

DCoE *in* Action

Vol. 4 No. 6 ★ June 2011



Community Partnerships

Working Together to Support
Service Members, Veterans, Families

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message from the director



Hammer

One of DCoE's most important functions is facilitating and promulgating knowledge relating to psychological health and traumatic brain injury to advance care for our service members and veterans. We know we don't have all of the answers, but by combining resources with others in the Defense Department and in the civilian and academic sectors, we have a far better chance of helping our wounded warriors and their families.

Across DCoE there are countless behind the scenes and visible collaborations that are directly responsible for enhanced care and more and better resources for our military community. The National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) went from concept to state-of-the-art treatment and research center thanks to the determination of some very special people, the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund and the generosity of the American public. NICoE is dedicated to finding solutions for complex combat related psychological health and traumatic brain injury conditions. It truly is the next generation in care for warriors and their loved ones and a testament to what we can do when we work together.

The virtual arm of DCoE, National Center for Telehealth & Technology (T2), is leading the way to improve access to care via telehealth. Although not new to the scene the afterdeployment.org website continues to deliver quality resources and showcases the coming together of those best in their field. Additionally, the 2010 Virtual Worlds Conference and Workshop brought together an array of specialists to look at ways to use virtual technology to address psychological health care.

[Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress \(CSTS\) Community Partnerships](#) has

forged outstanding relationships across academia and the private sector, advancing research and the direction of psychological health care. In the research realm, CSTS Director Dr. Robert J. Ursano is heading up the Army STARRS – Studies to Assess Risk and Resilience in Soldiers. The project is the largest study of suicide and is a part of the Army and Defense Department's continuing effort to address suicide in the military.

Deployment Health Clinical Center (DHCC) supervises the [Re-engineering Systems of Primary Care Treatment in the Military \(RESPECT-Mil\)](#) program. The program itself was derived from similar programs in the civilian population that showed great promise. The collaborative care model enables primary care providers in military treatment facilities to promptly screen service members for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder and if needed assist in receiving treatment either through RESPECT-Mil or other means.

The brainline.org website, a [Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center \(DVBIC\)](#) project is a one stop shop for resources on TBI. Brainline.org is an overarching community partnership that helps not only our military family but also the American public.

Center for Deployment Psychology (CDP) was established to train civilian and military behavioral health care providers to ensure the deployment related behavioral health needs of our warriors and their families are met. Since 2006, CDP has trained more than 5,000 military and civilian health care providers to be better equipped to provide care to our service members and their families.

These are just a few snapshots of ongoing collaborations and only a small sampling of the great work being done throughout DCoE and the Defense Department.

With the help of organizations, academic institutions and others throughout the globe we continue to keep the needs of our service members, veterans and their families in the forefront of all we do.

I encourage you to visit the DCoE website, the Real Warriors campaign and Military OneSource to learn more about these issues and the resources available.

You can also call or email the DCoE 24/7 Outreach Center toll-free at 866-966-1020 or resources@dcoeoutreach.org for more information or if you are in immediate need.

DCoE in Action

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Larry Rose Jr., 3, sits upon his dad's shoulders watching the Bridesburg Memorial Day Parade May 26. Bridesburg is a borough in Philadelphia and hosted the kickoff celebrations for Air Force Week Philadelphia. The parade featured a fly-by of a KC-135 Stratotanker and a KC-10 Extender and a performance by the U.S. Air Force Heritage of America Band. Air Force Week Philadelphia is an event designed to build new relationships in the Philadelphia metropolitan area and strengthen public support for the Air Force mission and Airmen serving worldwide in the war on terrorism. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III

 [DCoE Real Warriors Campaign](#)

 [DCoE Real Warriors Campaign](#)

 [DCoE Blog](#)



Federal Partners Start New Initiative to Review Psychological Health Programs

Robyn Mincher, *Strategic Communications*



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Clayton Lenhardt

“I didn’t know where to turn, where to go.”

— Brooke Warren, a former Fort Hood soldier needing assistance reintegrating post-deployment, as told to the *Austin American-Statesman*.

It’s a phrase heard often when service members and veterans seek assistance for psychological health concerns. The focus on military psychological health in recent years has created many programs available to troops, which can pose a challenge to one seeking help.

“With so many programs and organizations geared toward helping service members, veterans and their families with resilience, recovery and reintegration, it can often be hard for them to choose what best fits their needs,” said Dr. Lolita O’Donnell, deputy director, strategic communications (outreach) with [Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury](#) (DCoE).

Through a new initiative that highlights the most resourceful psychological health services assisting the military, DCoE, along with the center’s federal partners, is connecting service members, veterans and families with programs that specifically address their concerns.

“The Integrated Mental Health Strategy initiative aims to act as a ‘filter’ for these programs, putting the best resources in the hands of those who most need it,” said O’Donnell.

The initiative was born out of the center’s Federal Working Group, a partnership between DCoE, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Department of Labor, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other agencies through the Department of Health and Human Services.

“The mission of the Federal Working Group was to educate across agencies our respective efforts revolving around the psychological needs of our troops, so we can partner and work together in a unified manner,” said O’Donnell.

The collaboration proved to be successful. Among the initiatives created was the Department of Labor’s [America’s Heroes at Work](#) campaign, supporting the employment services and successes of returning service members. SAMHSA’s [Policy Academy](#) encourages states to develop action plans for addressing service member and veteran psychological health. Experts from these agencies shared their knowledge of traumatic brain injury and psychological health care at the local and state level during an August 2010 DCoE [monthly webinar](#).

