



SENTINELS OF FREEDOM

# Each of the Veterans We Serve We Call Sentinels in Honor of Their Service and Sacrifice

*Our work removes financial obstacles so severely wounded and injured veterans can complete their higher education and transition to civilian life.*

*Our mission is to help these military members of the armed forces who have been wounded or injured, in a combat or training related post-9/11 event as they maximize their potential to reach their educational goals leading to productive lives and careers.*

**ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

**[WWW.SENTINELSOFFREEDOM.ORG](http://WWW.SENTINELSOFFREEDOM.ORG)**

**YOUR INVESTMENT IN THEIR FUTURE  
HELPS US MEET OUR NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

## 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.

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WAYS TO GIVE



# 2022

AT A GLANCE

160 Veterans Served in 2022  
702 Since 2007 Inception

Veterans Across 46 States

Accepted 41 New Sentinels

90% of Sentinels Completed  
Bridge for Education Program

61 Sentinel Graduates in 2022

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



The Conklin Family  
Pictured Left to Right

Mike Conklin  
U.S.A. Major Kris Conklin  
U.S.A. Veteran Sergeant Casey Conklin  
U.S.A. Command Sergeant Major Curt Conklin  
Peggy Conklin



## MILITARY TRANSITION: AN ARTICLE FROM BROWN UNIVERSITY THE COSTS OF WAR

Since 2001, between 1.9 and 3 million service members have served in post-9/11 war operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many have been wounded or injured and suffer from conditions ranging from brain injuries to hearing loss. Additionally, a significant number have also been seriously injured in training, shipboard, and aircraft accidents. Without a doubt military service is a dangerous job.

Our national commitment to veterans continues long after wars ends. Those who have been deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq are entitled to free or subsidized government medical treatment for the rest of their lives. In addition, a significant percentage of them are eligible to receive lifelong government compensation for disabilities stemming from their wartime service. Veterans of the current wars are also entitled to certain educational, housing, training and other benefits funded by government agencies outside the VA.

Historically, the cost of caring for war veterans rises for several decades and peaks 30 to 40 years or more after a conflict, as veterans' needs increase with age. This will be especially true for veterans of the current wars, who are already utilizing VA medical services and applying for disability benefits at much higher rates than in previous wars.

Finally, there are significant other costs that will be borne by these veterans and their families. Family members of the injured often give up their jobs to become unpaid caregivers and self-employed service members lose income, for example.

Although the U.S. has promised care for veterans throughout their lives, the magnitude of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans' costs is grossly understated in government projections. There is no provision set aside to cover these future obligations and thus the U.S. risks shortchanging its veterans.

*Further information is available from project co-Directors Catherine Lutz, Neta Crawford, and Stephanie Savell at <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar>.*

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

The hurdles the wounded and injured veterans who have the motivation and goals to reenter the workforce as civilians face in their transition home are high.

The Sentinels of Freedom Bridge for Education program is designed to support them in their post-military transition, education, and career placement. We bridge the gaps to help them maximize their potential and attain their goals of successful transition and civilian careers.

200 thousand military members leave military service every year, and 16,000 are forced into retirement due to medical disability resulting from their service.

Sentinels of Freedom is committed to helping these new veterans on the road to success.

Your support as citizens, corporations, and foundations is vital to their success.

We hope you'll continue to support our efforts.

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**  
Executive Vice President,  
People & Culture,  
Invenergy LLC



**DAVID HALVERSON**  
LT. GENERAL  
U.S. ARMY, RETIRED  
President, Cypress  
International



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



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



**HT TRAN**  
U.S. ARMY, RETIRED  
**Graduated Sentinel**  
Community & Citizenship  
Manager  
Turner Construction Company

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



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



# \$922,620 RAISED IN 2022

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS, PARTNERS, AND SENTINELS



Pictured right to left: Brian Sardelich, Geeti Shams, Travis Hoke, and Bob Stolz of Chevron, and Mike Conklin, Chairman & CEO of Sentinels of Freedom



65% To Veteran Support  
15% To Fundraising  
20% To Administrative

# VETERAN IMPACT DURING “A TIME OF PEACE”.

With the end of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq and a reduction in military spending, many people have forgotten about the sacrifices that our veterans have made and the ongoing challenges they face. Many think the support of these veterans is no longer needed. Nothing could be further from the truth for several hundred thousand post-9/11 veterans who were wounded or injured in military service in these two 20 year-long wars.

