

OHF INTEL

Summer 2026

A Quarterly Report from Operation Healing Forces.



A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Dear Friends of Operation Healing Forces,

For 250 years, every generation of Americans has relied on a small number of extraordinary men and women willing to go first, go farther, and accept greater risk in service to something larger than themselves.

Their example reminds us of a truth as old as the Republic itself: freedom has never been self-sustaining. Since our nation's founding, each generation has been asked to protect it, preserve it, and pass it forward. From the patriots who secured our independence to the generations of military men and women who have safeguarded our freedoms across two and a half centuries, the strength of our nation has always rested on those willing to answer the call when duty demands it.

As America celebrates its 250th birthday and Operation Healing Forces marks its 15th anniversary, we are reminded that our nation's story has always been shaped by individuals whose courage exceeded their concern for personal safety and whose commitment to liberty outweighed the risks before them.

The men and women who forged our Republic understood an enduring truth: freedom requires stewardship. It demands sacrifice. It calls upon citizens willing to place service above self and the greater good above individual interests.

That same spirit has lived on in every generation of Americans who answer the call to serve. Among them are the members of America's Special Operations Forces community. Serving at the Tip of the Spear, these men and women undertake some of our nation's most demanding and consequential missions, supported by families whose strength, sacrifice, and resilience help make that service possible.

As Operation Healing Forces reflects on fifteen years of service, we are humbled by the privilege of walking alongside wounded, ill, and injured members of the Special Operations Forces community, as well as their families, caregivers, and survivors, as they navigate the challenges of rehabilitation, reintegration, and resilience.

Throughout that journey, we have witnessed extraordinary courage in the face of adversity, perseverance through hardship, and a steadfast commitment to others. Time and again, we have been reminded that service does not end when the mission changes. It is reflected in how these heroes continue to serve long after the mission changes, demonstrating the resilience, character, and commitment that have always defined our nation at its best.

As we celebrate this historic moment in our nation's story, we do so with profound gratitude for those who have safeguarded our freedoms across generations and with renewed commitment to those who continue that mission today.

After all, the story of America has never belonged solely to those who founded her. It also belongs to those who have defended her, strengthened her, and sacrificed for her in every generation since.

On this 250th anniversary of our nation, we remain inspired by those who continue to respond when duty calls and honored to serve the Special Operations Forces community that carries forward a legacy of service, sacrifice, and commitment woven throughout our nation's history. We are grateful for all who stand alongside them and help ensure that this legacy of service continues for generations to come.

Kerry Irvin
Chief Executive Officer
Operation Healing Forces

Strengthening the Legacy

As America celebrates 250 years of freedom, SOF Week reminds us that preserving our nation's future takes collaboration and shared purpose. According to U.S. Special Operations Command, SOF Week 2026 welcomed representatives from 73 countries, more than 30,000 registered attendees, 800+ exhibitors, and 180+ speakers.

Operation Healing Forces was honored to be part of this remarkable gathering. Just as generations before us answered the call, today's partnerships are helping strengthen the Special Operations Forces community and support the next generation of those who will protect our nation's freedom.

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Carlos and Esperanza Ordonez, recently celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary with their children.

EVERY STEP TOWARD HEALING

"OHF stepped in when we needed help the most and gave me the tools and support necessary to rediscover joy in life and be more present for my wife and children."

Recovery isn't measured by a single breakthrough. It's built over time through small victories, continued care, and the support of people who walk beside families through every stage of healing. For retired Army Special Forces veteran Carlos Ordonez, Operation Healing Forces has been part of that journey for years.

Carlos served 18 years in the Army, including 13 years in Special Forces with 7th Special Forces Group and the Special Warfare Training Group. During his military career, he sustained multiple traumatic brain injuries from explosions in Afghanistan and parachute jumps, leaving him to navigate the lasting effects of TBI and PTSD long after his service ended.

In 2018, during one of the most difficult seasons of their lives, Carlos and his wife, Esperanza, attended an Operation Healing Forces Therapeutic Couples Retreat. "That one week was enough to rekindle the spark we once had. For the first time in nearly a decade, I danced with my wife during that retreat," Carlos shared.

As Carlos continued his recovery, Operation Healing Forces remained by his side. When PTSD and TBI symptoms became overwhelming, OHF connected him with additional wellness resources that helped him through one of the darkest seasons of his life.

Most recently, after a severe relapse of TBI symptoms made even a few minutes in front of a computer screen unbearable, OHF provided support through the SOAR Transition Program. A specialized monitor significantly reduced Carlos' migraines, eye strain, and neurological fatigue, allowing him to spend much longer periods working and continuing his recovery.

"Before receiving the monitor, I could tolerate only about five minutes behind a screen before my symptoms became overwhelming. Now, I am often able to work for an hour or more at a time."

Carlos' story reminds us that healing isn't one moment. It's a lifelong process that evolves over time. Recovery can touch every part of a family's life, from relationships and emotional well-being to the lasting effects of physical injuries and traumatic brain injury. No matter what comes next, Operation Healing Forces is committed to providing the care and support Special Operations Forces families need to keep moving forward.

SOAR Program Managers Tiers Arnts and Phillip Fong reconnect with Carlos Ordonez during the 2026 Warrior Games, where he competed in adaptive sports alongside fellow athletes.



THE QUIET WEIGHT

There are some wounds that cannot be seen. They don't leave visible scars, but they can weigh heavily on the hearts and minds of Special Operations Forces service members and the families who love them.

Sergeant First Class Nicholas "Nick" Guard lived a life rooted in service and a deep love for his family. Born and raised in Hawaii, Nick first served as a Marine Force Reconnaissance operator before earning the Green Beret and serving with 1st Special Forces Group. He was a respected leader, a dependable teammate, and someone who genuinely cared for those around him. Cydney says Nick embodied the Hawaiian value of 'ohana, placing family at the center of everything he did. He was a devoted husband, a loving father to Mattix and Leilani, and the kind of person who made those around him feel valued.

No matter what Nick accomplished, he was always looking toward the next opportunity to grow. Cydney remembers him as someone who continually challenged himself to be better. In June 2022, his bags were packed by the door as he prepared to leave for selection with the U.S. Army's Combat Applications Group (CAG), continuing to pursue the next chapter of a career dedicated to serving others.

But Nick never made it to selection. He was lost far too soon, a heartbreaking reminder that invisible wounds can remain hidden behind extraordinary strength and service.

As Cydney faced the unimaginable task of rebuilding life without her husband, she also struggled to rediscover her own identity. For years, she had proudly been a Special Forces spouse.

Nick's legacy lives on through the family he loved so deeply and the lives he touched along the way.



Cydney Guard with her husband, Nicholas Kau'iloikaika Franklin Guard, and their two children.

Suddenly, she found herself wondering where she belonged.

Operation Healing Forces continued to stand beside the Guard family through the Immediate Needs Program, providing grief counseling, assistance with critical home repairs, and the support they needed during one of the most difficult seasons of their lives.

"The support we've received reminds me and the kids that Nick is appreciated," Cydney says. "His efforts weren't for nothing." For Cydney, that support became about much more than practical assistance. It reminded her that she and her children were still part of a community that loved them.

"They wrapped us in love," she says. "They reminded me, 'No, you are still loved, and you are a part of us.'"

Nearly four years later, grief is still part of everyday life. Some days, even deciding what to do with Nick's belongings feels overwhelming. Yet she continues to honor Nick's memory while moving forward with the life they built together.

"Life is still beautiful. Life is still worth it. You can keep carrying on," Cydney says.

For families like the Guards, support is more than assistance during a moment of crisis. It's knowing there is a community that continues to show up in the days, months, and years that follow, offering hope and the reminder that they are not alone.





THIRTY-TWO YEARS, ONE TEAM

"This beautiful experience has given us the rare chance to finally set down our roles as 'soldier' and 'caregiver' and just be husband and wife again," Carlos said.

For more than three decades, Carlos and Jennefer Mendoza have lived a life defined by service, sacrifice, and commitment, not only to their country, but to each other.

Married in 1994, the same year Carlos began his military career, they built their marriage through nearly three decades in the Special Operations Forces community. Together, they raised four daughters while balancing deployments, frequent time apart, and the demands that come with life in Special Operations.

As a Green Beret with 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, Carlos served throughout Central and South America, Romania, Kuwait, and across five combat deployments to Afghanistan. Through it all, the Mendoza family learned to make the most of the time they had together. Homecomings were treasured, family always came first, and every opportunity to be together was centered around their daughters.

Over time, they realized something surprising. "We never even had a date until Billy took us to Greenbrier," Carlos said. "When we went out, it was always with the kids."

After 32 years of marriage, their Operation Healing Forces Therapeutic Retreat gave them something they had not experienced in decades: uninterrupted time to simply be together.

One of their favorite memories came during an ATV excursion, where Jennefer climbed onto an ATV for the first time. "It made us realize we need to do more things together, kid free," she said.

The experience reminded them that even after more than three decades together, there were still new memories to create and new adventures to share.

While the retreat created unforgettable memories, it also introduced Carlos and Jennefer to a community that continues long after couples return home. Earlier this year, they traveled to the Tampa Bay area to participate in a glassblowing workshop led by Chief Program Officer Chris Stowe, reconnecting with fellow alumni and strengthening friendships built through Operation Healing Forces.

Communication, routine, and understanding have been the foundation of Carlos and Jennefer's marriage through the unique demands of military life. Today, they are intentionally seeking new ways to strengthen their relationship, proving that the strongest marriages are not simply built over time, but nurtured throughout every season of life.

