





**MISSION:** Warrior Expeditions is a veteran nonprofit outdoor therapy program that helps veterans heal from their wartime experiences through long-distance outdoor expeditions.

**BACKGROUND:** Historically, military units would experience a lengthy journey home after fighting a campaign abroad. During this journey home, warriors would process and come to terms with their wartime experiences. In today's age of modern transportation, military personnel can find themselves at home within a few days of serving in a combat zone.

In 1948, Earl Shaffer told a friend he was going to "walk off the war" to work out the sights, sounds, and losses of World War II. Four months later, Shaffer became the first person to hike the entire length of the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine.

Since 2001, over 3 million veterans have returned home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but many of them have never transitioned from their experiences. The Department of Veteran Affairs estimates that over 20% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In 2012, after returning home from three combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Marine Corps veteran Sean Gobin hiked all 2,185 miles of the Appalachian Trail. Recognizing the therapeutic effects of long-distance hiking, Sean founded Warrior Expeditions.

**WARRIOR HIKE PROGRAM:** In 2013, Warrior Expeditions launched the Warrior Hike program that traverses the entire length of the **Appalachian Trail**.

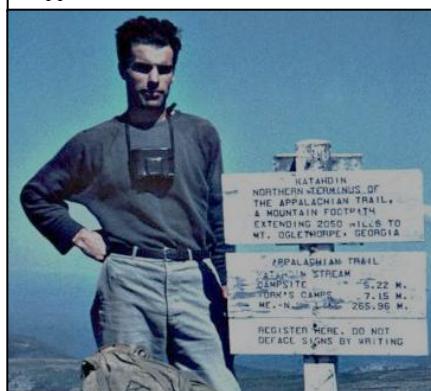
**WARRIOR PADDLE PROGRAM:** In 2015, to accommodate veterans with injuries that may prevent them from hiking long distances, Warrior Expeditions launched the Warrior Paddle adaptive program that traverses the entire length of the **Mississippi River**.

**WARRIOR BIKE PROGRAM:** In 2016, to accommodate veterans with injuries that may prevent them from hiking long distances, Warrior Expeditions launched the Warrior Bike adaptive program that now traverses the entire length of the **Great American Rail Trail**.

Soldiers marching home from the battlefield during WWI.

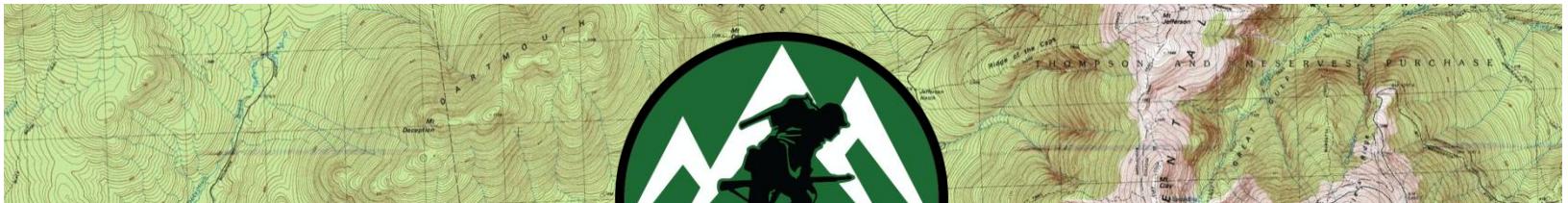


Earl Schaffer thru hiking the Appalachian Trail in 1948.



Sean Gobin thru hiking the Appalachian Trail in 2012.





**PROGRAMS:** In 2025 Warrior Expeditions offered 3 programs (Warrior Hike, Warrior Bike, Warrior Paddle), comprised of 3 long-distance trails that vary in duration from 3 to 6 months to complete. Warrior Expeditions also hosted an alumni reunion designed to reestablish camaraderie through outdoor activities.

#### **WARRIOR HIKE**

-The Appalachian Trail is 2,200 miles long and crosses 14 states from Georgia to Maine.

#### **WARRIOR BIKE**

-The Great American Rail Trail is 3,800 miles long and crosses 12 states from D.C. to Washington.

#### **WARRIOR PADDLE**

-The Mississippi River is 2,300 miles long and crosses 10 states from Minnesota to Louisiana.

#### **WARRIOR REUNION**

-Roanoke, Virginia hosted this year's Warrior Expeditions Alumni Reunion. Veterans gathered for 3 days of hiking, biking, and paddling along the Roanoke Greenways and Blueways. Additionally, veterans had an opportunity to connect and establish camaraderie with other veterans who have participated in past Warrior Expeditions programs.

**SUPPORT:** Warrior Expeditions provides veterans with everything they need to complete a long-distance outdoor expedition at no cost to the veteran.

