



WTU/AW2 Connection

March 2013

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CG Corner

My goal at the Warrior Transition Command (WTC) is to ensure we are “value added” in your eyes—the eyes of our stakeholders: our Soldiers and their Families, caregivers, cadre members, Regional Medical Commands, the Office of the Surgeon General, Senior Army leaders, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the American public. We do this by:

- Providing enhanced operational oversight and guidance in support of the Warrior Care and Transition Program.
- Overseeing the force structure of the program.
- Assisting Army leadership in making warrior care-related decisions and by ensuring the program is adequately resourced.
- Publishing or improving policies for Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) that result in a more successful and efficient transition process for each wounded, ill, and injured Soldier.
- Focusing on cadre selection, training, and support, as they are the front line leaders caring for our Soldiers and their Families.
- Providing personalized support of wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers through a Comprehensive Transition Plan.



*BG David J. Bishop,
Commander, U.S. Army
Warrior Transition Command
and Assistant Surgeon
General for Warrior Care
and Transition*

To bring you up to date, over the past eight months, I’ve asked my staff to focus on a well-trained, resilient, and resourced cadre. To support the challenging and important nature of this mission we have:

- Received the necessary General Officer support to secure Reserve Component Contingency Operation for Active Duty Operational Support (COADOS) staffing at WTUs through 2013 with a commitment from the Army G3 to find an alternate sourcing solution for the future that includes a Reserve Component cadre.
- Ensured that WTU and Community-Based Warrior Transition Unit (CBWTU) commanders are authorized to fill Reserve Component (RC) cadre vacancies with two-year orders. This will best serve wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers

assigned to WTUs.

- Maintained a diverse cadre as a result of the support we received from Army leadership. RC Soldiers will remain part of the WTU cadre—clearly an important distinction as 50 percent of Soldiers recovering at WTUs are National Guard or Reserve. I believe this will enable the most highly-qualified RC officers and NCOs to volunteer to serve in our WTUs.
- Enhanced cadre training by launching a five-day Cadre Resilience Course that will further prepare and equip WTU cadre with the tools and knowledge needed to manage the stress of these demanding assignments.
- Introduced a process to transfer demobilizing RC Soldiers closer to home as soon as possible when care and capacity can support. Additionally, we built systems to help resolve Soldier concerns quickly while instituting systemic solutions program-wide.
- Established a Cadre Collaboration Portal. This portal is available to all cadre and allows each cadre member a secure web-based interface to share lessons learned and questions with peers from across the program.

Each WTU has strengths. Through use of the Cadre Collaboration Portal, we are able to share those strengths across the program. I encourage each of you to register, log in and use this resource. This site was developed as a secure online method for the WTC staff and WTU cadre to collaborate, exchange information, share best practices, and store knowledge. It is available at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/wtucadre>. These accomplishments are just a few examples of our commitment to improve and refine the Warrior Care and Transition Program and to ensure that we continue to exceed the expectations and needs of our wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers and their Families.

As many of you know, it is almost time for the 2013 Warrior Games. I commend all of the Soldiers and Veterans who have participated in the many Warrior Games and adaptive and reconditioning camps, competitions, and events thus far. I also want to commend those of you who are competing for a spot on the 2013 Army team. Only fifty of you will make the team, but I applaud each of you for your efforts. The Warrior Games are sponsored by the U.S. Olympic Committee and Deloitte and slated for May 11-17 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Army team will be announced in early April and will join teams from the Marines, Navy, Air Force, Veterans Administration, and the United Kingdom to compete in archery, cycling, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, track and field, and wheelchair basketball.

The Warrior Games features our best wounded, ill, and injured athletes and serves as a public, positive reminder about the importance of adaptive sports and reconditioning programs. Army adaptive reconditioning programs serve much broader goals than just athletic competition: the results help Soldiers advance their recovery in life outside of sports by helping to overcome challenges associated with their physical injuries or illnesses. For many, adaptive reconditioning activities like Warrior Games offer new opportunities to overcome obstacles, regain confidence, make friends, and gain a new, positive outlook on life. I encourage each WTU commander to reach out to the WTC Adaptive Reconditioning Branch for assistance in improving your adaptive reconditioning program. And thanks to all for your support of this year's adaptive sports camps, competitions, and Warrior Games.

