



# OHF INTEL

2nd Quarter 2018

2018  
30 Planned  
Retreats

A Quarterly Report from Operation Healing Forces.

## Expanding Our Impact: OHF by the Numbers

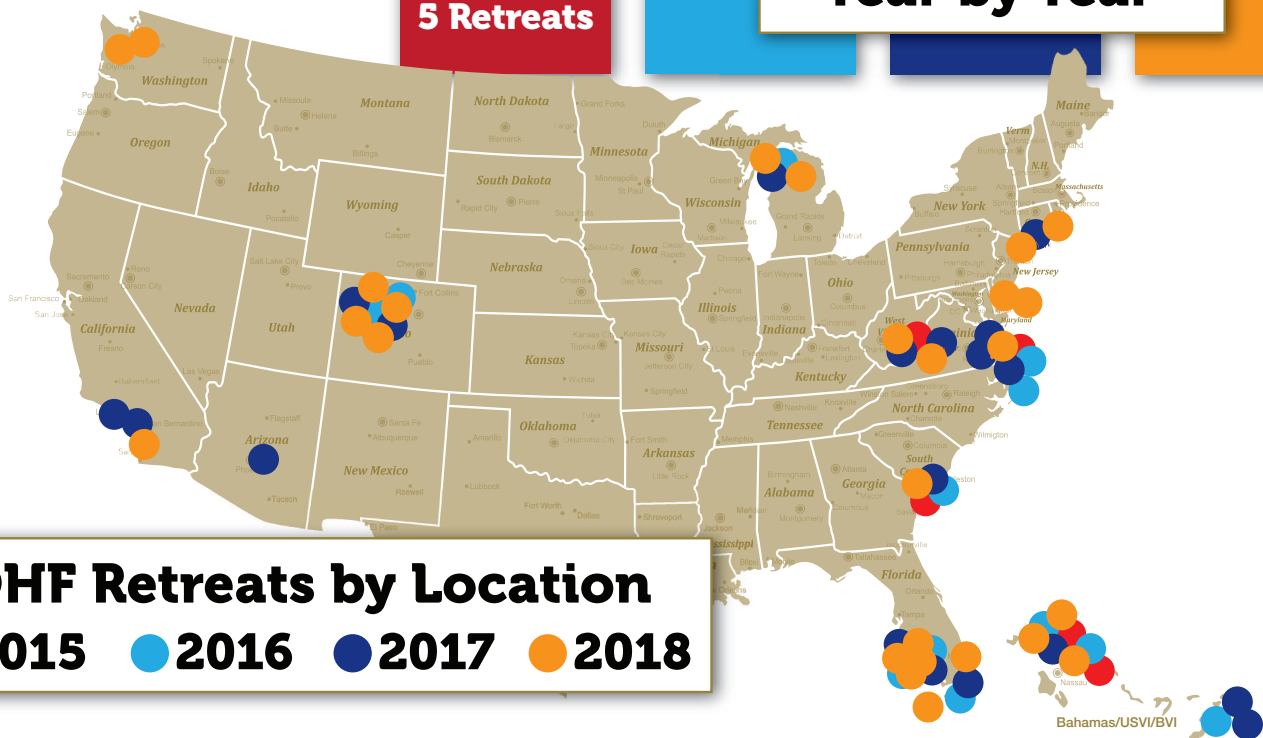
OHF is extending healing and hope to more couples than ever before, thanks to our dedicated donors. Since 2015, the number of annual OHF retreats has grown six-fold.

2016  
12 Retreats

2017  
19 Retreats

2015  
5 Retreats

### OHF Retreats Year by Year



Wounded special operators and their loved ones prepare for a horseback ride at The Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia. Horses are known to have a therapeutic effect on healing.

### IN THIS ISSUE

- p2 Growth and Gratitude:  
Helping More Heroes
- p2 Remarkable Resilience:  
Al & Tammy Barrientos
- p3 Shared Adventures:  
The Greenbrier, WV  
Steven & Jill  
Randall & Roslyn
- p4 Homes for Healing:  
4 Ways You Can Help



## Letter from the Chairman

Gary Markel, OHF Founder

### Growth and Gratitude: Helping More Heroes Heal

*Dear friends and supporters of Operation Healing Forces,*

Every year, Operation Healing Forces provides deserving couples with a unique opportunity to experience respite and personal healing at retreats in idyllic locations. At these retreats, our nation's Special Operators can suspend their daily stressors in an environment where all their needs are met. This gives them an opportunity to focus on their own healing, strengthen their marriage, and bond with a small group of couples with similar life experiences. The small, intimate nature of these retreats is part of what makes them successful.

Therein lies a challenge facing OHF: How can we make this experience available to more couples, while maintaining

the peaceful, personalized, healing atmosphere of our small retreats? I'm proud to report that OHF has met this challenge. Since 2015, the number of retreats has increased six-fold. For 2018, we have 30 retreats planned—an incredible feat we could not carry out without your support.

Our remarkable growth is made possible by dedicated, generous donors, and the expertise and tireless work of OHF staff members. Our efforts are making a real difference in the lives of deserving heroes and their families, and we are not done yet. Let's work together to provide more warriors with the space, time, and resources they need to heal, for years to come.



### Remarkable Resilience: Al and Tammy Barrientos

Just five months after an IED attack that led to a below-the-knee amputation and a traumatic brain injury, Al Barrientos and his wife Tammy found the courage and strength to attend our Palm Springs retreat. We didn't know for certain how the retreat would go, because Al still needed help walking and used a wheelchair most of the time.

Al surprised everyone at the retreat by participating in all the planned activities. But there were more surprises to come. On the third day of the retreat, Al shocked everyone by taking his first unas-

sisted steps since his amputation! Tammy captured the steps on video in their bedroom and shared them with the group. Although we knew Al still had a long road ahead, the experience was exciting and emotional.

Today, Al is back to work and has again achieved full operational status at 7th Special Forces Group in Eglin Air Force Base, Florida and is living a healthy life with his family. We salute the family's bravery, and we are honored to share their experience of healing at the retreat and beyond.

— Billy DeLong, Operation Healing Forces Program Director

**"Tammy and I would like to thank OHF for the generosity to take us to Palm Springs for a week, I want to thank you. I'm back to work!"**

**— Al and Tammy Barrientos, August 2017  
Palm Springs retreat participants**



May 2018, Al Barrientos training up in full kit, negotiating obstacles, and after going through a myriad of other physical and mental tests has again successfully achieved full operational status as a US Army Special Forces Green Beret.





## Shared Adventures: Retreat at The Greenbrier, March 4-10, 2018

Our nation's Special Operators are no strangers to adventure; their missions demand unwavering bravery and valor. But serenity, healing, and fellowship aren't part of their everyday lives. A recent retreat at The Greenbrier, a National Historic Landmark tucked in the mountains of West Virginia, allowed couples to experience a new type of adventure, together. As our couples took on new pursuits,

from horseback riding to falconry to glass blowing, they got the chance to rest, heal, and strengthen their bonds. Each pair returned from the retreat with a new perspective on their relationship, and new memories of adventures shared.



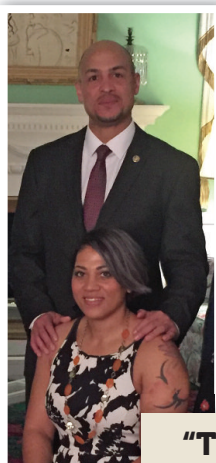
### Unexpected Respite: Steven & Jill

Throughout my many deployments over my 20 years in the military, opportunities for spending time with family are few and far between. I would sometimes see my wife for about two months out of the year. At the retreat, we wanted to interact with other couples and spend quality time together. The Greenbrier offered all of this and more. My personal favorite activity was horseback riding. During the retreat, it was sometimes hard to accept the way we were pampered, as I had never had an experience like this before. The time spent with my wife was priceless!

— **Steven Koszarek, Special Forces Operations Sergeant (Master Sergeant/E8)**



*Utilizing specialized off roading vehicles is routine for special operations forces, but their spouses rarely if ever get to partake in such training. At The Greenbrier, couples got to share the experience bringing them closer together. There's nothing like some mud in the face to make you both smile.*



### An anniversary to remember: Randall & Roslyn

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the Operation Healing Forces retreat at Greenbrier. Over the course of the last ten years of marriage and 17 years of service to Special Operations, I've never been able to take part in such a remarkable event. My wife and I rarely have time to dedicate to each other without our children; the retreat provided an opportunity

for us to rekindle our identity as a couple, solidify our bonds and celebrate an anniversary in a way that we would not have had the capacity to do on our own. I would highly recommend this experience to my fellow SOF members at any phase of life or service.

— **Randall & Roslyn Bethea, 75th Ranger Regiment**

**"The retreat was an incredible, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Through spending this healing time with my wife, I came away with a renewed perspective on my marriage, my role within my family, and my future. Our bond is stronger, which gives our family a firm foundation to move forward. We're extremely grateful for the opportunity."**

**— Randall Bethea, 75th Ranger Regiment, Company First Sergeant**



# Homes for Healing

Operation Healing Forces staff members plan, implement and personally oversee incredible, once-in-a-lifetime retreats for our couples. Every detail, every meal, and every activity are planned to maximize our participants' relaxation, healing, and personal and relational growth. But our retreats can't take place without the homes provided by generous donors.

The phenomenal growth in our retreat numbers means more couples can experience these retreats. This growth also means that Operation Healing Forces needs homes to house our heroes and their spouses.



## Our Need:

5-bedroom, 5-bathroom homes at destination locales in North America and the Caribbean.

## Timing:

Retreats take place over 7 days. We have immediate needs for retreat locations in 2018 and beyond.

## Learn More:

Contact Jim Zuba at [jim.zuba@ophf.org](mailto:jim.zuba@ophf.org) to learn more about opening your home and helping to heal to our nation's Special Operators and their spouses.

## Four Ways You Can Help!



- 1** **Cash Contributions**  
(100% to program costs)



- 2** **Donate a 5 bedroom/  
5 bath Home for a Week**



- 3** **Donate your Airline Miles**  
It's easy. Call or email Desiree Holley to find out how. 813-480-6078  
[desiree.holley@operationhealingforces.org](mailto:desiree.holley@operationhealingforces.org)



- 4** **Donate through Amazon Smile**  
Search for Operation Healing Forces at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), and Amazon will donate a portion of sales to OHF.

## Thank you for your support of Operation Healing Forces

### Comments? Questions?

Please tell us what you think about our quarterly newsletter. Direct questions, comments, or to unsubscribe, e-mail us at: [info@ophf.org](mailto:info@ophf.org) or by mail to:

**Operation Healing Forces**

380 Park Place Blvd, Suite 175, Clearwater, FL 33759  
(727) 221-5071



**Creating bonds that cure.**

[www.operationhealingforces.org](http://www.operationhealingforces.org)