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Annual Memorial Ceremony Honors Fallen EOD Technicians

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.-The Naval School of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (NAVSCOLEOD) hosted the 45th Annual Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Memorial Ceremony May 3 at the EOD Memorial next to the Kauffman EOD Training Complex on Eglin Air Force Base.

Members from all four services' EOD community, along with families and friends gathered to remember the legacy of 298 EOD heroes and add the names of eight additional EOD Technicians to the EOD Memorial (four soldiers and four Marines) who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country during the past year.

The guest speaker for the ceremony, Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, characterized the extraordinary efforts and of these EOD heroes and the EOD mission as well as the immeasurable sacrifice of their families.

"This memorial represents 72 years of service by the EOD community," said Odierno. "From World War II onward, we pay tribute to the men and women who volunteered to serve for one of the most dangerous missions in our profession - that of personnel protection and explosives identification, disarmament, and demolition. This memorial celebrates the professionalism, selfless service and sacrifices of our EOD heroes in operations at home and abroad. In times of war

and in times of peace, these EOD technicians and leaders protected our fellow service members by accomplishing our mission each day.”

As part of the ceremony, NAVSCOLEOD’s four service detachment commanders and senior enlisted members placed a wreath next to their respective service’s cenotaph, or monument, at the memorial while a fellow service member read the names of their fallen EOD heroes aloud, concluding with the phrase “we remember.”

The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James F. Amos, presented a flag, previously flown over the EOD Memorial, to each of the families of the four fallen Marines and Army Brig. Gen. JB Burton, commander of the Army’s 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Explosives Command, presented one of the flags to each of the families of the four Soldiers.

The Commanding Officer of NAVSCOLEOD, Capt. William Noel, reminded everyone at the ceremony that it is not only important to remember those warriors who have made the ultimate sacrifice, but also for the new graduates of EOD School to understand the gravity of their chosen career field.

“EOD technicians of all services make a solemn promise when we enter the EOD community that we will never forget. We will never forget those heroes who have gone before us, their bravery, courage, and their ultimate sacrifice,” said Noel. “New EOD technicians who graduate each week at this school in front of this memorial share this promise and vow to carry on this charge throughout their careers and years to come. Legacy and honoree families, we will never forget.”

Nicole Motsek, executive director, EOD Warrior Foundation noted that the annual ceremony is an important part of EOD tradition.

"Today we add eight new names to the EOD Memorial Wall, a memorial that ensures our fallen EOD warriors who have made the ultimate sacrifice will never be forgotten," said Motsek. "The Soldiers and Marines added today, and the 298 before them are heroes and it is an honor and privilege to preserve their legacy and continue to support their families.

"We remember signifies the very essence and ethos of EOD Technicians to never forget the extraordinary efforts and sacrifices of our EOD brothers and sisters who made the ultimate sacrifice," she continued. "The EOD Memorial stands as an amazing monument to the Honor, Courage, and Commitment exemplified by EOD Technicians from all four services as they performed the EOD mission."

Staff members from all four services at NAVSCOLEOD and members of the EOD Warrior Foundation coordinated and executed comprehensive preparations for the ceremony. The EOD Memorial Foundation, established in 1969, merged with the Wounded EOD Warrior Foundation in March 2013 to form the EOD Warrior Foundation, which combines the missions and resources of these established organizations to increase the capacity to serve and support the joint service EOD community.

NAVSCOLEOD, located on Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., provides high-risk, specialized, basic and advanced EOD training to U.S. and partner nation military and selected U.S. government personnel each year.

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