In closing, I want to remind you all that the responsibility to take care of our wounded, ill and injured Soldiers will endure long after the current hostilities cease. While concerned about the possible impact of current fiscal constraints and possible furloughs of our civilians on this critical mission area, I remain

confident that our Army will continue to meet this sacred obligation of taking care of our Soldiers and Families. We will continue to monitor for effects of sequestration on Warrior Care, and we will be deliberate and transparent in our planning to mitigate any impact.

Remember that the Warrior Transition Command is your proponent for Army warrior care and transition. You each have a support network at WTC and throughout your local Warrior Transition Unit. Thank you all for what you do each day. Let us know if we can help, if we are doing something right or if something needs improvement. We want to hear from you.

CSM Corner

This month the focus of the newsletter is on the transition of our Soldiers and Families assigned to our Warrior Transition Units. Before I get into specifics on warrior transition, I need to say “welcome” to our new AW2 SGM, Patrick Fatuesi, and “Farewell” to my close friend and former AW2 SGM, Bob Gallagher. SGM Gallagher has been a great asset to the program and the Army, and I’m sure SGM Fatuesi will also do an outstanding job for all of our Soldiers and Veterans.



*CSM Mark Dennis, U.S. Army
Warrior Transition Command*

Transition can be a very stressful time for our Soldiers and their Families. I have always encouraged Soldiers to educate themselves throughout their careers; education is the key to success in life. Whether a Soldier transitions, out into the civilian community, or back into our deployable force, a college education will always be beneficial to success. Our system of education in this country has matured to the point that a Soldier can take classes almost anywhere in the world in any environment. The Soldier Family Activity Centers (SFACs) have staff available to assist Soldiers and Families in enrolling in classes for college degree programs. The education centers on our camps, posts, and stations are also available to assist in college programs. Education opportunities are low hanging fruit for all of us in the military. Please take advantage of it!

The Comprehensive Transition Plan is a great program. Use this program to assist you and your Families in preparing for the future. I encourage you to take advantage of the time and opportunities you may have for internships. These internships may lead to other opportunities in the future. Utilize all of your available assets such as the Transition Counselors, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other independent agencies many of you come in contact with. There are many opportunities that are available, but it all starts with stepping out and taking advantage of the programs.

AW2 Update

AW2 Director COL Greene, AW2 Director

The last three months have been a time of considerable change. AW2 has been forced to bid farewell to several personnel, including two long-standing stalwarts: our XO, LTC Deb Cisney and SGM Robert Gallagher. With all our



*COL Colin Greene, new
Director of U.S. Army
Wounded Warrior Program
(AW2)*

hearts, we wish them all the best in their future endeavors. We have also been privileged to welcome SGM Patrick Fatuesi to the team. SGM Fatuesi has spent a career working with and taking care of Soldiers, and brings his extensive skills and experience to help AW2 care for not only Soldiers, but Veterans and their Families.

In alignment with the Commander's intent, SGM and I recently sat down with a list of the AW2 Advocate locations in the United States, and "divided up the map", such that nearly all Advocates should see at least one of us face-to-face during this calendar year. During these visits, we also look forward to meeting AW2 Soldiers and Veterans, as well as VA, WTU, and MTF leaders.

Change is also occurring in the area of training. We recently completed a successful New Hire Orientation Training (NHOT) session, welcoming eleven new Advocates into the AW2 Family. For future training, including NHOT, annual training, and resiliency training, AW2 is examining alternatives to large groups, including virtual sessions and leveraging training available locally and regionally. As the details are worked through, we will inform our Advocates.

The Community Support Network is being updated, and you can help. Click on the CSN tab on the website <http://www.WTC.army.mil/community/>. You will be presented with links to a host of national, regional, and local organizations who offer services to our beneficiaries free of charge, covered by insurance, or significantly discounted with the costs being disclosed upfront and prior to agreement. This site is not just for AW2 Advocates...it is for all WTU Cadre, Soldiers, and Families as well. I encourage you to navigate the site, make use of it, and send us feedback on its usefulness and how to improve it.

One thing that has not changed: the remarkably, inspirational character of our Soldiers, Veterans, Families, and the Advocates who support them. One of the greatest privileges of this position is to visit with you, help you, and learn from you. SGM Fatuesi and I look forward to seeing you soon.

The Value of Life and Quality of Care

Ronny R. Cunningham, Central Region Contract Supervisor AW2/SRI

The value of life and quality of care for our wounded Soldiers, Veterans, and their Family members begins with our AW2 Advocates. As an AW2 Advocate, you have a responsibility to provide the necessary care and time to our severely wounded. You also have to remain vigilant at all times when it comes to these great American heroes and their Families. Their lives have been changed physically, mentally, and emotionally because of their willingness to fight so we can maintain our way of life.

