



SENTINELS OF FREEDOM

# WE AIM FOR VICTORY, ONE SENTINEL AT A TIME.

*Our specialized individual services to these veteran's help bridge the unforeseen hurdles they may encounter in achieving their goals by providing budgeted financial assistance, a network of mentors, and finally assistance in career placement.*

THEY ARE WORTH THE INVESTMENT.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020  
SENTINELSOFFREEDOM.ORG

# OUR CORE VALUES & MISSION

Sentinels of Freedom is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit organization that helps severely wounded post-9/11 Veterans with comprehensive personal support and financial assistance as they complete their higher education and achieve success in their post-military careers.

Federal Tax ID: 20-8139201

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## 2020 AT A GLANCE

216 Veterans Served in 2020  
627 Since 2007 Inception

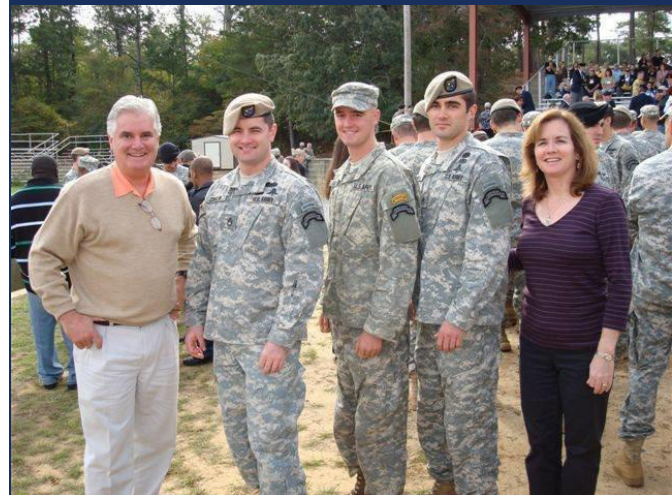
Veterans Across 45 States

Accepted 44 New Sentinels Even  
With The Effects of COVID

90% of Sentinels Completed  
Bridge for Education Program

63 Sentinel Graduates

6 Active Student Veteran Resource  
Centers on College Campuses  
Serving 2,000 Veterans Per Year



Pictured: The Conklin Family  
Mike Conklin, Kris Conklin, Casey Conklin,  
Curt Conklin, and Peggy Conklin

## DEAR SENTINELS OF FREEDOM SUPPORTERS AND THE VETERANS WHOM WE SERVE,

2020 was another challenging year in fundraising due to the impacts of Covid and its variants. However, in light of these challenges, with your generous support, we were able to keep our commitments to all the Sentinels in our program and added 44 new Sentinels in 2020, raising our total number of Sentinels served since inception to 627.

Our stated goal is to add 100 new Post-9/11 veterans each year. Meaning that in a few years we could have 100 new Sentinels joining the program, 400 actively pursuing higher education, and 100 graduates each year moving into their prospective career fields.

Some might think that with the departure of U.S. Troops from Afghanistan, there may be little need for our program to continue.

The differentiator from Sentinels of Freedom and other veteran organizations is that we not only focus on veterans who have been wounded in action, but we also serve veterans who have been forced into medical retirement due to severe injuries that they sustained in training accidents, shipboard accidents, aircraft accidents, and other accidents while performing their duties.

In research reports by the Dept. of Defense Actuarial Department, each year as predictable as the sun rising, some 200,000 members of the military branches end their service and return home, whether from 4-year enlistments or 30-year careers. Out of those 200,000, 16,000 are medically retired. Out of that 16,000, 3,000 are retired with disability ratings above 80%. The average disability rating of the veterans our program serves is 90%.

In understanding these numbers, you can see that the need for the services we provide will never end.

Some years ago, a friend asked me about our program and exclaimed, "Isn't that the job of the Veterans Administration?" My answer remains the same today as back then. "Yes, the VA and the Government have responsibility and services, but what about our responsibility as citizens?"

This is what Sentinels of Freedom is all about. We meet our national responsibility as citizens in providing highly personalized bridge services that the VA cannot provide to fill the gaps that these veterans face in their transition onto higher education and career employment.

The Sentinels of Freedom Foundation is citizen lead and citizen-funded, we have never taken a penny from the Government for our program. I believe this is something to be proud of.

As wars start and end, one thing is an irrefutable fact. We have a responsibility as citizens to these young men and women who volunteer to serve our nation, and who have sacrificed much in doing so, to play a role in helping them onto successful futures. This is the least we can do out of our gratitude to them for what they have done, and what they will certainly provide to our communities as successful, self-dependent veterans. They are worth it.

I hope you will join our mission and cause as we continue to invest in these very worthy veteran's futures.

Very Respectfully,

MIKE CONKLIN  
Chairman & CEO



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our board members consist of individuals with diverse backgrounds in business who are committed to advancing our mission and supporting the success of each Sentinel within the program. The board includes a mix of long-term members and two graduated Sentinels with the first-hand experience of the program. Together, they provide their time, talent, and leadership to ensure our passion for helping disabled veterans to complete their education and transition into successful post-military careers can continue long into the future.



**MIKE CONKLIN**  
**Chairman**  
CEO  
Sentinels of Freedom



**MIKE SANDY**  
**Board Secretary**  
CFO  
Sentinels of Freedom



**KENT STRAZZA**  
**Board Treasurer**  
Managing Director,  
Alternatives Group  
Franklin Templeton  
Investments (Retired)



**SAMANTHA CHAPMAN**  
Vice President of Programs  
Sentinels of Freedom



**PETE WALSH**  
Founder, President  
and CEO Owards LLC



**CHRIS MARZILLI**  
Executive Vice President  
Information Technology  
and Mission Systems  
General Dynamics



**STACY HADEKA**  
Senior Associate in  
Government Contracts  
Hogan Lovells US LLP



**MARY KING**  
Vice President,  
Human Resources and  
Chief Diversity Officer  
Pacific Gas & Electric  
(PG&E)



**DAVID HALVERSON**  
President, Cypress  
International  
Lt. General U.S. Army  
(Retired)



**DAN COLEMAN**  
Director of Design,  
Planning Engineering and  
Construction River Islands  
Development



**JASON CHURCH**  
**Graduated Sentinel**  
State Counsel and Northwest  
Regional Director for U.S.  
Senator Ron Johnson



