

NEWS OF VETERANS

From Wounded Warrior To Successful Federal Employee

(NAPSA)—Here's an inspiring look at how one former soldier went from adversity to personal victory: Retired Staff Sgt. Paul Roberts is a two-time Warrior Games medalist, a father of two, a federal employee and a proud member of the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2).

In the summer of 2009, Roberts was serving in Afghanistan when his truck was hit with an IED.

"I hit the windshield and I was unconscious," remembered Roberts, who sustained severe second- and third-degree burns and was the only survivor from the truck. "When I woke up, my face was on fire, the fire started eating through my gloves."

He was medically evacuated to Landstuhl, Germany and then to Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio, where he was introduced to AW2 and his first AW2 Advocate, Kimmy Davis.

During his recovery, Roberts participated in the Operation Warfighter internship program at the Drug Enforcement Administration. Roberts also discovered adaptive sports. "Wheelchair basketball was instrumental in my recovery and transition," said Roberts, who played for the San Antonio Spurs wheelchair basketball team. "It gave me a sense of purpose and a sense of drive."

In 2012, Roberts medically retired from the Army and relocated to Washington, D.C., where he met a new AW2 Advocate, Ayandria Barry. Though he was separating from the Army after six years of service, Roberts was determined to continue to serve his country by working for the government. Barry signed Roberts



Retired Staff Sgt. Paul Roberts and his wife Rebeca.

up for federal job fairs and practice interview sessions and helped with his résumé. Roberts accepted a position with the Department of Justice. "I feel lucky that I had wonderful people at AW2 help me transition from the Army to civilian life," said Roberts.

Along with career and education planning, AW2 Advocates work with soldiers and veterans to navigate federal programs and processes, assist with financial planning and find local resources. Specifically, Barry secured a special lawn mower for the Roberts' yard that accommodated the burns on Roberts' legs. Barry helped Roberts obtain a special wheelchair to train for and participate in the Warrior Games. Today, the Roberts family considers Barry a staple around their household, not only as an AW2 Advocate, but also as a friend.

To learn more about AW2 and other resources for wounded, ill and injured soldiers, visit http://wtc.army.mil/announcements/AW2_10th_Anniversary.html.