

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

NASBP Members Support Breakthrough in Trauma Treatment for Vets

LAST YEAR, AT NASBP's 2015 Annual Meeting, former soldier Doug Baldwin spoke about his struggles with post-traumatic stress (PTS) and the breakthrough treatment that turned his life around. His story inspired an outpouring of support from NASBP members. In less than a year, with contributions still coming in, individuals, agencies, and surety companies have raised more than \$120,000 to support studies that could make this ground-breaking treatment available to other active warriors and veterans. But there's still more work to be done.



From left, former soldier Doug Baldwin and J. Spencer Miller of Schwartz Brothers Insurance Agency.



Pictured are attendees at the 2015 NASBP Annual Meeting, from left, Rear Admiral Denny Wisely (ret); Jeffrey Hecker, spouse of NASBP President Susan Hecker; Kathy Murphy of the Blue Angels Foundation; Carl Dohn of Dohn & Maher Associates; and Thomas Padilla of HUB International Insurance Services of Albuquerque, NM.

A FORMER BLUE ANGELS FLYING TEAM LEADER AND CHAIR OF THE CHARITABLE BLUE ANGELS FOUNDATION, WISELY WAS DETERMINED TO BRING THE PROGRAM TO OTHER SERVICE MEMBERS SUFFERING FROM PTS.



From left, John Knox and Steve Nelson of SureTec Insurance Company.

NASBP's involvement with the PTS treatment program started with Tom Padilla, 2014-2015 NASBP President. To highlight his year's theme, "Make a Difference," he wanted to showcase and support veterans' groups at the national convention. Not only was the meeting in San Diego, home to a large naval base, but also he, his father and now his daughter have served in the military. "Plus, as an industry, what we bond is mostly government projects and a huge number of them are military," Padilla said.

Padilla asked retired U.S. Navy Vice Admiral David Buss to serve as keynote speaker.

"Tom told me that they were looking for a cause to get behind, and asked if I could suggest anything," recalled Buss. He had the perfect recommendation. Just a few months earlier, retired U.S. Navy Rear Admiral

Denny Wisely had told Buss about a new, non-drug protocol for treating PTS, pioneered by Dr. Frank Bourke, executive director of the Research and Recognition Project. Wisely had seen Bourke's program work for two veterans in San Diego.

"The results were astounding," Wisely said. A former Blue Angels flying team leader and chair of the charitable Blue Angels Foundation, Wisely was determined to bring the program to other service members suffering from PTS. Bourke had completed a very successful 30-person study in New York State, but he needed to conduct many more tests to win acceptance of the protocol from the medical community. "I started on a mission to fund another 30-person study with vets in the San Diego area," said Wisely. After learning about Bourke's work,

Padilla knew he had found a cause NASBP could support.

At the end of Buss' NASBP keynote address, he introduced Baldwin, who spoke about his 5½ years in the Army. During his time in Iraq and Afghanistan, Baldwin survived 14 IED explosions, firefights lasting 24 hours and longer and the loss of many friends. When he came home, Baldwin, like many other service members, had nightmares and couldn't sleep, function in society or relate to people. "It can be overwhelming," he said during his talk. "Just trying to get out of bed every day can be almost impossible."

Then Baldwin worked with Dr. Bourke. "After going through just the first of the three sessions, I was able to sleep for six hours straight for the first time in six years," Baldwin said. "By the end of the third session

I was ecstatic; I couldn't stop smiling. The change that happened over those three days—and continues to happen—just blows me away every day."