We know this job can be challenging to Advocates, but we must fight on. The way we do that is to maintain contact, proper case management, and to follow-up even when our wounded warriors fail to do so. As AW2 Advocates you must maintain efficiency because of the complexity of the many problems Soldiers and Veterans will face as we guide them to pathways of independence. AW2 Advocates, counselors, case managers, and supervisors, and yes, even our Soldiers and Veterans to accomplish the AW2 mission. Make no mistake about it. We are all change agents, and what better way to give back than to help our



1SG Eran Lyle in front of the Warrior Transition Battalion Headquarters at the Fort Stewart Warrior Transition Battalion. He arrived at Fort Stewart as a noncommissioned officer in 2004, and was assigned to the Third Infantry Division's newly-created 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Cadre Spotlight

Fort Stewart Soldier Makes a Difference through Compassionate Leadership

By Michelle L. Gordon U.S. Army MEDDAC Fort Stewart Public Affairs Officer

When 1SG Eran Lyle joined the military 22 years ago, he just wanted to be a Soldier. He attended basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and trained to be a Fire Support Specialist. "I didn't join the military seeking medals, glory, or fame," he said. "I just wanted to do what was right."

His early career was fairly uneventful. He volunteered for every school he could attend, and he said he just did his job. He arrived at Fort Stewart as a noncommissioned officer in 2004, and was assigned to the Third Infantry Division's newly-created 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. He deployed twice to Iraq, first in 2005, then again in 2007, where he was part of the troop surge. When his brigade deployed again in 2010 Lyle remained at Fort Stewart to be the Third Infantry Division Rear Detachment Command Sergeant Major.

While working at the division headquarters Lyle learned about the Fort Stewart Warrior Transition Battalion (WTB). He was intrigued, so when he saw an open position for the Headquarters and Headquarters Company First Sergeant, he applied. He was selected in December 2010.

Lyle describes his job in two parts. Part one takes place at Fort Stewart, Georgia, where he's responsible for ensuring new Soldiers assigned to the WTB are in-processed and on the right medical track to return to duty or transition out of the Army.

"We focus on getting them ready for their next phase," he said. "During my time here we've had more than a thousand Soldiers come through the WTB. We prepare them for transition--that's my job."

The second part of Lyle's job is the one he's most passionate about. It's also the most tedious. In addition to the Soldiers at Fort Stewart, he and his company commander, CPT John Walsh, are also responsible for 35 critically-

injured Soldiers at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Florida, located 320 miles south of the installation.

Although they have a liaison team composed of four Soldiers on-site, Lyle and Walsh are at the facility one week out of every month. They visit with Soldiers, assist Families, and attend special events such as Purple Heart ceremonies.

“My job is to ensure all of the pieces are operating smoothly,” said Lyle. “We coined a phrase down there called ‘compassionate accountability’, and you absolutely have to have it to do this job. We have Soldiers who can’t get out of bed—and they’ll never be able to get out of bed unassisted—but they have to go to therapy. They’re frustrated, and we get that, but we have to remind them not to be rude or disrespectful when the therapist comes to get them just because of that frustration.”

Lyle is committed to the mission of working with polytrauma patients, and he’d like to serve longer than the two year orders battalion cadre are currently authorized.

“If I could stay in this job for the next 10 years I would,” he said. “It’s gratifying working for these Soldiers and Family members. We have 35 Soldiers here, but we actually have 60 members of our Family that we take care of. We take care of mom, we take care of dad, we help out. A lot of these Families don’t have rental cars, and they’re in the hospital all day, so we take them to the grocery store, we help them move into a hotel, and we drive them to Fort Stewart, and then drive back the next day. It takes a special person to do that. You can’t just grab any Soldier off the street and put him in this job if he doesn’t have it in his heart.”

Knowing his position was only two years, Lyle was ready to retire last summer. He completed the paperwork and was planning his civilian life. Then he was selected to go the Sergeants Major Academy. Later this year Lyle and his wife Melisa, who serves as the head nurse in the Pediatric Clinic at Fort Stewart’s Winn Army Community Hospital, will leave the community they’ve called home for nearly a decade. However, Lyle hasn’t changed. He’s still the humble Soldier who entered basic training 22 years ago. He’s still not looking for glory or fame; he just wants to do his job.

