



## *2017 Veterans Day Benefit Gala*

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### **2017 Gala Warrior Guest Speaker Lance Corporal Duncan Mathis**



Lance Corporal Duncan Mathis was raised in a small town in NC, spending most weekends with his family or at church. He decided on military service at a young age and enlisted in the Marines during his senior year in high school. After initial training, Mathis was assigned as a Rifleman to 3rd Bn 9th Marine Regiment at Camp Lejune, NC. He rose to the position of fire team leader and was transferred to 2nd Bn 2nd Marine Regiment.

He deployed to Afghanistan in 2013 where he took place in multiple combat operations to include raids, patrols and captures of enemy personnel. While on a night raid of enemy positions on May 19, 2013, Lcpl Mathis was injured by a concealed booby trap. An abandoned well had been rigged to collapse, targeting US foot patrols. Mathis was the last man of the patrol and did not realize how unstable the ground under him was until it was too late—he was pulled into the well and fell 80 ft to the rocky bottom. With the combined weight of his body and a full combat load, Mathis broke more than 25 different bones upon landing at the bottom of the dried well.

After over 30 surgeries and years of physical therapy at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Lcpl Mathis is well on his way to recovery. He competed twice for the Marine Corps at the Warrior Games, bringing home Gold in wheelchair basketball. Mathis has also picked up snowboarding as a hobby during recovery. He is currently pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice to begin the next chapter in his life.