A treatment that works

Bourke, a clinical and research psychologist with more than 40 years of experience, refined his PTS protocol while treating more than 800 survivors of the 9/11 World Trade Towers attack. The treatment has successfully treated, without drugs and in

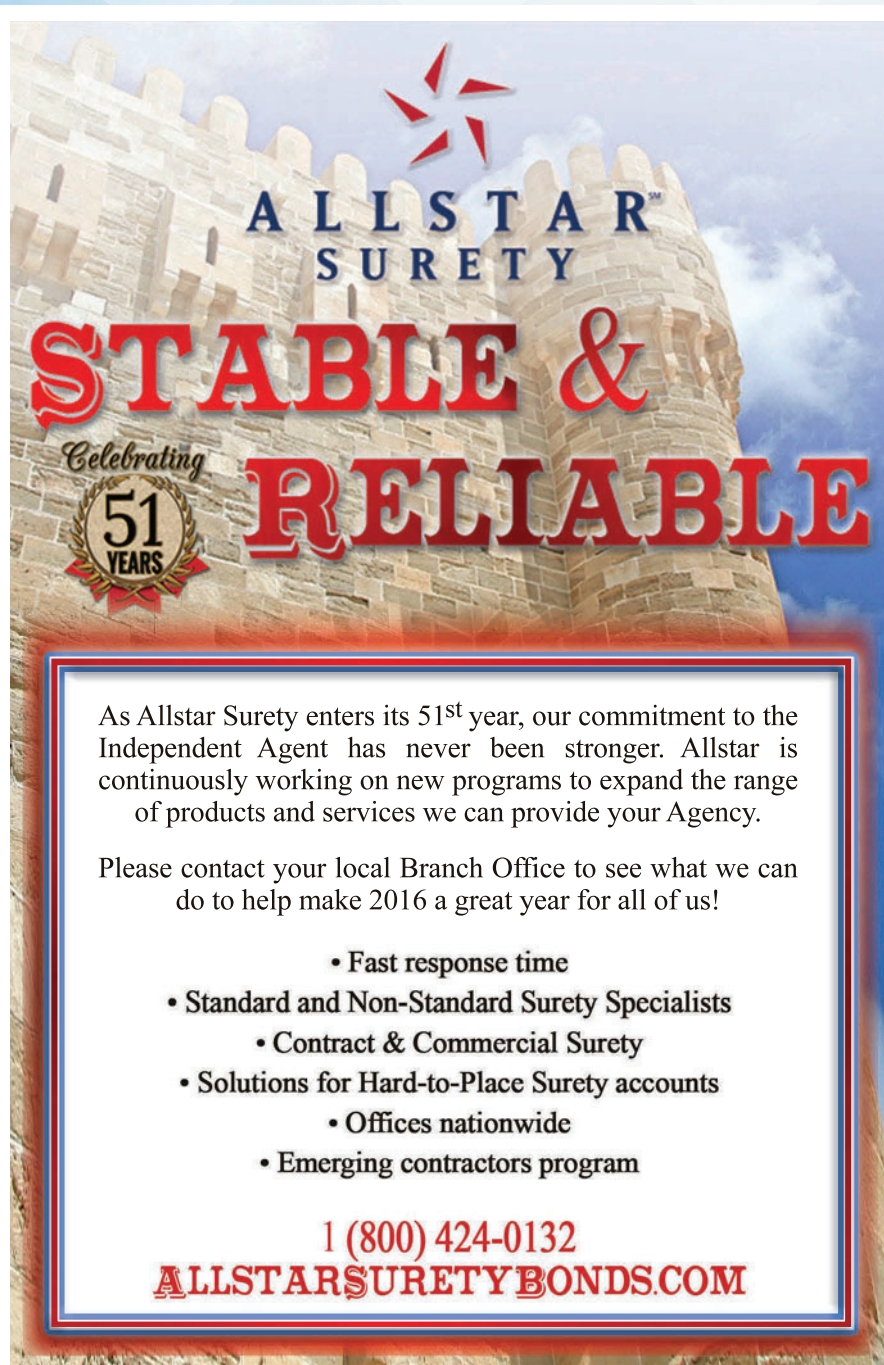
less than five hours, the symptoms of PTS—nightmares, flashbacks and directly related emotional problems. In the first pilot neurological measurement using EEG before and after RTM treatment, the physical indications of its presence in the brain decreased sufficiently to remove the indication of PTS. "This really isn't therapy in the classical sense. This is a neurological intervention that is done by talking to people and having them reimage their traumatic memories," he explained.

