

# The Blaster News

## Fourth Quarter 2025

### Upcoming Events and Retreats

#### December

**Salute in Motion: One Workout, 345 Reasons** - runs through December 31

**December 4:** Removing the Stigma: Talks on Mental Health - Schofield Barracks, HI

**December 9:** NAOOC Crawling Crab 5K Walk/Run - Savannah, GA

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**December 18:** Kendra Gives Back Event - Miramar Beach, FL/Online

#### January

No scheduled events.

Interested in fundraising/planning an event? Visit <https://eod-wf.org/fundraising/>

#### February

**February 7:** 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Polar Bear Plunge - Spotsylvania Courthouse, VA

**February 14:** Chilly Plunge, Turkey Creek - Niceville, FL

**February 21:** Break the Ice Plunge - Fort Bragg - Seaforth Beach Jordan Lake, Pittsboro, NC

#### EOD Monthly Gatherings

Family-friendly events held one day a month, sponsored by the EOD Warrior Foundation. Our purpose is to bring EOD Techs (past and present) and their families together for food, conversation, and fun!

To find a gathering in your area, visit <https://eod-wf.org/eod-monthly-gatherings/>

### Reflecting Forward: A Year of Growth, Connection & Service

As we close out 2025 and begin laying the foundation for the year ahead, it's worth pausing to celebrate the strides our EOD Community has made together. This has been a year of connection, healing, and renewed purpose—and your support has fueled every success.

#### 2025 Highlights & Milestones

**Retreats that Heal and Reconnect** - From the Force Blue Ocean Conservation School for Gold Star and White Star families to the EOD Warrior Surf Camp in Costa Rica, our retreats this year have brought EOD Warriors and families together for recovery, growth, and community. Programs like SongwritingWith:Soldiers, and the Warrior PATHH Program with Boulder Crest Foundation gave our EOD Warriors new tools for expression and resilience, while Blast Day, Track Heroes, and the Barksdale Hunt strengthened camaraderie and connection through shared challenge and adventure.

**Expanding Mental Health Support** - Through Removing the Stigma, we delivered mental health resources to our EOD community, building a stronger culture of openness and support.

**Support Across Every Pillar** - In 2025, we served hundreds of EOD families through our core pillars: Scholarships, Hope & Wellness, Financial Relief, and Memorial Care—each designed to meet real needs and strengthen the community fabric.

**Rapid Disaster Relief** - When Hurricanes Helene and Milton struck, we mobilized immediately to provide financial and logistical assistance to affected families.

**EOD Ball & Memorial Weekend** - Thousands gathered to honor our fallen, celebrate our legacy, and reconnect with one another in remembrance and gratitude.

These moments aren't just milestones—they're reflections of who we are: resilient, compassionate, and united in service to the EOD family.

#### Looking Ahead to 2026

As we move into the new year, we're eager to build on this momentum. In our upcoming strategic planning cycle, we'll be charting new priorities and strengthening what works best—our retreats, scholarships, mental health support, and community engagement. Together, we'll continue finding new ways to connect, care, and carry forward the mission of supporting those who serve.

Your belief, participation, and generosity make every step of this journey possible. Thank you for choosing to stand with your EOD Family—and for helping us make 2026 a year of deeper impact, connection, and hope.

It's an honor to serve alongside you.

2026

# 58th EOD MEMORIAL WEEKEND

*Friday, May 1st & Saturday, May 2nd*

**Ticket sale  
begins  
February 1**

The EOD Warrior Foundation is proud to announce the 2026 EOD Memorial Weekend, a time-honored tradition of remembrance, camaraderie, and celebration within the EOD community.

This year's events will take place on May 1st and 2nd, 2026. The weekend will kick off Friday with the annual EOD Memorial Golf Tournament, followed by the always-popular auction at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center. You can drop off auction items at our Niceville office, located at 716 Crestview Ave, Niceville, FL 32578 or ship them directly to us with attention to "Auction".

Saturday will begin with the solemn EOD Memorial Ceremony at the EOD Memorial Wall at NAVSCOLEOD, honoring those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Following the ceremony, attendees can head to The Gulf for the lively Chef's Cook-Off, where teams compete for culinary bragging rights. The weekend concludes with the elegant EOD Memorial Ball at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center, where the community gathers to reflect, reconnect, and celebrate the strength and spirit of EOD. This special weekend stands as a testament to the courage, unity, and resilience of the EOD family. We can't wait to see you all there. Please keep an eye on our website, [www.eod-wf.org](http://www.eod-wf.org) or social media for more details to come.

