

HONOR. CONNECT. HEAL.

# NOTES FROM THE FIELD: January/February/March 2023



A beautiful coastal sunrise at the 12th Annual North Carolina OBX Fins & Feathers event in Currituck, NC. Photo courtesy of WWIA Guides Crystal Masek and James Rissler.

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Welcome to the January/February/March 2023 edition of Notes from the Field. Our mission to Honor, Connect, and Heal our Heroes continues into the new year as WWIA proudly hosted three exceptional hunting events in the first quarter that offered our Heroes the opportunity to fish as well as harvest deer, quail, duck, and geese. These world-class sporting events allow our Heroes to connect with caring communities and with their fellow combat-wounded brothers and sisters. We also hosted our annual woodturning event in Wisconsin, a unique, memorable, and therapeutic experience that our Heroes always rave about! In addition, our incredible WWIA family and friends held some exceptional fundraisers on behalf of our combat-wounded veterans.

2023 is off to a great start with lots of amazing and life-changing events ahead, so stay tuned for more updates and highlights. Thank you for all you do to help honor and support our phenomenal Purple Heart Heroes. We recognize your efforts and hard work, and it is truly changing hearts and lives!



## **EVENTS AND FUNDRAISERS**

## 9th Annual Maryland Duck & Goose Hunt

January 13-16 Easton, MD





The community of Easton, Maryland proudly welcomed six of our Heroes for the 9th Annual MD Duck and Goose Hunt. This stellar event featured world-class goose, duck and pheasant hunting and was the ideal environment to relax and restore for a few days. Upon arrival, our Heroes enjoyed skeet shooting at the Talbot Rod & Gun Club in preparation for their weekend hunts. They were also graciously provided with beautiful duck and goose calls courtesy of Sean Mann and were trained on how to use them. Later, our Heroes had a delicious dinner at the Tidewater Inn while getting better acquainted and discussing plans for the next morning's hunt.

Everyone rose early the next day, grabbed a quick breakfast and then headed to a blind on the <u>Choptank River</u> to start their hunt. They harvested 2 bufflehead hens. After the water blind hunt, all Heroes and Guides headed to the field to hunt Canada Goose. It was a fantastic time as a total of 15 geese were harvested. After an exciting day in the field, everyone enjoyed dinner and live music while talking about their exceptional day.

The next day, everyone had a chance to sleep in as they had scheduled a hunt later in the afternoon for pheasant and chukar. Our Heroes cleaned and prepped all their geese from the previous day, had a good lunch, then drove to the <u>Caroline County Shooting Preserve</u> to hunt pheasant with Springer Spaniels. They harvested just under 20 birds, then headed back to the hotel to get cleaned up and rest a bit before dinner. A wonderful final night's dinner was held at <u>Chesapeake Landing</u> with great food, conversation, and plenty of laughs amongst the Heroes as they reminisced about what an incredible time they had in Maryland over the past few days.

As always, the food, hospitality, as well as the appreciation shown by the local community were second to none. Our Heroes returned home with a cooler full of game birds, but more importantly, new friendships and lifelong memories to cherish. High praise and gratitude to Host Brian Wegener and friends for honoring and serving our Heroes throughout this wonderful event and for the past nine years. Additional thanks to Paul and Joanne Prager of Blue Point Hospitality for their tremendous support, to 3-time Hall of Fame trainer, Mike Wallace, for bringing his Springer Spaniels to assist with the hunt, to Hampton Inn for providing lodging, and to WWIA Guides Gabe Fierros and Derek Duplisea for their contributions and assistance from start to finish.

"I wanted to thank all of the personnel that helped put this event together. The graciousness and kindness that was shown was infinite. This is the first veteran event that I have been a part of since I retired in 2009. Matt Upperman introduced me to WWIA, and I can't thank him enough. From the first introduction from Corrina to our Guides, Gabe and Derek to the other vets and most of all our Hosts, this has been an amazing event! Special thanks to Brian, Chip, Brandon, JR, Dave and everyone else involved. I apologize if I left anyone's name off the list. Healing comes in our life at different times and for different reasons and this event has helped me heal. Many thanks and respect."

