

Veterans Empowered With New Skills During Scuba Diving Certification Class

NEW LONDON, Conn., Sept. 10, 2018 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Injured warriors received their scuba diving certifications and connected with other veterans during a recent Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) three-day class at the U.S Coast Guard Academy.

"I love the ocean, and I enjoyed hanging out and talking to other veterans about their experiences in the military," said Air National Guard veteran Thomas Haughey. "Everybody was patient and helped each other, especially during the in-water sessions."

The scuba course covered the fundamentals of diving in the classroom, and warriors got to practice what they learned during dives in a pool each day.

"I've been wanting to get certified most of my life," said National Guard veteran Matt Sherwin. "Wounded Warrior Project gave me that chance. My favorite part of the class was the fact it took place at the Coast Guard Academy. Also, my classmates and I had a lot in common; that helped me relax."

"My girlfriend and I are meeting up with Matt and his wife for dinner in a few weeks," Thomas said. "He lives in Vermont, not far from where I live."

Activities like scuba diving and socializing with other veterans can help injured warriors cope with stress and emotional concerns. In a WWP survey (<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/survey>) of the injured warriors it serves, more than half of survey respondents (51.6 percent) expressed they talk with fellow veterans to address their mental health issues.

"Wounded Warrior Project gets warriors like me back out in the world — the way it was for us before the war," Thomas said. "I used to do so many things before 9/11, but after deploying multiple times, it got harder to enjoy doing things because I felt like an outsider or felt alone in a crowd. I'm so much more comfortable doing things with fellow veterans."

"Events like this scuba class have helped me find my old self that's been lost for years," Matt said. "I hope to attend more outdoor events in future."