



WOUNDED WARRIOR

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Send your comments, feedback

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Athletes prepare for training camp

WASHINGTON -- Air Force Services Agency officials will welcome athletes to the 2011 Air Force Warrior Team training camp Feb. 7 to 11 in San Antonio.

Of the 30 athletes attending the Air Force Warrior Team training camp, 25 will be selected to represent the service in the 2011 Warrior Games, an Olympic-style competition open to wounded, ill and injured active-duty Airmen and veterans May 16 to 21 in Colorado Springs, Colo.

"It's an honor to be considered for selection again," said retired Chief Master Sgt. Damian Orslene, an Airman who competed in the 2010

Warrior Games. The chief, from Ocean Springs, Miss., hopes to compete again this year in discus and swimming events.

"I'm confident we'll have a great team this year," said Capt. Courtnee Cruz, Air Force Warrior and Survivor Care policy chief. "We're looking forward to getting an outstanding team together and represent the Air Force well at the games."

This year's team will consist of 25 Airmen from a variety of backgrounds.

"It is my hope to be given the privilege to represent my United States Air Force in this spirited competition between the U.S. services," said Sergeant Reilly, a team hopeful who currently serves as a battlefield Airman liaison.

Approximately 200 warriors from all services will compete in the 2011 Warrior Games. Athletes will compete in such events as archery, cycling, basketball, shooting, swimming, track and field, and volleyball.



Team Air Force prepares for a basketball game during the 2010 Warrior Games. See Page 2 for a list of athletes attending the 2011 Warrior Training Camp. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Staff Sgt. Desiree N. Palacios)

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## New program helps families help veterans

WASHINGTON -- "Families at Ease" is a new program that works with family members and friends of veterans of any era to help them help their veteran get care.

Many veterans are reluctant to get help for the symptoms or difficulties they are having, or may not recognize their need for help, according to VA officials who developed the program.

Veterans could be experiencing difficulty at work or at home, problems sleeping,

driving too fast, or drinking too much. Or, they could seem irritable or sad.

Whatever the problem, family members are often very aware of veterans' mental health difficulties and want to play a positive role in helping veterans seek the help they need.

The "Families at Ease" educational campaign attempts to reach new veterans through their concerned family members by providing information and

support to help the veteran access VA facilities for services and benefits.

A multisite call center was developed at the Philadelphia and Durham, N.C., VA medical centers to answer calls from family members and friends, as well as veterans.

Callers can get information on how to enroll in VA care. They can also get free telephone-based coaching by a mental health

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### 2011 Warrior Training Camp Athletes

Retired Maj. Gwen M. Sheppard, Brown Deer, Wis.  
 Retired Chief Master Sgt. Damian Orslene, Ocean Springs, Miss.  
 Retired Senior Master Sgt. Noel Sepulveda, Severn, Md.  
 Retired Master Sgt. Kimberly K. Bradshaw, Yorktown, Va.  
 Master Sgt. Simon J. Wess, Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont.  
 Retired Master Sgt. Thomas E. Sansone, Randolph AFB, Texas  
 Tech. Sgt. Jason T. Butterfield, South Jordan, Utah  
 Tech. Sgt. Israel Del Toro, Lackland AFB, Texas  
 Tech. Sgt. Francis X. Reilly, Hurlburt Field, Fla.  
 Retired Tech. Sgt. Christopher M. Slaydon, Avondale, Ariz.

Retired Staff Sgt. Timothy A. Anderson, Warner Robins AFB, Ga.  
 Former Airman 1st Class Delvin McMillian, Grand View, Conn.  
 Staff Sgt. George C. Campbell, Danese, W. Va.  
 Staff Sgt. Shannon Cavazos, Dyess AFB, Texas  
 Staff Sgt. Christopher E. D'Angelo, Malmstrom AFB  
 Staff Sgt. Marc D. Esposito, Pope AFB, N.C.  
 Retired Staff Sgt. Jeanne A. Goldy-Sanitate, Rehoboth Beach, Del.  
 Retired Staff Sgt. Gregory J. Miller, Wentzville, Mo.  
 Retired Staff Sgt. Jason M. Morgan, McKinney, Texas  
 Former Staff Sgt. Claude E. Owens, Beaver Creek, Ohio  
 Retired Staff Sgt. Stacey L. Pearsall, Goose Creek, S.C.

