

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



**Creating bonds
that cure.**

Their Lives Are Our Mission.

The mission of Operation Healing Forces (OHF) is to serve the needs of our active-duty and recent-veteran wounded, ill, and injured Special Operations Forces (SOF) and their families by starting or continuing the process of mentally, physically and emotionally healing in preparation to return to the fight or transition successfully into civilian life.



The Tip of the Spear

Special Operations Forces (SOF) are known as the Rangers, Green Berets, Night Stalkers, Delta Force, SEALs, Air Force Special Tactics, and Marine Raiders but there are other SOF that you rarely or may never hear mentioned.

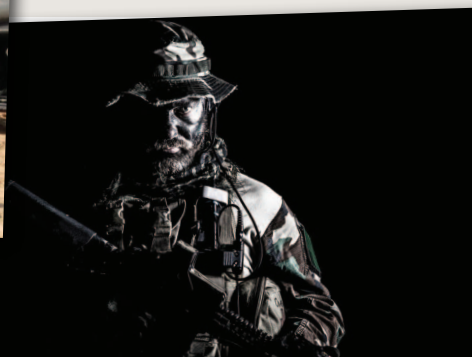
Each branch of the United States Armed Forces has its own Special Operations units. The parent command of all SOF is U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), which is headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. Comprising only about 3.5 percent of Department of Defense personnel, SOF are reportedly working in up to 76 countries on any given day, and they're tasked with carrying out the military's most secretive and specialized missions.

SOF missions are characterized as extreme in risk, precise in execution, and able to deliver a high payoff, the impacts of which will be felt for decades. Special Operators are entrusted to perform missions that exceed the authority given to conventional military units. Often called the "quiet professionals", they are continually "trained for certainty, while being educated for uncertainty"—a hallmark of SOF.



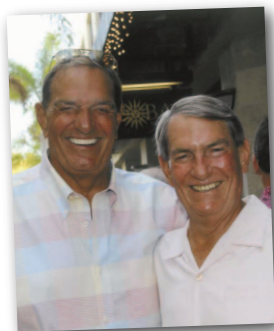
20 Years of Combat

- Still in a constant cycle of deployments and training
- While the message from SOCOM leadership attempted to stop the stigma of seeking help, the individual Operators continue to avoid seeking treatment to avoid negative consequences
- Divorce rates continue to rise and continue to show a stark disparity compared to their Conventional counterparts
- Suicides continue to rise in the active duty and Veteran populations
- The effects of long term or chronic injuries and illnesses including depression, post-traumatic stress syndrome, traumatic brain injuries, hormonal imbalances continue to impact the overall health and well being of Special Operations Forces



Our Concept is Simple: Strengthen human bonds.

- OHF provides a suite of programs for the SOF community to aid operators and their families given decades of perpetual combat operations, increased suicides, and an alarming divorce rate. Even though SOF make-up roughly less than 5% of the DoD and are comprised of the US military's most elite, SOF has the highest casualty, divorce, and illness rates amongst all services.
- OHF's programs are specifically designed and tailored to enable these war-torn men and women to break through the silence to openly discuss their battlefield and personal hardships and provide needed support. A safe, protected atmosphere with an OHF staff that's comprised of former operators, SOF spouses, and personnel who have worked serving the SOF community over a decade creates trust allowing our participants to let their guard down and share. Realizing they are not alone, participants discover it is appropriate — and not a stigma — to seek a hand up, help, support, and guidance when needed for SOF professionals and their families. And once an operator or SOF family becomes a part of our OHF alumni family—we maintain bonds and are always here if ever needed.
- Our staff serves 24/7 just like the SOF community we support.



Integrity Matters

Brothers Gary and Tony Markel are the grandsons of the founder of Markel Corporation, a specialty insurance firm and one of the largest of its kind. Gary puts it clearly when he says, "Our (OHF's) focus is on bonding and healing." Gary and Tony pay all overhead and administrative costs for Operation Healing Forces. Because of their generosity, 100% of all donations go directly toward supporting Special Operators and their families. For OHF, that means that every dollar raised goes directly to the programs and resources that our Special Operators need most. Those programs have grown every year since inception and now include resources and referral services that our growing alumni helped shape and create.