## 2026 EOD Auction - Call for Donations

**We invite you to be part of one of our most impactful events of the year by contributing an item to the 2026 EOD Auction. Your generosity directly supports our mission and strengthens the programs that make a lasting difference in the lives of EOD Warriors and their families.**

**Over the years, EOD shops, teams, units, platoons, businesses, and individual supporters have donated an incredible range of items, many of which have become standout favorites and played a key role in the event's success.**

**Your contribution this year can help us continue that tradition. Thank you for supporting the EOD Community with your dedication and generosity.**

**Please send items to:  
EOD Warrior Foundation  
Attn: Auction  
716 Crestview Ave  
Niceville, FL 32578**

**Be sure to include an Item Information sheet for each donated item.**

# We Remember

## EOD Warrior Foundation and Volunteers Honor the Fallen at Arlington National Cemetery



As part of the EOD Remembrance Flag program, the EOD Community gathered on Friday and Saturday, October 17 & 18, at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). There, in respect of ANC's guidelines, over 350+ roses with biodegradable tags were placed on all the known EOD graves located in the cemetery. In addition, a wreath was laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to honor the 80+ EOD Techs listed as MIA, Lost, or Buried at Sea.

The wreath, adorned with a scroll listing the names of those lost and missing, was presented by Hailey and Cole Dayton, the children of EODCS Scott Cooper Dayton, and SSgt Tyler Blattler at MCB Quantico EOD. The wreath placed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was the Navy Wreath placed during the EOD Memorial Ceremony in May.

They were joined by over 150+ volunteers, including EOD Techs from Fort Belvoir, Fort Lee, Indian Head, Andrews AFB, Quantico, National Guard, EODMC, O2X, friends, and family. All who visited Arlington that day witnessed a striking display of full dress uniforms and the deep love and respect the EOD Community shares with all who ever wore the badge.

Photos of this event and of the graves at Arlington may be found here:

**<https://albums.memento.com/EODWFArlington2025>**

As always, our thanks to Crescent Cities Charities whose generous grant makes this program possible And, to the hundreds of volunteers who have placed EOD Flags around the country this year!







# Salute in Motion

*One Workout. 345 Reasons*



Formerly 137 Memorial Workout Challenge, the Salute in Motion event is still going strong, and there's plenty of time to join in! Hosted by the EOD Warrior Foundation, this nationwide CrossFit-style workout challenge invites the EOD Community, families, and supporters to stay active while honoring our fallen EOD Warriors.

Participants can complete the workout anywhere, solo, with a team, or at their local gym, and every rep, lift, and drop of sweat pays tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Track your progress, compete with others, and push yourself in true EOD fashion.

Each registrant receives an exclusive event T-shirt, and top individual and team performers will earn special prizes.

Don't miss your chance to be part of something meaningful. Salute in Motion continues through December 31st!

Register now at: <https://secure.ggiv.com/event/2025saluteinmotion/>

## EODWF Undergrad/Trade School Scholarship

The EOD Warrior Foundation is proud to offer scholarships to dependents of graduates of NAVSCOLEOD. Scholarship funds can be used towards colleges and universities, as well as trade and vocational schools. To learn more, and to see full eligibility requirements, please visit our website.

The Undergraduate/Trade School application window is open until **February 1, 2026**.

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



## EODWF Spouse Support Survey



The EOD Warrior Foundation is dedicated to supporting EOD Families. Your feedback will help us create programs and services that best meet your needs. Please scan the code above or go to the link below and take a few minutes to share your thoughts.

<https://forms.gle/KrLHr6rZQ9976mpY9>



## EOD Warrior Foundation Ambassador Honors General David H. Petraeus at Army Heritage Event

EOD Warrior Foundation Ambassador Henry VanNess had the honor of representing the Foundation at the Army Heritage Center Foundation Awards Dinner, where General David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army (Ret.), was recognized as a “Living Legend.”

In a proud moment for the EOD community, Henry presented General Petraeus with an EOD Warrior Foundation flag and challenge coin—a symbol of respect and gratitude for his enduring leadership and support of the military community.

“This was a true honor,” Henry shared. “General Petraeus embodies the spirit of service, sacrifice, and commitment that unites the EOD and greater military family.”

The EOD Warrior Foundation is proud to have been represented at this meaningful event, celebrating those who continue to inspire through a lifetime of dedication to country and service.



