



# Keeping in Touch

Holiday 2023

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## **YOUR SUPPORT IS PART OF THIS WOUNDED VET'S REMARKABLE RECOVERY. HELP CREATE OTHER SUCCESS STORIES WITH A CONTRIBUTION TO CSRF.**

The holiday season is a time of wonder and joy. And nothing gives us more happiness than to relate the challenging yet joyful journey of a member of our Combat Soldiers Recovery Fund (CSRF) family. Over the years, we have kept in touch with Eric Burkett who first lost one leg and then the other as a result of serving America overseas. As we revisit Eric's story, keep in mind what your donation to CSRF can do to encourage and inspire our brave wounded vets.

It is a testament to Eric's resilience that his family jokes that he has had to learn to walk again seven times after his multiple surgeries. Since Eric was severely injured in 2012, he spent four long years at Walter Reed. He lost his right leg and then he began having difficulties with his left as well. At the time, the accomplished archer got around in a high-powered wheelchair. He competed in archery competitions, where he excelled, making the USA Archery Team.

All through Eric's struggles and successes, his family was always by his side. You may recall that we met him and his wife Melissa and their four children, Keenan, Josilyn, Mastin and Lochlen, then 17, 13, 11, and 8, back in 2015. In 2016, they welcomed their identical girls, Roawyn Elizabeth and Nollynn Robbie (named after the Walter Reed doctor, Dr. Robert Howard, who saved Eric's life with his exceptional care). The continued friendship of CSRF has always let Eric know we appreciate his service and sacrifice.



**Please send donations to:**

Combat Soldiers Recovery Fund  
3804 Williams Lane  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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Early in 2018, Eric's struggles once more came to a head when the severe, persistent staph infection (MRSA) in his left leg led to the need for another amputation. Eric went from his home in Pennsylvania back to Walter Reed for the surgery. Remarkably, Eric was proud to be back at the archery range less than two days post surgery. He did most of his rehab at home in PA, with trips again to Walter Reed to receive above the knee prosthetics and to also adjust the below the knee prosthetic.

Eric then decided to take advantage of an innovative technology called osseointegration to improve stability walking and his quality of life. This process involved two more surgeries at Walter Reed and about 18 more months of recovery and rehab. Thankfully, Eric's wounds healed better after these surgeries. Once more, he had to learn to walk again! From the beginning, his loyal service dogs, first Max and now Jambo, have added support and comfort.

Challenges continue to present opportunities for Eric. Archery remains a driving force in his life. He still competes as a para-athlete on the US Archery team and his coaching and competitions have taken him across the country and abroad. He also does a lot of public speaking for schools, churches, and corporations. His children are thriving, as well, as they move on with their lives taking their cue from their father to live up to their full potential.



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**CSRF HAS GIVEN CHECKS TO 4,400 WOUNDED VETS.  
PLEASE HELP US GET TO 5,000 IN THIS JOYFUL  
SEASON. AND ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT OUR CSRF  
MOTTO IS "THEY GAVE 100% SO WE GIVE 100%."  
WE PROVIDE 100% OF DONATED FUNDS TO OUR  
BRAVE HEROES.**

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CSRF is much appreciated.**