#### 12th Annual North Carolina OBX Fins & Feathers

January 18-22 Currituck, NC





Six of our Heroes traveled to the Outer Banks of North Carolina for some world-class waterfowl hunting, fishing, great food, and bonding time with their fellow Purple Heart recipients. Celebrating twelve years of honoring our Heroes, this event encapsulates how a community can come together to serve and give back to those who have given so much on our behalf.

This was evidenced by the tremendous outpouring of appreciation and gratitude shown to our Heroes throughout their stay. An example of this remarkable community involvement was shown as our Heroes arrived in Currituck, as the NC Patriot Guard, Currituck County Sheriff, Currituck County Fire Department, Cat 5 Jeepers, and hundreds of members of the local community gathered to welcome, honor and show their appreciation for our Heroes. They were given a large and memorable escort through town as members of the local community lined the streets, waving flags, holding up signs, applauding, cheering, and expressing their appreciation to our Heroes for their tremendous service and sacrifice. It was an incredible way to begin this memorable event and our Heroes were moved by the outpouring of care and the displays of gratitude and patriotism from this remarkable community.

The accommodations, food, and hospitality extended to our Heroes could not have been better. Our Heroes had an extraordinary time in the field and on the water and appreciated the outstanding camaraderie, stories, laughter, and friendships made throughout the course of the event. This was unquestionably the highlight for everyone involved.

We would like to express our appreciation to all the stellar local businesses, restaurants, and community members that graciously served and honored our Heroes throughout their stay. Special thanks to Hosts Larry Beasley, Tim Brown, and Tim Spence for putting on another world-class event for our Heroes, to Brook Sparks for her fantastic coordination and support year after year, and to <a href="Hitman Sportfishing">Hitman Sportfishing</a> for showing our Heroes a great time on the water. Recognition and thanks to WWIA Guides Crystal Masek and James Rissler for their contributions and care throughout the event.

"I am writing to express my sincerest appreciation for inviting me to your 12th annual event. From the moment I arrived at Norfolk airport, I was warmly welcomed by your facilitators and escorted to the lodge. The activities you provided were truly remarkable. The waterfowl hunting and tuna fishing were especially enjoyable. I was also impressed by the delicious food and the hospitality of everyone involved. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to be a part of such a special event. Your commitment to helping wounded veterans is truly inspiring. Thank you again for your generous invitation and for making this event so memorable."

### 9th Annual Wisconsin Woodturning

January 29 - February 3 Kronenwetter, WI



The 9th Annual Wisconsin Woodturning event brought four of our Heroes together over six days to learn a unique and valuable skillset. Our Heroes were instructed in the art of woodturning and fashioned beautiful handcrafted wooden items, including plates and bowls, fancy round boxes, spinning tops, game calls, wands, cups, candle holders and rolling pins. The number of items crafted by the Heroes was impressive and the quality was exceptional. The camaraderie among the entire group was fantastic, and their ability to share experiences and stories throughout the event only added to the bonds formed among these brothers.

Our heartfelt recognition and thanks to Tony Kopchinski for graciously hosting our Heroes and for his incredible hospitality and guidance throughout this event and over the years. Our appreciation and gratitude to Tony's friends and fellow instructors: Ken Day, Al Daul, and Bob Stavran for sharing their time, knowledge, and skills with our Heroes. Special thanks to Mike Banderob for his contributions, support, and assistance.

In case you haven't seen it yet, a local news station, <u>WSAW-TV</u> featured Tony and his woodturning event on a broadcast last year. This news <u>segment</u> gives a wonderful look behind the scenes at this exceptional opportunity and how it positively impacts the lives of our combat-wounded veterans. Be sure to check it out <u>here</u>.

"The stories I will carry from my time here will be repeated until I leave this earth. The skill I have been taught by such highly skilled artisans will be one more thing I can teach my daughters and will help me to create a lifetime of memories

for us and an invaluable skill for them. I can honestly say that my time in Tony's shop under the patient and watchful eyes of Bon and amongst newfound friends has been the uplift my tired heart needed. I will never be able to repay my time nor show just how much I appreciate this blessing. God Bless you all!

#### 6th Alabama Long Leaf Deer and Quail Hunt

February 3-6 Bay Minette, AL



Four of our combat-wounded Warriors traveled to scenic Bay Minette, Alabama to enjoy four outstanding days at the 6th Annual Long Leaf Alabama Whitetail and Quail Hunt. Once arriving at camp, everyone was able to confirm and zero their weapons before going to the hunting blinds for an evening hunt. A total of two deer were harvested the first evening, then everyone enjoyed a wonderful dinner of steak, potatoes and salad while getting to know one other before turning in for the night.

