

Wounded Warrior Care Month Recognition Ceremony held at Navy Installations Command

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WASHINGTON D.C. – At a ceremony in the command headquarters atrium at the Washington Navy Yard, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), Vice Adm. Dixon Smith hosted a Warrior Care month recognition ceremony Nov. 3. Command employees attended the event which included a video presentation about the Navy's wounded warrior care program along with special remarks from guest speakers including Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Office of Warrior Care Policy, James Rodriguez, and Navy Chief Logistics Specialist Averill Malone.



141103-N-BW872-041 WASHINGTON (Nov. 3, 2014) Navy Chief Logistics Specialist Averill Malone shares a personal story of recovery from PTSD with military and civilian members of Navy Installations Command. November is Warrior Care month, throughout the month, The Office of Warrior Care and all of the services' wounded warrior regiments will be highlighting various wounded warrior programs, activities, stories of recovery, and personal triumphs. (U.S. Navy photo by Sandra Niedzwiecki/Released)

Capt. Brent Breining, Navy Installations Command's Wounded Warrior – Safe Harbor program director welcomed guests and gave remarks about the importance of the Wounded Warrior – Safe-Harbor program.

"This year's theme - a show of strength - recognizes the fortitude and resiliency wounded warriors exhibit on their journey towards recovery," said Breining. "It is our hope that this event will instill a greater appreciation for the lifetime of support that Wounded Warrior--Safe Harbor provides."

Following the national anthem sung by Naomi Howell, a civilian employee with the command, and invocation by command chaplain, Cmdr. Phillip King, Smith spoke briefly about the relevance of having programs like this and the benefits of spreading the word.

"This month serves as an opportunity to recognize wounded warriors in all services, as well as those who care for them, for their service, sacrifices and achievements," said Smith. "We have a responsibility to take care of our Sailors and Coastguardsmen and get them back to fighting form."

Rodriguez expressed his gratitude for those who support the program, the benefits of what the program provides and how anyone can be affected regardless of age or length of service.

"This program is not just for the young or inexperienced," Rodriguez shared. "I want to highlight Chief Malone, one of the Navy's senior leaders, who has actually stood up and said 'I need help. I need assistance,'" said Rodriguez. "We have the programs to help him and that's what's important."

Malone, the keynote speaker for the event, suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from deployments to Iraq in 2007 and 2008. He has been in the Navy for more than twenty years and following his deployments struggled with his symptoms alone because he did not know where else to turn. After a violent family event he decided to get treatment from the Wounded Warrior--Safe Harbor program.

"I was having nightmares and was afraid of loud noises and I kept asking for help," said Malone. "They said I could have PTSD but back then I didn't know what PTSD was."

Malone brought his daughter with him to the ceremony and said he owed his success in the struggle with PTSD to her and his wife.

"They played referee between me and the world," said Malone "They made sure I didn't watch certain movies and kept people who came to the house from slamming doors and things like that. It's because of her and my wife that I'm still here."

Malone's comments about his family and their support helping him through his darkest times roused applause from the more than 75 attendees.

In 2013 Malone checked himself into Bethesda hospital and joined the Wounded Warrior adaptive sports program, which offered a variety of activities. Shortly after, he fell in love with archery and painting.

"I was looking at the other guys and saying that I couldn't compete with them," said Malone. "I told a friend of mine that I didn't think I could do it and he said 'It's not about winning it's about recovery' and that became my mantra."

Malone competed in the 2014 Warrior Games at Colorado Springs, Colo. and won a bronze medal in archery, which was neatly displayed on an easel with his art work during his presentation.

The event concluded with a cake cutting and a poster signing.

In 2008, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates designated November as Warrior Care Month in order to inform members of the military and their families and communities about the programs and initiatives currently being provided through the Warrior Care system and the forthcoming improvements.

Throughout the month of November in Washington, D.C. and throughout the DoD, The Office of Warrior Care and all services' wounded warrior regiments will highlight a variety of wounded warrior programs and activities, including stories of recovery, and personal triumphs. Warrior Care Month is not only about what is being done for our nation's wounded, ill and injured service members, but also about what they do for us, how they continually give back to our communities, their families, and our nation that they have sacrificed so much to protect.

For more information about Warrior Care Month activities or wounded warrior resources visit <http://safeharbor.navylive.dodlive.mil> or www.facebook.com/navysafeharbor.

For more information about Navy shore installations visit <http://www.cnic.navy.mil>