“I didn’t think I’d make the sergeant major list,” he said with a smile. “I was happy with my career, and I was prepared to transition to civilian life. Now I’m not sure what the future holds. I’d like to be a brigade command sergeant major someday...but we’ll see.”

Did You Know...

Policy Update

The Warrior Transition Command (WTC) is a strong proponent for the Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) across the Army. If you see nothing else from the new and updated WCTP policy, you will see that our policy updates and refinement reflect our leadership’s commitment to wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers and their Families. For WCTP policy, the overarching goal for the WTC remains the staffing and publication of a unified Army Regulation for Warrior Care and Transition. You can find current WCTP policy at

<https://intranetako.hqda.pentagon.mil/wtc/g357/ppp/ext/Pages/default.aspx>

While the WTC completes the staffing and publication of the WCTP Army Regulation, the WTC will ensure emerging and refined policy reflects what we hear from the field. Our CG, BG David Bishop, is listening and asking

Soldiers and Family members about their Comprehensive Transition Plan, about the Soldier Family Assistance Center, and their experience through the whole process.

Policy and guidance under review and revision at the WTC will cover the following areas and more:

- The Presidents' VOW to Hire a Hero Act directly translates to tasks for transitioning Soldiers and impacts how the Army REFRADs RC Soldiers and ACAP requirements
- GO Endorsements letters are for approval at the local Triad of Leadership level
- Combined WTC Risk Assessment and Mitigation Policy with the Behavioral Health Risk Assessment process
- Updated Non-Medical Attendant guidance
- Updated Cadre Selection and Approval guidance
- Refined Entry and Exit Criteria
- Improved SCAADL implementation information

VOW Act Implementation

Jennifer Leonard, Action Officer Career and Education Readiness Branch

The Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 and Veterans Employment Initiative Department of Defense/Veterans Affairs Joint Task Force directed the services to redesign the Transition Assistance Program in coordination with the Department of Labor and Veterans Affairs. The Secretary of the Army's Transition Policy (August 29, 2011) establishes the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) as a Commander's program. Commanders must ensure every Soldier, with few authorized exceptions, begin mandatory transition counseling, and planning not later than 12 months prior to separation from the Army. With our wounded, ill, and injured population, it is difficult to determine the separation date. Therefore, Soldiers should initiate their transition program as soon as they are medically able.

In order to comply with the VOW Act requirements, every transitioning Soldier will have documents that demonstrate preparedness to transition to include a resume, and at least one of the following:

- Acceptance letter from a college or training institution
- An actual job offer
- A current list of solid job opening leads that are well matched to the Soldier's current level of knowledge
- Skills and abilities, or a business plan if he or she plans to start a new business

In order to adequately prepare for separation from the Army, Soldiers must complete:

- Pre-separation counseling
- Department of Labor Employment Workshop
- VA Benefits Briefing
- An integrated 12 month post-separation budget
- Document requirements and eligibility for certification, licensure, and apprenticeship
- Evaluate transferability of military skills to the civilian workforce and complete a gap analysis
- Register on VA eBenefits and an Individual Transition Plan

Additional Army guidance is in draft form and is expected to be published early FY 14.

Commanders receive the Commander's Report to track transition counseling progress from the installation ACAP Transition Services Manager (TSM) on a

monthly basis. CBWTU Commanders may request an ACAP Mobile Training Team (MTT) to provide services at musters by contacting Mr. John Tatum at john.tatum@serco-na.com or (502) 613-8827. Soldiers may contact the installation ACAP office to schedule necessary appointments to initiate the transition counseling and planning services.

WTU Spotlight

CW2 James Hughes

James Hughes, Chief Warrant Officer, Fort Campbell, KY

I have had the honor and privilege to serve my country as both a Soldier and Sailor since May of 1997. During that time, I worked with the most professional men and women this great country has to offer. But none matched the dedication of those within the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU). I was assigned to Alpha Company, Warrior Transition Battalion in Fort Campbell, Kentucky on April 15, 2012 after a neck injury that unfortunately ended my military career.

