruit smoothies were all so delicious. We are definitely going to start eating at Kahuku Farms more often," he said.

Franky was impressed by the pure serenity of it all. "We would cruise along the beautiful coastline staring into the blue water, then we would cut into the woods on trails only to emerge onto another part of the beach. It was awesome," he said.

"The lunch and having the time to talk with each other was a true treat," Franky said. "We literally arrived straight into a spot in the woods with an open view of the ocean. Very private ... very personal ... and full of delicious, healthy food to accompany the amazing view."

The support Franky feels from WWP is overwhelming and has been truly life changing. "There is a family there that understands what you're going through and just wants to lift the "Rucksack" off your back for a while and give you some much deserved rest. I am and will forever be grateful to the team at WWP," he said.

"I simply enjoy all the different types of WWP events to bring wounded veterans together and how these veterans can talk, relate, and tie experiences together to build friendships," Shayne commented. "It was so helpful to hear other Alumni talk about their experience with WWP programs. I listened carefully to fellow Alumni talk about the Warriors to Work program, where they did mock interviews and received help building their resume."

Warriors to Work[®] matches skills with veteran-friendly employers, helps injured service members with their resumes, and prepares them for interviews. In March 2016, Warriors to Work served 2,154 wounded veterans and family support members on their journey toward meaningful careers of their choice. For more information, visit <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/warriors-to-work.aspx>.

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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