Everyone woke early on Saturday for a quick breakfast before heading to their designated hunting sites. It was another successful day hunting with many deer seen throughout the morning and a few more harvested by our Heroes. The deer were taken to the processor, then everyone gathered at the quail preserve and had a delicious lunch of fried chicken, fried catfish, various sides, and bread pudding, courtesy of the local <u>Stage Coach</u> Restaurant. After lunch, our Heroes broke up into four-man groups with their guides, conducted a safety briefing and ensured everyone knew the proper weapon orientation. The quail hunting was off the charts with over 100 birds harvested! Our sincere thanks to Hamilton Smith, owner of <u>Dennis Lake/Hamilton Smith Deer and Quail Hunting Club</u> and his incredible guides for volunteering their time and expertise at the quail preserve. After a memorable day, everyone

quality fellowship. The night ended early since everyone was exhausted from the excitement of the day.

Our Heroes were back at it on Sunday morning and continued to find success in the field. All told, a total of seven deer were harvested throughout the event. Mission success! At lunchtime, the group returned to camp and feasted on fried catfish, and an incredible shrimp boil. As everyone prepared for their trip home, they shared a wonderful final dinner that evening that was full of great conversation and laughter as they reflected on the incredible time spent in Alabama over the past few days. Our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Host Andy McMillan, his family, and friends for hosting another spectacular event. Thank you for honoring and serving our Heroes once again. Additional recognition and gratitude to WWIA Guide Jake Whipkey for his outstanding support and care throughout this event.

"I tell you what, there is nothing better to do than to get to come hang out and hunt with some guys that know what it is all about. This whole weekend has been top-notch. Some of the guys worry about if everyone kills a deer. But honestly, I would have had just as good of a time if I didn't kill anything at all. It's much more about the brotherhood and fellowship and this bunch knocks it out of the park. Thank you all so much."

### Southern Vermont Chapter Punta Gorda Fishing Excursion

February 17-20 Punta Gorda, FL



We want to recognize and express our sincere appreciation to Bill and Gail McGurn, and to Mike and Debi Davenport from the <u>WWIA Southern Vermont Chapter</u>. Bill and Gail were our honored guests at our 2023 Southern Vermont Chapter Punta Gorda Fishing Excursion, held

February 17th – 20th, and were accompanied by Vermont Chapter President Mike Davenport and Vermont Chapter Treasurer Debi Davenport for a weekend full of sun and fun. Bill is a proud Army veteran, having served as a 19 Delta Army Calvary Scout and is employed by Kaman Composites Vermont, an aerospace company that has graciously supported the Foundation.

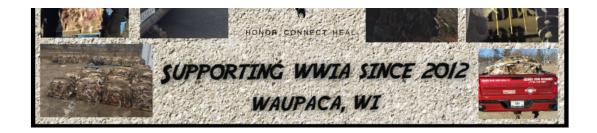
This exciting all-inclusive trip was held at <u>Fishermen's Village</u> in Punta Gorda, Florida, and was offered as a raffle prize during the 2022 Southern Vermont Chapter Fundraising Dinner where their community raised over \$60,000! This weekend excursion included lodging, a full day of fishing, fresh seafood dinners throughout their stay, shopping, and some time spent enjoying the sights around beautiful Punta Gorda.

Mike, Bill, and WWIA Founder and CEO, John McDaniel hit the water, and had an awesome time as they caught a variety of fish while sharing stories, laughs, and enjoying great conversation throughout the day. Early on, they had a good time bringing in some Jack Crevalle, and as the day progressed, they were able to catch the coveted West Coast Grand Slam, a combination of snook, red fish, and speckled sea trout. This would not have been possible without the expertise and guidance of Captain Mike Downs, from Task Force Fishing Charters. Mike is a Florida native who also serves as a Charlotte County Marine Operations Firefighter-Paramedic, and he did a spectacular job putting everyone on fish in extreme tidal conditions and with challenging winds. Thanks to Mike, it was a memorable and outstanding day on the water. While the gentlemen had their fill of fishing, Gail and Debi enjoyed a day visiting boutiques, specialty shops, galleries, and restaurants. There was plenty more to do throughout the weekend and it was a spectacular time spent with some wonderful and faithful WWIA supporters.

