



**AIR WARRIOR COURAGE FOUNDATION (AWCF)
ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2023**

**AWCF, P.O. Box 877
Silver Spring, MD 20918**

www.airwarriorcourage.org

**AIR WARRIOR COURAGE FOUNDATION (AWCF)
(Wounded Warrior Emergency Support Fund)**

"Where Camaraderie and Caring Continue"

ANNUAL REPORT FY 2023

Mission: The Air Warrior Courage Foundation was formed by military aviators to "care for our own." We work closely with the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association to do that. We focus on active duty, guard, reserve, and retired military personnel and their families needing financial assistance for emergency medical, educational, and other extraordinary expenses not covered by other military, veterans', or charitable institutions.

In time of war and peace, members of our military and their families safeguard our freedoms. Caring for their brothers and sisters in combat and for their families – including the families of comrades who never came home - is a proud tradition followed by Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. In that tradition, Air Warrior Courage Foundation (AWCF) was formed in 1998 by members of the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association (River Rats) to help with financial problems of warriors (primarily military aviators, Wounded Warriors, and their families) of an emergency nature or that fall beyond government support. We continue that mission today.

- ***AWCF has been named a "Best in America" by Independent Charities of America (independentcharities.org) each year since 2006.***
- ***In FY 2023 AWCF was awarded its tenth consecutive highest rating of Four Stars by Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org).***

AWCF, aka Wounded Warrior Emergency Support Fund, spends 97.2% of the funds we raise directly on our programs in aid of our military beneficiaries. In FY 2022 we spent \$626,225. Since our founding, we have spent over \$10,000,000 to help our military beneficiaries and their families. Though the wars we now fight are not always on the nightly news, there remain many needs that are not met by appropriated funds. Organizations like AWCF play a vital role in ensuring that our military members and their families are supported as they should be.

During FY 2023, AWCF raised \$771,059 to fund our programs. With those funds we:

- **Continued to support Wounded Warriors at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda, MD and Fort Belvoir, VA and at San Antonio Military Medical Center (SAMMC) in San Antonio, TX.**
- **Provided Emergency Cash Grants to individuals and families nation wide. This does not include the WRNMMC and SAMMC cash grants that are reported separately.**
- **Provided Therapeutic Riding for 222 medically challenged active duty dependents in 17 programs in 16 states.**
- **Assisted 6 children with IRS College Savings Plans (529 Plans) who are dependents of aircrew killed in combat or training aircraft accidents.**

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

I am proud to relate that Charity Navigator, under its new rating system still has the AWCF as a 4 Star Charity. 97% of our income still goes to our programs. That data was based on our last year's IRS Form 990.

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In other programs that will show more of an increase, during this past year, the AWCF has provided almost \$60K in Lorentzen Grants for the various universities. This includes 63 recipients at 24 universities and Airman from Vance AFB and Tinker AFB. We also provided \$30,000.00 to the RRVA scholarship fund. The funds have come out of the interest earned on investments. The Lorentzen corpus has not been touched. The Therapeutic Riding Program provided support to 228 riders.

This year our Heartland team did a "deep dive" into High Schools. Chuck's efforts with Edmond North's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program in concert with Air Force Association is a major player in the Edmond Public School system to reinforce higher education. Sloniker has worked with Guthrie High Schools Army JR ROTC program headed by Oklahoma Army River Rat, Kyle Brede to highly encourage the juniors and seniors to look at an opportunity to achieve Army College ROTCs scholarships. We provided 2 X \$1000 education grants to the first two who will be attending OSU. This is a first attempt to "bridge" them into higher education.

The AWCF is also working with the River Rats on its Aviator Medical Issues Committee (AMIC) program. On 9 May 2023, Aztec and I met with the Congressman from Omaha NE District 2, Don "Bits" Bacon, retired AF B/G and River Rat, to discuss the medical issues the AMIC is working. Bits gave his full support and will be a voice in Congress to make things happen to help in the cancer and the High-G Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) problems.

If you have ideas/suggestions/donations that will help us to expand our efforts even further. You may contact us at www.airwarriorcourage.org.

