

The Blaster News

First Quarter 2026

Upcoming Events and Retreats

March

- March 14: EOD Concert, Niceville, FL
- March 14: Leprechaun 5K, 10K & 1M: Old Mill State Park, Fredericksburg, VA
- March 14: EODWF Flag Program Kick-off: San Antonio
- March 29: EOD Monthly Gathering, EOD Trivia: Niceville, FL

April

- April 11: Warriors Helping Warriors Bottling Party Tackitt Family Vineyards, San Miguel, CA

May

- May 1-2: EOD Memorial Weekend
- May 1: Annual EOD Golf Tournament: Fort Walton Beach, FL
- May 1: EOD Auction: Fort Walton Beach, FL
- May 2: 57th EOD Memorial Ceremony: NAVSCOLEOD, Niceville, FL
- May 2: EOD Chef Cookoff: Fort Walton Beach, FL
- May 2: 58th EOD Memorial Ball: Fort Walton Beach, FL
- May 16: Dash Through the Dirt 5k, 10k & Half, Potomac, MD
- May 23: National Wine Day 5k & 1 Miler, Delaplane, VA

EOD Memorial Weekend May 1 - 2, 2026

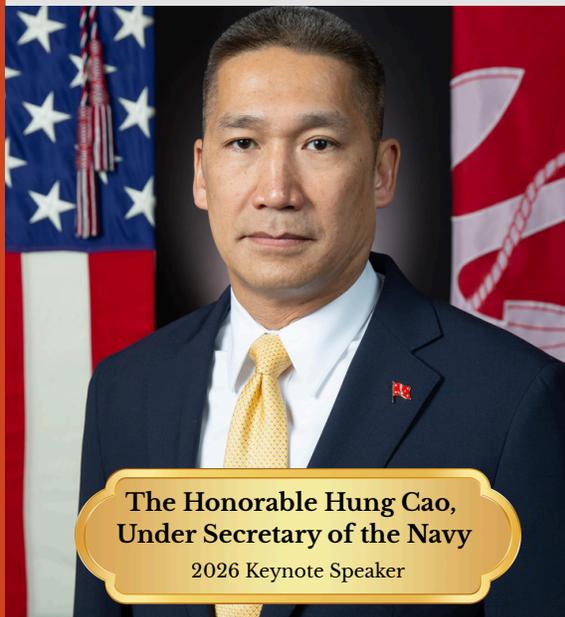
The EOD community will come together for the 2026 EOD Memorial Weekend, honoring our fallen, supporting our families, and strengthening the bonds that unite us.

The weekend begins Friday, May 1, with the Annual EOD Golf Tournament at Fort Walton Beach Golf Course, and wraps up that evening with the Annual EOD Auction at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center. We're always looking for unique auction items—donations can be mailed or dropped off at the EOD Warrior Foundation.

On Saturday, May 2, the heart of the weekend takes place with the EOD Memorial Ceremony at 9:00 a.m. at NAVSCOLEOD, honoring the brave technicians who made the ultimate sacrifice. Following the ceremony, join us for the EOD Chefs Cook Off at The Gulf on Okaloosa Island.

The weekend concludes with the EOD Memorial Ball at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center, featuring keynote speaker The Honorable Hung Cao, Under Secretary of the Navy, as we reflect, remember, and honor those who gave everything.

🎟️ Ticket sales are open: <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/2026EODBall>
Mark your calendars and plan to join us for a meaningful weekend of remembrance, camaraderie, and support for the EOD family.



**The Honorable Hung Cao,
Under Secretary of the Navy**
2026 Keynote Speaker

Your guide to...

EOD Weekend

Friday:

- Golf Tournament: Reg. 7 AM, Shotgun 8:30 AM
Fort Walton Beach Golf Course
- Auction: 6 PM (Doors open at 5 PM)
Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center

Saturday:

- 57th EOD Memorial Ceremony: 9 AM
NAVSCOLEOD - 8840 Range Rd, Niceville
- EOD Chefs Cook-Off: 11:30 AM - 3PM
The Gulf - 1284 Marler Ave, Fort Walton Beach
- 58th EOD Ball: 6 PM (Doors open at 4:30 PM)
Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center



Behind the Scenes

WHAT IT TAKES TO GET READY FOR EOD MEMORIAL WEEKEND

For most people, EOD Weekend begins the moment they cross over the bridge to Okaloosa Island. The uniforms worn with pride, the names we carry with us, the quiet moments of reflection, the reunions, the handshakes, the hugs that say more than words. What they don't always see is the care, coordination, and intention that happens long before those moments unfold.

EOD Weekend doesn't come together overnight. It's months – really, a full year – of planning, coordination, phone calls, spreadsheets, problem-solving, and people who care deeply about getting it right.



Honoring the Moment

Choosing keynote speakers, coordinating ceremonial elements, and ensuring the EOD Memorial itself is ready is a responsibility we never take lightly. Every name engraved represents a life, a family, a legacy. The weight of that responsibility is felt deeply by everyone involved.

