



WOUNDED WARRIOR

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Wounded warrior returns to serve with Air Force again

by Tammy Cournoyer
Air Force Wounded Warrior Program

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- Gunar Moschner knows all too well the pain and anxiety that follows a devastating combat-related injury, but he also knows help is available through the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program.

Thanks to the program -- and his own perseverance - Mr. Moschner is once again serving with the Air Force.

His life today is a long way from where it was Oct. 18, 2004, when he was injured in the line of duty. As a senior airman assigned to Pope Air Force Base, N.C., Mr. Moschner was deployed to Qatar. As cargo was being downloaded from a 747, the mechanized roller was activated while he was pushing a pallet out of the aircraft. Mr. Moschner's right foot became caught between the wheel and the rail system, basically twisting his leg from the knee down.

"I pretty much lost all of my meniscus (fibrous cartilage within the knee joint), and it severely affected my muscles



Using the Air Force's Wounded Warrior Employment Program, Gunar Moschner now works with the 325th Mission Support Group at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. He is a former senior airman who was severely injured while deployed to Qatar. (U.S. Air Force photo/Jonathan Gibson)

and ligaments," explained Mr. Moschner, a native of Bogota, Colombia.

The injury led to his being medically separated from the Air Force in August 2008.

Unfortunately, he was not aware of the Air Force's program for wounded warriors until he was going through the Airman and Family Readiness Center's

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Stigma of seeking help is diminishing

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- Efforts to take the stigma out of seeking help when it's needed and build resiliency within the force appear to be paying off, the commander of a brigade that's seen heavy action in Afghanistan told American Forces Press Service.

Army Col. Sean M. Jenkins, commander of the 101st Airborne Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team, reported promising signs that soldiers are heeding the message being sent from Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates on down that seeking mental, physical or spiritual care is a sign of strength, not weakness.

"We are making progress in moving to a point where there is not a stigma, and there shouldn't be," Colonel Jenkins said. "Every unit is different, and every squad and team is different. But I think we've come to a point where the stigma is diminishing and where soldiers recognize that it's sometimes okay to raise their hand and say, 'Hey, I can't go on this [mission].'"

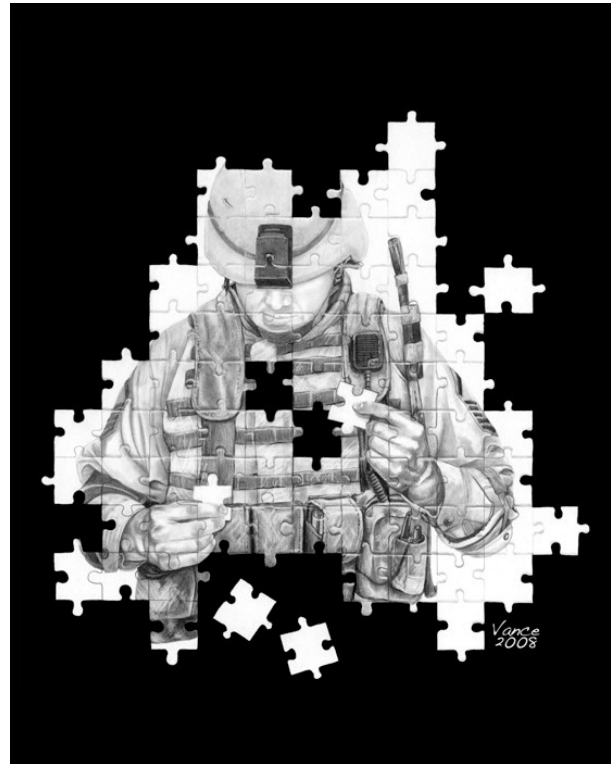
Colonel Jenkins' brigade, the last to deploy to Afghanistan as part of the 30,000-troop surge there, has taken heavy casualties since arriving last summer in the remote Paktika province that borders Pakistan. Fifteen "Currahee Brigade" soldiers have been killed, with scores more wounded and more than 40 soldiers flown out of the theater for advanced medical care.

In addition, two soldiers attempted suicide, and Colonel Jenkins said he's been surprised at how many have met with the brigade chaplain, psychologist or physical therapist for emotional, spiritual, mental health or physical help.

"I am glad the help is there, and I certainly want every Currahee to say it is accessible, and to say, 'I don't think I will be looked at differently if I seek it,'" Colonel Jenkins said. "That is the hurdle, but I think we have gotten better at that."

