



# TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

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Purple Heart recipients honored

By Jan Clark

PAO

TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER-During the University of Hawaii halftime Oct. 16, in a ceremony that touched the hearts of those in attendance, members from all services joined Tripler Army Medical Center's Warrior Transition Battalion Purple Heart recipient Soldiers as they were recognized for their military service.

Representatives from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Hawaii Army and Air National Guard, many from recently returned deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan, marched with proud precision onto the field. The WTs stepped in at mid-field.

As special honorees, the WTs represented the WTB at Schofield Barracks and the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment, Detachment Hawaii. These service members, recuperating from injuries sustained in combat, received a standing ovation.

Alan Pollock, Oceanic Time Warner Cable; Rear Adm. Scott Swift, director of Operations for the United States Pacific Command; Command Sgt. Maj. Iuniasolua Savusa, senior enlisted leader, Pacific Command, City and County of Honolulu Major Peter Carlisle; Jim Donovan, athletic director for the University of Hawaii and State Representative K. Mark Takai personally thanked each WT with a memento.

Spc. Jacob Richardson, Spc. Brandon Custer, Spc. Luke Harvey, Sgt. Daniel Harubin and Staff Sgt. Michael Champ received Purple Hearts while deployed to combat units in Iraq.

Spc. David Conway, not only a Purple Heart recipient, but also the Bronze Star for Valor, sustained his injuries in combat while assigned to the 2-27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade.

Marine 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Richard Rush received his Purple Heart for injuries sustained when assigned as a Maintenance Management and Ordnance Officer in Afghanistan, while Hawaii National Guard Staff Sgt. Jonjon Guieb, received his Purple Heart from injuries sustained while assigned at the Army Security Element at Joint Special Operations Task Force, in the Philippines.

These are all service members who have been injured and received a medal. But these are also service members, who are healing or have healed and are returning to duty, or have done so, for love of country and dedication to duty. Their service does not end with a medal – Champ is an example.

Known as the 2-mile run king, and a recent inductee into the Order of Saint Maurice, Champ, now WTB cadre, spent eight months as a WT recovering from his injuries. “I was shot in the leg, and the bullet split. That was in 2008, in Sadar City,” he said. “Now I give back by being a part of the cadre here to help others traveling a similar journey to one I know.”

Having sustained his injuries while deployed to Iraq in 2004, Custer seemed surprised by the recognition.

“This is the first time I’ve been acknowledged for my Purple Heart. This is kind of cool,” he said.

Harvey, in an interview with Defense Media Activity at the end of the event expressed his thoughts on service member recognition.

“No matter where you are, there is always someone out there who is fighting for you 7 seven days a week, 365 days a year –fighting, sweating, working really hard, day and night so we can be safe – we can have great football games – and keep our country safe. Even if you aren’t wounded, service members should be recognized because the sacrifice is still being made,” he said.

Savusa summed it up best. “There is not enough that we can do to thank these Soldiers for giving all they have. I’m so thankful tonight to see our wounded warriors being recognized in front of the public, and hopefully in front of the world.”



*Posing with the plaques received are from left standing: Spc. David Conway, Staff Sgt. Michael Champ, Brandon Custer, Spc. Luke Harvey, 1st Lt. Richard Rush and Staff Sgt. Jonjon Guieb. Seated: Spc. Jacob Richardson and Sgt. Daniel Harubin.*