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DCoE Partners with Academia to Help Student Veterans, Providers

Robyn Mincher, *Strategic Communications*

When a student veteran approaches the [University of Michigan Depression Center](#), they're not only greeted by a support network of clinicians, psychologists and fellow veterans, they're given a wealth of material from the [Real Warriors Campaign](#), an initiative launched by [Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury](#) (DCoE). The campaign also shares resources with the [University of Colorado Depression Center](#) and the [FOCUS Project](#) (Families OverComing Under Stress), a [University of California, Los Angeles](#), initiative.

"We understand that early detection and early treatment are keys to getting better," said Eric Hipple, former National Football League player and outreach coordinator at the Michigan center. "We want people to overcome the stigma and seek help if they feel they need it, because the support network is there for them."

DCoE outreach to academic institutions helps spread awareness of military psychological health and traumatic brain injury to student veterans and providers, aiding reintegration,

encouraging resilience and addressing psychological concerns when necessary.

Earlier this year at [Howard University](#) in Washington, D.C., DCoE hosted a specialized workshop, "Addressing the Behavioral Health of Military Troops." More than 140 participants attended the course, which was a collaborative effort between DCoE, Suicide Prevention Action Group with the [Center for Deployment Psychology](#) (CDP), a DCoE component center, and [Howard University's Department of Psychiatry](#).

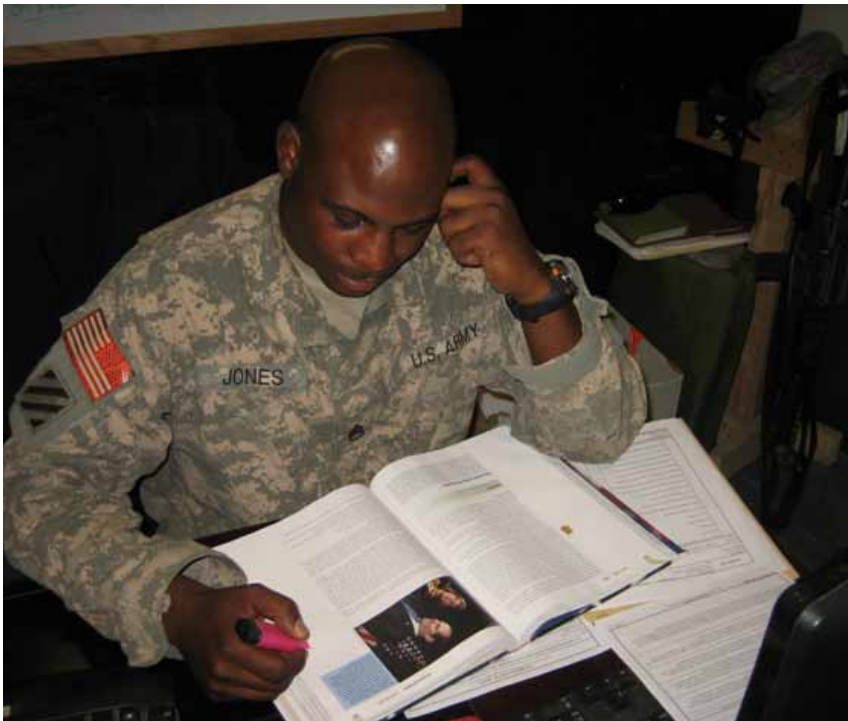
"The workshop was designed to educate psychiatry residents and behavioral health providers about the cultural and clinical concerns of military service members and their families," said Carlton Drew, DCoE education director. "This type of outreach is key to raising awareness of psychological health and traumatic brain injury in our university systems."

CDP's [University Counseling Center Core Competency Program](#) trains student providers to properly diagnose and address psychological health concerns of veterans reintegrating back into school life. The full-day presentation addresses social, cultural, clinical and campus-specific concerns, discussing campus outreach and planning.

The collaboration between DCoE and academia also involves sharing research on psychological health and traumatic brain injury during the DCoE-hosted annual Trauma Spectrum Conference.

"The Trauma Spectrum Conference provides us with an opportunity to reach out to our academic partners, who can then share new research with the best minds in military psychological health," said Erika Elvander, with the DCoE strategic communications directorate. "The relationship DCoE has with these partners and the dissemination of their knowledge is invaluable."

In May, Dr. Lolita O'Donnell, DCoE deputy director, strategic communications (outreach), participated in focused academic outreach at [George Mason University](#) by leading the workshop "Promising Practices



U.S. Army photo

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Family Resilience Conference: Highlights Resources, Programs for Military Families

— Robyn Mincher, *Strategic Communications*

“I got a look at my husband in the hangar and I knew right away that he wasn’t the same. That’s a look that will never leave my mind no matter how much therapy we receive.”

- Sheri Hall, military wife, [Real Warriors Campaign](#) spokesperson and advocate for family resilience, from her speech discussing her husband’s PTSD at the 2011 Family Resilience Conference

The voice of the military family resonated at the April 2011 Family Resilience Conference, hosted by the Defense Department and U.S. Department of Agriculture in Chicago. The theme of the conference, “Forging the Partnership,” highlighted programs that benefit military families that are a result of the 25-year relationship between the two departments.

Nearly 2,000 professionals supporting family programs attended the conference, including subject matter experts from [Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury](#) (DCoE), who presented on family and spousal resiliency, the family fitness model, traumatic brain injury and substance abuse, and new resources from the Real Warriors Campaign.