Thank you for your continuing support

David Brog, Executive Director

AWCF PROGRAMS

AWCF coordinates both financial assistance and service to the programs that are identified below. We work through official representatives of military commands and the Veterans Administration. The River Rats and their families and friends provide most of the manpower to help with projects and programs. We also partner with other non-profits when together we can provide more help. In the following sections you can see specific information (and photos) of what we've been doing this past year:

- TROOP SUPPORT FOR WOUNDED WARRIORS
 - WALTER REED NATIONAL MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER (WRNMMC)
 - SAN ANTONIO MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER (SAMMC)
- GRANTS FOR INDIVIDUALS (TO ASSIST ACTIVE, GUARD AND RESERVE MILITARY, RETIRED MILITARY, VETERANS, AND THEIR DEPENDENTS)
- THERAPEUTIC RIDING
- EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE
 - IRS COLLEGE SAVINGS PLANS (529 PLANS)
 - LORENTZEN EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENT FUND GRANTS

In the years we have been supporting our Wounded Warriors at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) at Bethesda, MD, and San Antonio Military Medical Center (SAMMC) in San Antonio, TX, and Nationwide grants we have dedicated untold hours and over \$3.5M in financial support. In FY 2023 alone we spent over \$600,000 on programs/grants. The Troop Support programs at the two medical centers are structured differently, but the end result of helping the Wounded Warriors and their families is the same. The funding we are able to provide to help these families is wonderful, but it is far surpassed by the value of the support provided by our volunteers. They donate untold hours, work and passion to help the folks we honor.

Our donations have continued to come from wide and far and we pass them on in many programs and forms. Below we have mentioned just a few:

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

In FY 2023, AWCF made a contribution of \$15,000.00 to a Habitat for Humanity Veteran's Build. For this contribution, the AWCF received another award from Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento, California.

EMERGENCY CASH GRANTS

Despite a smaller patient population, the Emergency Cash Grant program remains active at WRNMMC and Fort Belvoir. During FY 2023, we spent over \$2,500.00 for Emergency Cash Grants. These grants cover a wide range of financial problems that Wounded Warrior families' encounter, including Non-Medical Attendant healthcare support and the Holiday dinners. During already difficult times, emergencies can escalate beyond a family's ability to cope and it is often impossible for military appropriated funds to meet these needs. Nonprofits currently provide the

only solution to hardship situations for the Wounded Warriors and their families and AWCF often partners with other non-profits to cover these costs.

FY 2023 SAN ANTONIO MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER (SAMMC)
TROOP SUPPORT PROGRAM IN ACTION

The SAMMC Troop Support effort is led by Gary Baber, helped by a large group of volunteers. Since their operation began in 2005, AWCF has spent more than \$3.5 million supporting the wounded and their families in the SAMMC area. The demand for our services and funding has dropped over the past three years as the population of Wounded Warriors dropped from a high of 700 in FY 2012, to 201 in FY 2023.

EMERGENCY CASH GRANTS

The Emergency Cash Grant program continues to be the most urgent program that AWCF sponsors at SAMMC. During FY 2023, Emergency Cash Grants were given out at over value of \$10,000. These grants cover a wide range of financial problems that Wounded Warrior families' encounter including pay interruptions during permanent change of station moves to SAMMC, car repairs, security deposits for apartment or house rentals, emergency travel, and funeral expenses. There are too often nonmilitary programs that provide financial assistance in these cases. Unfortunately, nonprofits remain the only solution to these hardship situations for the Wounded Warriors and their families.

CHRISTMAS HOPE PROGRAM

The SAMMC Troop Support Program has sponsored the Christmas Hope Program since 2009. Christmas Hope is a special outreach during the Christmas holidays to Wounded Warrior families with children. It kicks off in November each year with social workers at SAMMC providing a consolidated list of Wounded Warrior families facing a bleak Christmas without some help. Starting in early December, grants of \$600 are given to families with up to two children, \$850 to families with three or four children and \$1,100 to families with five or more children.

The Lake Travis Christmas Hope Committee started with a group of patriots in and around Austin, Texas. They have taken on this cause as a personal project and have involved friends from Connecticut west to California and south to Key West. They have truly spread the word across the nation. Patriotic Americans have wowed us by their generosity. Since Christmas Hope began in 2009, these caring people have raised over \$1 million to help Wounded Warrior families.

