

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

All They Do is Nguyen: Two Brothers Go All-in for Wounded Warrior Project

LAS VEGAS, Dec. 7, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- It was the 364th hand of the final table when Qui Nguyen (fittingly pronounced "win") beat out Gordon Vayo to take the title of champion at The World Series of Poker®. Qui, a former nail salon owner, endured nine grueling hours of one-on-one play to take home over \$8 million in winnings and the coveted gold bracelet.

Gathered behind him in the stands was his family – all wearing matching shirts emblazoned with Qui's name, face, and the logo of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP). Qui recently donated a portion of his winnings to WWP. His brother, Thomas Nguyen, spent 23 years in the United States Marine Corps and played a role in this decision.

"Qui arrived in the U.S. in 2001," Thomas said. "He was stuck behind in Vietnam because of the war, and by the time he got here, I was at Camp Pendleton in California. He stayed with me on the base and wanted to join the Marines, but he had issues with paperwork and citizenship. It was frustrating for him."

Thomas, however, did serve – two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. He attended Texas A&M University, where he forged close friendships with the men who would eventually graduate alongside him and get commissioned in the Marine Corps with him. As the war raged on, Thomas lost half of his college friends by the time his service ended – including his best friend.

"When you're in the thick of it, as an officer, there's an emotional detachment you need to have," Thomas said. "As an officer, you have to endure loss privately because every decision you make is life or death."

It was a state of mind that followed him back to his civilian life; Thomas fought hard not to show any weakness or signs of struggle. He noted the first years of transitioning into the civilian routine were difficult. Sleepless nights were affecting his life. Through it all, Qui stayed with his brother and witnessed it firsthand.

"He would come up to me and ask me, 'why aren't you getting help?'" Thomas said. "It was hard to explain. Looking at it now, the short version was that I built up a lot inside. And I'm glad to put that behind me now."

Thomas is still driven by his zeal for the military – but from a much different standpoint. Specifically, he sees a great injustice when it comes to the way veterans return to the civilian world – and where wounded veterans struggling with post-traumatic-stress-disorder (PTSD) end up within it.

"These soldiers who come back from overseas with PTSD are rattled," Thomas said bluntly. "When they go back into society, they're expected to be completely normal. That's not going to happen overnight."

It was the topic of a long conversation between Qui and Thomas as the poker tournament came to a close. Thomas saw a light shining in the darkness, which led them to decide what to do next.

"We decided to donate to Wounded Warrior Project because we believe in what it does. We see how it assists wounded veterans: helping them get an education, get support, and get connected to beneficial resources."

To read more about Thomas and Qui's story, check out the full article at: <https://goo.gl/5lsRvd>. To learn more about how WWP's programs and services are making an impact on the lives of wounded warriors, visit <http://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/>. To find photos from this event, click on multimedia, then images.

About Wounded Warrior Project

We Connect, Serve, and Empower

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project[®] (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP connects wounded warriors and their families to valuable resources and one another, serves them through a variety of free programs and services, and empowers them to live life on their own terms. WWP is a national, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit woundedwarriorproject.org.

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For further information: Mattison Brooks - Public Relations Specialist, Email: mbrooks@woundedwarriorproject.org, Phone: 904.646.6897

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