Rick Keller, a DCoE expert in military psychological health and combat stress, presented “Resilience Training for Army Spouses/Couples,” that focused on building and reinforcing strength-based skills couples can use to improve their communication and enrich their relationship in all phases of deployments. Keller introduced these modules alongside Maj. Dennis McGurk, Dr. Lyndon Riviere and Julie Merrill from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

Dr. Philip Holcombe, DCoE education deputy director, presented “A Holistic Approach to Family Resiliency,” with Dr. Darlene Garlington, DCoE psychologist. The session focused on the integration of mind, body and spirit in strengthening families and building resiliency, highlighting interactive approaches for treatment.

Experts from the DCoE resilience and prevention directorate, Drs. Mark Bates, Monique Moore and Colanda Cato, ran a three-hour workshop introducing the Military Family Fitness model, which describes a process-oriented, multi-level model for total military family fitness. Key aspects of the model were also described, such as family stressors, strengths, resources and outcomes. Lt. Col. Stephen Bowles, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and Liz Davenport Pollock,




U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Anthony Sanchelli

Human Performance Resource Center, also presented at the workshop.

Other presentations by DCoE experts included “Traumatic Brain Injury and Substance Abuse,” by Jim Hardiman, licensed clinical social worker and substance abuse counselor with DCoE, and “The Real Warriors Campaign: Promoting Resilience, Reducing Stigma,” by Jill Herzog, program manager with the [Real Warriors Campaign](#).

The 2011 Family Resilience Conference provided a forum for DCoE to showcase efforts to advance understanding and knowledge of family psychological health, and paved the way for future collaboration with other agencies and organizations to provide the best care and treatment of troops and their families.

“Presenting the Military Family Fitness Model at the DoD/USDA Family Resilience Conference provided an excellent opportunity to disseminate useful information to families and providers on ways to improve family fitness and possibly prevent negative mental health outcomes or family violence,” said Cato. 

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Now, the agencies have partnered for the Integrated Mental Health Strategy Initiative, to review programs and create a network where service members, veterans or families can easily find services right for them.

“This initiative takes the mission of the federal working group and streamlines that effort to connect service members, veterans and their families to the best programs while teaching them how to use them,” said O’Donnell. “This joint effort is about looking into our best practices and continuing these key collaborations.”

As the federal partnership begins the review process, the initiative is aimed at providing help to the many faces of those in the military seeking out psychological health care.

“Our efforts can reach out to the service member or provider in a small Midwestern town with little access to a VA center or military treatment facility, to a service member’s spouse questioning what support group to join, to a military leader looking for a way to gain knowledge on signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder to properly supervise his or her troops,” said Gina Savini, acting chief of collaboration, DCoE strategic communications.

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for Healing Psychological Trauma of Service Members, Veterans, Family and Community.” O’Donnell discussed multidimensional and holistic practices to effectively respond to the complexities of combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

“There is an urgent need for our warriors to find services and a sense of community when they return to school using the GI Bill,” said Elvander. “This can promote healing, strengthen relationships and reintegrate our warriors into their communities as a whole. The DCoE relationship with universities and colleges helps push forth that effort to make each step of reintegration easier.”

For more information about academic training opportunities offered by the DCoE education directorate, visit the PTSD and TBI training [calendar](#).



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class James Bell

Motor–n–Safely!

For motorcycle riders, there’s nothing like cruising on an open road in summer. Unfortunately, motorcycle accidents and fatalities skyrocket during the warmer months. Across the services, guides and resources are offered about staying safe on the road.

The Army’s safety [website](#) gives tips for military leaders to stay current about motorcycle safety regulations, provides a video showing proper helmet use and a risk management toolbox.

In support of the [Air Force’s Year of Motorcycle Safety](#), Air Force bases are offering safety guidance to motorcyclists, as well as a course that provides training to Air Force installation motorcycle program managers to enable them to better facilitate and support a comprehensive motorcycle safety program.

[Navymotorcyclerrider.com](#) directs service members to traffic safety classes and training, a motorcycle census and updated motorcycle information. The Navy also distributes Smart Ride magazine, available for free download, which discusses motorcycle safety.

Chaplains Confirm Relationship with Mental Health Providers Key for Effective Care

Jayne Davis, *Strategic Communications*

Military chaplains, psychological and behavioral health care experts, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) social workers and officials, and mental health administrators came together for five days in May for the third joint meeting of the VA Chaplain Leadership Convocation and Military Chaplains Association.

The participants gathered in Hampton, Va., to address psychological health and spiritual care, outreach and administrative processes related to the conference's theme, "Defining Excellence in Chaplaincy in the 21st Century."

Mornings began with devotions and the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a series of plenary sessions that highlighted successful VA programs for veterans' caregivers and homeless veterans; U.S. Army Warrior Care initiatives; psychological and spiritual counseling for warriors and wounded warriors; and presentations on best practices and vital resources in care for warriors.

Dr. James Bender, clinical psychologist for [Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury](#) (DCoE) and Army veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, attended the conference to help educate participants about DCoE and its resources for military chaplains.

Bender said the conference reinforced the critical need to integrate mental health care and chaplaincy. Having worked closely with military chaplains when he was deployed, Bender knows firsthand the importance of the provider-chaplain relationship.

"Mental health providers need to continue efforts to collaborate with chaplains especially in the military community



From left, U.S. Air Force Capt. Cornelius Johnson, a chaplain with the 633rd Air Base Wing. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Brian Ybarbo.

where stigma may prevent service members from seeking help from superiors or health care providers," he said. "Service members often feel less stigma or none at all when speaking with chaplains."