**HT TRAN**  
**Graduated Sentinel**  
Founder, CEO, and  
President  
DNW Ventures, INC

**MAJOR GENERAL  
RON LOWE,  
US ARMY, RETIRED**  
Executive Director of  
General Contracting  
AT&T (Retired)



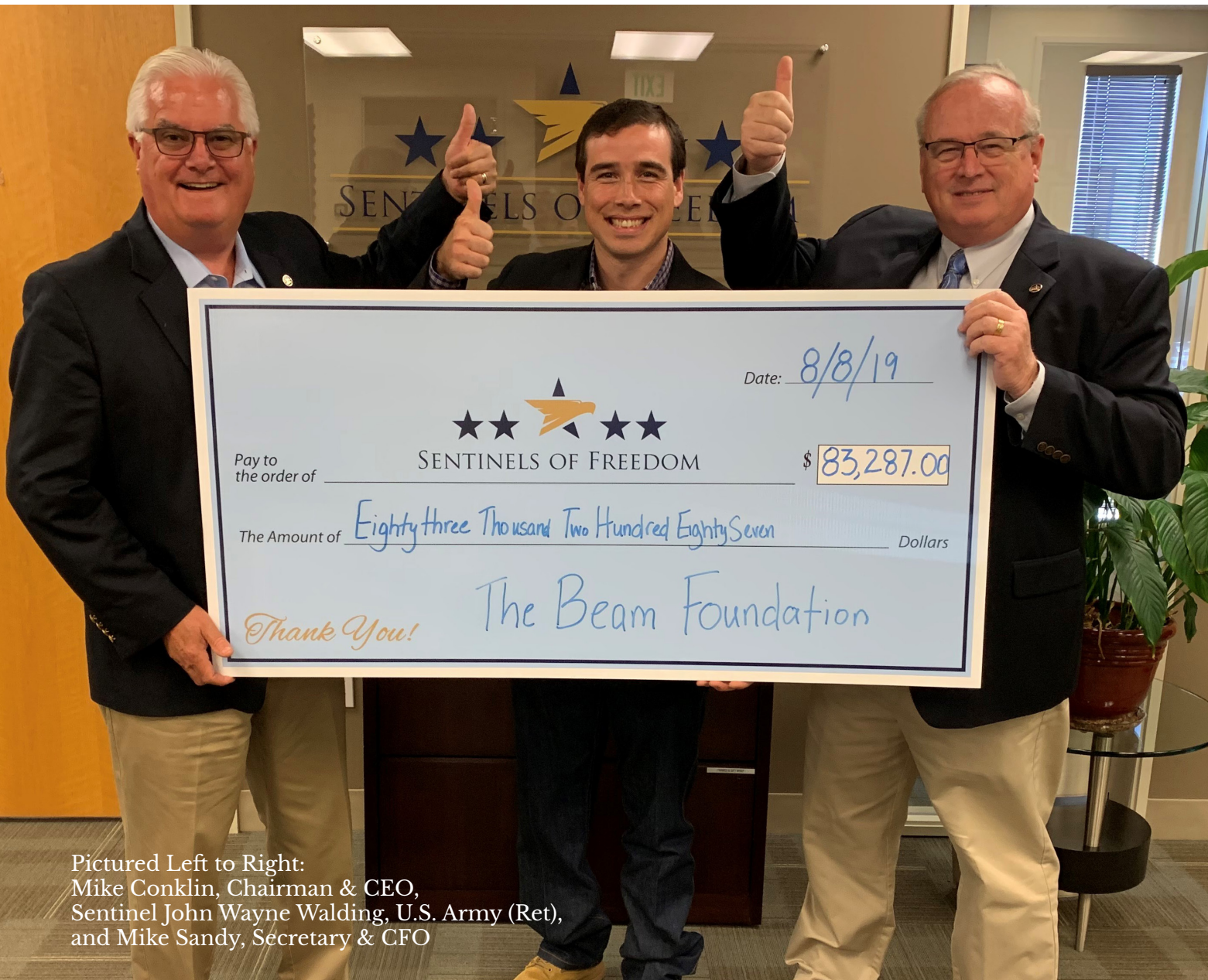
**MARTY KAPLAN**  
**1937 - 2019**  
Board of Directors Emeritus

2020

## FISCAL YEAR

## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Fiduciary responsibility supports our mission with respect to our donors, partners, and Sentinels.



Pictured Left to Right:  
Mike Conklin, Chairman & CEO,  
Sentinel John Wayne Walding, U.S. Army (Ret),  
and Mike Sandy, Secretary & CFO



78% To Veteran Support  
11% To Fundraising  
11% To Administrative

# THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Due to COVID-19, many of us had to adapt to our new “home offices” and a new way to work. This was also true for our Sentinels who were full-time students and faced with campus closures and a new virtual learning experience.

## EDUCATION EXPERIENCE GOES VIRTUAL

Virtual classes during COVID-19 created a difficult environment for our Sentinels to grow accustomed to. Pandemic learning became challenging for a number of reasons:

- No prior experience to remote or virtual learning before March 2020
- Home environment not conducive to productive learning
- Engineering classes are hands-on
- Social distancing in lab settings was difficult
- Hard to grow accustomed to studying while living at home with family

## MENTAL HEALTH ISOLATION & SENSE OF UNEASE

Sentinels were faced with lack of community engagement:

- Limited ability to openly contact professors
- Limited access to on campus learning and resources
- Dealing with family deaths and hospitalizations

## REASSURANCE

- Scheduled check-ins and completing biannual reviews
- Open communication with Case Manager and help to reorient their goals
- Additional surveys to address shifting needs during pandemic

## RESOURCES AND COMMITMENT

- Stand-up desk or other office equipment to create an environment for successful learning
- Treadmill to allow working out at home while gyms were closed
- Financial Resources (Udemy, Dave Ramsey Prog., Financial Coaching)



# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE



## COMPANIES THAT HAVE HIRED OR PROVIDED INTERNSHIPS TO OUR SENTINELS IN 2020

Academica Charter School  
Arctic Wolf  
Aspen Dental  
Bank of America  
Carolina Pain Center  
Cisco  
Columbus Machine Works  
Corrpac  
Deep End Fitness  
Underwater Torpedo League  
Educational Services Group

Frontier Design Group  
General Dynamics - Scottsdale, AZ  
General Dynamics - Falls Church, VA  
Goode Surgical  
Helping Hands Youth Facility  
Jen and Bob Photography  
JPMorgan Chase & Co.  
Mandeville Canine Academy,  
Ted Carlson Dog Training  
Niep Nutrition & Training

