

# The Blaster News

## Third Quarter 2024

### Upcoming Events and Retreats

#### September

**September 1:** EOD 137  
Memorial Workout (ongoing)

**September 6-8:**  
Songwriting With Soldiers,  
Female EOD Retreat,  
Smithville, TN

**September 7:** EOD Veteran  
Surf Camp Retreat, Costa Rica

**September 7:** Dashing to  
Summer's End, 5K & 10K,  
Washington, DC

**September 12:** Zentangle -  
Virtual & In-Person Event,  
Niceville, FL

**September 14:** 4th Annual  
Dworetzky Martinez Family  
Charity Cycling Event,  
Charles City, VA

**September 19-22:** Wake for  
Warriors EOD Family Retreat,  
Lake Harding, GA

**September 24:** Zentangle -  
Virtual & In-Person Event,  
Niceville, FL

#### October

**October 5:** Three Fox 5K &  
1M, Delaplane, VA

**October 24-26:** EOD Blast  
Day Retreat, Edgefield, SC

#### November

**November 1:** EOD Arlington  
Event

**November 1-4 :** EOD Veteran  
Barksdale Hunt Retreat,  
Alexandria, VA

**November 8-9:** 2024 Rampart  
Ride, San Miguel, CA

#### Dear EOD Family and Friends,

I am deeply honored and humbled to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of the EOD Warrior Foundation. Joining this incredible organization fills me with immense pride and excitement, and I am eager to embark on this journey alongside all of you—our dedicated staff, our Board of Directors and Honorary Board members, and our generous donors and supportive community members.

The EOD Warrior Foundation has a long-standing tradition of providing unwavering support to EOD warriors and their families. The work we do is vital, and it has a profound impact on the lives of those who have given so much for our country. As I step into this role, my commitment to our mission is stronger than ever, and I am dedicated to continuing the legacy of excellence that this foundation represents.

In the coming months, my primary focus will be on enhancing our programs and expanding our reach. Here are a few key areas I am excited to prioritize:

- **Strengthening Support Services:** We will continue to provide comprehensive support to our EOD warriors and their families, ensuring they have access to the resources and assistance they need.
- **Building Community Connections:** I believe in the power of community and the importance of fostering strong connections. We will work to strengthen our relationships with our donors, partners, and the broader EOD community.
- **Enhancing Awareness and Advocacy:** Raising awareness about the unique challenges faced by EOD warriors is crucial. We will amplify our advocacy efforts to ensure that their voices are heard, and their needs are met.
- **Innovating Our Programs:** We will continuously seek innovative ways to improve and expand our programs. This includes exploring new initiatives, leveraging technology, and staying ahead of emerging trends to better serve our community.

I am genuinely excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. With your support and collaboration, I am confident we can achieve remarkable things together. Your dedication and generosity are the lifeblood of our organization, and I am deeply grateful for your continued trust and support.

I look forward to working closely with each of you as we strive to fulfill our mission and create a brighter future for our EOD warriors and their families.

With gratitude,



Jerry Shelton  
Executive Director





The Women in EOD Ruck and Gala was a special event celebrating the achievements and resilience of women in EOD with a tribute to Linda Cox, the first woman in the field.

The event began with a 4-mile ruck, where participants carried 35-pound rucksacks, symbolizing the physical and mental toughness required in EOD roles. This was followed by a gala at The Island Resort, featuring inspiring speeches, gift presentations, and an evening of food and music.

The EOD Warrior Foundation is honored to have hosted this event showcasing the legacy of women in EOD.



# EOD History Path

## Est. August 2024

Over the past six months, the Board and Staff of the EOD Warrior Foundation have collaborated closely with NAVSCOLEOD and Eglin AFB's Civil Engineering and Staff to add a significant new feature to the EOD Memorial Grounds. Along the gravel path that connects the EOD Memorial to the Remembrance Garden, we have erected four pillars adorned with the original cenotaphs from the EOD Memorial's initial construction at Eglin AFB on March 17, 1999.

On the northern side of the path, three of these monuments narrate the "History of EOD," detailing our legacy from its inception in 1941 to current and future operations. The southern side of the path features the fourth and final pillar, which chronicles the history of the EOD Memorial itself. This pillar provides an account of the original memorial established at Indian Head, MD, in the 1970s, the subsequent transition of NAVSCOLEOD to Eglin AFB, and the relocation of the Memorial to its present site adjacent to the School House. The dedication of this new addition took place on August 9, 2024, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by community members, the Niceville City Council, and highlighted by remarks from our Chairman, Mr. Greg K. Mittelman and Executive Director, Jerry Shelton.