**EQUIPMENT, CLOTHING AND SUPPLIES:** Warrior Expeditions outfits veterans with some of the most highly rated equipment, clothing and supplies available from the outdoor retail industry.

**TRAINING AND ORIENTATION:** Warrior Expeditions provides the gear and skills training needed to successfully complete an expedition and shadows veterans during the first leg of their journey.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT:** Warrior Expeditions coordinates logistical support in the forms of transportation, lodging and food from community volunteers located along the trail routes.

2025 Warrior Hike Veteran  
Rebecca Baker completing the  
2,200 mile Appalachian Trail.



2025 Warrior Bike Veteran  
Michael Owens completing the  
3,800 mile Great American Rail Trail.



2025 Warrior Paddle Veteran  
Joseph Nichols completing the  
2,300 mile Mississippi River.



## APPALACHIAN TRAIL

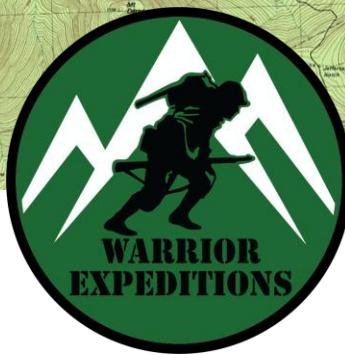


## GREAT AMERICAN RAIL TRAIL



## MISSISSIPPI RIVER





**QUALITATIVE IMPACTS:** Since 2013, Warrior Expeditions veterans have reported significant improvements in their physical, mental, and social well-being during and after their journeys.

**CONTEMPLATION:** During their 3–6-month outdoor expedition, veterans have the opportunity to decompress from their military service and come to terms with their wartime experiences.

**CAMARADERIE:** Veterans participating in Warrior Expeditions programs experience their journey with the camaraderie of other veterans who understand the challenges of transitioning from military service to civilian life.

**COMMUNITY:** Interaction with community supporters during their journey facilitates a veteran's reintegration into society, restores their faith in humanity, and builds a network of life-long friendships and relationships.

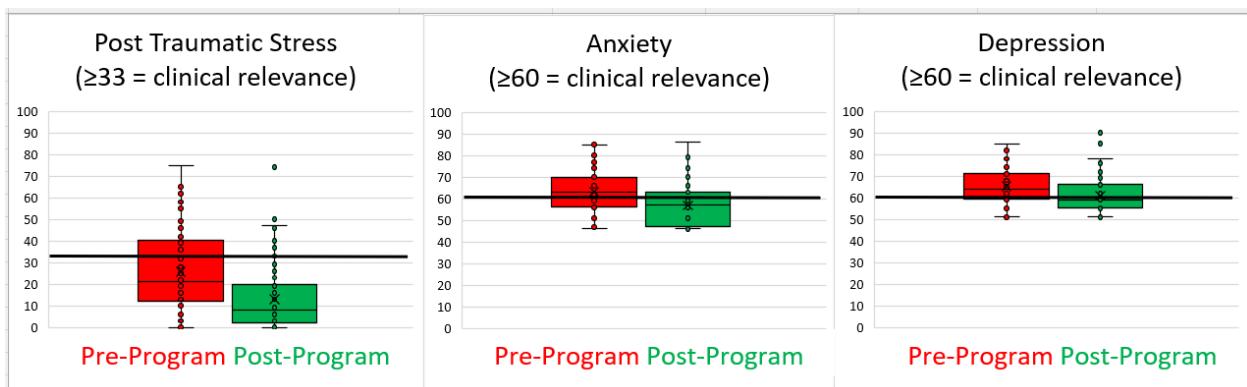
**QUANTITATIVE IMPACTS:** Since 2013, psychologists Dr. Shauna Joye (Air Force veteran) and Dr. Zachary Dietrich (Marine Corps veteran) have partnered with Warrior Expeditions to research and publish the effects of long-term wilderness experiences on combat veterans.

**METHODS:** Each year, Warrior Expeditions veterans volunteer to complete surveys before and after their journeys to measure the program impact on their mental health. They also receive weekly email strategies based on the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy framework to help normalize post combat reactions.

**MEASURES:** Warrior Expeditions uses two standardized measures of psychopathology:

1. The PCL-5 is a 20-item self-report measure that assesses Post Traumatic Stress according to the DSM-5 with clinical relevance scores recommended by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
2. The SA-45 is a 45-item self-report measure that assesses the 9 Symptom Domain Scales of General Psychiatric Symptomatology, and scores are compared to norms of an outpatient clinical population.

