



The Wounded Warrior Voice

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AW2 Launches U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Blog

Recently, AW2 debuted its U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Blog at www.AW2.army.mil. A blog is short for a weblog and is an online journal or exchange that is updated frequently. The U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Blog is a moderated, open forum. AW2's very own Director, Colonel Jim Rice, contributed the first blog entry.

The U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Blog will be updated weekly, with new postings from a variety of voices within the AW2 program. As a Soldier or Family member, you have a unique opportunity to be involved in the blog. You can either write your own blog posting with your perspective or allow us to interview you for a posting that we would write. Also, please be sure to help us spread the word about the debut of the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Blog. Tell your fellow Soldiers, Family members, caregivers, and friends about the blog. This is a great way to make people aware of all the sacrifices AW2 Soldiers have endured as well as educate people about the services that are available to them through the Army.

If you have any questions about the blog, please email at the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Blog Moderator [Teha Kennard](#). Be sure to check us out at www.AW2.army.mil.
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Your SFMS...Just a Mouse Click or Phone Call Away

Have you spoken to your Soldier Family Management Specialist (SFMS) lately? Each wounded Soldier is assigned to an SFMS who acts as a case manager and provides them with personalized case management, as they navigate through the system for as long as Soldiers and Families need help and support. Your SFMS will advocate on your behalf with the federal government and nonprofit agencies to ensure you receive the appropriate care and support you need. Even after your recovery and rehabilitation, your SFMS is there for you, for as long as you need it.

To connect with your SFMS, call 800-237-1336 or visit www.aw2.army.mil.
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AW2 Is Here to Serve You

Daily, AW2 helps Soldiers and Family members. AW2 is prepared to help Soldiers in a myriad of ways. Are you aware of how AW2 helps Soldiers through recovery to rehabilitation to transition to civilian life or active duty?

AW2 provides unique services to the most severely wounded, including:

- Helping wounded Soldiers remain in the Army by educating them on their options and assisting them in the application process;
- Assisting with future career plans and employment opportunities beyond Army careers;
- Supporting them with a staff of subject matter experts proficient in nonmedical benefits for wounded soldiers;
- Helping a Soldier obtain full VA and Army benefits;
- Helping a Soldier and their Family get healthcare after retiring from the Army;
- Working with a Soldier to get financial counseling to buy a house;
- Coordinating with local community groups to ensure shelter during the Hurricane Katrina and the recent southern California wildfires; and
- Ensuring that Soldiers and Families are able to celebrate the holidays.

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Employment Summit Leads to Disney Pilot

Recently, representatives from corporate America and the federal government met with the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program staff to test methods for placing veterans with physical and cognitive disabilities in careers. For the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program, the purpose was to learn what each organization could offer wounded, injured or ill Soldiers to help them return to the civilian workplace, as well as their concerns about hiring this special group of Soldiers.

As a result of the summit, Disney hosted a pilot program in Orlando, Florida. “We have 60,000 employees and 2,000 job descriptions, we don’t have to make a job fit these

people, we can find a position we already have that'll work for them," said Fred Larsen, the representative of The Walt Disney Company.

The Walt Disney Company has been working with AW2 to set up a system for recruiting wounded, injured and ill Soldiers. In December, the company invited a group of 9 AW2 Soldiers to Disney World Resorts in Orlando, Florida for meetings with Disney representatives to discuss career opportunities. "They visited areas where they might work, interact with other disabled workers and learn about working for Disney," added Larsen.

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Exciting Opportunities Available from AW2

Are you looking to meet other AW2 Soldiers and Family members at local, regional, or national events? Or, are you looking to spread the word about an upcoming event that you may be involved in? If you answered yes to either question, then you need to check out the "Opportunity" link under www.AW2.army.mil. There, you can post an event or see what is coming to your area. Some exciting upcoming events include:

- Adaptive Adventures Vail All-Mountain Ski Camp, Vail, Colorado
- Adaptive Adventures All Mountain Ski Camp, Steamboat Springs, Colorado
- Anaheim Arsenal Basketball Tickets, Anaheim, California
- Try Out for a NASCAR Pit Crew, Charlotte, North Carolina

Be sure to visit this area of the AW2 portal frequently so you do not miss out on seeing your fellow AW2 Soldiers.

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AW2 Symposium 2008: What is It?

Before you know it, the AW2 Symposium 2008 will be upon us! The majority of issues are submitted by Soldiers, Family members, and Caregivers. Subject matter experts and others involved with AW2 Soldiers may also submit an issue.

AW2 conducts symposiums in order to identify and develop recommendations regarding issues which impact the health, recovery, rehabilitation, transition and welfare of severely wounded Soldiers and their Families. These forums give wounded warriors a voice within the Army and resulted in positive policy changes benefiting all wounded warriors and their Families. AW2 will host its next Symposium in June 2008.

During the symposium focus groups will discuss each issue and develop recommendations that are vetted and briefed to senior Army leadership.

Prior to Symposium

- Call for issues-emails, letters and verbal requests are made
- Issues are submitted
- Issues are received, logged, and formatted
- Issues are reviewed and focus groups identified

At Symposium

- Issues are reviewed, clarified and discussed by the focus group
- Focus groups prioritize their issues
- Focus groups format their top issues
- The top issues of each group are briefed and voted on by all delegates
- Delegate voted top five issues are briefed to senior leaders

Look for your 2008 U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Symposium issue solicitation sheet in the next two weeks. Remember, you can make a difference!

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AW2 AFAP Conference Results: A Success for AW2

The 2007 AFAP meeting proved very successful for AW2 Soldiers and Family members. The following were considered the top issues and will be addressed by Army leadership:

- Minimum disability retirement pay for medically retired wounded warriors;
- Traumatic Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (TGSGLI) for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and Uniplegia;
- Federal Hiring Process for Wounded Warriors;
- Medical Care Access for Non-Dependent Caregivers of Severely Wounded Soldiers.

For questions on the results, please contact your Soldier Family Management Specialist.

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Pass it on...

Do you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter? Email their name and contact information to us at aw2stratcomm@us.army.mil and we will add them to the list.

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Tell Us What You Want to Hear

This is your newsletter and we want to make sure you get the most out of it. Tell us what you would like to see in the next newsletter. If your idea is picked, you will receive an AW2 logo item, of your choice. Email your ideas to aw2stratcomm@us.army.mil.

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