In FY 2023 Christmas Hope provided over \$27,100 to Over 50 families to help them to a Merry Christmas.

Christmas Hope funds not needed for Christmas grants in FY 2023 were used throughout the remainder of the year as to send children from Wounded Warrior families to summer camps at Ft. Sam Houston and Lackland AFB. They were also used to support riding programs for veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and suicidal feelings.

ADAPTIVE SCUBA PROGRAM

The Adaptive SCUBA program has continued to be popular each year since its inception in 2006. AWCF, together with Duggan Diving, a professional SCUBA diving company, provides a program specifically tailored to train Wounded Warriors with amputations and burns. The program is assisted by the Center for the Intrepid (CFI) rehabilitation facility at SAMMC. The CFI aids in selecting Wounded Warriors for the dive program and provides volunteer physical therapists that monitor the training.



GRANTS FOR INDIVIDUALS
(TO ASSIST ACTIVE, GUARD AND RESERVE MILITARY,
RETIRED MILITARY, VETERANS, AND THEIR DEPENDENTS)

Our help was given to over 150 individuals and families under this program in FY 2023. This year, our Grants for Individual program have provided emergency financial support for utilities, rent, transportation, auto repairs, and medical expenses that may fall through the cracks of what is provided by TRICARE. Once again - a reminder of how many expenses there are which for various reasons aren't covered by appropriated funds and how difficult it can be for individuals dealing with the long waits for Veterans Administration (VA) determination of benefits.

THERAPEUTIC RIDING

Therapeutic Riding remains our longest running major family program. we. In FY 2023, we provided over \$170,000 for Therapeutic Riding for 228 medically challenged active duty dependents in 28 riding stables/programs in 19 states.

The Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) and other groups and developmental professionals promote therapeutic horseback riding as a valuable program for children and adults with certain mental, physical or developmental challenges, including traumatic brain injuries and autism. There is a TRICARE autism demonstration project underway to determine better coverage for services related to autism. Therapeutic riding is not yet covered under Standard or Prime TRICARE, although some programs are covered if an individual is covered under the TRICARE Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) program. Until this valuable therapy is routinely covered, we provide funding assistance to active duty families who need it. Our medical doctor, Dr. Mike Herndon, does a record review and certifies

each of our riders as having a condition that could benefit from therapeutic riding. We either pay a portion of the cost of this therapy or, for stables/programs that do not charge, we make a donation to them to help defray costs.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

IRS COLLEGE SAVINGS PLANS (529 PLANS)

AWCF offers IRS College Savings Plans (529 Plans) for children of aircrew members from all Services killed while performing their aircrew duties. We start each 529 Plan with an AWCF donation of \$2,000 in the case of training accidents or combat deaths. We currently actively manage 89.

We have an active system with the Services to get the information quickly after a tragedy occurs. Not all take advantage of our offer to set up a plan, but for those who do, upon the request of the family, we open the 529 Plan immediately so that media notification of deaths, funeral services, etc., can contain information to permit donations for the education of the children of those killed.

LORENTZEN EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENT FUND GRANTS

Over the past few years we have been helping Wounded Warriors with grants for tuition and equipment for educational opportunities that fall outside appropriated fund rules. We have also been making presentations on our mission to the next generation of military officers at Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). Thanks to a generous endowment to AWCF from the estate of Archie and Sue Lorentzen to be used for educationally related needs, AWCF has been able to increase our assistance to our next generation of Servicemen and Women.

Because of our increased involvement (especially in the Heartland of the US) with ROTC units, in FY 2023 we provided \$65,597 to universities around the country through a variety of means of assistance to their ROTC units and cadets. There are currently 24 ROTC detachments from 14 universities in the program. We have also provided airmen at Vance AFB, OK, Laughlin AFB, TX and Ft. Carson, KS with these education grants. These airmen are working toward advanced degrees. They are obtaining these through distance learning. Not only have these efforts helped these future leaders, they have increased recognition of AWCF among them. This has resulted in numerous donations.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 2022