As a wounded Soldier, I was faced with many physical and mental trials, most significant of which was undergoing the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) process and the transition from Soldier to civilian. The officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) assigned to the Alpha Company, WTU made that transition much easier, and were always dedicated to my medical and emotional needs at any time, on any day. Not only is the WTU motivated to help Soldiers with their medical needs, but they also encourage us to further our education while assigned to the WTU. The WTU also encourages Soldiers to take time off to enjoy extracurricular activities through the "Hooah Program," which raises money for wounded Soldiers to attend professional sporting, hunting, and fishing events all over the United States. It is impressive that the WTU only concentrates their energy on the Soldier's medical and emotional needs, but they also never falter in continuing to reward Soldiers for their military achievements. No Soldier leaves a WTU without being recognized with an end of service award or the appropriate award in recognition for their service while assigned to the WTU.

There is no doubt in my mind that I would not have been as successful as I have been transitioning into civilian life if it were not for the dedication and professionalism of the officers and NCOs who took care of me and my Family's needs while assigned to the WTU. I would like to say a special thank you to the warrior leaders for taking time out of their extraordinarily busy schedules on more than one occasion to help me in this transition.

Stratcom Update **WTC Stratcom Update: WTC "Hire a Veteran" Campaign Wins Two AVA Digital Gold Awards**

Cait McCarrie, Stratcom, Warrior Transition Command

Warrior Care Month presents the opportunity to educate others about what it means to be a wounded, ill, or injured Soldier or Veteran and to support wounded Soldiers and Veterans in their own recovery and transition. This year the Warrior Transition Command (WTC) unveiled the "Hire a Veteran" campaign. Research conducted by the Society of Human Resource Management revealed three key obstacles that impact Veteran employment, and this campaign aimed to debunk those roadblocks. One instrumental part of the campaign was a 10-minute informational video <http://www.wtc.army.mil/employers/index.html> that focused on preparing Veterans for their transition to the civilian workforce and educating employers about the strengths and skill sets that Veterans bring to the workplace.

The ten-minute campaign video and the two-minute trailer earned two AVA

Digital Gold Awards for video production. The AVA Digital Award is an international competition that recognizes outstanding work by creative professionals involved in the concept, direction, design, and production of media that is part of the evolution of digital communication. The Award is administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals (AMCP). Judges are industry professionals who look for companies and individuals whose talent exceeds a high standard of excellence and whose work serves as a benchmark for the industry. There were approximately 2,000 entries from throughout the U.S. and several other countries this year. The Gold Award is presented to those entries judged to exceed the high standards of the industry norm.

These videos were part of a larger campaign that included a press conference, radio segment, newspaper article, and an online toolkit. This campaign showcased the benefits of hiring a Veteran and provided valuable resources and information for employers and Veterans. Visit the WTC website to download the campaign toolkit and watch the "Hire a Veteran" video here: <http://www.WTC.army.mil/employers/index.html>.

Make sure to visit the WTC website <http://www.WTC.army.mil> and blog <http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil> for resources, information, and stories for wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers, Veterans, Families, and Caregivers. Providing the most accurate information on warrior care is our mission not only during Warrior Care month, but every month. If you have any information you would like to share, please contact us at warriorcarecommunications@conus.army.mil.

We Want to Hear From You...

WTU/CBWTU Cadre Collaboration Portal now LIVE

The Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) and Community Based Warrior Transition Unit (CBWTU) Cadre Collaboration Portal is now "LIVE" on milBook. This site was developed as a secure online method for the WTC staff and WTU cadre to collaborate, exchange information, share best practices, and store knowledge. It is available at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/wtucadre> and also includes links to the WTC PCM Forum, NCM Professional Forum, and WTC TC Group.

Follow the directions below to access the Cadre Collaboration Portal:

1. Open the following URL: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/wtucadre>
2. If not yet logged in to milBook, you will be required to authenticate. Click on the 'I AGREE' button and, if prompted, select your CAC certificate and enter your pin number.
3. If you already have a milSuite account, skip to step 5. Otherwise, click on the link that reads 'Click here to register!' Your personal information will be pulled automatically from DEERS. If all data appears correct, click on 'Create New Account'.
4. You will receive a confirmation page stating that 'You have successfully created a milSuite account!' At this time, you will need to reenter the URL found above.
5. Before you can view any site content, you will need to be approved to join the group. Click on 'Ask to join this group' on the right-hand side of the page.
6. You will receive an email notification when your membership has been approved.
7. Use the URL above; also found in the email you will receive, to access the portal.

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US Army Warrior Transition Command
Wounded Soldier Family Hotline: 1-800-984-8523
Online www.WTC.army.mil Blog <https://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil>