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The Ted Gallagher 150: Walking for a Cause

By Diane Claytor



Lafayette's Ted Gallagher gets ready for his 150-mile walk to benefit the Navy. Photo Diane Claytor

When Edwin Gallagher, Sr. passed away in early 2014 at the age of 93, his son, Ted Gallagher, Jr., wanted to do something to memorialize his father in a way that was both meaningful and truly fitting of the man his father had been. "My dad was a remarkable man," Gallagher remembers lovingly. "He was a hard worker, building a very successful business but always remaining true to his Oakland roots and always placing his family first. He gave generously of both himself and the many resources he had available, helping to improve the lives of those around him."

Gallagher, Sr. valiantly served for more than three years in the U.S. Marine Corps during WWII, although he rarely talked about it. During his Celebration of Life, a Marine Honor Guard played "Taps" and presented the family with the American flag that had been draped over his coffin. "That really got me," Lafayette's Gallagher says. It was then that Gallagher knew he wanted to celebrate his father and honor his military service.

Research led Gallagher to the Semper Fi Fund, a charitable organization dedicated to serving those who have preserved our freedoms. (Semper Fi is the shortened version of the Latin Semper fidelis, the U.S. Marine Corps motto meaning "always faithful" or "always loyal.") According to the Semper Fi Fund website, this

nonprofit provides "immediate financial assistance and lifetime support . to all members of all five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families," delivering resources needed during recovery and/or transition back to their communities, "working to ensure no one is left behind."

"It's a phenomenal organization," Gallagher states.

Two years after his father's passing, Gallagher, an avid walker, decided to plan a fundraising walk around the Lafayette Reservoir and host a barbecue at his beautiful Lafayette home in the hopes of raising \$5,000 for the Semper Fi Fund. He received so much interest and support that he expanded his goal - and his walk. The 3-mile Res walk quickly morphed into a 75-mile, eight-day hike around Lake Tahoe, raising \$157,000.

Soon after that successful fundraiser, and with his commitment to continue raising monies for veteran organizations, Gallagher learned about the Navy SEAL Foundation, which provides "immediate and ongoing support and assistance to the Naval Special Warfare community and its families." According to its website, programs are designed to improve health and welfare, build resiliency and empower and educate families. Consequently, this year's walk will benefit this outstanding nonprofit.

The mileage and monetary goals continue to grow: the 2019 trek will be 20 days covering 150 miles, leaving Malibu on Sept. 30 and ending in Coronado, "adjacent to where the SEALs train," on Oct. 19, Gallagher notes. The objective is to raise \$150,000 for the SEAL Foundation. (According to Gallagher, 94 cents of every dollar goes directly to the warriors and their families.) Colleagues, friends and family will be joining at different points in the walk, but it's Gallagher who will walk the entire 150 miles, hoping to average about 10 miles per day; plans include a day of rest every two or three days. "It's unbelievable what a day off can do to rejuvenate you," he admits.

Passionate about helping our vets, Gallagher and his wife, Courtney - his most ardent supporter - have set a personal goal of raising \$1 million for these brave and honorable men and women. And, between the two walks, he's almost a quarter of the way there.

"It just breaks my heart that these men and women in all branches of our military come home after serving their country, fully committing themselves for many, many years, only to ask 'now what do I do?' It's great that there are organizations like these that offer help, and for Courtney and I, this is our way of giving back and saying thank you," Gallagher says.

As of Aug. 14, \$86,000 had been raised for this year's walk. If you are interested in donating to this extremely worthy endeavor or to joining Gallagher for some (or all) of his walk, please go to www.crowdrise.com/o/en/campaign/ted-gallagher-150.

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