Former Staff Sgt. Michael P. Rushton, Cameron, N.C.  
 Former Staff Sgt. Elmer M. Sanders, California City, Calif.  
 Retired Staff Sgt. Jack L. Shaw, Marine on the Croix, Minn.  
 Retired Staff Sgt. Ricky M. Tackett, Tucson, Ariz.  
 Former Senior Airman Matthew Bilancia, Fairfax, Va.  
 Retired Senior Airman Eric M. Grubbs, Roseville, Calif.  
 Retired Senior Airman Jennifer M. Stone, Denver  
 Retired Airman First Class Chatriex Goodson, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.  
 Cadet Matthew L. Pirrello, Fort Sam Houston, Texas

## Horses for Heroes

### Therapy offers warriors chance to learn new skills

A dusty barn and the musty smell of manure. Birds chatter among the rafters and horses nicker from stall to stall. Far from the chaos of a war zone or the bustle of the local Veterans Affairs medical center, veterans are participating in a nontraditional therapy program, Horses for Heroes.

"I was somewhat intimidated by the horses at first. These animals are very big and I was pretty anxious being around them," admitted William, an Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran and program participant; however, that was not the biggest challenge he faced in therapy.

"The hardest part of therapy is actually going," he said. "Often times I would think about calling and telling David [my instructor] that I wasn't coming. Once I got there, it was two hours of taking my mind off of everything and just focusing on learning new skills. That was what kept me going -- knowing that after I got there it was worthwhile."

The Lexington VA Medical Center has partnered with Central Kentucky Riding for Hope therapeutic riding center to offer veterans an



William, an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, grooms a horse at the Central Kentucky Riding for Hope barn. (Courtesy photo)

alternative rehabilitation program -- therapy that focuses on the close bond between horse and rider.

"The main focus of the program is addressing veterans who have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury," said Dr.

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## Post 9/11 GI Bill improvements become law

WASHINGTON -- The Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2010 was recently signed into law.

Effective Aug. 1, 2009, but not payable until Oct. 1, 2011:

- ◆ Certain National Guard members mobilized on Title 32 orders on, or after, Sept. 11, 2001, are now eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill and any qualifying Title 32 mobilization may be used to increase your percentage of eligibility.

Effective Aug. 1, 2011:

- ◆ The Post-9/11 GI Bill will pay all public school tuition and fees; this includes graduate training, out-of-state tuition differential, etc.

- ◆ For students attending private institutions of higher learning or foreign schools, the



tuition and fee reimbursement will be capped at the lesser of net out-of-pocket cost or \$17,500 annually; however the Yellow Ribbon Program still exists.

- ◆ College fund payments will be paid on a monthly basis instead of a lump sum at the beginning of the term. Those training at one-half time or less will be eligible for college fund payments.

- ◆ Reimbursement will be

available for multiple licensing and certification tests.

- ◆ Reimbursement will be available for fees paid to take national examinations used for admission to an institution of higher learning, such as the SAT.

- ◆ Vocational Rehabilitation participants will be able to elect the higher housing allowance offered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill if otherwise eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

- ◆ Break or interval pay will no longer be payable under any Department of Veterans Affairs education benefit program unless under an executive order of the president or because of an emergency situation such as a natural disaster or strike. Entitlement that previously

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## Services and Resources

HOME

Military OneSource brings you [H&R Block At Home Basic](#) electronic tax filing through the Military OneSource website and telephonic tax consultations. Prepare your 2010 state and federal taxes with this program. Provided by the Department of Defense, H&R Block At Home Basic is available free to active-duty, National Guard, and Reserve Airmen and their families. Tax consultants are available daily, including weekends, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern time, by calling 800-730-3802



[Stateside Legal](#) offers a website designed especially to help low-income service members, veterans and their families. For that reason, it focuses on legal services that are available free of charge. The site has indexed the three largest networks of free legal aid including military legal offices. Although there are not enough free legal services to help everyone, you may be able to find a free lawyer or advocate by searching the site's data base to find the relevant legal help resources in your state.



[Service animals](#) can be trained to do multiple tasks that serve to mitigate conditions such as panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. The National Resource Directory offers information about service animals that are trained to assist people with disabilities, as well as a listing of related agencies.

[MilitaryConnection.com](#) is a portal of all things military with thousands of pages of resources and information provided free to users. MilitaryConnection.com is often referred to as the "Go To Site". Website averages 40,000 daily page views and has a page rank of "6" by Google.

[www.ABILITYJobs.com](#) is the largest stand-alone resume bank for people with disabilities, helping companies fulfill their affirmative action compliance requirements and committed to expanding awareness about this job site to as many companies as possible.

