

Charter For

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Office of Warrior and Family Support

Purpose. This charter establishes the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Office of Warrior and Family Support and identifies the office's authority and responsibility.

Vision. The vision of the Office of Warrior and Family Support is: warriors -- wounded or well -- successfully reintegrated upon return from war into the force and/or civil society; confident, resilient and well-supported families able to assist in this reintegration and to manage the demands and the stress associated with follow-on wounded and mental health care issues; and families of the fallen comfortable in the knowledge that the U.S. military will not forget them or their sacrifice, that it will instead make concerted efforts to ensure they receive all benefits entitled and all support/counseling required to lead positive and productive lives.

Mission. To achieve this vision, the Office of Warrior and Family Support will, in concert with other federal agencies, military Services, and non-governmental organizations, lead the effort to improve the quality of life and work for returning warriors, their families, and the families of the fallen for the remainder of their lives. It will accomplish this mission by advising and assisting the Chairman, advocating for warriors and families, promoting successful family programs across the Services, and shaping appropriate legislation and/or policy. A special emphasis must be applied to early identification of those most at risk and to preventative programs and initiatives.

Functions and Responsibilities. As an advocate for all warriors and families, the Office of Warrior and Family Support will in support of this vision and mission:

- a. Advise and assist the Chairman, as well as the Joint Staff, on matters relating to wounded care, survivor issues, homelessness, and family support requirements with a focus on devising tangible, preventative and effective solutions to existing and potential problems -- systemic, institutional or legislative.
- b. Develop partnerships with Service and/or Combatant Command wounded warrior programs through leadership of a Wounded Warrior Council.
- c. Establish and further develop relationships with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, State Wounded Warrior/Family offices and relevant non-governmental organizations to maximize and synchronize support. We must close the gaps and seams which interrupt the smooth transition of warriors from the Service into society.
- d. Increase public and private sector (industry, educational, philanthropic, etc.) awareness of the challenges facing returning warriors and families and advance the means to facilitate support. Identify, encourage and highlight best practice programs, including those of the Services.

e. Suggest, inform and influence legislation that relieves, sustains or otherwise improves the conditions of warriors, veterans and their families -- as well as families of the fallen.

f. Invigorate action within existing medical, personnel, family, and benefits programs of the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs to better support warriors, veterans and families.

g. Pursue the advancement of alternative treatments for post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injuries, both preventative and restorative. This will be done transparently and collaboratively with the medical establishment.

Organization. The Office of Warrior and Family Support will be comprised of civilian, active duty, Reserve forces, and contractors reporting directly to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. It will be led by a Flag/SES equivalent officer with experience in wounded warrior and family support issues.

Authority. The Office of Warrior and Family Support functions under the authority of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Administration. The CJCS Office of Warrior and Family Support will function under the direction of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Special Assistant to the CJCS for Warrior and Family Support will provide regular reports on warrior reintegration and family issues, policy and legislation issues, and specific programs or projects as requested.

Review. This charter will be reviewed by the Special Assistant to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff for Warrior and Family Support periodically to determine if substantive changes need to be made to reflect emerging information.

Conclusion. Next to winning the wars we are fighting, there is no higher priority than to care for the men and women who bear the brunt of defending this nation, as well as their families. All over this country -- in all sorts of ways -- people are rolling up their sleeves and doing great things for the men and women who serve.

We need to match that focus and continue connecting to that sea of goodwill, especially as returning warriors and their families tackle new challenges associated with the stress of long deployments, the pain of combat injuries, or even the uncertainty of new careers in the civilian sector. They must get the care they need, the time they deserve, and the respect they've earned ... for life.

This extends to those whose loved ones have, in the words of President Lincoln, given "the last full measure of devotion." Let our devotion to those who have survived and continue to struggle be just as pure and just as complete. We owe them nothing less and probably a whole lot more.



M. G. MULLEN
Admiral, U.S. Navy