## Stories of Impact



“My family received some terrible news in the middle of 2024. My wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. We were driving 4 hours round trip every week for her treatment. When it came time to do her radiation, it was 6 weeks straight. This was extremely difficult to manage from a financial standpoint as well as others. The EOD Warrior Foundation came through in a huge way. Without their financial assistance, we would be in a very different place. The burden lifted by them can’t be put into words that would do it justice. I am forever grateful for their help and what they do to support EOD Techs and their families. I encourage everyone to give what you can to help this organization do the things they do. You can rest assured that it will be put to good use for an amazing cause.”

-Justin & Nancy Hart

Registration is \$30 at each plunge. Receive a Plunge Towel, support our programs, and have lots of fun!



## 2026 PLUNGES

*Brave the Cold. Honor the Brave.*

**THREE  
LOCATIONS!**

### **SPOTSYLVANIA COURTHOUSE, VA**

**FEB. 7**

Polar Bear Plunge  
Indian Acres Club of Thornburg  
6437 Morris Rd  
Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia

### **NICEVILLE, FL**

**FEB. 14**

Chilly Plunge  
Turkey Creek  
Hawks Landing entrance, W. College Blvd.  
Niceville, Florida

### **FORT BRAGG, NC**

**FEB. 21**

Break the Ice Plunge  
Seaforth Beach – Jordan Lake  
Pittsboro, North Carolina

**VISIT [EOD-WF.ORG/PLUNGES](https://eod-wf.org/plunges) FOR INFORMATION & TO REGISTER!**



## *Removing the Stigma*

a series of talks surrounding mental health



Mahalo to everyone who joined us for Removing the Stigma – Hawai'i, an event focused on raising awareness about traumatic brain injury (TBI) and its often unseen effects within the EOD Community. The discussion provided space for open conversation, education, and connection, helping illuminate the physical, psychological, and invisible burdens many of our warriors carry.

Attendees explored the importance of early intervention, recognizing symptoms, and building support systems that understand the unique challenges faced by EOD Technicians and their families. Coming together in this way helps reduce stigma and encourages those affected to seek help sooner.

We are grateful to our speakers, SFC Rory Ehle, Stephanie Rimroth, and Maj (Dr.) Anastasia Maletz, for sharing their expertise and personal perspectives. Their contributions added depth and meaning to the conversation.

A special thank you to 1LT Xavier Steinhart and the 303rd OD BN (EOD) for their outstanding support in making this event possible.

Together, we are helping remove the stigma and standing stronger for our EOD Warriors and their families.



# 2025 RAMPART RIDE



## Pedals, Purpose, and Record-Breaking Impact: Rampart Ride 2025

Rampart Ride 2025 rolled through Paso Robles with more heart and determination than ever—shattering fundraising records with over **\$70,000** raised for the EOD Warrior Foundation. Hosted once again by the incredible Leon and Cindy Tackitt of Tackitt Family Vineyards, this year's event brought together cyclists from across the country to ride for a mission far deeper than the miles.



From the Friday night welcome party to the final climb on Saturday, riders embraced every moment with grit, humor, and camaraderie. Team Orca Maritime led the charge, raising more than **\$24,000** and delivering unforgettable stories—including a rider who ran the last 8 miles after his bike failed, and another who casually added extra miles “just because.”

Thanks to Tackitt Family Vineyards' generosity, event expenses stayed under 4%, allowing nearly every dollar raised to directly support EOD Warriors and their families. As Leon shared, “Rampart 2025 was a resounding success... riders stepped up and really rocked the fundraising.”

The celebration continued post-ride with live music, sweeping vineyard views, and a community that showed up in full force to cheer, encourage, and remind riders what this event is truly about.

Every dollar raised strengthens the Foundation's ability to provide financial relief, mental health services, scholarships, retreats, and memorial support for the EOD Community. To every rider, donor, volunteer, and supporter - thank you for making Rampart Ride 2025 our most successful yet. **See you in 2026!**





# Meet our Staff!



Get to know the friendly faces behind the EOD Warrior Foundation! Each quarter, we'll introduce staff or board members who help support our mission.

## Meet Ashlee Steinhart!

Ashlee designs the newsletter, but don't worry, she didn't write this article!

Ashlee is the creative magic behind so many of the programs and posts you love. As our Marketing & Program Coordinator, she orchestrates scholarships, retreats, and all things social media & marketing, all while sprinkling in the kind of personality that makes every project more fun than the last.

Currently stationed in Hawaii (round 2!), Ashlee and her husband Xavier have been married for 18 adventurous years, 13 of those as an army EOD Family. Together they've tackled 7 duty stations, 3 awesome kids, and one very spoiled pup.

