DAVID DALY





Even before he returned home in 2011, David Daly knew he had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). During four deployments to Iraq and one to Afghanistan, he was exposed to unimaginable events that haunt him to this day. "Horrible things are happening," says David. "You hear gunfire and explosions everywhere. Fires are all around, jets are flying over. Utter chaos."

But the worst thing for David was the survivor's guilt he took home with him as a result of losing Marines. "There are voices you can't get out of your head — of people screaming for help."

Although he sought help from the VA, PTSD was increasingly affecting every aspect of his life. David had intense flashbacks and nightmares. He became addicted to gambling and emotionally abusive to his wife, Daphne, who finally pushed him to connect with Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP). "I thought Wounded Warrior Project was for guys who were missing limbs," says David. "But eventually I learned they help more people with invisible wounds like PTSD than anything else."

When David finally attended Project Odyssey®, it was an eye-opener — he realized there were others going through the same things he was. "There's a commonality there," says David. "You realize it's normal to have these issues and then you really start to connect. It's also where I found out about Warrior Care Network."

David credits the care he got through Warrior Care Network® with helping him the most on his healing journey. "They're experts at combat PTSD. They challenge your thought process and help you look at things differently. It was a huge breakthrough."

While David found acceptance and a new perspective, Daphne was getting help, too. She learned new ways to relate to her husband by meeting other caregivers and, eventually, both Daphne and David tried a weekly emotional support program called WWP Talk. "It was great for us to have that person to talk to," says David. "It doesn't have to be about your trauma, you can talk about whatever you want. It's great to have that kind of release valve."

Since his first contact with WWP, David has become the very embodiment of the WWP logo — one warrior carrying another. When he realized that flying a toy drone gave him relief from his PTSD, he thought it might do the same for other warriors. With Daphne's encouragement, he started a drone service business and a nonprofit organization that provided drones and training to veterans. David also shares his story in the hopes that he can help fellow warriors find their healing path.

"Everybody has trauma, everybody has struggles," says David. "This life can really suck. But what else are we here for than to try to help everybody around us make it through it a little better?"

"AS YOU DO MORE WITH WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT, YOU START TO REALIZE YOU HAVE A LOT IN COMMON WITH OTHER VETERANS. NOW, I GET TO BE THE GUY WHO SHARES HIS STORY AND GETS SOMEBODY ELSE TO REALIZE THEY AREN'T ALONE."