DCoE hosts a quarterly chaplain working group and offers chaplains information and resources on psychological health and traumatic brain injury with a spiritual focus for counseling service members. For more information about the group, contact: Megan.jakub.ctr@tma.osd.mil. DCoE also released "Tools for Chaplains Counseling Service Members and Families with Mental Health Concerns," one of two [fact sheets](#) that highlight DCoE programs and resources beneficial to health care providers and chaplains.

Check out the DCoE website for these chaplain resources:

[Navy Chaplain Corps Suicide Prevention](#) – Explains how chaplains play an integral role in suicide prevention

[U.S. Air Force Chaplain Corps Risk and Resilience](#) – Notes the importance of preparing chaplains prior to deployment and developing their resiliency

[A VA Chaplain Explores Spiritual Ministry to Veterans Struggling with Suicide Ideation](#) – Discusses survey of chaplains, training needed for suicide prevention and types of issues chaplains are engaged in when they minister

[Faith and Hope: Presentation at 2009 DCoE Resilience Conference](#) – Presentation by Navy chaplain Mark Smith on faith and hope in the face of trauma and war

["Honored to be a Part of DCoE's Discussion on Support for Chaplains"](#) – A DCoE Blog post by Navy Commander Bradley Thom, chaplain in the U.S. Navy Reserve. 

‘Sea of Goodwill’ Recognizes One-of-a-Kind Outreach Programs

Robyn Mincher, *Strategic Communications*

The events of 9/11 and the goodness of one man created a program that continues to help hundreds of returning service members and veterans.

Mike Conklin, a military father with three sons in the Army, created [Sentinels of Freedom](#). The non-profit foundation, based in San Ramon, Calif., helps service members and veterans with a traumatic brain injury (and other physical injuries) find housing, jobs and vehicles modified for disabilities. Conklin recently received the Medal of Honor from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, the group’s highest award.

“The way we describe [our involvement] is that we walk at their side. We don’t push them and we don’t pull them,” Conklin told his local ABC news affiliate. “But if they start to stumble, we’re there for them.”

A new Defense Department initiative that highlights organizations and individuals supporting veterans recently recognized Conklin’s program. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen calls this American support of the military a “Sea of Goodwill.”

Programs hailed by the Sea of Goodwill initiative span across a spectrum of unique and innovative outreach and advocacy to veterans and service members. In Grand Junction, Colo., Grand Valley Catholic Outreach has started work on two apartment buildings for homeless veterans. In Morris County, N.J., 18 employees of a local generic pharmaceu-



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Anthony Sanchelli

tical company designed and assembled office organizers and decorative journals for veterans to provide them with tools to help them get back into the work force. Another program recognized by the Sea of Goodwill is the [Healers and Heroes Program](#), a new collaboration between the New Jersey Medical Society and the state’s Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, providing returning troops with consultations and referral services.

The initiative recently recognized the Warrior Transition Battalion in Tacoma, Wash., that connects wounded veterans with job opportunities, like Spc. Dan Biskey, who lost part of his leg because of a land mine explosion. Through the program, Biskey works in radio communications, learning how to install and maintain equipment for law enforcement officers.

The experience opened up other career and school prospects for the 27-year-old, such as an opportunity at Joint Base Lewis-McChord to work with wounded soldiers, bringing them his message of hope.

“Hey, look, I got hurt, too. You can still do stuff,” he told *The News Tribune*. “I didn’t know what I wanted to do. And now I’m starting to do things to give me an idea.”

Programs and individuals identified by the Sea of Goodwill initiative seem to encourage others to become advocates themselves, like Spc. Jason Billiot of Casper, Wyo., a veteran with psychological health concerns who attended a presentation entitled “How and Why We Are Different After War and Trauma: A Veteran’s Perspective,” by a retired Wyoming National Guard major.

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“It really kind of hit home for me,” Billiot told the Billings Gazette. “When I came home, it was just really difficult to relate to everybody. I wanted to hang only with my son and my wife. I didn’t want to be out in the crowd or in the community.”

After treatment, Billiot went from listener to speaker. He gave a presentation to Casper College in Casper, Wyo., in April on returning home, coping with post-traumatic stress disorder and reintegration. His inspiring efforts were recently recognized by the Sea of Goodwill.

Service members and veterans looking to tell their own story of coping can [share](#) it with the DCoE [Real Warriors Campaign](#). Real Warriors Campaign connects people with volunteer opportunities through its [partners](#), a wide network of non-profit, military and veteran organizations that work together to reach out and connect with the military health community.

For more information about Real Warriors Campaign partners, visit www.realwarriors.net 



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Anthony Sanchelli

Service-Wide Summer Safety Resources

— Jayne Davis, Strategic Communications

Lance Cpl. Amanda Doubrava was enjoying a fun day on the beach when the unexpected happened.

“I was at Emerald Isle Beach with friends, and it was a nice day so there were hundreds of people at the beach,” Doubrava told Jacksonville Daily News. “There was a big wave coming, so I dove under it and as I came out of the water and rubbed the salt out of my eyes, I got hit with a surfboard.”

Doubrava underwent numerous surgeries for injuries to her face, a situation that may have been avoided if the man owning the surfboard had it tethered to his ankle.

Taking precautions can make a world of difference when it comes to summer safety. All military branches encourage and, in some cases, require service members to practice risk management. Here are some resources to remind and help you and your family to have safe fun in the sun.