We would like to honor and give special thanks to the entire WWIA Southern Vermont Chapter for their stellar support and fundraising efforts throughout the years. The Southern Vermont Chapter is a WWIA Medal of Honor decorated patron, having raised over \$403,000 in support of our Heroes since 2013! JUST INCREDIBLE! We are humbled by your dedication and patriotism and honored by your tremendous support of WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes! Thank you all!

# Hides for Heroes 2022-2023 Fundraiser Waupaca, WI





Please join us in recognizing and thanking Dave Hintz and the incredible Hides for Heroes team for their tremendous dedication and generosity on behalf of WWIA and our combatwounded Purple Heart Heroes. Year after year, Dave and his team have battled and braved harsh winter weather while delivering hide boxes, collecting the donated hides, and then salting thousands and thousands of deer hides in preparation for sale. This is no easy task, especially in the Wisconsin winter months! The monies from the sale of these hides are graciously donated each year to WWIA to assist with local events at WWIA's Camp Hackett in Phillips, Wisconsin. As a result of their tireless efforts and faithful support, Hides for Heroes raised a remarkable \$27,000 from their 2022-2023 fundraising efforts! Unbelievable! Hides for Heroes is a WWIA Medal of Honor Patron, having graciously donated over \$161,000 to WWIA since 2012! With tremendous gratitude and thanks, we salute Dave and the Hides for Heroes team for their outstanding support throughout the past eleven years!

We recently interviewed Dave on the WWIA Podcast. It's a great and informative episode that helps you learn more about Dave and his exceptional efforts with Hides for Heroes in support of WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes. Click <a href="here">here</a> to listen to the podcast.

#### **Inaugural South Dakota Archery Antelope Hunt Fundraiser**

March 4 Fulton, MO





We are excited to announce a new event coming this fall. The Inaugural South Dakota Archery Antelope Hunt will be proudly hosted by WWIA Guide, Crystal Masek and Brad Nelson. Through the outstanding efforts of Crystal and her phenomenal community of patriotic supporters, they raised over \$23,000 in support of this event! Incredible! This tremendous fundraising effort was accomplished through a gun raffle and from a wonderful game dinner and auction graciously hosted at the VFW Post 2657.

Thank you to all the participants and supporters of the gun raffle and those who attended the dinner banquet, to the exceptional volunteers, and to everyone who generously made donations on behalf of our Purple Heart Heroes.

Our gratitude and thanks for the following donations towards the Wild Game Dinner/Auction for South Dakota Inaugural Archery Antelope Event: Springfield Arms \$2,500, VFW Post 2657- Fulton MO \$2,300, Center of the Nations Sportsman's Club \$2,000, MEAT! \$1,400, Mathews Archery \$1,100, April Greene \$1,000, Con AG \$900, Christensen Arms \$700, Tractor Supply Columbia, MO \$600, Precision Precast \$600, Ameren MO \$500, Walton's \$500, Portmeirion \$500.

#### Welcome to the WWIA Podcast! Honor, Connect, Heal.



The WWIA Podcast has officially launched! We're asking for your help to get the word out to others by sharing the podcast on your social media channels. by word of mouth, or through email. If you haven't given it a listen yet, what are you waiting for!? It's a great way to stay connected, go behind the scenes, and get to know more about the incredible people who are a part of our WWIA family. You can listen and download current and past episodes on our website by clicking <a href="here">here</a>. You can also find the WWIA Podcast on your favorite podcast services, such as iTunes, Google Podcasts, Spotify, etc. New episodes drop every two weeks. Be sure to share this with your friends, family, and those in your network! Do us a favor and please leave a review wherever you listen to the podcast. We've got lots of great episodes and guests coming your way, so tune in, subscribe, and enjoy!



# **SPONSORS AND FRIENDS**

We would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following supporters for their gracious contributions and dedication to WWIA and our Heroes.

#### THANK YOU!

#### **Donations:**

Hayes Bryan \$2,079.47
Reed-Parsons Foundation for Good \$750
Elizabeth Dykes \$500
Pamela Lee \$500
John Desiderio \$500
Bryan Hayes \$500
PBJJ LLC \$500
Stephanie Armstrong \$500

Donations toward 13th MO-KAN Ducks, Bucks, & Trapping Event

C.R. Myer \$1,000
Robert and Jane Bolin \$500
Daniel Fuhrman \$500
Metal Works Unlimited Inc. \$500
Dan & Brenda Byers \$500
American Legion Pony Express Post 359 \$500
John Dollow \$500

**Donations toward Inaugural North Alabama Turkey Hunt** 

Marshall County Longbeards Chapter NWTF \$1,000
Nicholas Parks \$1,000
Fred Shipman \$1,000
Family Savings Credit Union \$1,000

## Watkins Broadcasting Inc. \$500 Phil Sims Campaign Funds \$500

**Donations toward 2nd New York FLX Turkey Hunt** 

Ontario Rod and Gun Club \$500

**Donations toward 13th NY Upland Bird & Couples Retreat** 

David Merow \$1,000

**Donations toward 13th North Carolina OBX Fins & Feathers** 

Mike Siers Real Estate \$500 Wilson Bros. CO, LLC \$500

**Donations toward Inaugural SD Archery Antelope Hunt** 

**Donations toward 9th Eagle River Muskie Chal-Lunge** 

Mike Brevard \$500 Microsoft \$500 (Company match for Mike Brevard donation)

Thank You for Your Tremendous Partnership, Ammo.com





Please join us in recognizing and thanking our friends and partners at <a href="Ammo.com">Ammo.com</a> for their recent donation of \$4,500.77 to WWIA. These amazing Bronze Star Patrons have donated an incredible \$76,772.94 to WWIA and our Heroes since 2019 through their Freedom Fighter program. Wow! When it comes time to order your ammunition, please consider ordering from Ammo.com. Whenever you purchase your ammo from them, they graciously donate 1% of your entire purchase back to WWIA. All you have to do is select WWIA as your preferred "Freedom Fighter" option from the drop-down menu at checkout. And right now, you can also save \$20 off any order of \$200 or more! Simply go to <a href="https://ammo.com/wwia-supporter">https://ammo.com/wwia-supporter</a> to get started and find out more information. Our sincere thanks to Ammo.com for their tremendous support and to everyone who chose WWIA as their "Freedom Fighter" designation when ordering. We are honored by your generosity and partnership, and we applaud your outstanding patriotism!

Your Generosity & Support is Greatly Appreciated





Please join us in recognizing and thanking the Ruskoski Charitable Giving Fund for their generous donation of \$3,000 to WWIA. They have been faithful and gracious supporters of the Foundation over the past several years and we are humbled and highly appreciative of their thoughtfulness and partnership in helping us fulfill our mission. Thank you!

### Arch Insurance, Thank You for Your Outstanding Support



Our thanks to <u>Arch Insurance Group</u> for their exceptional support of WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes. Arch Insurance Group has graciously donated \$2,500 in support of our MO-KAN Ducks, Bucks, and Trapping event. Our gratitude and thanks for their thoughtfulness and generosity in honoring our combat-wounded Purple Heart Heroes.

### High Praise and Gratitude to ColorMasters, LLC



Our gratitude and thanks to <u>Colormasters, LLC</u> for their outstanding generosity in helping support the upcoming Inaugural Alabama Turkey and Hog Hunt. Colormasters is one of the nation's premiere flexible packaging manufacturers whose core values are grounded in family, faith, hard work, and grit. We are humbled and grateful for their partnership. Thank you to Colormasters, LLC Owners, Gus King and Dennis Hicks, as well as the entire Colormasters team for their patriotism and tremendous support of WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes.

Thank You for Supporting WWIA and our Heroes, Victory Chevrolet





We would like to extend our appreciation and thanks to <u>Victory Chevrolet</u> for their exceptional support & generosity. Victory Chevrolet has been a faithful supporter of WWIA and America's Heroes and graciously donated \$2,500 toward the 13th Annual MO-KAN Ducks, Bucks, and Trapping Event. Thank you, Victory Chevrolet management and staff for your outstanding patriotism and support over the years!

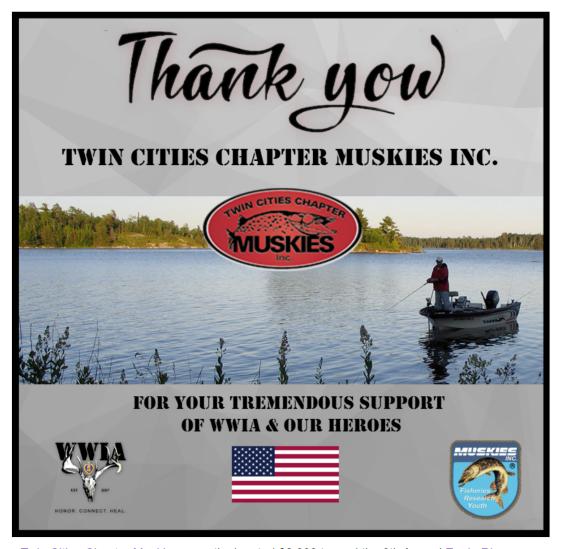
# Our Gratitude and Appreciation Center of the Nation Sportsman's Club





Our events are only possible because of the generosity and selfless support of so many incredible individuals and businesses across North America. Center of the Nation Sportsman's Club is a perfect example of the remarkable support our Heroes receive to help bring healing and restoration to their lives. Please help us thank Center of the Nation Sportsman's Club for their donation of \$2,000 that will go toward the Inaugural South Dakota Archery Antelope Hunt.

# Our Sincere Thanks to Twin Cities Chapter Muskies Inc.



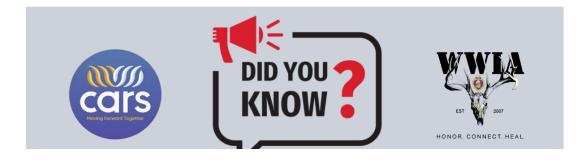
Twin Cities Chapter Muskies recently donated \$2,000 toward the 9th Annual Eagle River Muskie Chal-Lunge event in Eagle River, Wisconsin. The Twin Cities chapter is the founding chapter of Muskies, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with the single focus of improving the sport of muskie fishing everywhere the fish are found. We offer our sincere appreciation and thanks for your dedication to getting others into the great outdoors to enjoy muskie fishing and for your tremendous support of WWIA and our combat-wounded Purple Heart Heroes

# We Are Honored to Have Earned the 2023 Candid Platinum Transparency Award



We are honored to announce that WWIA has earned the Platinum Transparency Award for 2023, the highest award available to a non-profit, from <u>GuideStar</u> (Candid), the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations! Thank you for helping WWIA bring Honor, Connection, and Healing to the lives of America's combat-wounded Purple Heart Heroes.  $\heartsuit$ 

# Donate Your Used Vehicle, Boat, Motorcycle or RV to Help Benefit WWIA & Our Heroes



# YOU CAN DONATE YOUR OLD OR UNUSED VEHICLE AND HELP WWIA AND OUR HEROES!

WE ACCEPT CARS, TRUCKS, BOATS AND MORE.
THE PROCESS IS EASY, THE PICK-UP IS
FREE, AND YOUR DONATION IS TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.



Did you know that you can help support WWIA and our Heroes by donating your car, truck, van, SUV, boat, motorcycle, ATV, RV, trailer or airplane? Working or not, free towing, tax benefits, and helping support our combat-wounded veterans are just a few of the benefits of using the CARS vehicle donation program. Simply click <a href="here">here</a> to start the donation process or call CARS toll-free at 855-500-RIDE (855-500-7433) to have a donation staff specialist help guide you through the donation process. If you would like to learn more about how the CARS vehicle donation program works, please click <a href="here">here</a>. We thank you in advance for your support!

### **How Can You Help Support WWIA & Our Heroes?**





Did you know that there are lots of different ways to help support WWIA and our Heroes? You can donate online, via mail, via PayPal, through vehicle donations, through shopping with our friends and partners, through workplace giving, donor advised funds, legacy giving, on Giving Tuesday, and so much more! Click <a href="here">here</a> to learn more about the many ways you can give and partner with WWIA in our mission to bring healing and restoration to our phenomenal combatwounded Heroes. Thank you!

### Want to Learn More About WWIA? Visit Us Online!



Our website is full of information about who we are, how we serve our Purple Heart Heroes, and how you can get involved! Visit us today! Click <u>HERE</u>!























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