Carlos and Jennefer share a new adventure together during an ATV excursion through the Rocky Mountains.



Hockey Heals 22 Brings Community Together for Veteran Suicide Prevention



For 22 straight hours, the ice became a place of hope.

From 2 p.m. on June 13 until noon on June 14, players, veterans, first responders, NHL alumni, and supporters came together for the sixth annual Hockey Heals 22. Hosted by the Lightning Warriors Hockey Program, the event raises awareness for veteran suicide prevention while building a community of support for those who have served.

Operation Healing Forces was grateful to be selected as one of this year's beneficiaries and proud to spend the weekend alongside the incredible volunteers, players, families, and supporters who made Hockey Heals 22 possible. Every hour on the ice reflected a shared commitment to supporting veterans and bringing hope to those who need it most.

The "22" in Hockey Heals 22 reflects the heartbreaking statistic that inspired the event when it first began: an estimated 22 veterans lost their lives to suicide each day. While progress has been made, even one veteran lost to suicide is one too many. Hockey Heals 22 continues to raise awareness, foster meaningful conversations, and remind veterans that connection, hope, and support are always available.

"Letting folks know that there's resources out here, there's organizations like ours to reach out to. It's okay to not be okay, it's OK to ask for help. It actually takes strength to do that, not weakness, so we want to break that stigma," said Chris Scangarello, Executive Director of Hockey Heals 22.

Through the generosity of participants, sponsors, volunteers, and supporters, Hockey Heals 22 raised funds that will directly support Operation Healing Forces and other organizations dedicated to serving veterans and their families. We are proud to partner with the Lightning Warriors Hockey Program, the Malone Family Foundation, and others who share a commitment to supporting those who have served and reducing the risk of veteran suicide.

The final buzzer marked the end of 22 hours on the ice, but the impact will continue long after.



OHF Retreat Program Manager Jeff Tannery accepts a donation presented to Operation Healing Forces by the Lightning Warrior Foundation during Hockey Heals 22.

Welcoming Maggie McClelland to the Operation Healing Forces Team



Operation Healing Forces proudly welcomes Maggie McClelland as OHF's new Director of Development

As an experienced development professional and non-profit leader with proven success in non-profit fundraising, she brings more than 19 years of experience in non-profit leadership, fundraising and marketing to her role at OHF.

Prior to joining OHF, Maggie served as Chief Advancement Officer at The Spring of Tampa Bay, and Director of Development at Academy Prep Center of Tampa, positions where she led fundraising efforts, including strategic partner development, planned giving, endowment and capital campaigns, donor engagement, and strategic communications.

Maggie is a proud Tampa resident, and has spent her career in non-profit fundraising and marketing in Tampa Bay since 2006. She is also personally involved in the Tampa Bay community, serving as a leader within The Junior League of Tampa since 2012, as a graduate of the Leadership Tampa Class of 2017, and on the Leadership Tampa Alumni Cabinet for 3 years.

Maggie holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Relations and a Bachelor of Art degree in Spanish, both from the University of Florida. She also earned her Master's degree in Latin American Studies, with a concentration in International Communication, from the University of Florida. Maggie has also earned multiple certificates in non-profit management, non-profit financial management and leadership from the Non-Profit Leadership Center and the University of South Florida.

Maggie is honored to contribute to a mission that supports the Special Operations Forces community and the families who stand beside them. She believes that honoring service extends beyond military careers and includes investing in the long-term mental, physical, emotional and financial well-being of SOF families. We are proud to welcome Maggie to the Operation Healing Forces team and look forward to the experience, leadership, and passion she will bring

Welcoming Fran Beaudette to OHF's National Advisory Council



Operation Healing Forces is honored to welcome Lieutenant General (Ret.) Francis “Fran” Beaudette to the National Advisory Council, where his decades of Special Operations leadership and lifelong commitment to the military community will help guide our mission in the years ahead.

With more than 32 years of distinguished service in Army and Joint assignments, much of it spent as a Green Beret, General Beaudette served in leadership roles at every level of Special Operations, from commanding a 12-man Special Forces team to leading more than 36,000 Soldiers and civilians as Commanding General of United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). Along the way, he also served as Assistant Commanding General of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), Commanding General of 1st Special Forces Command, and Deputy Commanding General of the 1st Armored Division.

His operational experience includes deployments during the Gulf War, peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, and multiple deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Jordan. A graduate of The Citadel, he also holds advanced degrees from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College.

Beyond his distinguished military career, General Beaudette is widely respected for leading with humility, empathy, and a deep commitment to those who serve. He and his wife of 35 years, Liz, have long been advocates for wounded warriors, military families, and Gold Star families.