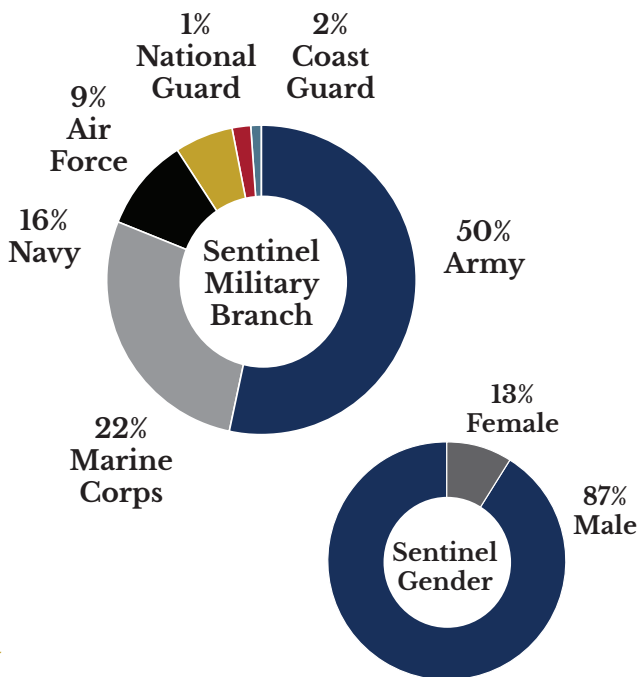
Oakland VA  
Phoenix VA  
Pinney Cullins, LLP  
Power Pro Plus Inc.  
Public Works Department, Navy  
PwC Dallas Office  
Rackspace  
Seachange Technologies  
Sigma Computing  
St. James Catholic Church  
St. Luke's Episcopal Church

State of Texas  
The Walt Disney Company  
The Zenith Group  
TMT Strategy at KPMG US  
Triangle Insights Group  
U.S. Dept. of the Army  
University of Pittsburgh  
Physicians Department  
of Hematology Oncology  
U.S. Air Force

ONCE A SENTINEL

# ALWAYS A SENTINEL

Many veterans may experience difficulties when transitioning back into civilian life. Our Sentinels have the additional burden of being severely wounded or injured, which often prevents them from doing what they previously did in the military or other physically demanding jobs. As they struggle to overcome their injuries many may find it can be difficult to envision a rich fulfilling life, but with Sentinels of Freedom, they are welcomed into a family that only wishes to see them succeed. Sentinels are encouraged to reach out long after their official graduation from school to provide updates or seek future support or guidance as needed.



## \$1,399,562

DOLLARS RAISED IN 2020

## \$53,163

Current Average Cost of Support Over a Sentinels 4-Year Period

## 627

 Veterans Directly Assisted Since Inception as of 12/31/2020

## 32

 Median Age of Sentinels Accepted in 2020

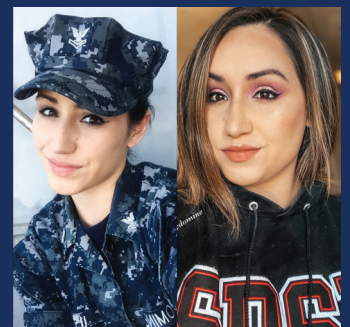
## 90%

 The Average Disability Rating That Our Sentinels Receive From Veteran Affairs

People with disabilities represent the single largest and most diverse minority in the country. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 80% of persons with a disability are unemployed.\* Some key statistics from [adata.org](https://adata.org) are 57% feared they would be discriminated against in hiring because of their disabilities, while only 36% intended to disclose their disabilities to an employer.\*\*

\*[www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm)\*\* [https://adata.org/factsheet/employment-data-veterans-disabilities#\\_edn9](https://adata.org/factsheet/employment-data-veterans-disabilities#_edn9)

Each Sentinel must have a VA disability rating of 50% or higher and have been wounded or injured in a combat or training related event post-9/11 and be committed to pursuing their higher education.

Sentinel Derek Abbey  
University of San DiegoSentinel Don Tran  
Chapman UniversitySentinel John Arroyo  
School of Urban MissionsSentinel Britney Domine  
San Diego State University

SENTINEL'S

# BRIDGE FOR EDUCATION

Our program assists wounded or injured veterans in finding their unique paths to a fulfilling post-military life. Sentinel's Bridge for Education helps fill the gaps GI Bill payments do not cover. This allows Sentinels to focus their attention on their studies, career, and family.

The Sentinel's Bridge for Education program is comprehensive, high touch, multifaceted, and based upon each individual veteran's needs. As our veterans move through school, ongoing assistance is provided in the form of mentoring, life skills coaching, career development, networking, budgeting, financial planning, and more.

**250** Sentinels Served  
at the End of 2019

**216** Sentinels Served  
at the End of 2020

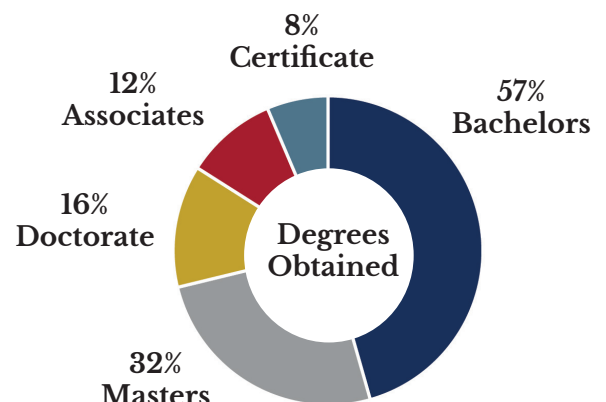
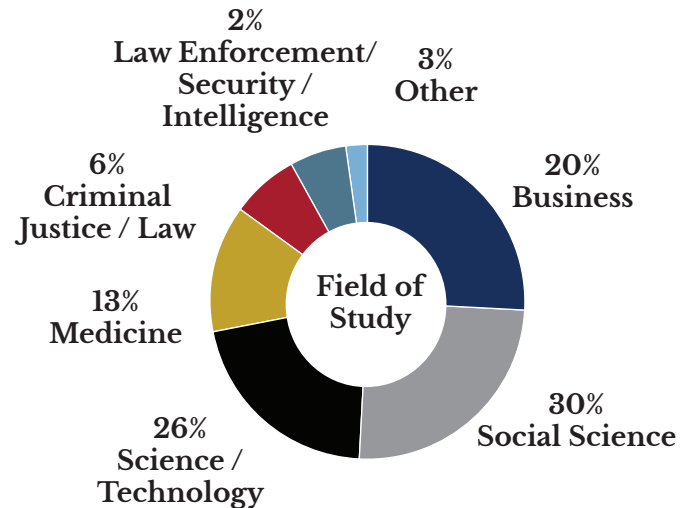
**106** Sentinels Accepted in 2019

**44** Sentinels Accepted in 2020

**90%** of Sentinels complete the  
Bridge for Education Program  
Successfully

**63** Graduated Sentinels  
in 2020

**6** Student Veterans Resource Centers  
Serving 2,000 Veterans Per Year on  
College Campuses



\*Sentinels may be assisted in obtaining more than one degree.