- [Military Health System](#) urges: Be cool, stay safe outdoors
- Army launches summer safety campaign with multimedia resources; [safe summer toolkit](#)
- Navy presents [Live to Play, Play to Live](#) campaign
- Army provides play-time tips during [month of the military child](#)
- Coast Guard helps [identify potential summer risks](#)
- Walter Reed Army Medical Center gives comprehensive [summer safety tips](#)

D_{CoE} Gears Up for *Safe Summer*

In the sun-filled summer months, we're on the go. Whether it's a family beach vacation, a motorcycle ride or just biking to a neighbor's house, our warriors and their families are out and about. While being active as a family is fun (especially in the sun), the risk of a mishap is always there — accident rates tend to soar between Memorial Day and Labor Day. No one is immune from summer accidents, but there are preventative measures service members, veterans and families can take to enjoy safe summertime activities.

How does D_{CoE} stay safe in the summer?

We've asked military community members that we've featured in our D_{CoE} newsletter, as well as D_{CoE} leadership, to provide tips to having safe fun in the sun.

"Summer is traditionally a time when many families have a permanent change of station. It can be a little chaotic... kids lose friends, and parents are disconnected from their community, not to mention all of the other stresses that go along with picking up and moving on. Staying connected to extended family and establishing contact with a sponsor or chain of command at the next unit is vitally important in helping reduce the strain of transition. [inTransition](#) program assigns personal coaches to support service members moving between health care systems or providers, as well as empower them with tools to make healthy life choices."

— *Maj. Todd Yosick, deputy director for D_{CoE} research and prevention directorate*

"Always wear sunscreen, because skin cancer can happen to anyone at any age. I had a skin cancer scare last summer and because of that my summer was filled with appointments—I had to stay out of the sun all summer."

— *Nicole Goetz, Air Force Military Child of the Year*

"Every summer all three of my children are enrolled in swimming lessons at the base pool. It's a fantastic way to get comfortable and familiar in the water again. They also improve not only their water safety awareness but their stroke skill as well. The beach also beckons this family in the summer—I never leave home without a first aid kit either, with bandages, tape, tweezers (for boardwalk splinters), antibiotic ointment and "itchy cream" for bites and stings."

— *Michelle Galvez, author of Spouse Speak! blog for the Flagship, the Norfolk Navy newspaper*

"One of the best ways we have found to build resilience during the summer is working in our garden. Last summer Fort Riley, Kan., put in a Community Victory Garden to help with the resilience effort on post. We found it a great way to spend our evenings relaxing and providing for our family. It was a way for the whole family to be involved in the planning and cultivating of the garden."

— *Sheri Hall, military wife and volunteer with the Real Warriors campaign*



Photo courtesy of the Galvez family

Real Warriors Campaign

Partners Add Value to Nationwide Outreach

— Jayne Davis, *Strategic Communications*

“We appreciate all that Real Warriors is doing to assist and support our injured service members ... We are thankful to have such valuable resources to share with our wounded heroes!”

— *Real Warriors Campaign partner*

Gauging success during the second anniversary of the Real Warriors Campaign is partly about numbers, partly about engagement.

The campaign, an initiative launched by the [Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury](#) (DCoE), partners with more than 150 federal, military and non-profit organizations nationwide to promote a shared ideal: encourage service members and veterans to seek help for psychological health concerns and increase awareness of the tools and resources available for them, their families, caretakers and friends.

Partners are highly engaged with the campaign, as seen by the frequency with which they promote it in their own resources, such as newsletters, blogs, podcasts, websites and social networking sites and at various events.

Two brochures the campaign says partners most often request are, “Five Tools That Reinforce Psychological Strength,” written for service members, veterans and families, and “Seven Tools That Reinforce Psychological Strength,” written for members of the National Guard and Reserve members. Both highlight free resources that are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, such as the DCoE outreach center where trained health resource consultants answer calls (866-966-1020) and online requests for information and confidential guidance.

In the last year, the Real Warriors Campaign saw a 70 percent increase in the number of partnering organizations that included the campaign in their materials and a 108 percent increase in materials ordered for outreach opportunities. The campaign’s growth in partners and actionable resources helps to penetrate selected populations with its primary message: reaching out shows strength, not weakness.

By highlighting personal stories using video profiles and through speaking engagements at partner-sponsored events, the campaign uses “real warriors” and proves through examples that seeking treatment is neither a sign of weakness nor an automatic end to a military career.

Marine Staff Sgt. Josh Hopper, who volunteered for the first Real Warriors video profile, shared his story of multiple

deployments and post-traumatic stress disorder at the 2011 Navy and Marine Corps Combat Operational Stress Control Conference in San Diego, a Real Warriors Campaign partner event. Hopper’s story of courage in seeking treatment resonated so well with other service members that the U.S. Marine Corps Operational Stress Control and Readiness commanders now show his profile to transitioning service members.

During the 2010 professional football season, the Real Warriors Campaign teamed with another partner, the National Football League Players Association, for a series of six “Game-Day” outreach events at U.S. military installations. At each event, service members and former NFL players exchanged views on common reintegration challenges and the potential stigma of asking for help with psychological con-

“We implemented the Real Warriors Campaign on our base. We used your materials, copied articles, etc. and have really seen a decrease in stigma. We asked people who referred them to us and they said ‘Real Warriors materials.’”

— *Mental Health Clinician from Aviano Air Force Base, Italy*

cerns, and discussed available tools and resources to address those concerns, such as the Real Warriors Campaign. These events also allowed campaign members to interact directly with service members and their families.

