



Ray Andaglio was born in the Philippines and immigrated to the United States when he was 14 years old because of a revolution in his homeland. He loved and respected the country that sheltered his family and helped them find freedom, and in 1992 he decided to give back by joining the U.S. Navy. He served six years on active duty before transferring to the reserves.

In 2003, Ray was sent to Iraq to serve as a corpsman for a unit of marines, and his training was put to the ultimate test. “My whole battalion was getting blasted left and right,” says Ray. “Everybody in my unit has something wrong. If they say there’s nothing wrong with them, they’re in denial.”

Ray was injured in April 2004, when the shock waves from multiple explosions caused a traumatic brain injury (TBI) that — to this day — requires him to wear dark glasses to prevent severe headaches. He also lives with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of his experiences. As a corpsman, you’re there to save lives — but the reality of war is that you can’t save everyone. When Ray came home, he struggled more with his survivor’s guilt and PTSD than the physical injury to his brain.

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“I’d rather have a TBI than post-traumatic stress,” says Ray, “Because my whole time in Iraq was bad ju-ju. Just being reminded of that is challenging.”

When Ray got back to Las Vegas, he took a job in a popular club, in part because it gave him an excuse to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol. But after exploding on a customer one night, Ray knew he could no longer live the way he was. He relocated to San Diego to get away from the temptations of Las Vegas and to have better access to care. Though he sought help, many hard years followed. He even tried to take his own life.

Thankfully, in 2010, Ray met a veteran who introduced him to Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP), and his life started to improve. WWP helped him get involved in sports like running and cycling, and the inspiring veterans he met helped him realize he could overcome PTSD, just like they had. Most importantly, he found his new purpose — helping other veterans.

“Thanks to Wounded Warrior Project, I’m still ‘Doc,’ even though I’m no longer a corpsman,” says Ray. “I’m just saving my fellow Warriors differently now.”

Ray has since moved to Oklahoma, where he finds peace gardening and riding motorcycles with his fellow veterans. He spends much of his time building a nonprofit that will teach useful trade skills — like gardening, motorcycle repair, and welding — to warriors. He also continues to serve as a Peer Support Group leader for WWP.

“I’m able to reach out to people and make a difference in their lives,” says Ray. “I can honestly tell you, I can pinpoint every single warrior I’ve encountered who is now blessed and has a better life because of Wounded Warrior Project.”