Sentinel Zeeshan Parvez  
University of California, LA



Sentinel Ashley Gorman  
Grand Canyon University



Sentinel Sean Karpf  
Jacksonville University

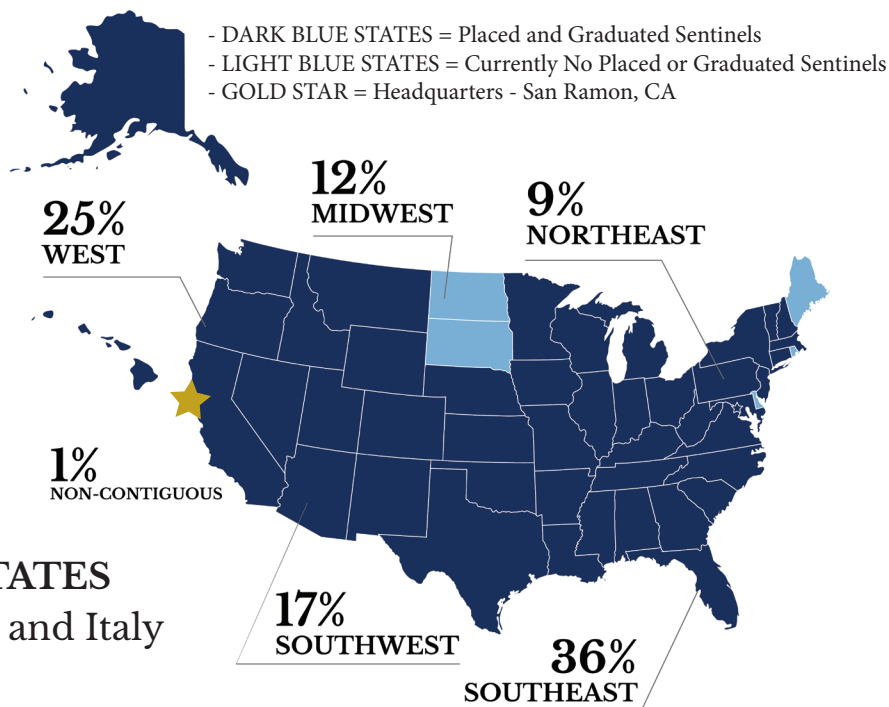


Sentinel Kevin Ivory  
University of Phoenix

## OUR SENTINELS

# LIVE ALL ACROSS THE US

Sentinels of Freedom  
has **SENTINELS LIVING IN 45 STATES**  
throughout the US as well as Brazil and Italy



## UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES AND TRADE SCHOOLS ATTENDED IN 2020 BY OUR SENTINELS

AIMS Community College  
Alabama Aviation College  
Enterprise State Community College  
Alliant International University  
Arizona State University  
ATP Flight School  
Baylor College of Medicine  
Bethel Seminary San Diego  
Boise State University  
California Institute of Integral Studies  
California Southern University  
California State University East Bay  
California State University Fullerton  
California State University Long Beach  
Campbell University  
Carroll College - Helena, MT  
Central Piedmont Community College  
Chapman University  
Charleston School of Law  
College of Central Florida  
Colorado Christian University  
Colorado Mountain College  
Columbia College  
Columbia Southern University  
Columbia University  
DeVry University  
Doane University  
Duke University  
Eastern Kentucky University  
Eastern Virginia Medical School  
Embry Riddle Aeronautical University  
Fayetteville State University  
Fayetteville Technical Community College  
Methodist University  
Fielding Graduate University  
Flathead Valley Community College  
Florida International University  
Fordham University  
Functional Medicine Academy INC.  
Galvanize  
Gateway Community College

Gavilan Community College  
George Mason University  
George Washington University  
Georgetown University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Gonzaga University School of Law  
Grand Canyon University  
Hallmark University  
Harvard University  
Holy Names University  
Houston Baptist University  
John Jay College City University New York  
Keiser University  
Liberty University  
Lone Star College at Tomball, Texas  
Los Angeles Film School  
Louisiana State University  
Mauna Loa Helicopters, Honolulu, HI  
Michigan State University  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Montana State University  
Montgomery Community College  
Murray State University  
National University  
New Mexico University  
New York Institute of Technology  
North Central State College  
Northeast Community College  
Northern Virginia Community College  
Northwest Vista College  
Northwestern University  
Norwich University  
Old Dominion University  
Olympic College  
Orange Coast College  
Oregon Health & Science University  
Point Loma Nazarene University  
Penn State University  
Queens University of Charlotte  
Regent University

Royal Military College of Canada  
Rutgers University  
Saint Charles Community College  
Saint Leo University  
San Diego State University  
San Francisco City College  
San Francisco State University  
San Jose State University  
Santa Clara University  
Santa Rosa Junior College  
School of Urban Missions  
School of Visual Arts  
South Puget Sound Community College  
Southern University Law Center  
Southwestern Acupuncture College  
St. Mary's College  
St. Thomas University  
State College of Florida  
SUNY Cobleskill  
SUNY Empire State College  
SUNY Farmingdale State College  
Tacoma Community College  
Tennessee Tech University  
Texas A&M University San Antonio  
Texas State University  
The Catholic University of America  
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology  
The Citadel Military College of Southern Carolina  
The Culinary Institute of America  
The Ohio State  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
The University of Oklahoma  
The University of Texas at San Antonio  
The University of Texas Permian Basin

Troy University  
University of Arizona  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of Central Missouri  
University of Charleston  
University of Colorado Anschutz School of Medicine  
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs  
University of Colorado Boulder  
University of Denver  
University of Georgia  
University of Houston  
University of Incarnate Word  
University of Miami  
University of Michigan School of Law  
University of North Carolina School of the Arts  
University of Notre Dame  
University of Pacific  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Phoenix  
University of San Diego  
University of South Florida  
University of Southern California  
University of the Cumberlands  
University of the Incarnate Word  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
University of Washington, Tacoma  
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee  
Urbana University  
Vermont Law School  
Wake Forest University  
Wayland Baptist University  
Wayne State University  
Wesleyan University  
Western Governors University  
Withlacoochee Technical College

## A SENTINELS JOURNEY

Military Service > Transition Home > Education > Career

YOUR INVESTMENT  
TRANSFORMS LIVES



### RAHUL (HARP) HARPALANI / U.S. ARMY

During his 2nd deployment to Afghanistan, his team was ambushed by Taliban forces. The IED that initiated the attack tore off his right leg and severely damaged the other. After recovery, he returned to combat and served his country for an additional 5 years.