“General Beaudette is, in every sense of the phrase, a Soldier’s Soldier,” said Kerry Irvin, Chief Executive Officer of Operation Healing Forces. “His remarkable career speaks for itself, but what has always distinguished him is the way he has cared for the people entrusted to his leadership. He reminds us that the greatest leaders are remembered not only for the missions they accomplished, but for the lives they influenced along the way. We are deeply honored that he has chosen to bring his experience, wisdom, and servant leadership to Operation Healing Forces.”

Upcoming Events

There's an exciting lineup of events ahead, including our Evening of Honor and Impact signature events held in Tampa and Richmond, and OHF's Anne Arundel Manor Golf Tournament. We hope you'll join us as we come together to support the Special Operations Forces community.

Visit the Events page on our website for more information and to reserve your tickets. For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Courtney.Bilyeu@ohf.org.

CONNECT WITH OHF

Help expand OHF's impact –
Please share this newsletter.

Help spread the word about Operation Healing Forces and the battles faced by our nation's Special Operations Forces. Forward this newsletter to a friend, relative, or colleague today. You may end up connecting OHF with its next donor, supporter, or recipient family.

“I read an article online about Operation Healing Forces a couple of years ago and as a U.S. Marine Corps veteran myself, I felt compelled to get involved.”

— OHF Supporter David T. Maccagnone, CEO Multi-Bank Securities Inc.

Helping SOF SOAR

Now more than ever, the SOF community need your support. OHF continues to expand its programs to provide for immediate needs, SOF spouses and caregivers, and assistance with career transitions, employment, and financial planning. To contribute or learn more about these programs, please contact our SOAR team at SOAR@ophf.org

SOAR (Special Operations Additional Resources) Programs

OHF's SOAR Offers:

- Immediate Needs Assistance
- Access to Financial Planning Experts
- Access to Tax Preparation Experts
- Transition Assistance
- Alumni Support
- Holistic Wellness Support

A Home for Healing:

Operation Healing Forces offers transformative therapeutic retreats for SOF couples and caregivers, where meaningful connections are made in homes that provide the perfect setting for creating bonds that cure. A powerful way to give back to those who have sacrificed so much is by donating your home or offering your space to support these life-changing experiences.



OUR NEED:

5-bedroom, 5-bathroom homes at destination locales throughout North America and Worldwide.

TIMING: Retreats take place over 5 days. We have needs for retreat locations in 2026 and beyond.

LEARN MORE: Contact **Kerry Irvin** at kerry.irvin@ophf.org to learn more about opening your home to our nation's Special Operators and their spouses.



Mutually Beneficial

Aside from helping support a worthy cause, stock donations can maximize the value of a gift to both the charitable recipient and the donor. Compared with selling appreciated securities and donating the after-tax net proceeds, a direct gift of stock has the potential to increase the net proceeds to the charity and maximize a donor's tax deduction.

When donating appreciated securities (e.g., stocks, bonds, mutual funds, etc.) with long-term holding periods of one year or more, the amount of the donor's tax deduction is equal to the average value of the high and low price of the securities on the date of the gift. You may generally deduct up to 30% of your Adjusted Gross Income for contributions of appreciated securities held more than one year.

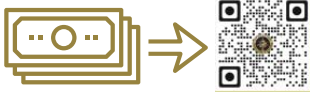
Donating stock to charity is as easy as calling your financial advisor and providing transfer instructions. To learn how to make a stock donation for Operation Healing Forces, visit **<https://OperationHealingForces.org/Donate>** or contact **Kerry Irvin** at **kerry.irvin@ophf.org**.

Giving to Operation Healing Forces is Easier Than Ever!

Simply scan or click on the
OHF QR Code to make a
contribution right away!



More Ways You Can Help!



Cash contributions.*

100% goes to program costs thanks to our board of directors covering all overhead expenses.



Donate a Home.*

5-bedroom/5-bath home for a week.



Host an in-home reception* introducing OHF's mission to your friends and neighbors



Donate your airline miles.

Email Desiree at desiree.holley@ophf.org to find out how

OHF's Retreat Program and SOAR Program are especially meaningful and healing to the Special Operations Forces community because these opportunities are offered at no cost to the participants. By alleviating the burden of financial stress, deserving elite warriors and their families can access much-needed respite and focus on restoring and strengthening each other's bonds which makes a significant difference in the healing process.

OHF's transformative programs are only possible thanks to our partnership with dedicated donors like you. As you consider making a tax-deductible donation to OHF to aid the Special Operations Community, do so with the confidence that **100% of your donation** will go toward supporting our programs. This unique assurance is possible because of the committed support of our board of directors, who personally cover every penny of OHF's overhead expenses. *That means every dollar you give will go directly toward special operators and their families.*

Thank you for your support!



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 firsthand - clients served, volunteers and donors.

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Thank you for supporting 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 or by mail to:

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Creating Bonds That Cure

www.operationhealingforces.org

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