



WARRIOR

BONFIRE PROGRAM

**A PLACE FOR PURPLE HEARTS TO
FIND CAMARADERIE, SUPPORT
AND HEALING, AT THE BONFIRE.**



"We made it through the war, and at Warrior Bonfire Program, they're making sure we make it through the rest of our life."

- PURPLE HEART PATRICK G.

Our program works specifically with Purple Heart recipients—those service members injured in combat at the hand of the enemy.

**SINCE 9/11
APPROXIMATELY
7,500**

PURPLE HEART MEDALS have been received by men and women across all branches of service.

"What better way is there to help a wounded veteran feel, once again, like they are part of a community than for members of the civilian community to welcome and host them on a weekend retreat?"

- WBP V.P. HELEN PHILLIPS

WARRIORBONFIREPROGRAM.ORG

Our Mission

A traumatic experience for anyone can be challenging but a prolonged traumatic experience occurring over months or years will have devastating consequences. Combat wounded veterans have to cope and manage, mental, emotional and physical pain for decades. Warrior Bonfire Program provides support that improve the lives of combat wounded veterans on their lifelong journey of recovery and healing.

Who We Are

The Warrior Bonfire Program (WBP) brings together warriors wounded in combat to provide stress-free, safe, and secure settings designed to address the traumas sustained during combat. The goal is to foster healing, build support communities, and transform lives.

Because of our clear-cut scope, our veteran members feel safe and confident while sharing intimate information and experiences, and our supporters, donors and volunteers are assured their efforts are focused where it is most needed.

We are a nationwide community of veterans, civilians, business owners, foundations, and volunteers that donate the use of their funds, private properties, and resources to facilitate small group retreats for our combat-wounded veterans.

Who We Serve & What We Do

Most Purple Heart veterans were immediately pulled out of service after being injured. Many of their injuries require multiple surgeries and decades of medical support, which in turn stresses marriages, support systems, and mental well being. Their life-long career choice abruptly changed and a new purpose must be discovered.

Our objective is to foster healing, build supportive communities, and transform lives. We create a bridge between individual clinical therapies and large veteran gatherings. We offer a healthy and safe place to integrate civilian and military communities.

We embrace and encourage building strong family and community relationships. We address the troublesome aspects of being a Purple Heart veteran: depression, contemplation of death by suicide, isolation, loss of purpose, physical limitations, survivors' guilt, and community reintegration.



“Even though it looks like we’re just messing around having fun, but to have that kind of exhilaration without the cost of death or war associated with it is part of our healing.”

- PURPLE HEART TONY D

We foster healing.

The Warrior Bonfire Program’s primary purpose is to help Purple Heart veterans begin healing the invisible wounds of combat.

Bonfire Retreat participant, Matt M., survived an IED blast, eventually lost both legs, his wife, and his sense of value as a man. At one point, he came dangerously close to death by suicide. However, traveling with the Warrior Bonfire Program, he learned that he was not alone. As an amputee he re-learned to ski and is now a member of the Utah Paralympic team, and a motivational speaker on veterans’ issues. Through the support of WBP, Matt embraced healing in many aspects of life. He learned not only how to navigate physical life as an amputee, but he also became inspired to share his story and help other veterans.

Ned M. also severely injured in an IED attack in Iraq, suffered severe burns over most of his body, lost his left hand, and damaged both legs and his right hand. Doctors projected he would never walk again. His wife divorced him, took away his daughter, and left Ned utterly broken. In 2017, Ned participated in a Bonfire Surfing Retreat in California. “It was an awesome experience in my life, and it definitely moved me beyond any measures to know that I am worth it,” Ned later shared. In 2018, Ned trained for the Bataan Memorial Death March as part of the Warrior Bonfire Team. On completing the 26.2-mile march through the desert he said, “I trained the best I could the past 3 months, and that helped me achieve one of the greatest accomplishments in my second life.” He moves forward in life with renewed hope thanks to the camaraderie and safe place to share his thoughts found through WBP.



“The emotional and mental turmoil I had tried to deal with alone has become far easier to deal with now that I’ve spent time with others dealing with similar issues in an environment where all are equal and open to sharing.

It’s a blessing.”

- PURPLE HEART JOE M.

We build support communities.

The second purpose of our program is to help Purple Heart veterans find a sense of community in which they thrive.

Greg W. sustained a significant traumatic brain injury and a multitude of physical injuries when a rocket-propelled grenade exploded at close range. Medically retired for his wounds. Greg sought various forms of therapy and treatment, none of which filled the void of his military unit family. He struggled daily with the simplest tasks and suffered from horrific nightmares. One day Greg commented to Dan, the founder of Warrior Bonfire, that he could spend a full day with a Ph.D. certified counselor and not come close to the therapeutic value of sitting around a bonfire with others who had experienced similar traumas. This comment inspired Dan to create a program that would serve Greg and others like him. Today Greg is happily married and has built a church in Georgia.



We transform lives.

The third purpose of our program is to help Purple Heart veterans transform the way they interact with the world.