This addition to the Memorial Grounds stands as a lasting tribute to our EOD history and heritage. Crafted from rock and bronze, these pillars are a permanent reminder of those who came before us, those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and those who left us too soon. As the next generation of service members from all branches train across the street, they will continue our tradition of protecting others and preventing the loss of life, grounded in the enduring legacy of EOD.



POWERED BY



**WOUNDED WARRIOR  
PROJECT®**

Thank you, Wounded Warrior Project! We are proud to once again be part of @Wounded Warrior Project's Community Partnership network. This partnership embodies the strength of community and our shared commitment to addressing the most pressing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers. With our shared dedication, we can go #FurtherTogether in our mission to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who've served our country.

The WWP Grant for 2024-25 partially funds our grants program, and is earmarked to helping ensure that post 9/11 Warriors and their families have the resources they need. All grants for pre 9/11 Warriors and their families are funded through our other generous donors.

Thank you!

# Courage and Civility Award Fund Gift

We are thrilled to announce a major donor to the EODWF's Scholarship program! Thanks to a generous donation recommendation by Admiral McRaven, the Foundation is able to expand and continue its support of Gold Star Children and their educational needs. This generous gift is made possible thanks to the Bezos Courage and Civility Award received by the Admiral from Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sanchez and will begin distribution for the 2024-25 School Year.

In the notification letter, Admiral McRaven said, this gift is being given "owing to the remarkable work being done by the EOD Warrior Foundation in providing education for the children of the fallen." It is the Foundation's deep honor to continue to care for all Gold Star families and ensure that the sacrifice of their loved one is never forgotten.

For the 2024-25 School year, the Foundation will distribute more than 145 Scholarships, valued at \$350,000. These gifts, made possible through generous support, make a lasting and positive difference in the lives of all who receive this valuable educational support.

Thank you again, Admiral William McRaven and Jeff Bezos for your support of both the EODWF's Scholarship Fund and the entire EOD Community!

2025 - 2026

## EODWF Scholarships

The EOD Warrior Foundation is proud to offer scholarships to dependents of graduates of NAVSCOLEOD. To learn more, and to see full eligibility requirements, please visit our website.



The Undergraduate and Trade School application window is from November 1, 2024 - February 1, 2025

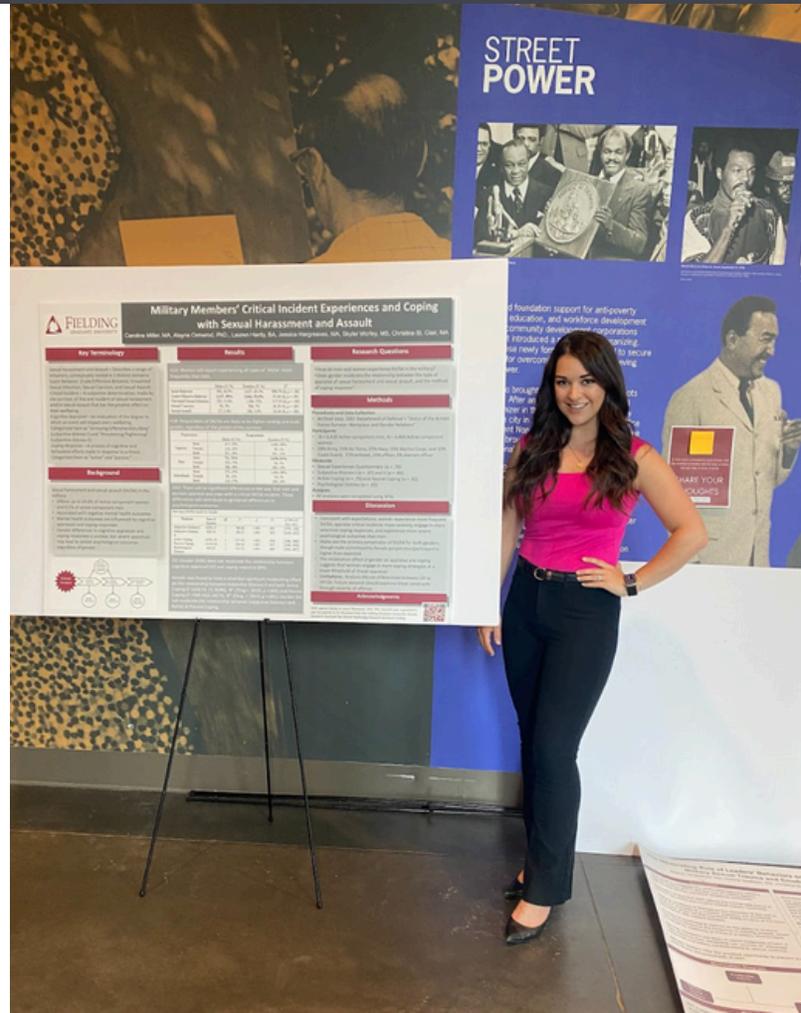
\*Note that prior awardees must renew their scholarship each year.