Our commitment to those we serve comes with a responsibility we do not take lightly. Each year, the organization is independently audited by a highly respected external firm. Key financial documents including this audit are always available by request or by visiting our website: www.operationhealingforces.org

Since our first year of eligibility, OHF has received a four-out-of-four star rating from Charity Navigator, the number one charity evaluation organization in American. Their careful analysis of financial efficiency and administrative accountability ensures that transparency is always maintained. OHF is also a Platinum Level member of the Guidestar Exchange which can only be achieved through accurate reporting of financials and programmatic impact each year.



OHF has achieved Charity Navigator's top ranking of Four Stars. Described as "Exceptional" - Exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its cause.



OHF has achieved the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency Rating, the top 0.1% of the nation's non-profit organizations in terms of transparency.



OHF received the "Top Rated" rating by Great Nonprofits. Rated highly by people who experience their work first hand - clients served, volunteers and donors.

Reintegration. Rehabilitation. Resiliency.

Our goal at Operation Healing Forces (OHF) is to give you and your significant other a chance to reconnect and refresh in a beautiful setting with a few other couples that share similar experiences.

Each OHF retreat is unique in its activities and settings, but our goal is always the same: **Creating Bonds that Cure.**

Operation Healing Forces conducts week-long therapeutic retreats for Special Operations couples throughout the United States. Each retreat is led by an OHF Retreat Lead who is also a Retired member of the SOF community - no counselors here. Retreats are hosted at donated home or resort locations where each couple is ensured a private bedroom and bathroom with no more than 4-5 couples in attendance.

Keeping retreats personal has always been a priority for OHF. Retreat travel, meals, and activities are also covered by the generosity of donors hoping to give back to the SOF community.

A Week on an OHF Retreat

A sample timeline of activities and experiences retreat participants might enjoy.



Monday

Arrival and Dinner with Retreat Group



Tuesday

Couples Ropes Course



Wednesday

Relaxing Hike on Property



Thursday

ATV Adventure and Dinner on the Town



Friday

Hot air balloon ride



Saturday

Couples Time and Dinner with Homeowners

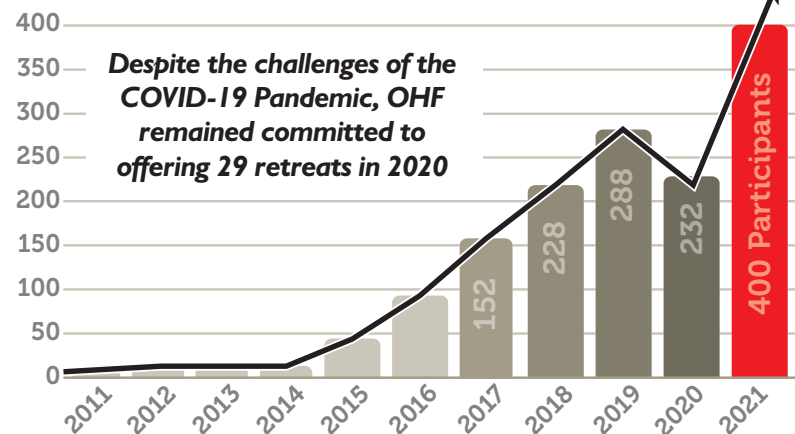


Sunday

Departure and Farewell

Retreat Participants

125 Therapeutic Retreats Conducted Since Inception



"Before we were invited to this event, our marriage was past the brink of divorce. We hadn't spoken to each other in months, we slept at opposite ends of the house, and we used our children as emotional buffers. We were alone.

Thank you for providing this experience. You saved us. You've saved our family. You've saved our lives. Thank you for giving us this chance to reset and try again."

— Alex & Maya, OHF retreat participants



2020 Participant Impact Survey

As we continue to grow, the quality and effectiveness of our program are of utmost importance. We currently conduct pre and post retreat surveys and an annual survey to continue to track and measure our short- and long-term program outcomes.

MENTAL HEALTH

Every single Service Member and Spouse reported improvements in multiple mental health symptoms following the retreat *while 90% reported continued improvement 6 months to a year or more later.*

Every Service Member that completed a pre-retreat survey, reported experiencing one or more than one of the following:

- **Anxiety** (70%)
- **Inability to Sleep** (55%)
- **Depression** (43%)
- **Angry Outbursts** (36%)
- **Loss of Hope** (9%)



Retreat participants responded that they will be seeking treatment for the following medical issues following the retreat:

- **Anxiety** (40%)
- **Depression** (25%)
- **Loss of Hope** (11%)
- **Other** (42%) *suicidal ideations, migraines, cancer screenings, chronic/nerve pain, orthopedic injuries, PTSD, TBI, hormonal imbalance, marriage counseling*
- **Inability to sleep** (34%)
- **Angry Outbursts** (19%)

COMMUNICATION

Over 96% of annual survey respondents reported improved communication with their spouses following the OHF retreat.

