

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

Wounded Warrior Finds Peace by Giving Back at National Park

SAN DIEGO, Sept. 5, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Francisco Chavez returned relatively unharmed from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, where he worked convoys for the U.S. Army. But an explosion stateside ended his civilian job as a mechanic at Naval Base San Diego.

"My whole face was shattered after the shop explosion," Francisco said. "I have nine implants in my face. I also lost most of my teeth and part of my tongue."

Francisco spent 30 days in intensive care, followed by physical rehabilitation and months of additional surgeries and therapy. His jaw was wired shut for a while and he only ate liquified foods. Anxiety started to creep in, he began mixing his medication with alcohol, and his family life suffered.

"I didn't want to be around anyone," Francisco said. About the time he started to lose hope, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) gatherings brought peace and purpose back to him.

"[Wounded Warrior Project](#) saved my life," he said. "I was headed down a bad direction." When a friend told him about WWP, his first reaction was, "I'm not a Purple Heart guy." Then he learned WWP had resources to help him manage his journey to recovery, regardless of the type of injury.

He recently hiked and gave back to his community at Sequoia National Park with WWP and The Mission Continues.

"I met new warriors again; I always meet great people through Wounded Warrior Project," Francisco said. "You can let your guard down because you know you're surrounded by people you can trust."

He worked alongside other veterans to clear hiking paths. After the work was done, they walked through the magnificent Sequoia forest and took pictures of a mama bear and her cub. They then set up camp and enjoyed a peaceful night.

"It felt good to help the park and help nature in a small way," Francisco said. "Being in the tent felt peaceful and quiet – I had never camped like that before and would love to do it again."

Learn more about how WWP meets warriors where they are on their journeys to recovery and helps them [plan paths forward](#).

About Wounded Warrior Project

Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers – helping them achieve their highest ambition. [Learn more](#).

SOURCE Wounded Warrior Project

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