"I would like to take a moment and offer my sincerest gratitude to the EOD Warrior Foundation and all the generous donors who have supported the Graduate Program Scholarship! This scholarship has made a significant impact in my academic pursuit of a PhD in Clinical Psychology, bringing me one step closer to my dream of becoming a military psychologist. The scholarship program truly is a reflection of the EOD Warrior Foundation's commitment to serving our community, and I am very grateful to all those who support and believe in this important mission!

Thank you!"

**-2024 Graduate Program Scholarship Recipient,  
Caroline Miller**



# Let's make the 137 Memorial Workout a family affair!



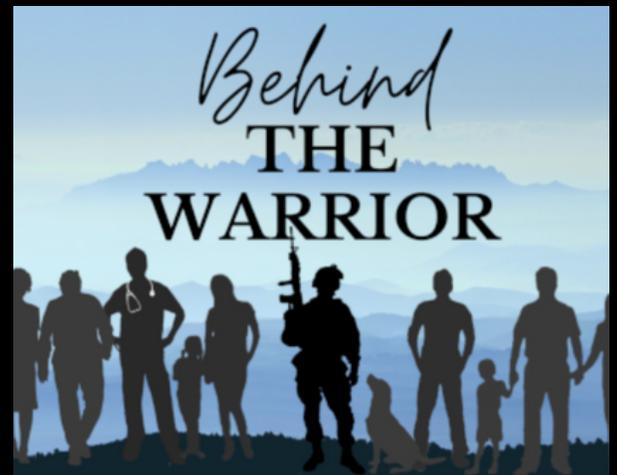
Thanks to a grant from YSA and AmeriCorp, the 137 Memorial Workout now has two specific kid and teen workouts. Registration for those 18 and younger is free with this program and we encourage everyone to honor those we have lost since 9/11 with your entire family.



## Behind the Warrior Podcast

### Upcoming Episodes

- Celebrating Women in EOD: LTG Heidi Hoyle
- Randy Manner, Major General, USA, Retired - Transition Series
- Volunteer Spotlight - Henry VanNess
- Removing the Stigma - San Diego
- The History Path
- Ice Baths 2 Part Series
- April Cobb - EOD Spouse & Author of The Women of Explosive Ordnance Disposal
- EOD Tech Brian Price - Summiting Granite Peak & Mount Rainier



Listen to *Behind the Warrior* on your favorite streaming platform.

# 2024 RAMPART RIDE



VETERAN'S DAY  
WEEKEND  
NOV 8-9

Hosted by Tackitt Family Vineyards



**EOD WARRIOR**  
FOUNDATION

The Rampart Ride, an exhilarating bike race, is set to take place at the picturesque Tackitt Family Vineyard in Paso Robles, CA, on November 8th and 9th. This event not only offers cyclists the chance to traverse scenic routes, but also honors veterans, combining athletic challenge with a meaningful tribute. The Rampart Ride features four route options to cater to cyclists of all levels: 9, 20, 31, and 45 miles. Each route winds through the rolling hills and vineyards of Paso Robles, offering participants a unique and memorable cycling experience.

Cyclists of all ages and skill levels are encouraged to join. Whether you're a seasoned rider looking for a challenging course or a casual cyclist seeking a scenic ride, the event offers a route that fits your needs. Registration is available online, and early sign-up is recommended to secure a spot.