Allen P.'s mother recognized he wasn't the same person when he returned from combat. She realized he had PTSD, and she didn't feel he was managing it well. In 2015 Allen cautiously attended a Bonfire Retreat hunt supported by a large number of Texas volunteers. To his surprise, he was welcomed into a community that understood and supported him. Allen lost several military brothers in a multitude of graphic combat encounters and struggled profoundly with survivor's guilt. Allen attended five Bonfire Retreats. With each flag retirement ceremony, he emotionally shed a portion of his guilt each time. Allen shared that after the 5th bonfire, he experienced his first-day post-combat, guilt-free. Today, Allen is the Vice Chairman of the WBP Board of Directors, a business owner, and very active in his community.



"The Bonfire ceremony helped me by bringing peace with those who I couldn't be there for and at their funeral.

- PURPLE HEART MAXIMO M.





Warrior Bonfire Programs

The Warrior Bonfire Program provides small group retreats that are activity-based, to promote camaraderie and therapeutic healing. We serve Purple Heart recipients and their spouses from all over the United States, offering a wide variety of activities and travel throughout the country.

All Bonfire Retreats conclude with our signature Bonfire American Flag Retirement Ceremony, which help our veterans move past the stage of survivors' guilt by allowing them to name, honor and memorialize their fallen brothers and sisters.

BONFIRE ADVENTURE RETREATS are multi-day events comprised of six Purple Hearts, active duty and veteran, men and women service members. Retreats incorporate recreational and group therapies. These retreats encompass activities designed to foster camaraderie, physical achievement, and an overall healthy mindset.

STRONG HEART SPOUSES RETREATS, are retreats to help energize and motivate the treasured caregivers of our modern-day heroes and full of rest and relaxation. These retreats are designed to provide a support community to talk, listen, and learn from each other. They also gain a greater understanding of what the veteran receives from attending retreats.

STRONG HEARTS COUPLE RETREATS are designed to promote healthier relationships for the veteran and his or her partner in life. These retreats follow the same structure as our Bonfire Adventure Retreats but with a focus on cultivating quality time together. Many Purple Heart veterans experience struggles in their relationships, and being around others with similar challenges helps bring clarity, understanding, and positive change.

BONFIRE WARRIORS RETREAT LEADER PROGRAM is for those who've attended multiple Bonfire Retreats and have identified that they are ready to be part of the solution and help other members. These warriors are trained to lead Bonfire Retreats, organize new retreats, provide peer to peer support, represent as speakers, network, fundraise, and serve the organization in various capacities. Our Bonfire Warriors see this as a new way to serve their country and fellow service members.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS are in the design phase. We look forward to developing a transition program to help veterans, post-retreat, fully integrate with their local community. We also look forward to offering more spouse and couple retreats to curb the growing number of divorces.

"I didn't think I would be able to last the whole day golfing. This is the most I have walked on my prosthetic, and I feel good!"

- PURPLE HEART JUSTIN R.



How to Get Involved

By being a hero to Warrior Bonfire, you are indeed a hero to our Purple Heart veterans. Our programs change lives. Our programs save lives. If you're inspired by what we offer, we would appreciate your financial support. We are a 501(c)3 organization.

When a veteran decides to join us, she or he registers through our website and provides official documentation showing Purple Heart status. At that time, interest in retreats is indicated, and the veteran is placed in the first available retreat. Once a retreat is confirmed, our team begins to make all travel plans and oversees their entire travel until safely home. All retreats are at zero cost to the participant, and veterans may attend as many retreats as desired or needed.

MULTIPLE WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE



SPONSORSHIP

Support a retreat or a veteran, host a fundraiser, contribute a lump sum, or contribute monthly.



IN-KIND DONATIONS

Connect us with those who can offer lodging or activities.



MARKETING RECIPROCITY

Display your logo on warriorbonfireprogram.org and share our mission through your marketing resources.

All of our programs require funding.
An outline of costs is as follows:



\$10,000-\$15,000

1 Bonfire Retreat for Six Purple Heart Warriors



\$1,500-\$2,500

1 Bonfire Retreat for 1 Purple Heart Warrior

We always welcome support in any form whether it's through introductions to influencers for growth opportunities, administrative resources, or connections to services for veteran issues. We welcome assistance with hunting and fishing licenses, golf course fees, ski tickets, and other travel expenses. Lastly, we benefit from having the community help connect us with Purple Heart veterans to serve.