## THE NEED WILL NEVER END.

That’s why it’s important for all of us to step up to meet our national responsibility as U.S. citizens to continue to support our military and veterans. The war may be over, but the impact of the war is in full effect and will be for years to come.

Inflation is exacerbating the already concerning impacts on our veterans — particularly low paid, younger veterans — being unable to cope on a fixed income while in college that may require working in non-degree required jobs at low pay to make ends meet; especially our wounded and injured veterans who due to their injuries face seemingly unsurmountable high hurdles. Their GI Bill pay, or disability pay hasn’t kept pace with inflation, which was recently reported as having increased by 8.6% since last May. It’s the highest 12-month increase since 1981.

Sentinels of Freedom’s financial support is vital to ensuring that our veterans can live happy and fulfilling lives as they face numerous challenges in recovering their health and returning to civilian life. Our support provides these veterans financial aid towards housing & living subsidies, financial coaching, mentoring, and transition assistance navigating their college journey.

As a community, let’s come together more than ever and show our support for those who have given so much to our country. We must ensure that our veterans receive the care and support they deserve, even in a time of peace. We urge you to donate your time, mentoring support, or financial support to our veteran program and help ensure that we can continue our mission and commitment to these warriors. They have certainly earned a place at our nations table of abundance and opportunity.





# COMPLETING THE MISSION



## 6 STUDENT VETERAN RESOURCE CENTERS SERVING OVER 2,000+ VETERANS PER YEAR ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

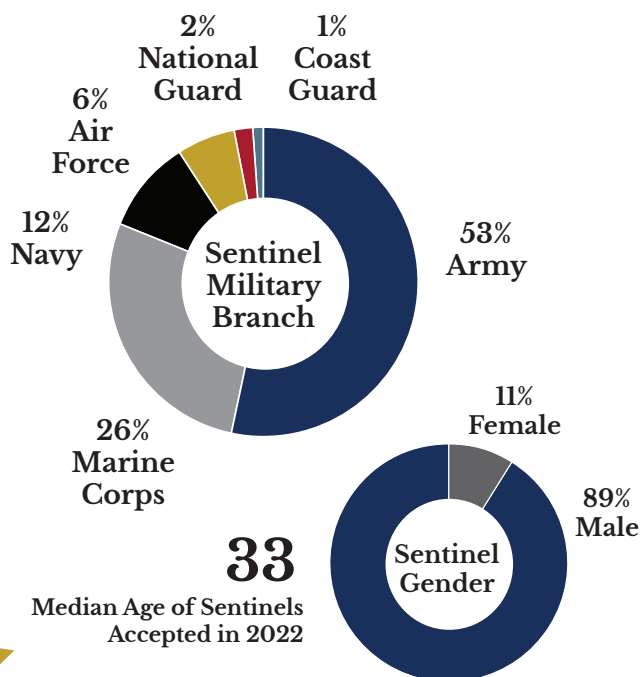
We work with institutions of higher learning and corporate partners to help develop, launch, and provide materials for Student Veteran Resource Centers (SVRC's) across the country. SVRC's offer a physical and emotional "safe space" for veterans to connect, share, and support each other in a calm, quiet environment (particularly important for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and/or traumatic brain injury.)



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.



People with disabilities represent the single largest and most diverse minority in the country. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, In 2022, persons with a disability accounted for 12 percent of the civilian noninstitutional population.\* Some key statistics on employment rate for veterans with a service-connected (SC) disability rating are 35.1% of veterans with a SC disability have a disability rating of 50% or higher and only 25% of the 131,900 veterans with a SC rating of 70% or higher are employed.\*\*

\* <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/disabl.pdf>

\*\* [https://addata.org/factsheet/employment-data-veterans-disabilities#\\_edn9](https://addata.org/factsheet/employment-data-veterans-disabilities#_edn9)

**\$922,620** RAISED IN 2022

**702** Veterans Directly Assisted Since Inception as of 12/31/2022

**90%** The Average Disability Rating That Our Sentinels Receive From Veteran Affairs

**61%** of Sentinels Since Inception as of 12/31/2022 with a Purple Heart

Each Sentinel must have a VA disability rating of 60% or higher have been wounded or injured in a combat or training related event post-9/11 and are committed to pursuing their higher education.

