

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

## Discovering Hidden Strength Among Female Warriors

BAY SHORE, N.Y., Nov. 16, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- United States Army Veteran Donna Zephryne describes her deployment to Iraq in jagged excerpts of fragmented memory and anxiety. Her mind plays a nonstop soundtrack of war:

*Got hit while sleeping, lots of noise, smoke, get armor on, get to safety area - close call, no clarity, no vision - close encounter, where are my battle buddies?*

"At the beginning of my second deployment, our compound was hit with rocket-propelled grenades, and one landed very close, lifting me and other soldiers up in the air and knocking us back several feet," said Donna. "We got hit a lot, and you never got accustomed to it. This was the start of my combat stress-related issues, and I started to struggle with flashbacks, anxiety, and panic attacks."

Donna describes her anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI) as a constant cycle of difficult thoughts and nightmares due to frequent gunfire, rocket grenade attacks, and the difficulty of being one of very few women in her unit.

This was common until Donna attended an all-female [Project Odyssey](#)<sup>®</sup> as part of the [Combat Stress Recovery Program](#) at Wounded Warrior Project<sup>®</sup> (WWP).

The first segment of a 90-day Project Odyssey program is a multi-day, rehabilitative retreat for warriors facing a range of mental health challenges.

"I wanted to engage with other female veterans. I wanted to make those connections. I wanted to face my issues and overcome them, much like I did as a little girl with learning disabilities."

The second part of Project Odyssey includes a complete 90-day evaluation following the multi-day therapeutic retreat. Warriors receive continued therapy, and their specific mental health level and targeted areas of personal improvement are evaluated.

"Until I participated in Project Odyssey, I didn't know how specific or how limiting my condition was," said Donna. "It helped me approach my issues with a clear mind and gave me specific tasks to work on to overcome the challenges I was experiencing."

Donna shared that the 90-day follow-up had a significant impact on her recovery and overall outlook on her post-military life.

Read Donna's full story at <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/discovering-hidden-strength-among-female-warriors-project>.

### **About Wounded Warrior Project**

Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project<sup>®</sup> (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers - helping them achieve their highest ambition. Learn more: <http://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/about-us>

SOURCE Wounded Warrior Project

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Additional assets available online: [Photos \(1\)](#)

<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2018-11-16-Discovering-Hidden-Strength-Among-Female-Warriors>