62% of Service Members reported that communication with their medical care team improved following the OHF retreat.

RELATIONSHIPS

83% of annual survey respondents believe that the peer-to-peer exchange during the retreat aided in their personal recovery.

74% of annual survey respondents believe that the relationship with their OHF Retreat Lead aided in their personal recovery.

A 2021 study contacting or attempting to contact every SOF couple (over 525 couples) who have participated in an OHF retreat revealed they have a divorce rate of only 6.7%, which is the complete inverse of commonly reported SOF divorce rates of 80% or more.

ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

Over 96% reported increased sense of confidence in their physical abilities following the recreational activities they participated in during the retreat while 99% were planning similar activities with their spouses and families following the retreat.

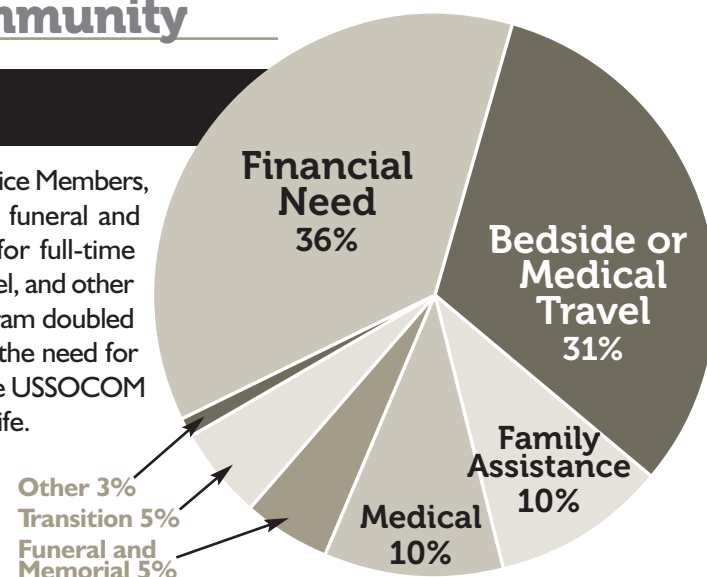
84% of Service Members reported that they learned of additional resources or benefits during their retreat from the other couples or the retreat lead.

Meeting the needs of the Special Operations Community

SOAR (Special Operations Additional Resources) Program

The Immediate Needs program covers travel and expenses related to medical emergencies for SOF Service Members, Veterans, and their families, medical and adaptive equipment not covered by government means, funeral and memorials costs not covered by government means including family travel, relief or respite care for full-time caregivers, one-time financial assistance related to transition or employment opportunities including travel, and other as needed crisis support for families including emergency financial support. The immediate needs program doubled in 2020 and we were able to assist more families than ever. This program will double again in 2021 as the need for access to this resource is vital in the overall wellbeing of SOF families. Our continued partnership with the USSOCOM Warrior Care Program ensures that every SOF service member, Active Duty and Veteran, is SOF for Life.

- 341 SOAR Requests Fulfilled
- OHF has provided \$472,125 in Direct Immediate Needs Support
- \$354,400 was spent in 2020
- 1,489 Operators or Family Members Assisted
- \$1.2 Million estimated spent by the end of 2021



2020 SOAR Program
Immediate Needs Requests By Type



"I've learned that it's OK not to be OK, and it's OK to ask for help,"
says Brooke Adams, Army SOF Spouse.

"I will forever and always rave about Operation Healing Forces, because this is an organization that shows the heart of God. When people are in need, you help them, and that's what they do."



"From the retreat to the flooring, it was like a set of dominos with things falling into place. It's been incredible for our family in ways I can't put into words."
says Courtney Carreon about the family's new floor, installed to help their son Maverick who was born with a genetic disorder that hampered his ability to walk.