Campaign partners comprise military, federal and non-profit advocacy organizations with national or local reach. Though they share a common goal, partner organizations vary in who their members are and who they seek to engage; Adaptive Fly Fishing Institute, Army Wife Network, Strong Families Strong Forces, Veteran’s Heart Georgia and the Brain

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“[I’m in Iraq and] there is a video that is on [Armed Forces Network] at the moment. It has been on a couple of times in the last few days and it helps so much to watch.”

- Deployed service member’s email regarding Real Warriors Campaign programming

Trauma Foundation are just a few of the non-profit advocacy groups that partner with the campaign. The Defense Department inTransition program, Veterans Upward Bound, What a Difference Campaign and the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program represent some of the campaign’s federal and military partners.

Aware of the need to offer resources to military family members, the campaign successfully engaged Blue Star Families, National Military Family Association and Military Community and Family Policy for partnerships to help drive more family-focused content on the campaign’s website.

Real Warriors Campaign and its partners help service members build resilience, recover from trauma and reintegrate back into productive lives. The campaign provides valuable resources for those objectives and partners help get that information into communities. 

Fast facts

From Real Warriors Campaign data on partners’ use of campaign materials

Last Year
70 percent increase in inclusion of campaign in partner materials

108 percent increase in materials ordered for outreach to military community

To Date
130 – partner publications that include campaign information

Five million – potential audience reach

70,000 – materials partners requested to send to military communities

Stacy Pearsall

A Combat Photographer’s Story

As an award-winning Air Force combat photographer deployed to Baghdad in 2004, Staff Sgt. Stacy Pearsall experienced the first of several combat-related incidents that would later result in post-traumatic stress and separation from the Air Force.



Photo courtesy of Stacy Pearsall

Physically wounded several times and carrying emotional wounds from seeing her teammates wounded and killed, Pearsall tried to push aside the effects of physical and psychological pain for fear of losing her career. But a friend – a fellow photographer and Vietnam veteran – recognized the signs of post-traumatic stress after her first injury and connected her with a veterans center where she began counseling.

It was only after several more deployments, experiencing and then having to photograph difficult scenes of war, and a career-ending neck injury that she finally sought help for her psychological health concerns at a Department of Veterans Affairs medical center. While noticing the many Vietnam veterans there and hearing their stories, she began to see a new future in the work she loved, capturing the stories of service members on camera.

Pearsall volunteered her personal story for inclusion in the Real Warriors Campaign’s video profiles to offer encouragement to others worried about the stigma involved in reaching out for help. “My hope is that if [other service members] watch my story, they’ll find a way to offload their burden,” she said to the American Forces Press Service. “Everyone wears [sic] a different amount, but it’s not necessary to carry it around with you all the time.”

See Pearsall’s [video profile](#) on the Real Warriors Campaign website for her full story.

Organizations Ease Transition for Veterans Seeking College Degree

Jayne Davis, *Strategic Communications*

Student organizations at hundreds of U.S. colleges and universities are extending a collective hand to returning veterans who choose higher education after deployment.

These organizations recognize that veterans face unique challenges reintegrating into civilian life and university culture in particular. Through their outreach, these organizations show appreciation, awareness and concern for fellow students who enter school with distinctly different life experiences from those who have gone to college directly from high school.

With the passage of the [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#), which provides financial support for education and housing to qualified service members, and the proposed draw-down of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, a surge in veterans signing up for college may well be expected. According to James Hardiman, licensed clinical social worker with [Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury](#), higher educational institutions will need to be prepared for the influx.

“The Post-9/11 GI Bill includes increased benefits from the previous Montgomery GI Bill,” said Hardiman. “As part of those benefits, education is now even more accessible to our veterans.”

For all the advantages a college degree holds for veterans – in part, potential higher wages and greater access to potential employers who value higher education coupled with their military discipline and team mentality – it also holds challenges.

The vastly different experiences of deployment can be isolating on campus. School faculty and peers may not understand veterans’ experiences. The veteran may still carry visible and/or psychological conditions onto campus, further distancing him or her from shared experiences with other students.

In a November 2010 RAND study entitled, “[Service Members in School: Military Veterans’ Experiences Using the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Pursuing Postsecondary Education](#),” participants described challenges such as difficulty walking between classes quickly across campus; hyper-alertness and anxiety; difficulty concentrating and relating to others; and controlling one’s temper in social and academic settings.

“The life experiences of our service members returning to college greatly differ from their peers,” said Hardiman. “Assimilating back into society in general is challenging. An additional layer of challenge is present when integrating for



U.S. Marine Corp photo by Cpl. Jenn Calaway

someone who often does not understand why the constant tap of a pencil or the position of a doorway is cause for concern.”

Balancing family responsibilities with the time commitment college demands adds to the veteran’s challenges. According to a 2009 American Council on Education study, “[Military Service Members and Veterans in Higher Education: What the New GI Bill May Mean for Postsecondary Institutions](#),” 48 percent of military undergraduates in 2008 were married and 47 percent were raising children with or without a spouse.

Help with managing these challenging transitions is where student-veteran organizations make a difference.