The brigade began building resiliency skills long before arriving in Afghanistan, he said. The unit's pre-deployment training included a "Toccoa Tough" program -- named for the Georgia town where the storied unit that came to be known during World War II as the "Band of Brothers" was founded in 1942. The program emphasizes mental as well as physical resilience for soldiers and their families.

That training continues in the combat theater, where the brigade holds a three-day, semi-



monthly course that reinforces the principles of mental, physical and spiritual health, and sessions covering everything from physical health and nutrition to proper sleep methods and how to deal with stress. Attendees are encouraged to take what they learn and apply it, not only to themselves, but also to their peers and subordinates.

"It's a constant process," Colonel Jensen said of resiliency-building efforts that will continue throughout the deployment and after redeployment to Fort Campbell, Ky.

Resiliency focuses heavily on junior leaders taking care of their soldiers and soldiers looking out for each other, he said. "It's a team effort," he said. "But it is really interaction with leaders -- junior leaders, team leaders, squad leaders. There is so much on their shoulders."

Colonel Jenkins called junior leaders and noncommissioned officers his front line of defense in recognizing soldiers in need of help.

That, he said, requires knowing each soldier -- his or her family situation, likes, dislikes and challenges. "That is what you have to know, because then you can pick up when they are not acting right or something is bothering them.

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DOD authorizes Armed Forces Service Medal for Haiti

The Department of Defense has approved the Armed Forces Service Medal for personnel assigned to Operation Unified Response who participated in humanitarian relief assistance to the people of Haiti following a 7.0 earthquake Jan. 12, 2010.

Airmen who supported Operation Unified Response between Jan. 14 and June 1



must have been assigned to the immediate area of operation.

Members must provide source documents confirming Armed Forces Service Medal entitlement to their unit commander or designated representative. Source documents include temporary

duty orders, travel vouchers, decoration citations, performance reports, etc. Documents must show the operation being supported, location and duration of service in the qualifying area.

For more information, call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102. (Courtesy of Air Force Personnel, Services and Manpower Public Affairs)

Warrior gears up for Olympic-style competition

by Patrick Desmond

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- Wounded warrior Tech. Sgt. Israel Del Toro continues to improve his quality of life by way of different professional and sporting mechanisms. The latest, a custom-made Catrike Expedition, takes his love of competition to the next level.

Returning to active duty despite disabling injuries received during combat, Sergeant Del Toro trained to become an instructor, graduated from the Gaylor NCO Academy, and most recently, again qualified for the Armed Forces' Olympic-style competition, the Warrior Games, May 16 to 21.

The acquisition of his own racing recumbent bike, specifically designed for Sergeant Del Toro's body, gives the wounded warrior an edge he didn't have during his first attempt at the 10K ride in Colorado Springs, Colo.



"Last year, I had to leave the gear in second the whole time," Sergeant Del Toro said, not able to manipulate the gearshift on the left handle.

This time, the gearshifts for both front and back tires are located on the right handle of the bike's carbon-fiber frame, making shifting as easy as flipping a switch on top or twisting the handle.

In addition to a custom fit, Sergeant Del Toro said having the bike allows for more time to train beyond the allotted week given to all competitors prior to the games.

But Sergeant Del Toro is not merely satisfied with one event. This year, he's adding the 100-meter dash and the air rifle competition events to his repertoire.

He will also be returning to the bronze-medal winning Air Force volleyball and wheelchair basketball teams.

Despite five events, pushing himself is nothing new to the former high school and current Airman athlete.

"I'm challenging myself to see how much better I can get, to see if I can continue to get better over the years," he said.

Accordingly, his training week is stacked: three 10K bike rides, a few runs, and weekends spent at the shooting range.

He's also extrinsically motivated by the atmosphere of the games and the other

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Tech. Sgt. Israel Del Toro, 342nd Training Squadron, steers his custom made recumbent bike past Forbes Hall during a training ride at the Lackland Training Annex on April 5. The recumbent bike 10K is one of five events Sergeant Del Toro is preparing for in anticipation of his participation in the 2011 Warrior Games May 16 to 21. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Robbin Cresswell)

Services and Resources

HOME

The FINRA Investor Education Foundation's Military Financial Education Project delivers free, unbiased financial education tools and training to service members, their spouses and on-base financial educators through a variety of programs and public awareness initiatives. A partner in the U.S. Department of Defense Financial Readiness Campaign, the project's primary goal is to help military families manage their money with confidence. This service was launched in February 2006 using fine money levied against firms for misleading sales practices targeting military personnel. For additional information about the Military Financial Education program, click [here](#), or contact the FINRA Foundation's Frank Dong at 202-728-6933.