WARRIOR BONFIRE BY THE NUMBERS



7,500

Post 9/11 Purple Hearts Nationwide

OVER 350

Warrior Bonfire Members



700

AND CLIMBING
Veteran Opportunities Provided

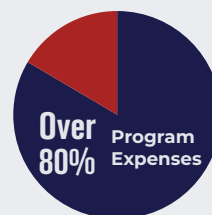
NEARING

150

Total Program Events

95%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAY THE BONFIRE HAD A **POSITIVE** **+ IMPACT** ON THEIR LIVES



NET OPERATING REVENUE

Program Expenses to Total Expenses

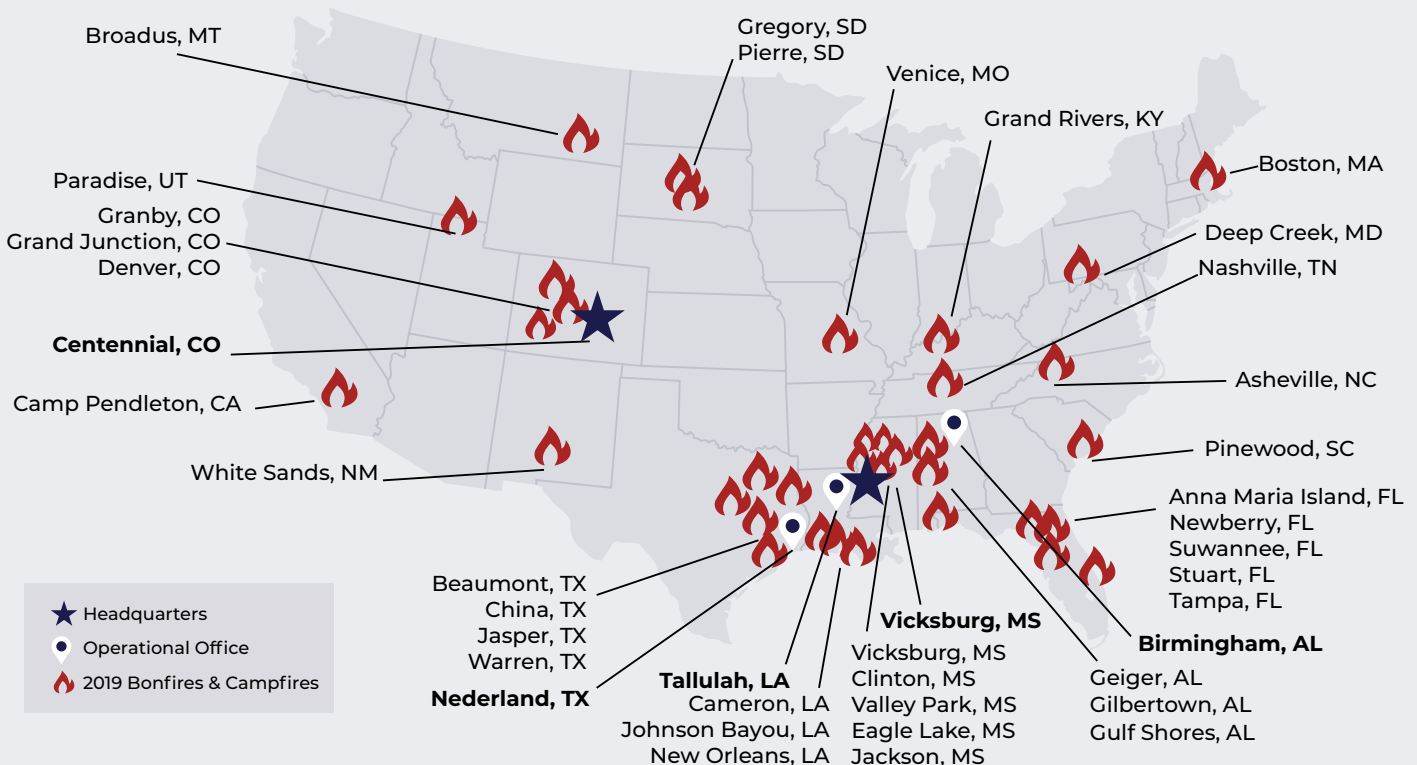
OUR HISTORY

In 2012, Veterans Dan and Hunter Fordice hosted a group of combat wounded veterans at their hunting lodge in response to the need that SFC (RET. USA) Charles Gregory Williams, stated how sitting around a bonfire with five or six others with traumas like him, had more therapeutic value than spending a full day with a Ph.D. certified counselor.

At this deer hunt they quickly realized this was far more significant than an ordinary hunt. Purple Heart Mike C., stated, "You're not just taking six guys on a hunt, you're saving six guys lives!"



WARRIOR BONFIRE PROGRAM LOCATIONS



What started out as simply pulling together small groups of veterans to hunt, fish or ski, has evolved into something that makes an actual difference in the lives of those the organization serves. What the Warrior Bonfire Program provides for our veterans is actually very simple. We bring people together, to divide the pain and multiply the joy. This is the healing among those of similar traumatic experiences.

The brotherhood and sisterhood that develops around the Bonfire does not end at the Bonfire; participants keep in touch and watch out for each other after the event as well. As one Purple Heart put it, "There is nothing like sitting one on one with fellow brothers for hours in attendance just counseling one another."

Thank you for your interest in the Warrior Bonfire Program. Whether you are or want to be a donor, a volunteer, or a supporter of the organization, your interest and participation serves our nation's Purple Heart recipients. Thank you.

WarriorBonfireProgram.org • 769-230-0789

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