**32%** of Accepted Sentinels with a Visible Injury or Physical Disabilities  
Blindness, Deafness, Gun Shot Wound, Paraplegic, Amputation, or Burns

**68%** of Accepted Sentinels with a Non-visible Injury or Mental Disability  
PTSD, TBI, Depression, or Other

71% Combat  
18% Service  
11% Training

Percentage Of Sentinels Accepted In Our Program Who Were Wounded In Combat, Service, Or Training



Sentinel Rebecca Comac  
Keiser University



Sentinel TJ Rosetti  
University of Notre Dame



Sentinel Casey Cobb  
University of Charleston



Sentinel Dez Del Barba  
Sonoma 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. Sentinels of Freedom supports our veterans with a well-rounded, all-encompassing program catered to their specific needs. Our support gives Sentinels flexibility 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.

**163** Sentinels Served  
at the End of 2021

**160** Sentinels Served  
at the End of 2022

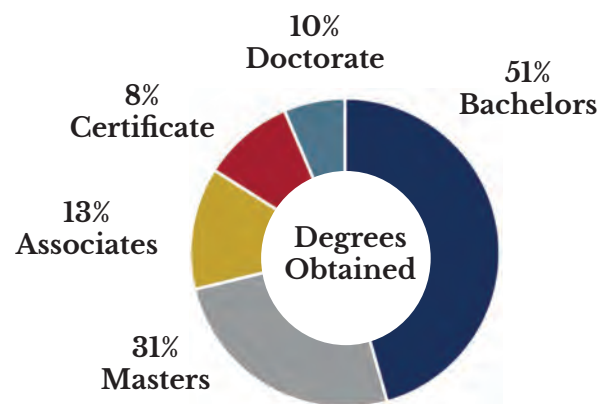
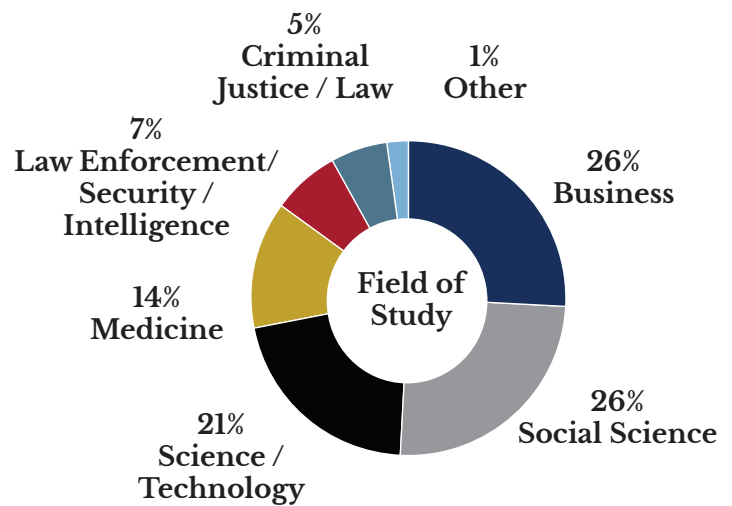
**31** Sentinels Accepted in 2021