Bourke uses the example of someone traumatized by a lion attack. Remembering the event nightmares and flashbacks helps the brain ensure that the person will avoid lions in the future. "It's not meant to be under your intellectual, neocortical control; you're not supposed to get rid of it," Bourke explains. "It's implanted in a portion of the brain that isn't up for negotiation, implanted with a very clear visual memory and auditory and kinesthetic memory."

The key is to reprogram the brain so those memories no longer engender fear. The first part of the process is disassociation—helping the person imagine they are watching a black-and-white movie of the attack from a seat in a movie theater. Then Bourke assists the person in altering the way the picture is stored. "We have them run it backwards very quickly; instead of the lion 10 feet away, ready to jump, they run the movie backwards until they get to the part where they were safe, before it all began," he explained. "What you've done is made the movie that's stored in your brain, which normally goes forward and freezes at the height of the terror, go backwards past the terror with no feeling," Bourke said. We believe, the separation between the images and the traumatic feelings is neurological, based on a neurological process called Reconsolidation.

In the first two studies in New York and in San Diego, the Research and Recognition team was able to eradicate the PTS symptoms in 96 percent of the 60 veterans who participated. There are several other studies underway, but millions of dollars are still needed to complete them. Looking for a neurological laboratory to help with the research, Bourke was able to connect with Dr. Jeffery D. Lewine from the Mind Research Network located on the campus of the University of New Mexico. Lewine has agreed to let Bourke and his team use his state of the art neurology laboratory to document the significant changes made in the brain after the PTS treatment.

"We want to do extensive scientific research until no one can doubt



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what we have; we want this to be classified as evidentiary medicine," said Bourke. The goal is to get the protocol accepted by the Veterans' Administration and provide relief for the thousands of active and former service members suffering from PTS.

Ongoing support

After hearing about Bourke's work, "Spence Miller [2010–2011 NASBP President] made a challenge from the podium for everyone to donate at least \$500," said Padilla. Then, John Knox, CEO of SureTec Insurance Company, promised to match, dollar-for-dollar, the contributions made at the meeting. Both Admiral Buss and Jerry Lujan, another speaker, donated large portions of their speaker fees to the effort. NASBP members in attendance contributed generously, as well. That totaled \$37,500. Originally, Padilla had hoped to raise \$20,000–\$30,000, but soon realized contributions had quickly surpassed that target goal. "With SureTec's contribution, we were able to contribute, through the Blue Angels Foundation, an initial \$75,000 towards the project," said Padilla.

"We look for ways to give back, and this fit a lot of criteria," said Knox. "Here was a program that many of the best surety bond producing agents were excited about, and we got to meet the admirals who were excited about it, too. It was a wonderful opportunity. The money is important, but it's also important when you pull together people who are focused on doing the right thing."

Pledges continued to come in. "Merchants Bonding Company, Chubb Surety, Liberty Mutual Surety and CNA Surety Corporation all gave additional significant contributions," said Padilla. To date, total contributions resulted in over \$120,000 contributed to PTS studies. With the Blue Angels Foundation supplying the additional funding, Bourke completed the San Diego replication study, achieving amazing results with 30 veterans (93 percent symptom remission).

Wisely, meanwhile, has been impressed with NASBP's commitment.

"This group of people at NASBP have hearts; they are all patriots, and they are all in," he said. "This is good corporate citizenship, to give something back to a group that has given so much to our country," said Padilla. "It's the right thing to do for our country and our vets."

Learn more about Dr. Bourke's work and see moving video and written testimonials at <http://www.researchandrecognition.org/>.

[researchandrecognition.org](http://www.researchandrecognition.org/). To make a contribution, or obtain more information, contact Tom Padilla at Tom.Padilla@hubinternational.com or donate via <http://www.researchandrecognition.org> and mark it "PTS Project/NASBP fundraising." To view video testimonials of veterans who received the RTM treatment, visit the research and recognition website at <http://www.researchandrecognition.org/>.



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