"When the ball gets dropped and that support is stripped from you, it turns your life upside down. It worries me to think of others who have gone through this. Lives have literally been ruined or even ended by suicide because of these types of things. That's what makes programs like OHF so critical."
– W.C. Hunt, Army Ranger sniper with the 75th Ranger Regiment

"My wife cried when she found out what they were doing for us. For OHF to say 'we've got your back, don't worry, we're going to cover this,' was something we never expected. It's amazing to know that this kind of support is out there for those of us living paycheck to paycheck."
– George McAlister, Air Force Combat Controller

Additional SOAR Programs

OHF Employment Services

Operation Healing Forces works closely with several employers and organizations to assist transitioning or retired SOF service members and their families find employment.

SOF Caregiver & Spouse Retreats

After years of Creating Bonds that Cure between SOF couples in hopes of repairing and strengthening marriages, we realized that the SOF spouses and caregivers had truly become our unsung heroes of the war. Our military SOF spouses need to create their own bonds to help encourage and support one another through therapeutic retreats designed just for them by one of their own.

Alumni Support

The Operation Healing Forces therapeutic retreat program has grown every year. With over 900 OHF alumni and growing, we recognized that many of our couples need continued assistance following their retreat. The OHF Special Operations Additional Resources (SOAR) program was designed to meet these continued needs of our alumni which has grown to over 3,000 members in 2020. We maintain a connection with all participants following involvement in any OHF Program.

Financial Planning

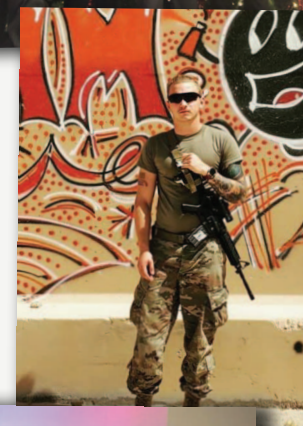
In Partnership with Davenport & Company, LLC, The Valdes Group of Merrill Lynch as well as other Merrill Lynch planners, Operation Healing Forces has started a pilot program designed to help families from the Special Operations community create a long range financial plan for themselves and their families for the remainder of their military career as well as the their transition to retirement or civilian careers.

Legal Assistance Program

Operation Healing Forces is developing a resource to assist Special Operations families with legal needs such as real estate matters, general business matters, contractor agreements, estate planning including will and trusts, probate, guardianships, immigration matters, income tax controversy matters, and general litigation issues. The SOAR program will provide the initial assessment and referral for all OHF families.

Ambassador Events

The Operation Healing Forces Ambassador Program was a direct result of our passionate alumni's desire to spread the word about OHF throughout the SOF community! Retreat alumni and OHF staff come together to host special events to inform other Special Operation's families about the retreat program as well as our other programs.





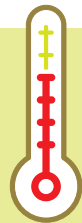
A Note From The Chairman

Dear Friends of Operation Healing Forces,

Despite the trying times we have faced in 2020, our Nation's elite Special Operators and their families continue to respond to the demands our country places on them in service around the world. For Operation Healing Forces, this meant never backing down on our allegiance and loyalty to these Heroes and their families. Over the past 20 years, the fight at home and abroad has taken its toll resulting in a continued battle against depression, suicide, and lingering wounds that affect our operators' quality of life and the lives and wellbeing of their families. We will soon mark OHF's 10-years of service and commitment to those who have sacrificed so much for our continued freedoms. For now and in the future, we will continue to meet the needs of these Special Operations Service Members and their families through expanded programming including our therapeutic retreat program, immediate needs program, and additional resource opportunities. My hope for OHF has always been to provide a place of hope and healing for this heroic community, which is only possible through your generous and patriotic support of our mission—Creating Bonds that Cure. I would personally like to thank each and every one of you who supported OHF in 2020; making those who stand ready so we may sleep safely in our beds at night a priority in a very difficult year. With sincere gratitude to you all, and may God bless America.

With warmest regards,
Gary Markel, *Chairman*

2020 Financials



**Total Raised
in 2020:**
\$2,993,796

Program Expenses:	\$2,265,593
General & Administrative Expenses:	\$145,692
Fundraising Expenses:	\$369,883
Total Net Assets:	\$2,088,116

**Gary and Tony Markel have committed to covering
all overhead expenses, so we can continue to use
100% of all donated dollars towards program expenses.**

Community Support



**188 Volunteer
Hours**



**29 Property
Donations in 2020**



**112 Businesses Donated
Meals & Services**

2020 Board Of Directors

Gary Markel, *Chairman*
James Attkisson, *Treasurer*
Tony Markel, *Secretary*

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Like to know more? Please visit:
www.operationhealingforces.org



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