**41** Sentinels Accepted in 2022

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

**61** Graduated Sentinels  
in 2022

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



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



Sentinel Elizabeth Trujillo  
University of San Diego



Sentinel Dan Calbi  
Columbia University



Sentinel Ben Diu  
University of Denver

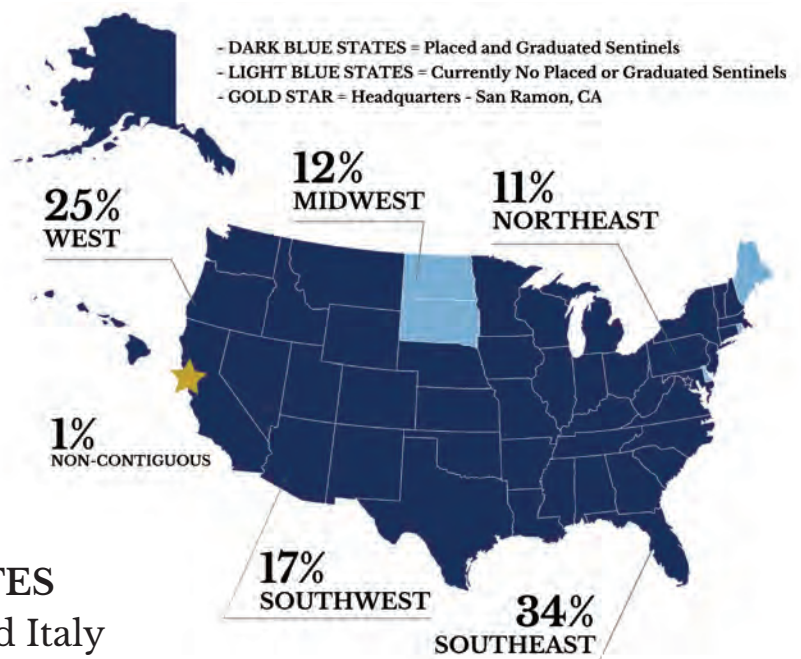


Sentinel Mechele Fonck  
Montana State University

## OUR SENTINELS

# LIVE ALL ACROSS THE US

Sentinels of Freedom  
has **SENTINELS LIVING IN 46 STATES**  
throughout the US as well as Brazil and Italy



## UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND TRADE SCHOOLS ATTENDED IN 2022 BY OUR SENTINELS

Alabama Aviation College  
Alliant International University  
American Career College  
American Military University  
American Public University  
American University  
Arizona State University  
Auburn University  
Austin Community College  
Aviation Institute of Maintenance  
Bates Technical College  
Boise State University  
California Institute of Integral Studies  
California Southern University  
California State University,  
Long Beach  
California State University,  
Sacramento  
Campbell University  
Carroll College  
Charleston School of Law  
College of Charleston  
Columbia Southern University  
Columbia University  
Concordia University Irvine  
Contra Costa Medical Career College  
Duke University  
Eastern New Mexico University  
Eastern Virginia Medical School  
Enterprise State Community College  
Evergreen State College  
Fayetteville State University  
Fayetteville Tech Community College  
Fielding Graduate University  
Flathead Valley Community College

Genesee Community College  
George Washington University  
Georgetown University  
Gonzaga University School of Law  
Harvard Kennedy School of Business  
Harvard University  
Indiana University  
Ivy Tech Community College  
John Jay College City University  
New York  
Kansas State University  
Keiser University  
Liberty University  
Louisiana State University  
Massachusetts Maritime Academy  
Methodist University  
Modesto Junior College  
Montana State University  
Montgomery Community College  
Murray State University  
National University  
New Mexico University  
Northern Illinois University  
Northern Virginia Community College  
Northwestern University  
Norwich University  
Oregon Health & Science University  
Pacific Lutheran University  
Parker University  
Penn State University  
Point Loma Nazarene University  
Reed College  
Rice University  
Rollins College

Royal Military College of Canada  
Rutgers University  
San Diego State University  
San Francisco City College  
Santa Clara University  
Santa Rosa Junior College  
Southwestern Acupuncture College  
St. Martins University  
State Fair Community College  
SUNY Cobleskill  
SUNY Empire State College  
Tacoma Community College  
The Catholic University of America  
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology  
The Citadel Military College of  
Southern Carolina  
The Culinary Institute of America  
The University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill  
The University of Texas at San Antonio  
The University of Texas Permian Basin  
Thomas Edison State University  
Troy University  
University of Arizona  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of Charleston  
University of Colorado Anschutz  
School of Medicine  
University of Colorado at  
Colorado Springs  
University of Colorado Boulder  
University of Connecticut

University of Denver  
University of Georgia  
University of Louisville  
University of Maryland  
University of Miami  
University of Michigan  
University of North Carolina, Charlotte  
University of North Carolina,  
Wilmington  
University of Notre Dame  
University of Pacific - McGeorge  
School of Law  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton  
School of Business  
University of Phoenix  
University of San Diego  
University of South Florida  
University of Texas, Arlington  
University of Texas, Austin  
University of Texas, San Antonio  
University of the Cumberland  
University of the Incarnate Word  
University of Virginia School of Law  
University of Washington  
University of Washington, Tacoma  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee  
Vanderbilt University  
Wake Forest University  
Wayland Baptist University  
Western Carolina University  
Youngstown State University