Graduated from Harvard University JFK School of Government with his Masters of Public Administration. Harp now works for Google as a Product Manager. He and his wife, Amy, welcomed their first child in 2020.



**YOUR INVESTMENT PROVIDES MORE THAN A BRIDGE TO EDUCATION IT'S A BRIDGE FROM THE LIFE OF SERVICE TO A LIFE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN THE CIVILIAN WORLD.**

### PHILLIP ROUSU / U.S. ARMY

While deployed in Afghanistan he was wounded during a firefight on a night raid. A bullet traveled up his dominant forearm causing severely limited function in his right hand. Even after physical therapy Phillip continues to have limited function in his hand.

Studied web-development courses at ASU and found an interest in computer software programming. Attended the Hack Reactor Software Engineering Immersive Program through Galvanize. Now works for General Dynamics.



**ALTHOUGH THE DETAILS OF EVERY SENTINEL'S JOURNEY ARE DIFFERENT, THE CHORDS RUNNING THROUGH THEM ARE THE SAME.**

### ASHLEY BIGALKE / U.S. NAVY

Served aboard USS George H.W. Bush in the Persian Gulf and conducted airstrikes in Iraq against ISIS. While stationed in Norfolk as a helicopter mechanic the physical demands of the job took a toll on her body leaving Ashley with constant knee, back, and foot pain and tinnitus due to the loud noises.

Ashley has completed her bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in Russian. She is currently pursuing her master's degree from Hawaii Pacific University in Organizational Development and Change.



**THESE MEN AND WOMEN HAVE BEEN GRAVELY AND PERMANENTLY INJURED, YET THEY ARE DISTINGUISHED BY THEIR UNIQUE DRIVE, DETERMINATION, AND PATRIOTISM.**

### CASEY BRADEN / U.S. NAVY

During his first deployment in the North Arabian Gulf aboard USS Saipan he tore every ligament in his right ankle when, as a first responder, he was reacting to a shipboard fire and fell down a hatch to the below deck. While in Afghanistan at FOB Shank, he suffered from PTSD.

Casey transferred from California Western School of Law to George Washington University and was accepted for a summer 2021 internship at General Dynamics. He plans to become an attorney upon graduation.



**WE HAVE 627 SENTINEL STORIES TO SHARE AND COUNTING.**



## SENTINEL SIMON SANDOVAL

First Sergeant U.S. Marines  
Bachelors of Arts in History  
University of San Diego

Four years ago, before I was even officially retired from the military, I returned back to school and set off on a journey to further my education. To be absolutely honest, I was very scared going back, and my first day walking on campus at San Diego, Mesa College was one of the most nerve wrecking days of my life. Of all my deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, and all the battles I survived in combat, I was afraid of falling short and failing in the goals I set for myself. Most of all, I had the Sentinels of Freedom who supported and provided me with the tools I needed

to set me up for success. This journey was no easy task, and it kept me up many nights in putting forth my best efforts in all that was required of me.

What was most difficult for me during my transition was changing my mindset from a military culture after serving twenty-one years in the Marine Corps, to an academic culture as a student veteran. Of course, I attended several courses in military academies and conducted training exercises during my military career, but attending classes on a college campus was an unusual challenge for me. I had to start from the beginning with taking pre-algebra and entry level English classes, so I could learn how to write a proper academic paper. I was without a computer and I had no way of printing out my assignments, unless I printed them at the library on campus until Sentinels of Freedom provided me with a computer and a printer to help me complete my assignments from my home. What was most beneficial for me, was the financial support the Sentinels of Freedom provided me and my family. Your contribution helped us with cost of living and reduced my rent significantly. That made a huge difference in our life, knowing that my family and I would have a place to sleep and have enough food on our table. This is something that I hope I can pay forward in the future, as I move on to find another career.

Thus, as a Sentinel, I am thrilled to inform you that I have completed my journey in graduating from the University of San Diego, WITH HONORS IN HISTORY. I am also pleased to announce in this letter, that I was the recipient of the Dr. James Gump Award, for Excellence in Department Service. I want to make it clear, that I could not have done this without the help of the Sentinels of Freedom. I was an "F" student in high school, and never in a million years would I have ever imagined graduating from a 4-year university with honors. This is such an enormous achievement for me, and when I sit down and think about it, it brings me tears of joy. I CAN'T BELIEVE I DID IT.

From the bottom of my heart with all my gratitude, I THANK YOU ALL. May God bless you, God bless America, and Semper Fi.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

*Simon L. Sandoval*



SENTINEL

# ABRAHAM MARTINEZ-AYALA

Specialist U.S. National Guard  
Masters of Social Work  
San Jose State University

The most beneficial part of SOF was the support that was provided by everyone at SOF. Even with me moving to San Jose and it not working out, they were able to support me in finding me a place. SOF also supported me after my wife passed away, always asking how I was doing and if SOF could do anything to support me.

As mentioned beforehand, my wife, Ashley Elizabeth

Martinez-Ayala, passed away on December 20, 2018. That moment in my life has been the most devastating thing to happen to me. It is even worse than being blown up in Iraq, because I lost the person that I loved so much. I honestly thought about quitting school. But I knew that doing that would serve me no purpose, so I decided to continue on. Carol and Mike checked in with me several times to see how I was doing and also with seeing if I needed anything. I was grateful that I had the support from both of them and also from the entire SOF family. SOF even helped me connect with HeadStrong, which is an organization that helps veterans with receiving mental health support with a therapist. I have been able to process not just my grief, but also many other emotions that I had because of my childhood and the military. This is all thanks to SOF.

Now that I have graduated from San Jose State University with a Master in Social Work degree, I have accepted a position at the Department of Veterans Affairs as a Social Worker at HUD-VASH, which helps homeless veterans with finding stable housing, and also help the veteran find resources to be able to treat other issues that might arise with them, i.e. substance abuse or mental health. I am excited for the opportunity as I have been wanting to be a social worker since I got discharged from the military. I am excited to be able to help the population that I feel the most comfortable with.

In this journey of mine, I have learned that as social workers, we are really good at helping others and going above and beyond to take care of those in need BUT we forget to help ourselves. After Ashley passed away, everyone at SOF constantly told me that if I needed anything, and they could provide it, they would. I hesitantly asked for help because of my personality, but SOF went above and beyond in helping me. I learned that there are caring people in this world and that it is ok to ask for help, because we are human beings.