She holds degrees in Teaching, Digital Marketing, and Business Management.



Fun fact: From Warped Tour (that's right. She did music promo for WARPED TOUR!), to the Warrior Life, Ashlee knows how to make any event a blast.

In the office - or anywhere, really - Ashlee is that person: Bursting with creative ideas, turning simple plans into unforgettable experiences, making people laugh before she's even finished her morning energy drink.

Her spark is contagious, her imagination is endless, and her passion for the EOD Community is unmatched. Whether she's designing a retreat, recording a goofy team video, or writing a heartfelt tribute post, Ashlee shows up with joy, intention, and big "let's make it awesome" energy.

## Meet Brittany Younker!

Originally a farm girl from New Mexico, Brittany is still adjusting to Florida's humidity, but she's fully embracing her family, her community, and her new role as the Foundation's Financial Grants & Resources Coordinator.

Fun fact: Brittany married her husband Jon, an EOD Tech, twice. Their first ceremony was in Tennessee, followed by a full wedding on a cruise to Honduras!

With four stepsons (Ayden, Bryson, Carson, and Dedrick), her home is full of energy, humor, and nonstop teenage activity. The youngest two live with her and Jon in Florida, giving her a fast-paced introduction to "boy mom life."

Their two dogs (Jax and Pete) and two cats (Kenny and Jasper) add even more personality to the household, and all of them are male. Brittany hopes a baby girl might someday balance things out.

She also brings 12 years of Army service to the team. She enlisted at 17 as a Military Police officer, later commissioned into transportation, and eventually moved into logistics before a medical discharge. Her service gives her a strong connection to the EOD Family she now supports.

Outside the Foundation, Brittany and Jon run Dirty N Sturdy Fencing, a family business dedicated to building community in Niceville and beyond.



**Brittany Younker**



Financial Grants & Resources  
Coordinator



# Mental Health Pillar

## Inspiring Joy and Protecting Your Mental Health This Holiday Season

The holidays are often described as the “most wonderful time of the year,” but for many in the EOD community, they can also be a time of mixed emotions. The season can bring connection and celebration, but also stress, loneliness, or reminders of loved ones who can’t be with us. That’s why this year, the EOD Warrior Foundation encourages everyone to focus on protecting mental health and finding joy in small, meaningful ways.

### Give yourself permission to slow down.

It’s easy to feel pressure to make the holidays perfect, to attend every event, buy every gift, and be cheerful all the time. But joy doesn’t come from perfection; it comes from being present. Allow yourself moments of rest and reflection. Take a walk, watch a sunrise, or simply breathe deeply and let yourself just be.

### Reach out and reconnect.

Isolation can sneak up on anyone, especially during the holidays. If you’re struggling, know that you are not alone. Reach out to a fellow EOD Tech, family member, or friend. A simple conversation can make a world of difference, for both of you! And if you know someone who’s having a hard time, check in. Sometimes, a small gesture of care can remind someone they’re seen and valued.

### Focus on what truly matters.

The holidays aren’t about how much we spend or how much we do. They’re about connection, gratitude, and shared humanity. Try to find joy in the everyday moments: laughter at the dinner table, a phone call from an old teammate, or quiet time outdoors. These moments are what ground us and remind us that joy is still possible, even in difficult times.

### Ask for help when you need it.

Taking care of your mental health is a sign of strength. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or down, please reach out to a counselor, a trusted friend, or to the EOD Warrior Foundation. We’re here to support you with resources and community, no matter what this season brings.

As we move through the holidays, let’s remember that joy and mental health go hand in hand. By taking care of ourselves and one another, we create space for healing, hope, and connection within the EOD Family.



**From all of us at the EOD Warrior Foundation, we see you, we appreciate you, and we wish you peace, strength, and moments of true joy this holiday season and beyond.**



# EOD HOME BUYING

We are so excited to be working with EOD Home Buying! Between offering unmatched referral & lending services, they have it ALL to get you through the home buying/selling process! In addition to assisting EOD families across the country with their real estate needs, the Hamiltons generously donate 5% of their PERSONAL commission to the EOD Warrior Foundation.

Whether you need an agent to help you buy or sell your home, OR you need access to one of the nation's TOP lenders, they can assist you. Learn more about their nationwide network by visiting [www.eodhb.com](http://www.eodhb.com) or call them directly!

EOD Home Buying 850-366-3370  
The Hamilton Team 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.