## A SENTINEL'S JOURNEY

Military Service > Transition Home > Education > Career

YOUR INVESTMENT  
TRANSFORMS LIVES

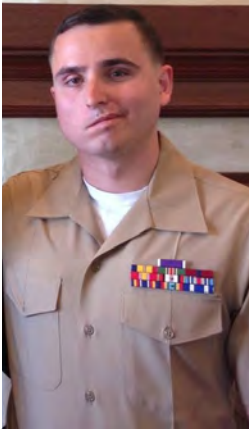


### BRITNEY DOMINE / U.S. NAVY

During her 6 years of service, Britney served as an Electronics Technician which resulted in injuries to her neck/back, hips, and knees due to years of continuous physical stress. Her transition proved to be more challenging mentally as she found it difficult to relate to fellow students.

She found a community through the veterans' centers at Grossmont College and San Diego State University which helped bridge the gap in relating to other students. Britney is looking at becoming a Forensic Anthropologist working to identify remains of military members.

**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.**



### MIKE BITNER / U.S. MARINES

Mike deployed twice and encountered incidents that lead to him sustaining multiple injuries when his vehicle ran over an IED. The most significant being TBI, fractures to his spine and skull, as well as severe damage to his left arm. he spent several months receiving care at Walter Reed then at the VA Medical Center in CA.

Upon his discharge from the hospital and release from active duty, Mike started attending community schools and city colleges, later graduating from California State University with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology.

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



### JOSH BARRIO / U.S. COAST GUARD

Josh served 5 and a half years and completed several search and rescue missions. He severely injured his back causing chronic pain leading to surgery. After the completion of his bachelor's degree in San Diego, Josh relocated to pursue his graduate studies, leaving behind the support system they had.

SoF was able to financially assist Josh and keep his family afloat during the pandemic and created a mentoring relationship through ACP. Josh completed his Masters, and was hired by Northrop Grumman as a Line of Sight Systems Engineer for their Space Program.

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

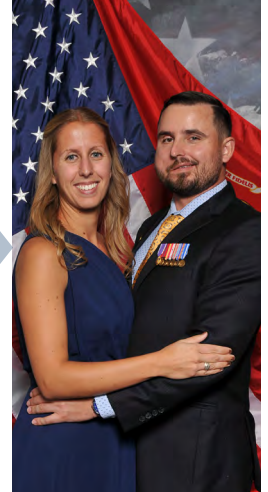
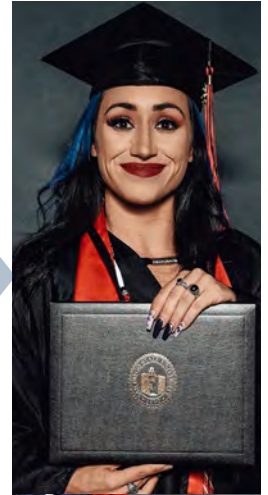


### JOSEPH LATHAM / U.S. MARINE CORPS

Joseph only planned on serving for 4 years, but after the events of September 11th, he continued to serve for a total of 15 years. He was injured by an IED explosion during combat operations causing a concussion from the blast and receiving shrapnel to his legs, hands, and hearing loss that required hearing aids.

Before graduating, Joseph was selected for a position in the Advanced Mental Health Interprofessional Education Fellowship Program with the VA. Since graduating Joseph accepted a position as the Director of Veteran's Service Center at Irvine Valley College.

**WE HAVE 700+ SENTINEL STORIES TO SHARE AND COUNTING.**



SENTINEL

# CHRIS CHOMYSZAK

**Sergeant U.S. Army, 2/75 Ranger Regiment**  
**Bronze Star, Purple Heart, \*NATO Medal**  
 University of Washington  
 Bachelor of Arts International Studies  
 Business Development Representative at Adobe



\* The NATO Medal is an international military decoration which is awarded to various militaries of the world under the authority of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Having come from a military family and being a first-generation American, Chris felt it was his duty to serve and joined the Army in 2013 soon becoming a member of the 75th Ranger Regiment. During his time as an Army Ranger, he deployed 3 times to Afghanistan, and while clearing a building he and four other Rangers were hit with shrapnel from an enemy fragmentation grenade during his third deployment. This resulted in shrapnel wounds to his right foot and right cheek, and he received a Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medal with V Device.