When It All Comes Together

By the time EOD Weekend arrives, most of the work is already done—but the emotion is just beginning. The planning fades into the background, and what remains is connection. Remembrance. Community. That's the part we plan for. So when you attend EOD Weekend, know this: every detail you experience comes from countless hours of care, intention, and teamwork, all focused on honoring our fallen and bringing our community together.

We wouldn't have it any other way.

– Jerry



The People You Don't See

There's a small but mighty group of staff, volunteers, board members, partners, and supporters who make EOD Weekend happen. Many of them take time off work. Some travel across the country. Others quietly step in wherever they're needed – setting up chairs, answering questions, solving last-minute problems no one ever hears about.

They do it because this weekend matters.



EOD Weekend Sponsorship

While the EOD Golf, Auction and Ball are the high energy, fun, and exciting events of EOD Memorial Weekend, we never lose sight of the real reason we pause and gather on the first Saturday of every May: The EOD Memorial Ceremony, remembering those no longer gathering with us, and supporting their families and friends. This quiet, sacred event is one of the most meaningful 60 minutes of the yearly EOD Calendar. To ensure that everyone can watch and participate, we livestream the ceremony and make it available via recording for later viewing. The link for this video is found on our website and YouTube Channel.

In addition to the Livestream, we also provide supplies, chair covers, tenting, and carts for the EOD Memorial Ceremony.

To assist our Gold Star families, a lunch and program is provided on Friday and breakfast on Saturday before the Ceremony. These events allow families to gather, join together, share their experience, and have a quiet moment before proceeding to the Ceremony space.

Your help to fund these events is greatly appreciated! Direct sponsorship opportunities or to simply add a contribution to support these events may be found here:

<https://form-renderer-app.donorperfect.io/give/eod-warrior-foundation/2026-eod-weekend-sponsors>

This donation, like all donations, may also be made in tribute to someone.

Please contact Patricia at Patricia@eodwarriorfoundation.org or 770.375.8375 for additional information.



Sponsorship Opportunities

Gold Star
Breakfast

EOD Memorial
Ceremony (Carts
& Support)

EOD Memorial
Ceremony
(LiveStream)

EOD Memorial
Ceremony
(Tenting)

Gold Star
Luncheon

EODWF Strategic Planning 2026



In January, EOD Warrior Foundation's Board and staff gathered in Niceville, FL for our annual Strategic Planning. This time together gave us space for candid conversations, learning, and collaboration as we looked honestly at what's working, what we can improve, and how we continue showing up for the EOD Community.

We are deeply thankful to Catherine Morgan, founder of Inspire Bridges Consulting, for creating a thoughtful and supportive environment that encouraged connection and clarity, and to the [Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce](#) for graciously hosting us and making us feel at home.

For the 5th year, the EODWF will kick off the EOD Remembrance Flag Program in March! Thank you so much for all your support in helping to honor all EOD Techs through this program. The goal is to place an EOD Flag on the grave of all EOD Techs, regardless of branch, years of service, or cause of death. The program is now open and the map and the sign-up sheet may be found on our website.

This program is 100% free for volunteers and is made possible through the generous donation of Crescent Cities Charities!

For questions or to add a name to the EOD Flag database, please contact Patricia – Patricia@eodwarriorfoundation.org
<https://eod-wf.org/flag-program/>



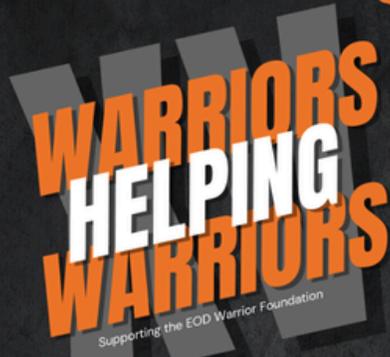
2026 - 2027 EOD Warrior Foundation Graduate Scholarship

The EOD Warrior Foundation is proud to offer graduate scholarships to eligible dependents of NAVSCOLEOD graduates. If you are a dependent of a NAVSCOLEOD graduate and are enrolled in, or planning to enroll in, an accredited graduate program, we encourage you to apply.



 Graduate Application Window: **March 1, 2026 – April 27, 2026**

To review full eligibility requirements and application details, please visit our website.



WARRIORS HELPING WARRIORS
Supporting the EOD Warrior Foundation

Bottling Party
April 11, 2026

Stone Fired Pizza, and Live music by WINE COUNTRY TROUBADOURS and ERIN & THE EARTHQUAKES
Tickets include a T-shirt, Wine Glass, and all-you-can-eat stone fired pizza!

TICKETS: \$50

Warriors Helping Warriors is celebrating its 15th year, supporting EODWF!

 Tackitt Family Vineyards // EOD Cellars
6640 Von Dollen Road, San Miguel, CA 93451
805.286.4266



REGISTER NOW!

EOD Memorial Golf: May 1, 2026

Registration includes:
18 Holes
Lunch
Goodie Bag



THANK YOU
PRESENTING SPONSOR:



EOD HOME BUYING

**WARRIORS
HELPING
WARRIORS**
Supporting the EOD Warrior Foundation

**EOD WARRIOR
FOUNDATION™**

\$50,000 MATCH

Now through April 11, every donation will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$50,000.

