



# LOVE IN THE AIR

BY MURV

Todd Love. You might not know the name—yet—but you’ve probably seen some pictures or videos of him. You’d remember because those were the images that immediately made you stop whining about how hard your day was and how you just couldn’t do something because it was too difficult.

**H**e often has that effect on people—a USMC veteran who lost both of his legs and his left hand to an improvised explosive device (IED) in Afghanistan, who’s determined to not let that get in the way of ANYTHING. He’s been surfing, skiing, scuba diving, wrestling alligators, and now learning to skydive.

I met Todd through Operation Enduring Warrior, an organization focused on raising awareness and honoring wounded veterans with a pretty unique approach. The other day I asked him to tell me why he wants to skydive, and about his journey so far, and this is what he wrote:

“Well I did some jumping (static-line) in the Marine Corps and I did a few training jumps in Afghanistan too. After I was hurt I of course didn’t know anything about what I would be able to do or how my life would turn out. I remember watching one of Jeb Corliss’s videos and I thought how awesome and was inspired. Then a few months later I met these guys who called themselves Team XTREME [now Operation Enduring Warrior]. They would tandem skydive wounded service members into events and they took me to Hawaii and not only put me on a surf board for the first time, they took me scuba diving for the first time, and right there where they filmed part of Jurassic Park I experienced my first freefall. It was beautiful. It was at The XTERRA World Championship and I waited as the guys ran the whole thing as a team with gas masks. I knew I belonged with a group like this and wanted to be a part of it. They gave me the

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privilege of being on board and I'm not sure how it all happened but we started doing Spartan Races and Xterra events but they would carry me through the race on their backs. Sometimes they would let me tackle some obstacles by myself but they were always there when I needed them."

I actually first learned of Operation Enduring Warrior at one of those races—the Bataan Memorial Death March—last spring. It's a 26.2-mile ruck through the New Mexico desert that the team, which included double amputee Noah Galloway, completed while wearing gas masks. I had no idea what that was all about, so I asked them afterward. What I learned then was that that

their name stood for "train, rehabilitate, empower, motivate, endure." The organization has since evolved into Operation Enduring Warrior, which better represents who they support—warriors who have endured in spite of their injuries. "This is definitely not your average nonprofit," I thought, "they actually do stuff!"

So of course the next logical step was to see how I could help them implement the best therapy tool I know—skydiving. It's something the team had already been using with the help of Mike Elliott and the All Veterans Parachute Team performing tandems, but we were now going to take it a step further.

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"Then they started Operation X-Wing and I was introduced to a wind tunnel for the first time at the Paraclete. [James Flaherty, aka The Punisher aka] Pun was my first instructor. It took me a while at first to get stable enough to where I wasn't spinning out of control in the tunnel. It was frustrating. I knew if I had more time I could get better though and after watching all the regulars showing all their tricks I wanted to be able to do it too. Then JOIN Skydive Apparel jumped on board and they sent a pretty girl to take some measurements for a custom suit just for me. A few weeks later they showed up and I was starting to look like a pro with some fancy gear. Then UPT joined in too and built me a rig that I could wear. It all just started falling together. I guess that's what the skydive community does haha."

Todd's got that right for sure—this is how our community does it! United Parachute Technologies, Performance Designs, Paraclete XP, JOIN Skydiving Apparel, Axis Flight School, SkyVenture Arizona, Green Light, Skydive Suffolk, as well as all the instructors and staff offered their help without hesitation and we are extremely grateful to them.

"Then I was told SkyVenture Arizona donated a lot of time for me and that AXIS Flight School was going to coach me. I flew out and I met Nik and Brienne from AXIS and they were super fun to work with. I flew with my rig for the first time and by the end of the week I had made tons of improvement. Nik introduced me to the story of Alistair Hodgson, who is a skydiver who is a double amputee above the knee. I knew I could fly but I wasn't confident how I would land but Al reassured me that I would be good. I would be landing the same way he does. I knew if he could do it then I could do it too. The guys from Axis then edited a video from my time in the tunnel, then next thing you know Jeb Corliss was sharing my video on his page. Soon I will be doing my AFF and I've never been more excited in my whole life."



<< Scan this QR code to watch

Yup, Todd rocked that tunnel training at SkyVenture AZ, despite his injuries and others' skepticism, so we're on to AFF at Skydive Suffolk. To be continued... 🚀

Follow Todd's progress at [facebook.com/OperationXWing](https://www.facebook.com/OperationXWing).



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**  
Iveta "Muv" Muravyeva is a pilot and a skydiver with over 10 years of experience in both. She joined Operation Enduring Warrior in 2012 as the Operation X-Wing director with a goal of connecting wounded veterans with the skydiving community. Muv is also a member of 2MH and an apprentice videographer at Axis Flight School.

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