

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

Warrior Care Network Helps Put Fireworks Back in Veteran's Life **PTSD Treatment Centers Part of Wounded Warrior Project Program**

SPARTANBURG, S.C., June 8, 2017 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- People-watching is a way to pass the time and enjoy your surroundings, whether it be at a shopping center, park, or busy city sidewalk. For Marine Corps veteran Joe Merritt, it triggered too many reactions.

"I would position myself against a wall or as close to it as possible," Joe said. "I was on alert, scanning the crowd for nonexistent threats. I was uncomfortable."

Joe lived with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for at least a decade before reached out for clinical help.

[Warrior Care Network](#)® is an innovative partnership between Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP), four top academic medical centers, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Through this collaboration, warriors experience up to a year's worth of therapy in two- to three-week intensive outpatient programs. Joe received treatment at Emory Healthcare Veterans Program in Atlanta.

"It was like a rebuilding," Joe said. "I talked about specific traumas in detail I had never shared before. Prolonged exposure therapy drew out raw, primal emotions; I remembered things I had not recalled in a long time."

During treatment, a clinical expert gets to the root of traumatic experiences.

"It was the hardest thing emotionally I have ever done. Mentally and emotionally exhausting. It took a lot out of me, in a good way."

As part of Joe's recovery at Emory's Veterans Program, he experienced in vivo exposure therapy. He went to a busy part of Atlanta for lunch on several occasions.

"The first couple times created anxiety, but I got more and more comfortable with each visit."

Joe said he has noticed a different level of calmness in himself; so has his wife.

"I have gotten upset, but not like I used to. I can feel a difference in my thinking. I attribute a lot of that to Warrior Care Network and Emory."

Now Joe has another goal in mind.

"I have not been able to see a fireworks display in more than a decade. I plan to change that this Independence Day."

To learn and see more about how WWP's programs and services connect, serve, and empower wounded warriors, visit <http://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/>.

About Wounded Warrior Project

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) connects, serves, and empowers wounded warriors. Read more at <http://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/about-us>.

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