

Wounded Warrior Overcomes Brain Injuries *Family Met their Inspiration at Clearwater Marine Aquarium*

Clearwater, FL (April 12, 2019) – In 2005 U.S. Army Sergeant Eric Edmundson was severely injured during his deployment near the Iraq/Syria border. The shrapnel of an improvised explosive device (IED) that detonated under his vehicle ruptured his spleen, broke his patella, fractured his vertebrae and caused him to sustain a traumatic brain injury. While waiting to be transported to a hospital, Edmundson was without a pulse for 30 minutes, causing him to also sustain an anoxic brain injury. The injuries left Edmundson unable to speak or walk, although his cognitive skills remained completely intact. Edmundson, his wife and their two children, Hunter (8) and Gracie (14), have bonded over the inspiration they found through Winter the dolphin's story in the *Dolphin Tale* movies. On Fri., April 12 Edmundson and his family visited Winter and Hope the rescued dolphins at Clearwater Marine Aquarium. [Click here](#) to download video of the experience.

Edmundson was determined to not only survive with traumatic and anoxic brain injuries, but live his life to the fullest and make a difference for others. Through hard work and years of rehabilitation, as well as family and community support, Edmundson is able to communicate through a computer device and has regained some control of his hands. He is also able to occasionally rise and walk a few feet out of his specially equipped wheelchair.

To provide support to his fellow wounded soldiers, Edmundson has learned how to paint with the help of a device that allows him to hold a brush. The proceeds from the paintings Edmundson creates are given to help his fellow vets have meaningful and healing experiences.

Edmundson, his parents, and his 2 children traveled from their home in New Bern, North Carolina to meet Winter and Hope the rescued dolphins during a special encounter at CMA on Fri., April 12 at 10 a.m. For more information contact Julia Anderson at janderson@cmaaquarium.org or 727-686-3499.

Media Details:

- What: A wounded warrior and his family travel to Florida and meet their inspiration Winter the Dolphin at Clearwater Marine Aquarium.
- [Click here to download video.](#)
- When: Friday, April 12 at 10 a.m.
- Where: Clearwater Marine Aquarium | 249 Windward Passage | Clearwater, FL 33767

About Clearwater Marine Aquarium:

Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working marine rescue center dedicated to inspiring the human spirit through leadership in education, research, rescue, rehabilitation and release. CMA is home to rescued dolphins, sea turtles, river otters, stingrays, nurse sharks and more. Winter the dolphin's story of survival, after an injury that caused her to lose her tail, has impacted millions of people around the world. Major motion picture *Dolphin Tale* (2011) features Winter's story and its sequel *Dolphin Tale 2* (2014) features the incredible story of Hope, a young resident dolphin of CMA. Through Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute, CMA conducts important global research focused on protecting manatees, right whales and sea turtles. The mission and potential to change people's lives differentiates Clearwater Marine Aquarium from any other aquarium in the world.

WE BELIEVE in preserving our environment while inspiring the human spirit through leadership in the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of marine life, environmental education, research and conservation.

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