[Student Veterans of America](#) (SVA) is a non-profit coalition of 340 student-veteran groups formed by students on campuses nationwide. Its executive staff advocates for student veterans at state and national levels and provides resources and support to its chapters to help veterans succeed in their education and post-education goals. The chapters provide peer networks led by fellow student veterans, coordinate campus activities and generally act as a touchstone for campus veterans.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric Shinseki supports SVA, as recognized in this February 22, 2011, [VA blog](#) post, and cites it as a key component of student-veteran success for its emphasis on peer networking. The aforementioned RAND study found that veterans ranked veteran peer

See [COLLEGE](#) on Page 13



U.S. Marine Corp photo by Lance Cpl. Michelle S. Mattei

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support higher than all other options as the most desirable type of assistance. According to a participant in the study, veterans helping each other mimics the military mentality of “leave no person behind.”

Hardiman agrees. “Turning to their ‘battle buddies’ for support during deployment is one of many keys to keeping the force healthy and mission ready. It’s part of our humanity to seek out like-minded peers to stand by us,” said Hardiman.

Though varied in their size and approach, student-veteran groups share a strong sense of commitment and concern for campus veterans.

The [SVA chapter at Syracuse University, N.Y.](#), advocates for veterans at all levels of government, promotes veterans’ resources and helps them identify VA benefits. With more than 72 members, the chapter is open to veterans, military family members and supporters of service members. Its goal is to expand a peer network of veterans and non-veterans as an adjunct to the university’s broad range of associated resources and programs.

SVA named the [University of Arizona chapter](#) its nationwide “2010 Chapter of the Year.” Representing nearly 1,000 student veterans, the chapter was recognized for lobbying the university to institute priority registration for Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients. SVA also lauded

the chapter for its fundraising, veteran outreach and notably, helping students at other state campuses develop comparable organizations.

Glen Lacroix, retired from the U.S. Army after experiencing a brain injury, is now the University of Arizona SVA’s chapter president. Lost with nothing to do and nowhere to go, Lacroix said joining the chapter turned him around. “I came along and [through SVA] was able to reestablish my life in a meaningful way, and I feel this should be available to every veteran who wants to come back to school,” Lacroix said in an October 2010 [UANews](#) issue, a service of the university’s office of communications.

Wounded, injured or ill veterans also benefit from SVA’s Veteran Educational Transition program ([VET](#)).

When Dillon Behr, who was medically discharged from the Army with a Silver Star, had trouble with his college application process he contacted the VET program. There, he got help processing his VA education benefits online, as well as a personal introduction to the SVA chapter at his school, which he later joined. As he said in a post to SVA’s website, “Leaving the military was stressful. But SVA really helped make my transition to college as smooth as possible. Now I look forward to helping other soldiers [who] find themselves in a similar situation.”


Some schools have found success with other veteran groups.

[Terp Vets](#), a student-veterans group at the University of Maryland, College Park, primarily emphasizes social networking and family support for veterans, including mentoring children of local military families. [Western Governors University](#) is in its fourth year of being named in [Military Advanced Education magazine’s annual guide](#) to top military-friendly universities and colleges. As the only non-profit online university with students in all 50 states, it allows U.S. military students to access the university from anywhere they have an Internet connection, even overseas, and keep their education costs down.

Veterans can also find help in their own backyard.

[VetSuccess](#), a pilot VA program now functioning on eight college campuses, helps service members make successful transition to student life. Each campus has a full-time VA counselor and part-time outreach coordinator who offer peer counseling and coordinate benefits, health and educational needs and support for veterans. [Vet Success](#) also provides vocational testing and referrals.

The U.S. Army’s [Wounded Warrior Education Initiative](#), a cooperative education initiative with the University of Kansas, provides a way for Iraq and Afghanistan wounded veterans to earn master’s degrees at the university, then continue their service through a return to duty or civilian employment with the Army. Eligible service members receive a full salary and a fully-funded graduate degree, while the Army benefits by retaining their service.

As veterans return home from deployments, higher education institutions have an opportunity to help them successfully reintegrate back into civilian life. With greater awareness of the concern and dedication student veteran organizations and other supportive programs demonstrate, college-minded veterans can look forward to joining the college experience with healthy anticipation. 



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Active Minds

Group Sends Silence Packing

Imagine the sight of 1,100 backpacks laid out in a room. Now, put a face with each of those backpacks and you'll have a personalized image of the numbing statistic that represents the number of student lives lost to suicide each year.

This spring [Active Minds, Inc.](#), a national advocacy organization, sent its highly acclaimed Send Silence Packing Tour to 14 cities in nine states for five weeks to drive home the tragedy of student suicide and promote a dialogue about mental health on campuses. The program seeks to change the conversation about mental health on campuses and create a culture of acceptance so students feel free to seek help.

Through its Veterans and Mental Health program, one of 10 focus areas, Active Minds partners with Student Veterans of America to support the needs and concerns of student veterans.

"Active Minds is keenly aware of the unique challenges and circumstances many student veterans encounter when on campus, which may affect their overall health and well-being," said Alison Malmon, Active Minds founder and executive director. "We are dedicated to [reaching out] to them in our work to change the conversation about mental health on college campuses so that everyone feels comfortable getting the help they need and deserve."

Active Minds has chapters on 336 campuses across the nation and continues to grow. The organization seeks both to help student veterans and to enlist student veterans as allies in the effort to end the stigma associated with psychological health concerns.

For more information and resources, visit www.activeminds.org



Photo courtesy of Active Minds, Inc.

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hero spotlights

Dale Snead

Operation Still Waters

“I have a friend who says the only time he is not hurting is when he is fishing.”

- Dale Snead, Operation Still Waters

Operation Still Waters is a non-profit community organization founded in 2010 in St. Petersburg, Fla., that uses the experience of fishing and being on water as therapy for wounded veterans. The small but big-hearted organization operates on the belief that being on water is healing itself, and relationships formed through fishing help wounded veterans with physical and psychological conditions.