Chairman

Sam Angelella, Lt Gen, USAF (Ret) Daytona Beach, FL- Term Expires 2024

President

**George Harrison, Maj. Gen. USAF (Ret.) Peach Tree City, GA – Term Expires -
2024**

Vice President

Rick Zehrer, Brig.Gen., USAF (Ret.), Lakeway, TX- Term Expires – 2024

Secretary

Dave Brog, Col., USAF (Ret.) Silver Spring, MD - Term Expires- 2026

Treasurer

Jerry Knotts, Col., USAF (Ret.) Thousand Oaks, CA – Term Expires - 2024

General Counsel

Rob Lamb, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret), Sacramento, CA – Term Expires – Indefinite

Executive Director

Dave Brog, Col., USAF (Ret.)

Directors

Mike Dugan, General, USAF (Ret.) Dillon, CO – Term Expires – 2025

Earl Hailston, Lt.Gen., USMC (Ret.) Round Hill, VA – Term Expires – 2025

David Krumm, Lt Gen., USAF (Ret.) Anchorage, AL-Term Expires 2026

Bob Ettinger, Col., USAF (Ret.) Palos Verdes Est., CA -Term Expires – 2025

Scott Seymour, Huntington Beach, CA – Term Expires – 2025

Mike Sloniker, LTC, USA (Ret.) Edmond, OK – Term Expires – 2025

Craig Wills, Maj. Gen., USAF (Ret.) San Antonio, TX – Term Expires – 2024

Bruce Wright, Lt. Gen., USAF (Ret.) Arlington, VA - Term Expires – 2024

Rick Zehrer, Brig. Gen., USAF (Ret.), Lakeway, TX- Term Expires – 2024

Rob McAvoy, SGTMAJ, USA (Ret.) Glens Falls, NY – Term Expires – 2026

Chuck DeBellevue, Col., USAF (Ret) Edmond, OK – Term Expires – 2025

James Paulsen, Capt, USN (Ret) Lafayette, IN Term Expires – 2026

Erwin Schultze , TSgt USAF (Re)– Term Expires 2026

Bill Schwertfeger, LtCol, USAF (Ret.) Caldwell, KS – Term Expires – 2026

WE NEED YOUR HELP

As long as there are brave men and women serving in defense of our freedom, AWCF will continue to provide support to them. Because of the generous help provided by people like you, AWCF daily makes a difference in people's lives. So, please:

- Donate to Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #11450 under the title Wounded Warrior Emergency Support Fund) or United Way (write in "Wounded Warrior Emergency Support Fund") or through Independent Charities of America (ICA).
- Donate at – www.airwarriorcourage.org. Simply hit "Donate" and follow directions.
- Donate by check made out to "AWCF" and mail with the form below to PO Box. 877, Silver Spring, MD 20918.

- If you shop at Amazon, go to www.smile.amazon.com and register for an Amazon Smile account with AWCF as the beneficiary. It costs you *nothing* but for every dollar you spend on an eligible purchase (most are) Amazon contributes 0.5% to AWCF. Amazon Smile works whether you have a standard Amazon account or Amazon Prime – just start your purchase at smile.amazon.com.
- Make a planned gift from your estate to help us in the future. Your estate/tax advisor can advise you how best to do this.
- If you are over 70 you can take part of your annual mandatory distribution from your IRA as an IRA Charitable Rollover transferred directly to AWCF. When the donation is transferred directly from your IRA to AWCF, it is not considered as federally taxable income for you – but it does count toward your required minimum distribution. Your estate/tax advisor can advise you how best to do this.
- Identify individuals or projects in need of our support. Just email or call the AWCF National office with your recommendations.
- Contact the AWCF National Office (or your local River Rat chapter) to volunteer your service and ideas or to ask for additional information.

Air Warrior Courage Foundation
P.O. Box 877, Silver Spring, MD 20918
(301) 588-3283 email: awcf@airwarriorcourage.org
www.airwarriorcourage.org

AWCF is an IRS 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization and is therefore eligible for personal or corporate contributions. Acknowledgement letters will be sent in response to donations made directly to AWCF.

Please accept my/our gift in the in amount of \$ _____. (Make out check to "AWCF" and mail to AWCF, PO Box 877, Silver Spring, MD 20918)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ Alternate phone _____

Email _____