**OUTCOMES:** The graphs below represent the positive mental health changes of PTSD, anxiety and depression reported by Warrior Expeditions veterans at the completion of their journeys. For more information, please visit: <https://warriorexpeditions.org/impact/quantitative-impacts/>





## JOEDY VANVELZEN

### 2025 WARRIOR HIKE VETERAN

"This was one of the most physically challenging things I have ever completed, and the mental and emotional demands made me a stronger person. I've grown physically, mentally and emotionally over the last 147 days. I've tested my body to the limit and am probably as physically fit as I have ever been. It can be peaceful but also gives you a lot of time to self-reflect. It gave me the opportunity to focus without distraction on all the things I've done, all the people I have met, and all the events that have shaped my life. Yes, this is definitely a life changing event. The last six months have made me a better person."



## BRADLEY HAGSTROM

### 2025 WARRIOR BIKE VETERAN

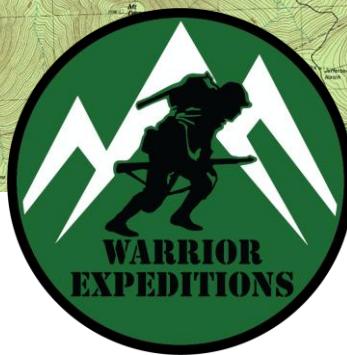
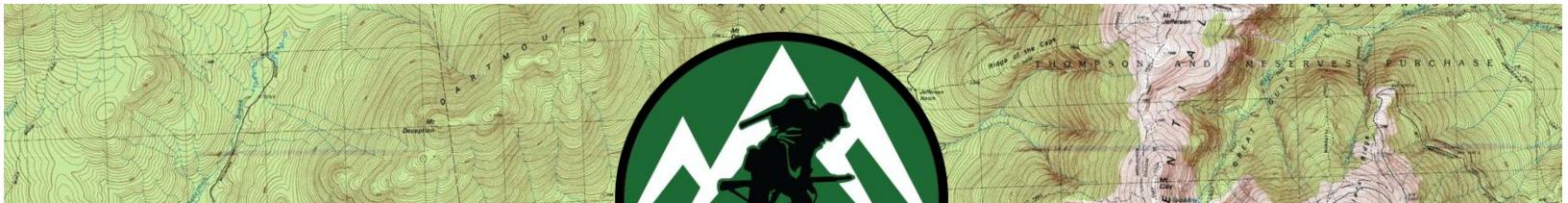
"Physically I feel like I can do whatever I put my mind to and I've needed that ever since I was medically retired with a broken body. It took me 10 years to get back and this was the test I needed and completion felt amazing. Probably the best part of the trip was just being with "the boys" and having other veterans around. The magic for me was random encounters and unexpected support from locals. Most of the supporters were great and offered unbelievable hospitality and generosity. I'm not much for social interaction just because it's hard for me to relate to most people based on my life experiences but I did have some growth in that area for sure."