Turn \$50K into \$100k!

Stand with those who've stood for us.
Donate Today. Double Your Impact.

This spring, your generosity can go twice as far in support of EOD warriors and their families. Through the **Warriors Helping Warriors \$50K Match**, every donation made to the EOD Warrior Foundation will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$50,000, effectively doubling the impact of your gift. EOD technicians put their lives on the line in service to our nation, and many face long-term challenges after their service ends. The EOD Warrior Foundation is committed to ensuring these heroes and their loved ones receive essential support when it matters most. With this generous matching opportunity, your donation helps provide critical assistance, preserves the EOD legacy, and honors the bravery and sacrifice of those who served.

Whether you give now to support programs for wounded, ill, or fallen EOD warriors or contribute in honor of someone special, your gift will have double the impact thanks to this match. Visit the donation page to contribute and turn your generosity into double the hope, support, and difference for the EOD community.



<http://weblink.donorperfect.com/2026WHWMATCH>

EOD Auction

Friday, May 1st

Destin - Fort Walton Beach Convention Center

Every year, the EOD Warrior Foundation brings together former and current EOD Techs and their families from across the country, and sometimes around the world, for an unforgettable event. The annual Auction is a testament to the incredible generosity of our community, raising vital support for EOD Techs and their families. The auction floor buzzes with excitement as bidders compete for everything from beautiful quilts and unique artwork to rare EOD memorabilia. But beyond the bidding wars, it's the sense of camaraderie and connection that truly makes this event special.

The 2026 Auction, set for May 1st at 6:00 PM, promises another evening filled with cherished reunions, friendly competition, and the chance to take home extraordinary items—all while supporting a powerful cause.



Donating an Auction Item

EOD Shops, businesses and individuals have donated many items over the years that have been incredibly successful including:

Unit's EOD Challenge Coin
Coin racks

EOD paraphernalia/gear

EOD furniture, poker chips, poker table, trailer hitch covers,
cups, mugs, etc.

Blasting Machines (old, new, unique, replicas)

EOD Badges/Patches: U.S. and Foreign

Handcrafted EOD-related items: Quilts, Stained Glass,
clocks, art

Sports memorabilia

Experience Packages: Getaways, adventures, dining
opportunities

**Please send items to:
EODWF, Attn: Auction
716 Crestview Ave
Niceville, FL 32578**

Please include an **item info sheet** with each donation!



If you're donating an auction item in person on May 1, please deliver it to the convention center by 3 PM. Items received after 3 PM will be included in the 2027 auction. Thank you for your understanding.

Mental Health Pillar

Understanding Suicide Risk in the EOD Community: What the Research Shows

Our recent suicide research survey, led by Dr. David Wood, shows us that suicide risk within the EOD community is not random. Instead, there are identifiable trends, patterns in thoughts and experiences that are contributing to increased risk.

The research highlighted four primary risk factors:

- **Perceived Burdensomeness** – Feeling like you are a burden to others.
- **Thwarted Belongingness** – Feeling disconnected or isolated.
- **Moral Injury** – Carrying unresolved guilt, shame, or emotional weight from events experienced in service.
- **Acquired Capability** – A reduced fear of pain or death due to repeated exposure to danger.

Over the next few quarters, we will take a deeper look at each of these. This quarter, we begin with Perceived Burdensomeness.

When Someone Feels Like a Burden

Perceived burdensomeness does not mean someone is actually a burden. It means they believe they are. Thoughts like:

- “My family would be better off without me.”
- “I’m just causing stress.”
- “I’m more of a liability than an asset.”

These thoughts can quietly distort how someone sees their value. In a community built on competence, strength, and mission-focus, struggling can feel like failure. That perception alone can be incredibly powerful. When someone begins to believe they are a liability to their family, their friends, or their mission, it can distort their sense of value and belonging. Needing help does not make someone a burden, it makes them human.

One of the most protective factors against this mindset is *connection and direct conversation*. Research shows that simply asking someone directly how they are doing, and listening without trying to fix or minimize can significantly reduce isolation and distorted thinking.

What Can Help

If you notice these thoughts in yourself:

- Share honestly with one trusted person.
- Challenge the thought by asking: "What evidence do I have that I'm a burden?"
- Reconnect with purpose, even in small ways (mentoring, volunteering, checking in on another tech).

The Goal:

Recognizing these thoughts isn't just about awareness, it's about taking action for your own well-being. By identifying when you feel like a "burden," you gain the tools to challenge that narrative and reconnect with your true value.

Resources

If you or someone you know is struggling, confidential help is available:

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – Call or text 988 (24/7 confidential support)
- Veterans Crisis Line – Dial 988 and press 1
- After the Long Walk (EOD Peer Support – 24/7) – 1-888-412-0470
- Local behavioral health providers.

If you would like more information about this research or available support resources, please contact michelle@eodwarriorfoundation.org.

To read the full article by Dr. David Wood, visit this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/3f4hrdh9>

Seeking support is not weakness, it is a protective action for yourself, your family, and the EOD community.



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 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 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.