*Abraham Martinez-Ayala*

“Abraham’s story of commitment to help others, and continued service above self inspires us and gives us strength to carry on with our mission at Sentinels of Freedom. We’re proud of you Abraham for letting Sentinels of Freedom into your life in helping you with your objectives and professional goals. Veterans Never Stop Serving!” - Mike Conklin

## SENTINEL

**CHRIS LAMY /**

Technical Sergeant U.S. Air Force  
Juris Doctorate from Louisiana State University


Chris made the decision to join the Air Force after his daughter was born in order to secure a future for his young family while accomplishing something with his life. He decided very early on that he would use the education benefits available to him and completed his bachelor's degree from American Military University while active duty. Over his 10 ½ years of service Chris deployed to Iraq twice as well as once to Afghanistan, Jordan, and Curacao.

In the summer of 2012, while assigned to SEAL team 2, his team established a camp in a remote area of Afghanistan where Chris spent 5 months as the teams K-9 handler going on approximately 50 missions and being exposed to numerous attacks and altercations with the local Taliban fighters. Shortly after returning home it was apparent that something was not right, and his wife convinced him to see mental health care resulting in a diagnosis of severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Through continued care he has identified his stressors and learned there is nothing that he cannot overcome with the right mindset and support of his family. Through therapy and research, he has learned it is something that is likely to never go away and he must simply be aware of his issues and do the best he can every day.



Chris was accepted to Sentinels of Freedom (SOF) after completing his first semester at Louisiana State University. He was on the verge of giving up due to the financial burden of going to school full-time while also raising a family, in addition to the academic stress of his Juris Doctorate program. SOF provided financial relief where he could focus on his family and school and also allowed his wife, Shana to return to school for a bachelor's degree. During his time in school, Chris traveled to DC for a summer fellowship opportunity where Sentinels of Freedom was able to provide networking connections. SOF was also there to provide emotional support and accountability while Chris successfully completed his Juris Doctorate in May 2020.

Shortly after completing his degree, his life was turned upside down again when a close family friend unexpectedly passed away. After his passing, Chris became the lead dog trainer at Mandeville Canine Academy, Ted Carlson Dog Training to carry on Ted's legacy and provide a safe and happy environment for dogs to learn and play while focusing on continued education and constant growth.



“Applying for and being welcomed into the Sentinels of Freedom family was one of the most important steps I took that led me to where I am today. The financial assistance I received from January 2018 until April 2020, not only helped me afford to achieve my goal of attaining an advanced degree; it also gave my wife, Shana, the opportunity to go back to school and finish her bachelor’s degree. Shana graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University one day before my graduation date, neither of which would have been possible without the support of Sentinels of Freedom. While I could go on and on about the financial assistance that we received, that was only one aspect of the Sentinels program that made it so beneficial for me and my family. By far the most important part of the Sentinels of Freedom program has been the quality of individuals I have met as a result. ”

- Sentinel Chris Lamy



“Despite any challenges Chris faced, he was always very positive and energetic with so much passion for what his goals and aspirations were. I always looked forward to my reviews with him to hear how he and his wife were. I especially enjoyed hearing about all of the opportunities and networking events Chris made a point of going after such as his internships in DC, working with different non-profits, and volunteering within his community. It was an absolute pleasure and honor to have been his case manager and a part of his journey!”

- Havilah McMeans, Case Manager

## SENTINELS OF FREEDOM & 7 EAGLE GROUP



Veterans and their spouses are born from the world's greatest workforce -the US Military.

Sentinels of Freedom is proud to team up with other great organizations serving the Military community, like 7 Eagle Group.

7 Eagle Group's mission is to connect talented Military Veterans and their spouses with businesses that value the sheer grit and experience they bring to America's workforce. For more information go to [www.7eagle.com](http://www.7eagle.com).



### SENTINEL

**ALFREDO GAITAN**

U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant

University of the Incarnate Word

Bachelor of Science Business

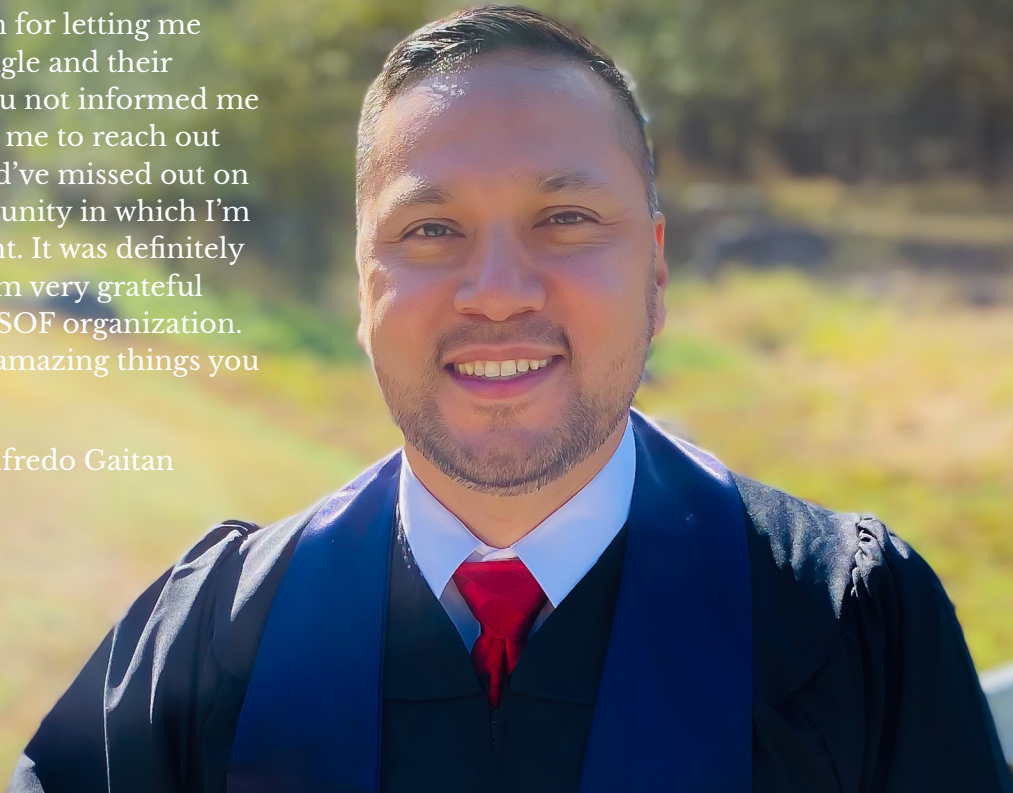
Administration Information Systems

After retiring from the U.S. Air Force as a medic following 20 years of service, Alfredo Gaitan was referred to SoF by a fellow parent from his child's sports team, Sentinel Jose Moreno. Alfredo had started pursuing his education at the University of the Incarnate Word for his bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a focus on Information Systems.