Caregivers are loved ones, family and friends, who are essential to the healing of wounded warriors, providing critical attentiveness in the home to complement medical care. Veterans Affairs realizes that their sacrifice is enormous, every day, year after year, for wounded warriors who safeguarded this nation. A VA-established support line is available for caregivers by calling toll free 855-260-3274.



The [National Association of American Veterans](#) is committed to assisting eligible service members, veterans, and their families experiencing financial hardship. A one-time grant up to \$1,500 (based on availability of funding) may be provided to help families in the areas of: mortgage assistance, rent, home repair/maintenance, vehicle repair/maintenance, medical expenses, and transportation expenses. Financial assistance can be obtained for other critical needs on a case-by-case basis.

TRICARE beneficiaries can learn more about their health care benefits through the online TRICARE University. People can learn about TRICARE eligibility, health care coverage for regular component and Guard/Reserve personnel, pharmacy options, dental coverage, claims and appeals, and transitional health care coverage. For more information and to enroll, click [here](#).

If you rent your, do not assume your landlord carries insurance covering your personal belongings. You will most likely need to purchase a separate policy whether you rent an apartment or a house. Severe financial loss is just a flood, fire, earthquake or tornado away. Visit the [Consumer Action website](#) for tips on how you can save money finding a policy that is right for you.



The [Stanford School of Medicine's Vets Connect](#) program provides free individual psychological therapy to Post 9/11, Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom veterans and their family members. Services also including free couples therapy and family therapy in an outpatient setting. Your first point of contact will be with a clinical coordinator who will assist you with the enrollment process, consisting of an assessment and a personal interview.

Free Microsoft training offers technology skills, experience

Job Opportunities for Disabled American Veterans is offering the opportunity to become proficient using Microsoft products through its [Microsoft IT Academy Program of eLearning for Wounded Warriors](#).

The program is free to wounded warriors who can choose from 372 eLearning courses covering all of Microsoft's software products.

According to the academy's website, the curriculum helps people obtain hands-on skills and experience necessary to succeed in technology careers, plus earn Microsoft certifications to impress employers.

To receive a student access code, contact Rebecca Dominguez, Air Force Wounded Warrior Program, at 210-565-4724.



Upcoming events

Wounded Warrior Project offers [Project Odyssey](#). With its name derived from Homer's epic poem about overcoming adversity and finding the way home, Project Odyssey helps warriors heal their spirits and helps to overcome combat stress through outdoor, rehabilitative retreats that encourage a connection with nature, peers, and others. The retreats focus on the positive aspects of military service, teamwork, and overcoming difficult obstacles. Warriors participate in outdoor, recreational activities geared at building self-esteem and overcoming fears including separation from family, interaction with others, and trust issues. Activities may include horseback riding, canoeing, whitewater rafting, kayaking, rock climbing, rappelling, a high ropes course, fishing, skeet shooting, sled hockey, and skiing at retreats held in various locations. Visit the [website](#) to learn more about upcoming events.

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.

Caregiver Retreats are available for wives, mothers, sisters, husbands, fathers, brothers, and other family members who are helping their wounded loved ones face a range of physical and mental challenges. These weekend-long, all-expense-paid retreats are hosted at numerous locations around the country, and offer a chance 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. The Wounded Warrior Project staff follows up with all participants and assembles a comprehensive contact database to ensure everyone can stay connected. For more information, click [here](#).

The National Military Family Association will hold 2011 [Operation Purple](#) summer camps. This free summer camp program was developed by the association to support military children dealing with the stress of war. The eighth summer of Operation Purple camps will host children for 40 weeks of camp in 25 states as well as in Japan. Camp states include Alabama, Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia. The overseas location is set in Japan. Specific camp locations, dates, contact information, and camp program and eligibility are available online.

New Warrior and Family Operations Center at Randolph

A ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the grand opening of the new Warrior and Family Operations Center is scheduled at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, May 25 at 9 a.m.

Look for details and photos of the event in the next issue of the AFW2 Bulletin and the AFW2 website.



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: wounded.warrior@us.af.mil

AFPC Disabilities Branch – Call **210-565-5653**, or e-mail disability@us.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 for the nearest VA office

