



The WTP: Making the way home easier

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As Sailors head home after six-to-12 month deployments from Iraq and Afghanistan, they are faced with a difficult transition from a war zone to their Families.

The Warrior Transition Program at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, assists in the Sailors' transitions by gathering their gear and weapons and providing them with emotional support.

"We try to make everything easier for them by taking their weapon and all of their gear and ship it home for them," said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Nnamdi Emenogu, a Gardina, Calif. native who serves as an aviation boat's mate handler with the WTP. "It takes a lot of the burden from them because they don't have to fly with their gear because we do all the work for them."

As Sailors take part in this process, they often express their joy of handing



Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Blondeaux, who serves as a cruise lodge technician dumps his gear on a table to get rid of it before he heads home from Bagram, Afghanistan.

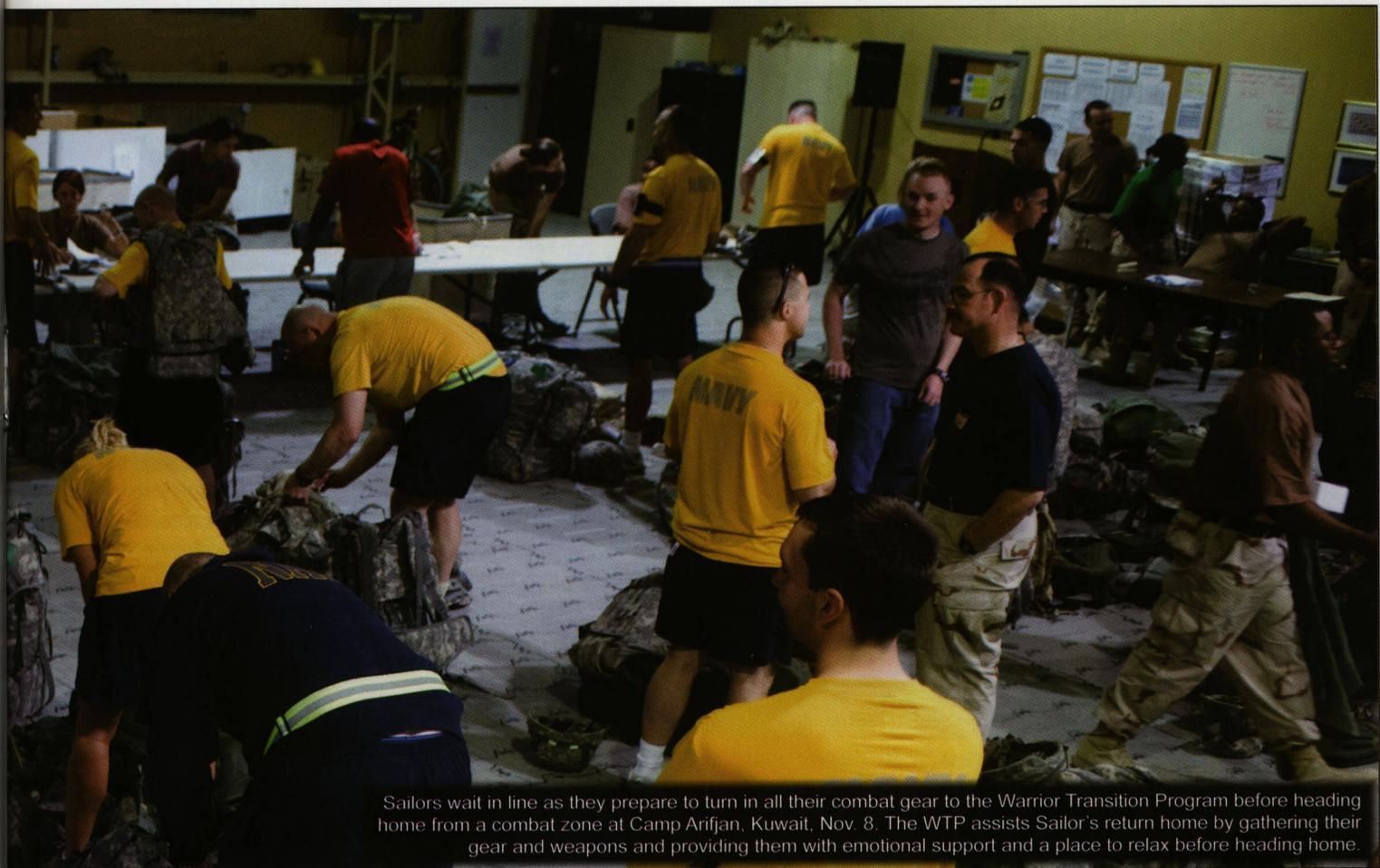
off all their gear.

"This whole process of getting rid of all my gear feels liberating," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Blondeaux, a Cleveland, Ohio native, who serves as a cruise lodge technician and is heading home from

Bagram, Afghanistan. "I can't wait to get back to the States."

The WTP not only tries to lighten the physical load of the Sailor but the emotional one as well.

"One way we help Sailors is by offering workshops where we



Sailors wait in line as they prepare to turn in all their combat gear to the Warrior Transition Program before heading home from a combat zone at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Nov. 8. The WTP assists Sailor's return home by gathering their gear and weapons and providing them with emotional support and a place to relax before heading home.

focus on combat operational stress control and reintegrating Sailors back with their Families,” said Navy Commander Anthony Wright, who serves as the commander for the WTP.

This is designed to assist Sailors in the short time frame they face between a combat zone and being back home with their Families.

“We learned a lot from Vietnam,” Wright said of past conflicts. “They came out of the jungle, got on an airplane and their heads were still spinning. Mentally, we try and get them to unburden themselves so when they go back to their Families and loved ones they can be in a much better place.”

The WTP offers presentations by care teams made up of chaplains and trained psychiatrists to assist in the Sailors’ reintegration process from a combat zone.

“Sailors are grouped by rank and like experiences, so they are able to talk about what they have been through together,” said Wright. “Our goal here is to help put them in a better place mentally before they go



Petty Officer 2nd Class Leslie Rodriguez (left) and Petty Officer 2nd Class Jan Baker (right), both logistics specialists with the Warrior Transition Program, take accountability of a Sailor’s combat gear home.”

The WTP not only provides a presentation to assist in the Sailors return home but a place to relax.

“We have our own [Moral, Welfare and Recreation center] filled with video games and movies that offer the Sailors a chance to sit back and relax,” said Wright.

The services provided by the WTP provides a way for the Sailors to continue to Sustain the Fight by making the transition home a simpler process.

“I feel the Navy makes a very serious effort here to let them know they care about them, as both Sailors and individuals,” said Wright.