

## Warriors of All Kinds: Veterans Day with Wounded Warrior Project, UFC, and Harley-Davidson

NEW YORK, Dec. 8, 2016 [/PRNewswire-USNewswire/](#) -- Motorcyclists and mixed martial arts (MMA) fighters were united in their enthusiasm for warriors of the road and the ring at a series of Veterans Day gatherings hosted by Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) in partnership with Harley-Davidson® and the UFC®. WWP program events like this give wounded warriors an opportunity to rediscover the spirit of camaraderie they enjoyed during their military service – in a safe, fun atmosphere.

However, Ahmad Azmi, a Navy veteran and wounded warrior who is a self-professed UFC fanatic, said the atmosphere on Friday would've been best described as "electric."

"I was there for the UFC press conference," Ahmad said. "The Wounded Warrior Project office in New York is across the street from Madison Square Garden, so I met up with a bunch of other warriors and walked in. There were crowds everywhere. Everyone I was with said they had an amazing time, and that just getting out for an afternoon to spend time with other veterans was very helpful for them. I couldn't agree more."

Ahmad made a splash in his social circles during the press conference. Near the halfway point, he was able to approach the microphone and ask Conor McGregor what his plans were for the fight. McGregor's response was widely circulated on sports channels leading up to the fight.

"I got 15 texts from friends asking if that was me on TV," Ahmad said. "To see the media coverage was awesome – I got to say I was a part of that. It was pretty cool."

Later on during the press conference, two wounded warriors approached Stephen "Wonderboy" Thompson with an American flag they carried with them during a veterans' motorcycle ride, sponsored by Harley-Davidson, from New Jersey to New York. The flag was draped across Thompson's shoulders as he strode into The Octagon® to face his opponent, Tyron Woodley.

"The fights were amazing," Ahmad said. "I've been to a few Wounded Warrior Project program events, but this was a chance of a lifetime. A big highlight for me was the variety of people I met – I exchanged numbers with six of the guys I went to the fight with. We all went out to eat together afterward – it's a good group of new friends I'm excited to get to know better."

Ahmad noted this is a group he could now see himself leaning on for more serious matters – building a peer support network in his local area. In a [WWP survey](#) of the injured warriors it serves, more than half of survey respondents (51.7 percent) talked with fellow Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn veterans to address their mental health issues.

"We've got similar stories from our times overseas," Ahmad explained. "And we're there to help one another out with our disabilities if we have questions or if we're struggling. We're all the same age and have similar interests, so that trust comes easier."

Peer support plays an important role in the recovery process as injured veterans rely upon each other's learned experiences when managing day-to-day challenges. This special type of therapy reintroduces injured veterans to the unique bonds experienced during military service. Rarely duplicated in the civilian world, these

relationships act as a secure bedrock that paves the road to recovery.

To learn more about how WWP's programs and services are making an impact on the lives of wounded warriors, visit <https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/>.

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

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