

Special Operations Warrior Foundation

Talking Points

Mission: For 30 years, the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization, has provided college educations to the surviving children of Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps special operations personnel killed in combat or training. Additionally, the Warrior Foundation provides immediate financial assistance to special operations personnel severely wounded so their loved ones can be bedside during their recovery.

Programs: The Special Operations Warrior Foundation provides college scholarship grants, *not loans*, to surviving children of special operations personnel killed in combat or training missions.

- **Scholarships** (tuition, books, fees, supplies, expenses, room and board, plus computer and printer) cover the full cost of a college education at post-secondary institutes across the nation, including state and community colleges, vocational-technical training and career institutes.
- **Family Service:** From the initial contact with the family through college education, children of fallen special operations warriors and/or their guardians receive assistance and support from the Foundation's family advisor.
- **Wounded Special Operations Forces Support:** The Warrior Foundation provides \$2,000 to cover immediate financial needs for Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps special operations personnel severely wounded in operations.

Overhead: The Special Operations Warrior Foundation is proud of its low overhead. In 2009, the administrative **overhead was 7.7 percent**.

Awards: The SOWF was awarded its **fourth** consecutive 4-star rating for its financial efficiency by a charity watchdog group, Charity Navigator. Less than 7 percent of the 5,300 charities rated by Charity Navigator receive this exceptional rating.

The SOWF is the proud recipient of the Best in America seal of excellence awarded by the Independent Charities of America as well as the Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity Seal for meeting all of their stringent requirements.

Numbers:

- The Special Operations Warrior Foundation currently has **133** students enrolled in colleges and universities across the country.
- Last year, the Foundation provided **\$2.7 million** in scholarship grants, academic, financial aid, and family support to our families.
- In 2009, the Foundation provided **\$311,000** in financial assistance to **severely wounded (hospitalized) special operations personnel** so their families could be bedside. To date, we have provided over **One Million Dollars** to wounded Special Operations warriors.
- Total number of Special Operations Forces (SOF) casualties since 1980: **728**
- Total number of children in our program since 1980: **842**
- Total number of SOF casualties since 9/11/2001: **396**
- Total number of children left behind from SOF casualties since 9/11: **450**
- Total number of SOWF college graduates: **158**
- Last year, America lost **46** Special Operations personnel... compared to an average of 15 SOF casualties prior to Sept. 2001.

Why Special Operations Personnel: Since the terrorist attacks in 2001, America has demanded much of its elite Special Operations Forces. Special Operations Forces consist of some 60,000 Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps – active and reserve – who are organized into a variety of land, sea, aerospace forces, including Army Special Forces and Rangers, Navy SEALs, Air Force special operations squadrons and Marine Corps special operations personnel. Operating in more than 26 countries around the world, Special Operations Forces have taken the lead role in the war against terror. But in return, the sacrifices and casualties incurred by Special Operations personnel have been significantly high.

History: The Special Operations Warrior Foundation began in 1980 as the Col. Arthur D. "Bull" Simons Scholarship Fund. The Bull Simons Fund was created after the Iranian hostage rescue attempt to provide college educations for the 17 children surviving the nine special operations men killed or incapacitated at Desert One. It was named in honor of the legendary Army Green Beret who repeatedly risked his life on rescue missions. In 1995, several charitable organizations merged to form the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.

Organization: The SOWF is governed by a Board of Directors (up to 25 members), which consults with a Board of Advisors. The Board of Directors has four standing committees: Executive, Development, Audit & Finance, and Governance. The SOWF office is located four miles from MacDill AFB, the home of the United States Special Operations Command. The Foundation has eight full-time employees and two part-time employees: President/CEO, Executive Director, Educational & Family Services Director, Financial Aid Director, Public Relations Director, Public Relations Assistant, Event and Communications Manager, Director of Philanthropy and two Administrative Assistants.

Challenge: With more than 100 children eligible for college each year, the Foundation's financial need, determined by a professional Actuarial corporation, is **\$76 million**. The Foundation currently has **\$29 million** in their investment portfolio.

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