Air Force Wounded Warriors can receive expedited processing of disability claims from Social Security. Benefits available through Social Security are different than those from the Department of Veterans Affairs and require a separate application. The expedited process is used for military service members who become disabled while on active military service on or after Oct. 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs. Visit the [Social Security Administration's](#) website for more information.

[afterdeployment.org](#) offers a program that has been designed to provide support to service members who are healing after having experienced sexual trauma. You will hear from others who have experienced sexual trauma, learn coping skills that can be helpful in the healing process. Check out the videos of others who are dealing with similar experiences, and explore the e-library for in-depth information.



### Help is just a phone call away

Troubled troops, veterans and family members have a round-the-clock, free resource for locating the help they need to deal with psychological health problems and traumatic brain injury. The [24/7 Outreach Center](#) is part of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, or DCoE. The center is always staffed with trained, professional health-resource consultants. Call 866-966-1020.

## Upcoming events

A [Virtual Career Fair](#) for veterans and military spouses takes place March 10 beginning at 11 a.m. EST. Participants must register online.

A Women's Snowsports camp takes place Feb. 27 to March 1. This event is part of the 2011 Higher Ground Snowsports Camps taking place in Sun Valley, Idaho, for disabled veterans with at least one combat tour supporting Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. These camps are for people with a traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, polytrauma and/or visual impairment. Camps are free to the qualified warrior and a supporter. People [interested](#) in attending should contact Bert Gillette at 208-726-9298 Ext. 117, or send him an e-mail at [bert@svasp.org](mailto:bert@svasp.org).

Air Force Wounded Warriors are invited to the 2011 National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic set for Sept 18 to 23. If interested, contact Tristan Heaton at 858-642-6426 or send e-mail to [Tristan.heaton2@va.gov](mailto:Tristan.heaton2@va.gov).

The Wounded Women Warrior Ride is set for March 31 through April 2. This event takes place in Southport-Park Island, N.C. Activities include an adaptive bicycle event, kayaking, boating, golf and more. For more information, visit [www.warriorride.com](http://www.warriorride.com), call 910-278-4612, or send e-mail to [teamracine@ec.rr.com](mailto:teamracine@ec.rr.com).

The [National Veterans Wheelchair Games](#) -- Aug. 1 to 6 -- is an annual wheelchair sports competition offering 17 different sports to veterans who use wheelchairs. The games promote rehabilitation through rigorous competition in such events as basketball, rugby, softball, hand-cycling and others. A special "Kids Day" program allows children with disabilities to meet the athletes and be introduced to wheelchair sports. While past games have produced national and world-class champions, the games also provide opportunities for newly disabled veterans to gain sports skills and be exposed to other wheelchair athletes. For more information and to request an application, contact Andy Krieger at 202-416-7757 or send e-mail to [andyk@pva.org](mailto:andyk@pva.org). Application deadline is April 15.

Retreat weekends for caregivers are filled with exciting opportunities for new friendships to grow. Participants frequently share that the weekend provided them with the opportunity to create support bonds that continue long after the conclusion of the retreat itself. All travel expenses to and from the retreat are paid by the Wounded Warrior Project; however, a credit card is needed when checking in for personal incidentals. The Friday and Monday surrounding the retreat weekend are primarily used for travel, and departure and arrival times are flexible. If you are interested in participating in a future retreat, please download and fill out an application and e-mail to [caregivers@woundedwarriorproject.org](mailto:caregivers@woundedwarriorproject.org) (this e-mail address is being protected from spam bots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it) or fax to 904-296-7347 Attention: Caregiver Retreat. Contact Anna Frese at 904-296-7350 for more information.

For more information or to receive additional details on any of these events, contact your AFW2 care manager at 800-581-9437 or send an e-mail to [afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil](mailto:afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil).

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## Do you need to update your contact information?

**NOTE - Updates should be provided to: AFW2 Program Office, AFPC/Disabilities Branch, DEERS, DFAS, and the VA.**

AFW2 Program Office – Call **800-581-9437** or via e-mail: [afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil](mailto:afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil)

AFPC Disabilities Branch – Call **210-565-5653**, or e-mail [disability@randolph.af.mil](mailto:disability@randolph.af.mil)

DEERS – Updating info in DEERS is accomplished in one of three ways:

Call **800-538-9552**

Visit a military base ID card issuance facility

Visit the website at: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/address/indexAction.do>

DFAS – Online at "myPay" website: <https://mypay.dfas.mil>

VA – Call **800-827-1000** or visit their website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for the nearest VA office