During his Senior year of studies the internship he lined up was cancelled due to COVID-19 and Alfredo was unsure where he would land for employment following graduation. Sentinels of Freedom introduced Alfredo to 7 Eagle Group who had a new opportunity with Cisco Systems to turn four military Veterans into Penetration Testers. Alfredo was a great fit for the new program and began a 6 month paid internship. He will graduate from the program in October 2021 as a fully qualified Pen Tester with the required certifications and will be given an opportunity to be hired by Cisco Systems as a full-time employee.

“ Thank you again for letting me know about 7 Eagle and their mission. Had you not informed me and encouraged me to reach out to Bruce, I would've missed out on the great opportunity in which I'm in at the moment. It was definitely a blessing and I'm very grateful for you and the SOF organization. Keep doing the amazing things you do for us Vets!”

- Sentinel Alfredo Gaitan



## 2020 OUTSTANDING SENTINELS OF FREEDOM

## CORPORATE MEMBERS

Each year Sentinels of Freedom recognizes corporations and their leadership members that have provided outstanding support to the wounded and injured veterans we serve. **These corporations and their employees have gone above and beyond in their efforts to make sure that we as a nation provide tangible services and opportunities to our post-9/11 veterans who have served and sacrificed at our nation's call.**

The leadership of these corporations and the opportunities they provide through, internships, career development programs, job training, in-kind services, and networking is a testimony not only to their goodwill and respect for our veterans but also a great investment in our communities. They assist our veterans with attaining their ultimate goal of a meaningful career.

Without the tremendous support of corporations, citizens, and communities, we would not be able to help these veterans achieve their goals in education and onto their objectives in each of their careers.

## GENERAL DYNAMICS AND GENERAL DYNAMICS MISSION SYSTEMS

## GENERAL DYNAMICS

Chris Marzilli - Executive Vice President

Information Technology and Mission Systems

Chris Brady - President Mission Systems

Devon Engel - General Council General Dynamics

GENERAL DYNAMICS  
Mission Systems

Mike McDermott - Vice President of Marketing for Mission Systems

Mike Neal - Marketing and Strategic Communications Mission Systems

Sharon Dunbar U.S.A.F. MAJ GEN Ret. - Vice President, General Dynamics  
Mission Systems



## PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY

Mary King U.S.A. Ret. - Vice President Human Resources  
and Chief Diversity Officer

Jimmy Harris - Chief of Community Relations

## AMERICAN AIRLINES



Randall Stillinger U.S.A. MAJ Ret. - Manager, Military  
and Veterans Initiatives

Timothy Raynor U.S.M.C. Lt. Col. Ret. - Captain & Chief Pilot  
American Airlines Chicago

## NORTHROP GRUMMAN



David Perry U.S.N. Ret. - Corporate Vice President  
and Chief Global Business Officer

Joseph Mulloy U.S.N. Vice Admiral Ret. - Vice President for  
Marine Systems at Northrop Grumman



AT&T - John Stankey - Chief Executive Officer

## CHEVRON



Jessica Allen - COCO Communications Coordinator

Juliet Don - Corporate Affairs Representative

MAKE AN IMPACT THROUGH GUIDANCE

# BE A MENTOR

As our severely injured veterans embark on their journey to civilian life, they'll be guided by mentors who will help them visualize success in order to achieve their goals and overcome obstacles they may face along the way — including a few that might have looked insurmountable at first glance.

From deciding which degree or job to shoot for to learning tactics for financial stability, mentors in this program help Sentinels put the pieces together as they navigate this next, new, exciting phase of their lives, one victory at a time.



“Mentorship at Sentinels of Freedom is very helpful to me because I was able to see new ways of improving myself to be a better individual. My mentor, Bob Michel, guided me what are the best ways I could take to become a better person and mastering the career that I have chosen. Also, he handed me the experiences and knowledge that I could use to help improve myself to be the best version.”

## SENTINEL

**Kevin Jude Basan**

Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps

San Jose State University, Graduate

Bachelor of Science Business Administration

Small Business Owner, Illiminate Streetwear



## MENTOR

**Bob Michel**

President

PROforma Marketing

# SENTINEL RESOURCES

## WWW.UDEMY.COM



Udemy is an online learning and teaching marketplace with over 155,000 courses and 40 million students. There are many popular courses on information technology, programming, marketing, project management, lifestyle and more. Udemy offers full course curriculum for multiple certification certificate programs.

## WWW.TRIPLEIMPACT.COM



Our Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) recruiting model fuses high caliber talent with a superior work ethic to perfectly align solutions with your organization's challenges. Triple Impact Connections will manage and accelerate the ideal approach to help your business adapt to today's customer. We have a deep understanding of customer relationships, change management/customer transformation strategies and the technical expertise to help our clients exceed the goals they have for their customers.

## WWW.WARRIOR-SCHOLAR.ORG



In partnership with top colleges and universities, Warrior-Scholar Project (WSP) hosts intensive, one and two-week college-preparatory academic boot camps for enlisted veterans and transitioning service members. Boot camps are offered in three disciplines: Humanities, STEM, and Business & Entrepreneurship.

## WWW.PUTVETERANSTOWORK.COM



Put Veterans to Work was created by Keith Hannaleck who is a Navy veteran and so was his father in WWII. He has been in recruiting since 2001 and has been actively recruiting and sourcing veterans since 2016. The idea of Put Veterans To Work was initiated in 2017 with his LinkedIn Group and the domain came to life in 2020. The intention of the group and this website is to help Veterans to find inroads to gainful employment through various forms of information that will be provided on the site. This is content not just posted on social networking sites so it disappears in a matter of minutes. The permanence of the info provided is important.

# MAKE AN IMPACT

Many veterans may experience difficulties when transitioning back into civilian life. Our Sentinels have the additional burden of being severely wounded or injured, which often prevents them from doing what they previously did in the military or other physically demanding jobs. As they struggle to overcome their injuries many may find it can be difficult to envision a rich fulfilling life, but with Sentinels of Freedom, they are welcomed into a family that only wishes to see them succeed. Sentinels are encouraged to reach out long after their official graduation from school to provide updates or seek future support or guidance as needed.

## ANNUAL COMMUNITY EVENT

### Annual Military Swearing-In Ceremony

Over the past 22 years, we honor our young graduating students from Monte Vista, San Ramon, California, and Dougherty Valley, Del Amigo High Schools and have made the highest commitment High School students can make, joining our United States Armed Forces.

