

Jared Estes shares, brings tears, laughter to Fort Riley

By Hannah Kleopfer | 1ST INF. DIV. POST | December 08, 2015

Jared Estes, inspirational speaker, gives his "Fire Back" speech to Soldiers of Fort Riley at the Morris Hill Chapel the morning of Oct. 16. (Photo by Hannah Kleopfer, POST)



Inspirational speaker Jared Estes came to Fort Riley for the second time this year to share another message with the troops who he said give him so much hope. His message was titled "Fire Back." Through his story Estes shares how he learned to deal with physical and emotional pain and how he came back from the flames.

"I tell my story and I learned a lot of tough lessons throughout that," said Estes. "I took a chance to process those lessons and learned we can use them more like weapons that we can always use to fight our way out of the dark."

Estes' story begins with his high school sweetheart, Paige. A short six months after they were married, they were in a car wreck due to a drunk driver and Paige was killed in the accident. Estes was in a coma for two weeks, but as he told his story his fight continued for years after that.

"I went through a lot of dark stuff and a lot of dark days and it took me the better part of 50 surgeries and about three years to come back really mentally and physically," said Estes.

He now goes around sharing his story with groups such as the Soldiers of Fort Riley. In his message he shares how to come through one's darkest days and struggles, giving listeners something to take away in their own way.

"I learned a lot about resilience," said Maj. Erik Peterson, 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. "Everyone's in a bad situation and you see somebody suffering something like this, and then setting goals to get past and keep going."

Goals were something Estes realized he needed after accomplishing his only goal of getting to his late wife's grave. While that was a short-term goal, he needed long-term goals to get him through.

"The biggest thing to me was him realizing that his short-term goals weren't enough and that he would have to push through some difficulty and find long-term goals to get through a really hard circumstance," said Pfc.

James Clark, 2nd Bn., 34th Armor Regt., 1st ABCT, 1st Inf. Div.

At the end of Estes' story, Soldiers rendered a standing ovation that echoed throughout Morris Hill Chapel. Maj. Peterson then presented Estes with a battalion coin.