



**WARRIOR**<sup>™</sup>  
INSTITUTE



**OUTWARD BOUND**  
**VETERANS**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **Warrior Institute and Outward Bound for Veterans head to the Everglades to help a group of veterans and their spouses address combat-related health conditions**

**Gainesville, Fla.** – Warrior Institute is partnering with Outward Bound for Veterans to help veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injuries (TBI) learn how to recognize and control patterns of physiological functioning – while camping and canoeing in the Everglades.

Outward Bound for Veterans currently offers a variety of trips for veterans all over the country, but this collaborative trip is unique. During the six-day paddle trip the Warrior Institute team plans to integrate outdoor activity-based therapies with biofeedback training. And as they launch the canoes on Saturday, Feb. 23, the veterans will have some extra support on board – their spouses.

“Integrating biofeedback training during this adventure-based trip will allow veterans and their spouses to learn how to control their body’s response to stress and anxiety, and ultimately help decrease symptoms associated with PTSD – all while having a great time in the Everglades,” said Tonia Zyburt, program director, Warrior Institute, a non-profit organization based in Reddick, Florida.

“Our warriors have made a significant sacrifice for our country, and deserve an opportunity to rebuild their lives and restore their overall health and wellbeing with the very best that nature and technology has to offer,” Tonia said.

Chad Spangler, National Director of Outward Bound for Veterans, agrees. His organization has been working with veterans with PTSD for 30 years.

“We are incredibly excited to kick off our relationship with the Warrior Institute with this course. We look forward to creating a long-lasting relationship that takes advantage of the unique strengths of each organization to better serve our nations veterans,” says Spangler.





While camping on beaches and large wooden platforms, the Warrior Institute team will offer daily biofeedback training for the couples, which will help trip participants learn how to control their stress responses. Ranging in age from 26 to 45, the four couples from Tennessee, Washington, North Carolina and South Carolina have been working with the Warrior Institute over the past two months, preparing for the trip. The team provided personalized pre-trip training and individualized fitness plans.

“We want all participants to have a great experience during the trip, enhance their current physical activity and fitness levels, and then maintain them after the trip is over,” said Tonia. “This is a great way to demonstrate how adventure and wilderness-based activities can be a positive experience for veterans and their families.”

For more information about the Warrior Institute’s programs visit our website at [www.warriorinstitute.org](http://www.warriorinstitute.org).

### The Warrior Institute

*The Warrior Institute is a non-profit organization that provides comprehensive rehabilitative and transitional services for military service members, veterans and their families by combining biofeedback and recreational therapy to enhance the quality of life of individuals with symptoms associated with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Our goal is to strengthen the warrior and the entire family unit with recreational activities that everyone can participate in, enjoy and attain positive results. We want to help veterans find their passions with activities that will help them relax, get back into balance, and build healthy relationships with family members, neighbors, co-workers and others in their communities.*

### Outward Bound for Veterans

*Outward Bound for Veterans helps thousands of returning service members and recent veterans readjust to life at home through powerful wilderness courses that draw on the healing benefit of teamwork and challenge through use of the natural world.*

*Service members and veterans take part in wilderness expeditions that are physically, mentally and emotionally challenging in order to build the self-confidence, pride, trust and communication skills necessary to successfully return to their families, employers and communities following wartime service. These expeditions purposefully scaffold wartime experiences (carrying heavy packs, sore*



*shoulders, rubbery legs, sleeping out, strange noises, sweat, dirt, frustration and anger) with authentic achievements to create positive emotional and mental outcomes.*

*Wilderness activities are used as metaphors for daily life experiences in the pursuit of individual and group excellence, illuminating how the support and collaboration needed to meet Outward Bound goals can positively impact participants' interactions with others at home. Many veterans experienced courage, brotherhood and a real sense of power and competence while in combat. Outward Bound gives Veterans and service members the opportunity to re-experience these strengths in themselves in a different context, thus helping them to transition back to civilian life.*

*Beginning in 1983, Outward Bound's first courses for veterans were established through collaboration with Veterans Administration Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) units to serve Vietnam War veterans. Outward Bound renewed the program in 2006 to serve Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, running one such course each year. The 2006 and 2007 courses both received overwhelmingly positive evaluations. Based on this success, in 2008 Outward Bound received a three-year, \$4.3 million grant from Military Family Outdoor Initiative Project (MFO). More recently Outward Bound for Veterans has received the generous support of Holiday Retirement Communities, Fortress Investments, and a network of private donors and charitable foundations that allow Outward Bound and serves between 600 and 1,000 veterans a year through fully-funded wilderness courses that include free travel to and from the course area of their choosing.*

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