We are joined with other community members like the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley, Marine Corps League, Blue Star Moms Chapter 101, The Veterans Memorial Building and Communities of Danville, Alamo, San Ramon, and Blackhawk who aided in supporting these students as they 'take an oath' to honor and serve our country.

SoF and the community wish them each well and when they come home whether, in 4 years or 20 years, we will be here to welcome them with open arms.



## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## IT DOESN'T TAKE A FORTUNE.

Every \$20 dollars donated helps a Sentinel become one step closer to graduation.

Sentinels of Freedoms overall goal is to attain gratifying, career-oriented employment to our severely wounded post-9/11 veterans. Your support is vital to their mission.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## HOST A FUNDRAISER

Join forces and start a fundraising campaign to help severely wounded veterans by raising funds; help them complete their higher education and successfully transition back to civilian life.

Get creative with your own fundraising campaign. Host a workout fundraiser within your community, open a curbside bake sale, or gather a team and host a walkathon. The possibilities are endless and every dollar raised goes to providing comprehensive personal support and removing financial obstacles for severely wounded post-9/11 veterans.

## funraise

It only takes a minute to set up a fundraising campaign. Pick a name and photo. And just like that, you are ready to raise money! Once your fundraising campaign is set up, use the power of communication and tell everyone. The more people you tell, the quicker you reach your goal! If you want to join forces with your friends, family, or community, do so by creating your own team.



Givevia helps people shop and gives to Sentinels of Freedom. It all started with our Shop-to-Give program that empowers supporters of all types to "Give for Free" to charities they love with an everyday activity they are likely already doing – shopping online.



**Double the Donation**  
matching gifts made easy

## CHEVRON COIN DONATIONS

Chevron is pleased to provide the Sentinels of Freedom the opportunity to be the beneficiary of the coin boxes in our corporate stations during the months of April and May in 2020.

LAWRENCE LIVERMORE  
NATIONAL LABORATORY

Every year LLNL does a HOME (Helping Others More Effectively) Campaign, encouraging employees to give back and donate to charities and organizations of their choice. Sentinels of Freedom is one of the organizations chosen to highlight for employees who may want suggestions on where to give.



SENTINEL

**COREY OLSON**

U.S. Marine Corps

Marine Wing Communication Squadron 38

San Francisco State University, Bachelors of Arts History

When I heard from the Sentinels of Freedom that I had been accepted as a scholar in their organization in the spring of 2019 I immediately felt like a weight had been lifted off of my shoulders. I had been simultaneously going to school and working during the first two years of my undergraduate degree, and while my teenage years of working on farms and the Marines had certainly made me accustomed to working hard, I knew it was taking a toll on the amount of effort I was putting towards my education. This, coupled with the difficulties that many of us veterans experience during the transitional period after exiting active duty, were putting a hamper on my ability to pursue goals I had set forth for myself. I knew the financial assistance

provided, on top of the myriad of other benefits, would allow me to commit one hundred percent of my efforts and focus on my studies and healing myself, both physically and mentally.

While certainly not lacking for good grades before being accepted as a SOF scholar, my performance at school drastically improved by having the ability to focus all my time and effort on my studies, a direct result of the assistance that SOF provided me. SOFs assistance enabled me to excel in my studies, achieve my educational goals, and due to my stellar performance in the final years of my undergraduate career and the urging of several professors, has allowed me to get to the point where I am now applying to go straight into doctoral programs, something I did not think I would find myself doing until the usual process of pursuing a masters degree program. Although I will not receive the results of my applications for several months, I plan to continue my pursuit of academic studies in the coming years and have no doubt I will receive several letters of acceptance to graduate programs here in Colorado. Due to the pandemic several internship opportunities that I had lined up with the Department of State were postponed but I am very much looking forward to pursuing those while waiting for graduate programs to commence in the Fall of 2021 as the world returns to a sense of normalcy-hopefully.

Regardless of what the coming year will entail, assistance from Sentinels of Freedom over the past two years has enabled me to focus on setting myself up for success in the future and allowed me to be in a position where I could focus on healing myself and helping my fellow veterans. I feel blessed to have been accepted as a scholar and eternally grateful for SOFs assistance over the last few years, and in knowing I have their continued support in the years to come.

Semper fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Corey Olson". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "C" and "O".



## SENTINEL JAMES EIDE

I will say it is hard to leave the military. There is so much known about career progression and an understanding of what is expected of you. There is a group of like-minded men and women that work to achieve the goals of the Department of Defense. We are all kind of on the same page. But when you leave, especially under medical pretenses, that feeling of “the same page” fades quite quickly which was daunting to me.

I found the months of out processing through soldier’s support center’s to feel more like a regular day in the military and less like I was close to leaving. But in the

final days as I signed out and there was no ceremony of any kind other than saying goodbye to my peers, I felt a rush of unease. Stepping into a world where you create your own adventure is different than the world of the military and getting used to that was going to take time.

Luckily after my first semester at school I found the Sentinels of Freedom through fellow veterans on Duke’s campus. Being connected with SOF and subsequently receiving the scholarship as well as the resources they offered changed my view of the disconnectedness quite rapidly. I was connected with some of the world-class staff who made me feel welcome and let me know that I’m not the only one in my position of medical retirement and that there are others just like me all of which are under the SOF umbrella. The meeting with the staff and the conversation with the leadership made me feel welcome and brought me to what I believe was the same page as other medically retired veterans seeking higher education. It also is refreshing that there was ample review of what I was doing through my time at Duke University. Being required to fill out information of how I am doing both emotionally, physically, medically, and financially was exactly what I needed to take a moment out of the busy school schedule and think about how I am doing as a person especially one that faces constant medical issues. Every time I sat down and spoke with Carol and the staff at SOF I was reminded that there are great people out there thinking of me and my well-being.

Now that I have graduated, I have taken a senior leadership position at a startup company working to solve the environmental damages caused by toxic waste waters. It is a role that requires my training and leadership as well as decision making. I met the founder of the company when I was taking business classes and I interned with the company when they were very early stage. Thanks to SOF, I was able to receive the scholarship while I was working as an unpaid intern. This level of financial support allowed me to take a chance and work for a company that needed help to get off the ground. I couldn’t have done that without SOF and it paid off! Now I am going to be one of the major decision makers to see the company make real impact in the world. I cannot express how happy that made me and the sense of fulfillment I get from being afforded the opportunity to take such a risk and to have a whole organization like SOF support me on that endeavor.

U.S. Army - 95th Civil Affairs Brigade  
Duke University, Masters in International Development Policy

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Eide".



SENTINELS OF FREEDOM

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**SCAN TO MAKE A DONATION**