Operation Still Waters is involved in all aspects of sport fishing with the veterans it serves and supplies equipment and experienced trainers for fishing outings. It works with health care providers to create therapeutic fishing-related programs and plans to expand its programs for recreational, physical and occupational therapy.

Dale Snead summed up the young organization’s philosophy by noting “if we can be successful in taking even one veteran out [fishing] with us, and helping that person feel better for a moment, our efforts ... will have been well worth the time.”



Photo by Richard Traugott, courtesy of Dale Snead of Operation Still Waters

Doug Warren

Alaska's Healing Hearts

“Please, never forget those servicemembers and their families who give so much every day without question to ensure our freedoms and our lives.”

- Doug Warren

Doug Warren is a man among bears ... Alaskan bears. But he isn't alone. Through Healing Hearts, a non-profit organization in Fairbanks, Alaska, he organizes outdoor events where wounded veterans can legally hunt bear, fish and participate in other outdoor recreation to build self-confidence and reintegrate socially.



Photo courtesy of Doug Warren

Warren has made it his personal mission to help give veterans hope that they can live productive, active lives. He markets and raises funds for events, such as the annual black bear hunt, where veterans and celebrities hunt together. Warren also engages hunters and other outdoors enthusiasts to work with wounded warriors to create confidence-building opportunities that might not otherwise exist.

Founded in 2010, Alaska's Healing Hearts is a year-round program that provides veterans with positive, therapeutic outdoors experiences to show them appreciation for all they've done for the country.

Scott Anderson

At Ease

“Scott Anderson is truly a demonstration of the ‘power of one’ to make a difference!”

- Ruth Henrichs, president and CEO, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska

Scott Anderson had an idea. As an advertising executive, ideas were his job; however, this idea was not aimed toward commercial success - it sought to help veterans manage post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In 2009, Anderson founded At Ease, a non-profit program in Omaha, Neb., that treats veterans with combat-related PTSD, and veterans who won't or can't seek treatment from traditional government facilities, such as veteran hospitals. At Ease also treats parents and spouses of veterans diagnosed with PTSD who show similar symptoms. It's the program's view that veterans with the disorder may affect the psychological health of the people closest to them.

The small treatment program has out-sized goals; it pledges to quickly accept almost everyone who comes to them for help. Funded by local donors, it helps individuals even if they can't pay. “His bottom line is that veterans and their families will be served in this community,” said Henrichs. “He is a true patriot.”



Photo courtesy of Bev Carlson

Roy Foster

Founder, Faith-Hope-Love-Charity
and Stand Down House

“I do what I do because I am one of them—it’s as simple as that. I practice what we are taught in the service that no person should be left behind.”

- Roy Foster, U.S. Army veteran

Even during the hazy days of recovering from alcohol and drug addiction, Roy Foster knew in his heart that he would someday help other homeless and addicted veterans make positive changes in their lives.

Foster’s dream came true in 1994 when he and another homeless veteran started Faith-Hope-Love-Charity, a crisis intervention center for male veterans in Palm Springs, Fla. The center now also assists at-risk and homeless female veterans and military families with temporary housing and comprehensive resources, including mental health services, financial assistance and life skills education. In 2000 Foster founded Stand Down House, an initiative of Faith-Hope-Love-Charity, which provides transitional living, shelter and services to veterans in different stages of recovery and with varying psychological needs.

“The dedication, heart and strength he displays are beyond words,” said Shari Balter, a licensed psychologist and independent contractor at vice to Stand Down House. “He gives of himself and sees the value in each individual.”

For nearly 20 years, Foster’s charity has helped more than 1,100 veterans. In 2009 CNN named Foster one of its top ten heroes.



Photo courtesy of Shari L. Balter, Psy.D.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Colbert

Radar Gun Scans for Head Trauma

Researchers at Georgia Institute of Technology have designed a device, similar to a police officers radar gun, that could soon diagnose head traumas quickly and accurately by analyzing a person's walking gait. [Read more . . .](#)

Therapy on Four Legs

Veterans Moving Forward provides service dogs, at no cost, to veterans with physical and mental health challenges, including those experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries. [Read more . . .](#)

Mobile Help

In a ceremony at the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, Segs-4Vets presented 39 injured veterans with a motorized device to assist mobility. The program has donated more than 700 of these devices to disabled veterans across the country. [Read more . . .](#)

Fly Fishing for Healing

Based out of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Project Healing Waters aims to help veterans and active duty personnel cope through educational fly fishing outings. [Read more . . .](#)

Save the Date DCoE Monthly Webinar

**June 23, 2011
1 p.m. (EST)**
The DCoE June webinar, "Anatomical/Physiological Changes Secondary to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" will discuss NICOE's work in treatment and research of such conditions, particularly some of the specific anatomical and physiological changes connected with post-traumatic stress disorder.

To register for this event, email: DCoE.MonthlyWebinar@tma.osd.mil.

DCoE Outreach Center

**24/7 Help: 866-966-1020
www.dcoe.health.mil/24-7help.aspx**
The DCoE Outreach Center is staffed with qualified health resource consultants who provide comprehensive information, resources and tools about concerns related to psychological health and traumatic brain injury to service members, veterans, families, health professionals and civilians 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Jack Braden

Additional links are available on our website.

www.dcoe.health.mil/ForHealthPros/Resources.aspx

Resilience ★ Recovery ★ Reintegration