

STICKS FOR SOLDIERS X
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LACROSSE TOURNAMENT

FAIRFIELD LUDLOWE
HIGH SCHOOL LACROSSE

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Two Wounded Servicemen Named Honorees for the 10th Annual Sticks for Soldiers Thanksgiving Charity Lacrosse Tournament on November 28th, Fairfield, CT.

Fairfield, Conn., October 27, 2015 – United States Army Captain (Ret) Nicholas Vogt and United States Marine Corps Sergeant (Ret) Eddie Ryan have been named the honorees and beneficiaries for this year's 10th annual **Sticks For Soldiers** Thanksgiving Charity Lacrosse Tournament, hosted by the Fairfield Ludlowe High School boy's lacrosse program on Saturday, November 28th. Captain Vogt and Sergeant Ryan both sustained life-changing injuries from combat in November 2011 and April 2005 respectively.

Sticks for Soldiers is a non-profit charity with its mission to raise money to support future needs of severely-wounded soldiers, and promote youth awareness of military service through this state-wide event. In nine years, the tournament, which is held every year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, has raised over \$455,000 through team entry fees, silent auction, merchandise, and corporate and private donations. This year, more than 900 boys and girls from over 60 Connecticut high school teams are expected to participate and play 100 games during the one-day event. Game officials from around the state of Connecticut, will donate their time as well as many volunteers from Fairfield Ludlowe High School. This is the players opportunity to "give thanks, provide support and raise awareness" to servicemen and women. The goal this year is to raise \$150,000 and divide the proceeds to up to three severely-wounded honorees.

2015 10th Annual Honorees



United States ARMY Captain Nicholas J. Vogt

Nicholas John Vogt was raised in rural Ohio as the oldest of 5 siblings, and he graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 2010 with a Bachelor degree in Life Sciences. A pre-med student with a goal to become a trauma surgeon, he deferred his Med School enrollment to serve as an officer. Following graduation, he trained as an infantry officer at Ft. Benning, Georgia and completed his Airborne and Ranger School qualifications before reporting to Ft. Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska. Since his unit was deployed at that time, he immediately left to meet them in southern Afghanistan. Soon after his arrival, he was assigned as the commander of an infantry platoon.

While leading his platoon on a foot patrol on November 12th, 2011, then 1st LT, Nick was severely injured by an IED explosion which killed a colleague. This resulted in double above-knee amputations and a traumatic brain injury, among other things. He survived after numerous heart failures and after more than 500 units of blood transfusions- the most in Army history, thanks to his fellow soldiers and excellent trauma care. After over two years of recovery at Walter Reed, Nicholas returned to active duty and completed his service time as a professor's aide at the United States Naval Academy in the Leadership, Ethics, and Law Department. He was medically retired in June 2015 as an Army captain. On September 19th, 2015, Nicholas married

LTJG Lauren Vogt, a Navy nurse he met while recovering at Walter Reed. They live in Arlington, Virginia. Nicholas is currently attending George Washington University, pursuing a Masters degree in Bioinformatics.

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United States Marine Corps Sergeant Eddie Ryan

Born and raised in rural Ellenville, New York now living in Lake George, Eddie enlisted in the Marine Corps directly from high school in 2002 at age 18, following in his father's footsteps and compelled after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. After boot camp, he was immediately deployed to Iraq and saw combat in Nasariya and Ramadi. His second deployment was to Djibouti, Africa. On his 3rd deployment to Iraq in April, 2005, he was shot in the head by two machine gun rounds on a rooftop. He was not expected to survive except for the effort of his fellow marines. In the words of his father, "Day by day as he was in ICU, the prayers were working. Eddie was fighting and at 3 ½ weeks Eddie was off the Life Support that the doctors said he would be on for the rest of his life. Eventually, weeks after that, Eddie started tracking us with his eyes. One day a peer of his, (a fellow sergeant), who was an

experienced Marine sniper, came to visit him from Hawaii, Eddie did the unbelievable he SMILED."

Eddie saw more improvement as time passed and his memory and speech slowly came back as he healed from the immediate wounds and surgeries. With the bullets piercing his skull and face, Eddie suffers from severe TBI, and is wheelchair bound with only limited use of one arm. After 10 years since his "Alive day," he lives with his devoted mother Angela and father Chris and they care for him 24/7/365. He requires daily care and therapy of all kinds, from muscle coordination, speech, and normal activities. In order to receive the much-needed VA benefits which were not readily available in rural Ellenville, the family decided to uproot their home of 30 years, and move to Lake George where they had a seasonal home and be closer to VA services in Albany. There is still much regular care needs beyond what the VA can support.

An additional honoree may be named before the tournament.

Sticks For Soldiers Leadership

Jim Tommins, President of Sticks for Soldiers and tournament chairman "Giving Thanks. Providing Support, Raising Awareness... what better way to celebrate Thanksgiving and, in the month of Veteran's Day, honor the men and women who have served for us by supporting these fine men for their personal sacrifices. Less than 1% of Americans serve and defend our freedom. Getting the high school players involved doing something they love doing anyway, while helping others and gaining understanding of their service... it's a win-win-win. We are blessed and fortunate as are our children, so let's help where we can."

Tournament Details

Team sign-in begins at 8:00 am with first games at 9:00. At Ludlowe Taft Stadium, there will be a mid-day ceremony complete with a military honor guard to introduce and recognize the honorees. Participating high schools include host Fairfield Ludlowe, Fairfield Warde, Fairfield Prep, Staples, Hopkins, St. Josephs, Barlow, Weston and many more. The competition will be excellent, and the tournament "winner" will be the honorees themselves. Games will be played at Ludlowe HS, RLMS, Sturges park, Tomlinson and other venues around Fairfield.

All are welcome to attend and admission is free. Donations will be accepted. Some great items will be available for Silent Auction, and commemorative T-shirts will be on sale. Corporate and private donations are welcome, and may be sent to "**Sticks for Soldiers, Inc.**," PO Box 475, Fairfield, Conn. 06824. For more information, honoree profiles, tournament schedules, location and history, please see www.sticksforsoldiers.org.

About Sticks for Soldiers

Sticks for Soldiers is a non-profit high school charity which hosts a lacrosse tournament held in Fairfield, Connecticut to raise money for severely-wounded military personnel. Held on Thanksgiving Saturday, it is sponsored by the Fairfield Ludlowe High School lacrosse team. The mission of the tournament is to provide support and give thanks to the service men and women who put their lives on the line and sacrificed for our country, while raising awareness among high school athletes to the sacrifices being made by people just a few years older than they are. Through their play and fund-raising participation, the athletes demonstrate their tangible thanks and support. Originating in 2006, the idea came from long-time lacrosse advocate Mike Voucas along with support from current Fairfield Ludlowe Head Coach Chris Parisi and a number of dedicated volunteers. The tournament and related fund-raising efforts has now raised over \$455,000 in nine years.

Sticks for Soldiers, Inc. is recognized by the IRS as a 501c3 non-profit charity. FEIN 46-0962202. For more information go to www.sticksforsoldiers.org