## EODWF Flag Program

For the fourth year, thanks to a generous gift from Crescent City Charities, we are working with hundreds of volunteers to place EOD flags on over 3,000 EOD Techs buried around the country.

In addition to placing flags as individuals and small groups, we invite you to join with the entire EOD Community for a gathering at Arlington National Cemetery:

November 1-2, 2024 There are 320+ EOD Techs buried here and another 80 EOD Techs who are classified MIA or buried at Sea. A wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier with the names of those 80 will be placed at 12:15 on November 1 and flowers will be placed on the 320+ graves on the 1st and morning of the 2nd.

To RSVP, please follow this link or contact Patricia ([patricia@eodwarriorfoundation.org](mailto:patricia@eodwarriorfoundation.org)) for more information: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024Arlington>

You can still join us in remembering these men and women and honoring them for their service by placing flags in your own area. Please see the webpage for instructions and how to sign up. There are flags waiting across the country for volunteers!

# Removing the Stigma

a series of talks surrounding mental health



## The Power of Conversation: Removing the Stigma-Alaska

In our ongoing commitment to fostering a supportive community, the EOD Warrior Foundation recently traveled to Alaska to host "Removing the Stigma," a powerful panel discussion focused on mental health and suicide awareness within the EOD community. This event brought together experts in mental health, community-based support resources, and included testimonials from EOD Techs who courageously shared their personal struggles with mental health.

Discussions at the event included the ongoing EOD Mental Health Survey, which was launched earlier this year with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the mental health landscape within our community. Additional conversations addressed Operator Syndrome, a lesser-known and complex condition affecting many EOD Techs. The discussions also highlighted how the isolation from friends and family experienced while living in Alaska can negatively impact mental well-being. Various programs, ranging from mental health support to recreational activities, were explored as potential solutions for supporting Techs.

Perhaps the most powerful moments came from EOD Techs who shared their own mental health journeys, reminding the audience of the profound impact that reaching out to others can have. They emphasized how opening up about struggles not only aids personal healing but also encourages others to offer their support, creating a stronger, more connected community.

As we reflect on the powerful stories and insights shared during the panel, we are reminded that removing stigma is an ongoing journey. It requires each of us to be active participants in fostering a culture of understanding and acceptance. We encourage all members of our community to continue these conversations, challenge stigma when they see it, and support those who are affected.



# EOD HOME BUYING

We are so excited to be working with Justin and Christine Hamilton of EOD Home Buying! In addition to assisting EOD families across the country with their home purchasing needs, the Hamiltons have generously pledged to donate 5% of their PERSONAL commission to the EOD Warrior Foundation.

Simply mention the EODWF when working with them! The Hamiltons are licensed lenders in all 50 US States, so no matter where you are located, they can assist you. Learn more about their nation-wide network by visiting [www.eodhomebuying.com](http://www.eodhomebuying.com) or contact the Hamiltons directly by calling 815-908-9363!



## Giving for Tomorrow

EOD has been part of your life for years and EODWF is there for you and your family every step of the way. From support to new graduates and their families to scholarships for the grandchildren of Vietnam-era EOD Techs and everything in between, we fully embrace the belief that the EOD Community is for life. We are here for you and are grateful that you are here for us! Ensure your legacy and support to the EODWF and EOD Community continues by including EODWF in your Will or living trust. For more information, please contact Patricia Adelman, Development Officer, at 770.655.4028 or [patricia@eodwarriorfoundation.org](mailto:patricia@eodwarriorfoundation.org) or speak with your financial or legal advisor. The process is simple, quick, and completely confidential.

## Gift Donation of Stock & Wire Transfers

We welcome your gift of appreciated stock and wire transfers!

Please contact Patricia Adelman, Development Officer for Broker and Account numbers. It's easy, quick, and great way to add your support!

EOD Warrior Foundation Phone: 850.729.2336  
EOD Warrior Foundation Address: 716 Crestview Ave. Niceville, FL 32578  
Nonprofit EIN#: 20-8618412

Thank you again for making such a positive and lasting difference in the lives of EOD families.

## Monthly Giving

Giving can be easy, painless, and still make a major impact! Just sign up for a recurring gift and we will be happy to charge your card a set amount on a set schedule until you tell us to stop! Your small (or large!) gifts add up quickly and make a big difference in the lives of EOD Techs and their families.

Check out the Recurring option under the Donate button today.

