



Press photos/Jessica Waters

After enjoying dinner provided by the Franklin Veterans of Foreign Wars Friday evening, soldiers participating in the 2014 Warrior Hike posed with Terry Hougum's M35 Deuce-and-a-half military vehicle. VFW Post 7339 sponsored the hikers, assisting with food, lodging and transportation.

# Warrior Hike: A journey home for soldiers ‘walking off the war’

In 2012, two Marines who had recently returned from overseas duty passed through Franklin on the inaugural Warrior Hike.

Marine Corps captains Mark Silvers and Sean Gobin founded Warrior Hike in 2011 and hiked all 2,185 miles of the Appalachian Trail while raising \$50,000 to purchase adapted vehicles for seriously wounded veterans.

This past weekend, eight veterans continued that legacy. As with prior year's hikers, the eight combat veterans faced snow during the first stage of the trip, which began at the Appalachian Trail terminus in Springer Mountain, Ga.

Hailing from different

states, different branches of service and ranging in age and background, the eight hikers taking part in the 2014 Warrior Hike stopped in Franklin Friday, March 28, to enjoy some of the Trail Days celebration. The hikers were sponsored by VFW Post 7339 and The American Legion post 108.

The chance to “decompress” on the hike — to have time to think and process, and to be around others who have been through the same thing, is an important opportunity, said hiker Joe Young.

To learn more about the Warrior Hike, make donations, or follow along on the hikers’ trip, visit [www.warriorhike.com](http://www.warriorhike.com).

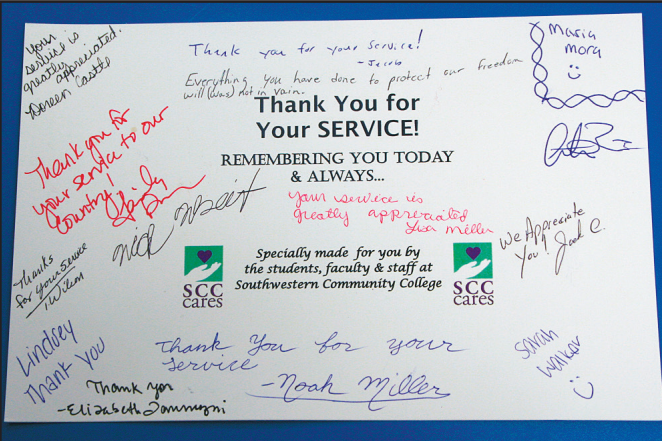
## Warrior Hikers

Eight 2014 Warrior Hikers visited Franklin during the Trail Days weekend.

- Joe Young, Army National Guard
- Jamey Pierson, USAF
- Jesse “The Viking” Swensgard, Alaska Air National Guard
- Cecil “Stitch” Thayer, USMC and Ohio National Guard
- Cecil “Pops” Hall, USMC
- Cosmo Brown, Army
- Matthew “Machine” Donnelly, Navy
- Todd “Big Foot” Rogers, USMC



2014 Warrior Hike participants Jesse Swensgard, Jamey Pierson, Joe Young, Cecil Thayer, Calvin Hall, Cosmo Brown, Matthew Donnelly and Todd Rogers wrap up in the colorful quilts made for them by the Smoky Mountain chapter of Quilts of Valor. The quilts were presented during a breakfast held at the American Legion Post 108 in Franklin in honor of the hikers.



Top SCC students paid respects to the Warrior Hikers. Middle, Todd Rogers leaves his signature behind as he passes through Franklin. All eight Warrior Hikers signed Terry Hougum's M35 Deuce-and-a-half military vehicle. Bottom, Jesse Swensgard enjoys time with his daughter Sophia, 11 months, during dinner at the Franklin VFW.

### Best BITES!

Join us for a bite! Whet your appetite at these Franklin area restaurants. You are invited to come have a bite & enjoy their favorites!

**PAPA'S PIZZA**  
WE DELIVER!  
try our **HUNDRED POUNDER**  
XL 18" PIZZA  
100 PEPPERONI  
1 POUND OF CHEESE  
**\$15.99**  
\*FRESH BAKED\*  
Dough Made Fresh daily  
369-9999  
PIZZA • SUBS • SALADS • WINGS  
LOCATED AT HOLLY SPRINGS PLAZA (old Walmart shopping center)

**Martha's Kitchen**  
Always Fresh. Always Delicious.  
Dine-in / Take-out / Delivery  
Open M-F 10am-3pm  
24 Iotla Street in the Courthouse Plaza  
Call Martha Today! 828.524.4600

**Dooley's Deli**  
FAST-FRIENDLY SERVICE  
LOCATED INSIDE **N&N EXPRESS MART**  
BREAKFAST • LUNCH • DINNER  
Hamburgers | Hot Dogs | Hot & Cold Deli Sandwiches | Homemade Potato and Macaroni Salad  
MON-FRI 6AM-8PM  
SATURDAY 6AM-2PM  
(828) 524-8801  
1256 E. Main St. Franklin

**Gazebo Creekside Café**  
Specialty & Deli Sandwiches  
Soups • Salads  
Kid's Menu • Desserts  
Monday thru Sunday  
10:30AM to 3PM  
MENU online @ [www.gazebocreeksidecafe.com](http://www.gazebocreeksidecafe.com)

**Olivia's Ice Cream & Bakery**  
32 Flavors!  
712 Highlands Road • Franklin  
828.371.0552 • 828.371.1886

**Franklin's First Asian Fusion Restaurant**  
THAI  
VIETNAMESE  
CHINESE  
JAPANESE  
828-524-8879  
215 HOLLY SPRINGS PLAZA

**HANA EXPRESS**  
Hibachi & Sushi  
828-524-8879  
215 HOLLY SPRINGS PLAZA

**BREAKFAST**  
• Biscuits & Gravy  
• Variety of Breakfast Pizzas  
• Breakfast Bowls (Shredded Potatoes, Cheese, O&P, Etc)  
• Burritos

**LUNCH**  
• Pizza  
• Variety of Sandwiches  
**Donelle Minn Pit Stop**  
376 DOWDLE MTN ROAD  
FRANKLIN • 828.349.9411

**Lucio's RESTAURANT**  
Bella Vista Square  
313 Highlands Road  
Wed-Sat 5PM-'til  
369-6670 • LuciosNC.com

**Macon Coffee**  
OPEN MON-SAT 6AM-5PM - SUN 9AM-2PM  
Coffee & Espresso • Donuts  
New York Bagels • WiFi & Music  
Bagel Sandwiches & Soups starting @ 11AM  
828.369.5445 • 2720 GEORGIA RD. • FRANKLIN, NC  
Less than 2 Miles from McDonald's in the Franklin Plaza