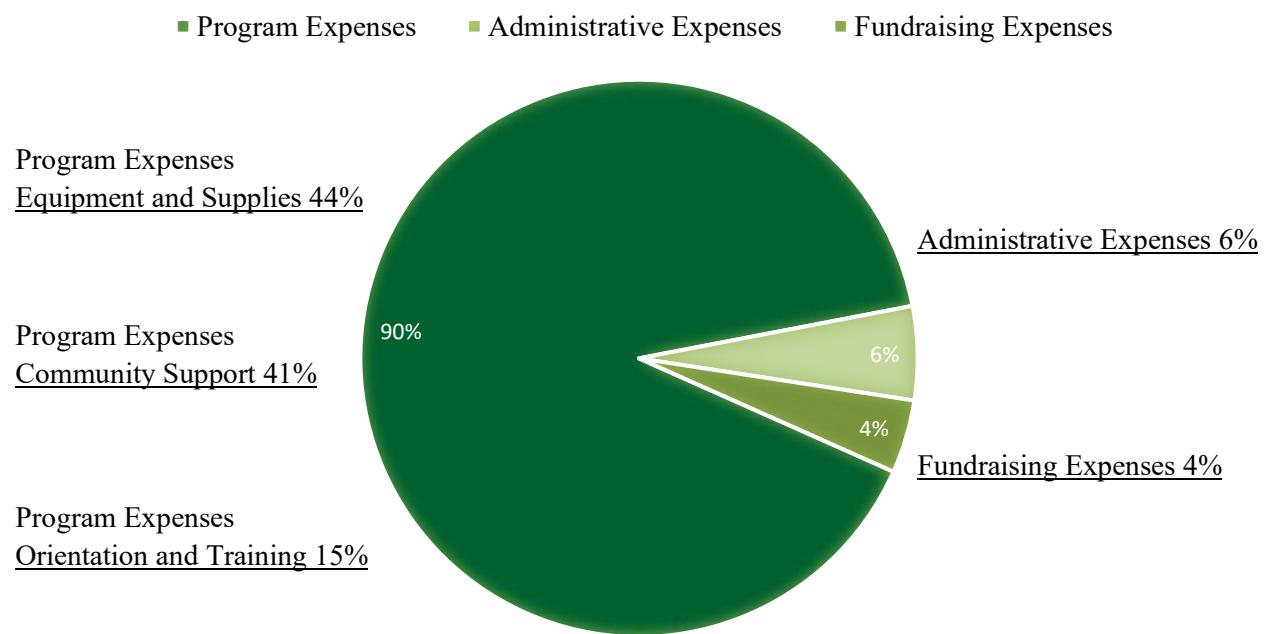
## CASEY LUDEWIG

### 2025 WARRIOR PADDLE VETERAN

"It's helped me quite a bit in a lot of different aspects. My anxiety's gone down, actually getting out and talking to more people and also, just my sleep's gotten better because of the fact of, you know, nature and just being out in the wilderness. My favorite part is meeting and learning from all the supporters on the way down the Mississippi, but also it's meeting these other gentlemen I've never met before, learning from them, learning more about myself, and reflecting on a lot of the different issues that I've had in my life since I came back from Iraq."



**FINANCES:** In **2025** Warrior Expeditions provided **\$477,629** worth of support to **31** veterans who participated in **3** Warrior Hike, Warrior Bike, and Warrior Paddle expeditions. Warrior Expeditions ensured that **90%** of every dollar donated directly supported the veterans enrolled in our programs.



**COST PER VETERAN:** In **2025** Warrior Expeditions provided approximately **\$15,407** worth of support per veteran per expedition.

**IN-KIND COST: \$5,519** In-kind cost includes equipment, clothing and supplies donated by our **25** sponsors and transportation, lodging, and food donated by our **204** community supporters.

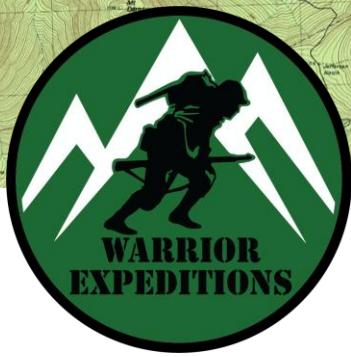
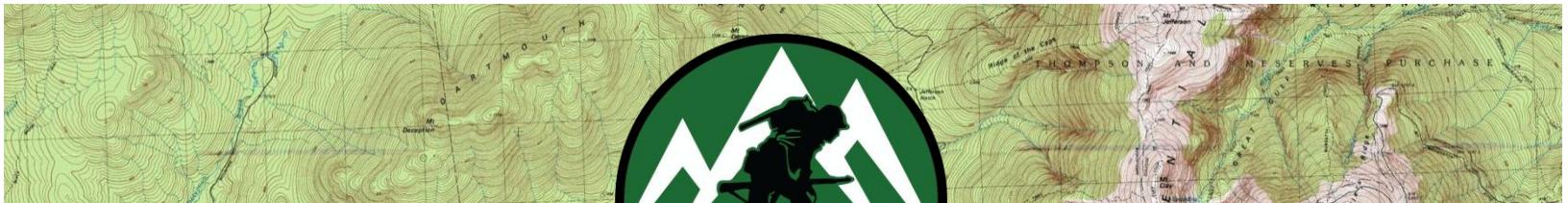
**CASH COST: \$9,888** Cash cost includes the purchase of remaining required items not provided by our in-kind donors and the cost of training and orientation packages provided to each veteran.

**DONORS:** Warrior Expeditions offers three ways donors can support our veterans:

**CASH DONATIONS:** Cash donations to purchase outdoor equipment, clothing, and supplies to outfit our Warrior Expeditions veterans during their journey.

**CORPORATE SPONSORS:** In-kind donations of outdoor equipment, clothing, and supplies to outfit our Warrior Expeditions veterans during their journey.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT:** In-kind donations of transportation, lodging, and food to host Warrior Expeditions veterans during their journey.



### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Sean Gobin is a United States Marine Corps veteran who served 12 years as an Infantry Rifleman and Armor Officer. After returning home from deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Sean hiked the Appalachian Trail. In 2013, Sean founded Warrior Expeditions and now serves as the Executive Director.

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### DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION:

Angela Miller is a United States Navy veteran who served 20 years as a Line Officer and Judge Advocate. After volunteering with Warrior Expeditions in various capacities since 2014, Angela now serves as the Director of Administration.

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### DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT:

Michelle Revoir is a United States Air Force veteran who served 11 years as a Videographer and Aerial Combat Broadcaster. After returning home from deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Michelle hiked the Appalachian Trail, the Mountains to Sea Trail, and paddled the Mississippi River with Warrior Expeditions. In 2015, Michelle began volunteering with Warrior Expeditions and now serves as the Director of Development.

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### DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS:

Sarah Zeller is a former Senior Project Geologist with The Moultrie Group in Brisbane, Australia. After volunteering with Warrior Expeditions in various capacities since 2014, Sarah now serves as the Director of Operations.

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