

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

U.S. Airman Reaches Out to Wounded Warrior Project **Learns Coping Skills at Life-Changing Mental Health Workshop**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Oct. 27, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- In her almost 200-day deployment to Logistics Support Area Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, U.S. Airman Jessica Daubenmire's base was attacked 149 times – three were rocket attacks, and the rest were from mortars. "I remember one evening in July of 2007, I heard the sirens signaling an incoming attack while I was in my bunk," Jessica said. "The explosion was so violent; it was as if someone was shaking me by my shoulders."

The mortar struck the trailer directly beside the one Jessica was in.

"I mean, having it hit so close," she said as she let the thought hang in the air. "How can anybody live in a country where – any minute – something can come out of the sky and blow you up?"

Only 22 at the time of her deployment, Jessica is one of many wounded warriors who endured physical and mental hardships to fulfill the Global War on Terrorism mission.

"At Anaconda, we had one of the best medical facilities in the area of responsibility," Jessica said. "As a security forces airman, one of my responsibilities was to perform routine checks on the pharmacy while on patrol. To get to the pharmacy, my team had to walk through medical tents that housed severely injured patients. Many had wounds from improvised explosive devices – some were Iraqi children. It was a horrific sight. Even if you closed your eyes, you still had to hear and smell the suffering."

Jessica returned stateside a totally changed person.

To address the growing mental health needs of warriors returning from war, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) created its Combat Stress Recovery Program (CSR). Through the generous support of donors, WWP offers wounded veterans a range of specialized mental health programs and services – all tailored to each veteran's specific needs and free of charge. WWP and its supporters believe warriors already paid their dues on the battlefield.

Jessica's story is a reflection of other wounded warriors who are confronted with the same struggles once home from combat. Exposure to traumatic combat and operational experiences affects service members and veterans spiritually, psychologically, biologically, and socially.

Unable to concentrate or sleep, the day came when Jessica was forced to accept her inward battle. "I eventually broke down and told my flight chief that I couldn't even remember how I got to work." Once she sought help, it didn't take long for military doctors to diagnose Jessica with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and more.

Six years after her service, Jessica reached out to WWP and was soon at her first WWP mental health workshop with approximately 20 other female veterans from across the nation. Although challenging, WWP's multi-day mental health rehabilitative opportunities provide safe, private environments for warriors to express themselves and discuss their combat action. At the end of the program, injured veterans share lessons learned from the activities that impacted their personal struggles most and set achievable goals for their recoveries.

"It's simply amazing," Jessica said. "Having the support of other lady warriors who are dealing with similar struggles - it turned out to be the best tool we had at the event. There were a lot of emotions and anxiety, but the experience allowed us to come together and share our journeys. The workshop had an immediate effect on my recovery. I'm looking at things in a completely different light and am starting to see the person I want to be. I may be different, but I am stronger."

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.

Video - <https://youtu.be/q6CgyDYj-IA>

SOURCE Wounded Warrior Project

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<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2016-10-27-U-S-Airman-Reaches-Out-to-Wounded-Warrior-Project>