After his discharge in 2018, Chris decided to return to school to pursue a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in International Studies at the University of Washington and graduated in May 2022. During his educational journey with Sentinels of Freedom, Chris was supported with a financial subsidy towards his living expenses, financial counseling, resume building assistance, networking opportunities, a connection with a mentor for career and personal development, personalized support from a case manager, and many resources at his disposal. Upon graduation, he, and his long-time girlfriend, along with his service dog Appa, made the move from Washington to sunny San Diego where he now works for Adobe as a Business Development Representative and spends as much time outdoors as possible. Sentinels of Freedom is proud to call Chris a graduated Sentinel and look forward to seeing him continue to grow in his career!





“One of the more difficult aspects of transitioning from the military to a full-time student is the financial burden. Though the Post 911 GI Bill is great, it is just enough to get by on usually and does not cover the breaks in between school periods. The GI Bill gaps, and the paid amounts make it hard to catch up on any loans or create a savings nest egg.

The SOF provides a plethora of assistance, from finances to access to Udemy courses. Every single one of them has and continues to be useful. However, the SOF financial assistance is the most beneficial aspect of SOF as an undergraduate. Financial assistance gave me the financial freedom necessary to live comfortably and focus on my academics.”

Chris Chomyszak



“It has truly been an honor to walk beside Chris during his journey to pursue higher education. I have enjoyed watching him grow in his networking and his excitement to take advantage of all the opportunities SoF had to offer him was contagious every time we spoke. I cannot express how proud I am of Chris and seeing him continue to thrive and succeed in this next chapter of his life by crushing his goals and obtaining a position with a company he enjoys and continues to grow in. It has been a great honor to be his Case Manager and to have the chance to meet in person at both our annual gala and again at a Sentinel BBQ where he was able to connect with other Sentinels in his area.”

H McMeans

Havilah McMeans  
SoF Programs Manager



# Commemorating THE U.S. MARINE CORPS

*Marines represent the face of our Nation because they come from all parts of it, contributing different backgrounds & walks of life into the fight that defends America's way of life.*

*"I feel that being a Sentinel has put me in a position to be a significant member of my community and I hope to impact other lives the way SoF has impacted mine and my families."*

**BRIAN VARGAS**  
U.S. Marine Corps  
Lance Corporal  
BS Social Work/MSW  
University of  
California Berkeley

*"I appreciate the opportunity SoF has afforded me to continue my education and focus on school for this last year! Thank you for the support and mentorship."*

**KATIE BLANCHARD**  
U.S. Army, Captain  
Ph.D. Nursing Science  
and Occupational Health  
University of Washington

*"I was grateful that I had the support when my wife passed away. SoF connected me with HeadStrong, an organization that helps veterans with receiving mental health support with a therapist."*

**ABRAHAM "ABE"  
MARTINEZ-AYALA**  
U.S. Army National Guard  
Specialist  
MSW, San Jose State  
University

*"It has been an amazing experience working with this group of amazing individuals. The support they provide has truly helped me start to pull myself out of my troubles."*

**ZEESHAN PARVEZ**  
U.S. Marine Corps, Corporal  
Ph.D. Materials Chemistry  
University of California  
Los Angeles





Our nation has been through tough times in our history. We are a resilient nation made up of strong and honorable people. Let us all take a moment each day and remember who fought and sacrificed for our freedoms and the quality of life that we enjoy today, **our veterans**.

As over 200,000 military members end their enlistments each year, 16,000 of these new veterans will be coming home to communities across the nation due to injuries making them unable to continue their military service. Of this group, 6,000 will be rated at above 50% or higher permanently disabled by Veterans Affairs.



**SCAN TO LISTEN** to Sentinel Johnny “Joey” Jones speech about how Sentinels of Freedom has impacted his life after service.



**SCAN TO LISTEN** to Sentinel Garrett Jones talk about his deployment back to Afghanistan after learning how to fight a war with a prosthetic leg.

Graduated Sentinel Johnny “Joey” Jones deployed to the Helmand Province in Afghanistan as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal specialist. While there, Joey disarmed over 85 Improvised Explosive Devices and disposed of several thousands of pounds of unknown bulk explosives. During deployment he stepped on an IED that caused him to lose both of his legs above the knee. Following a medical evacuation & months of recovery, he learned to how to use prosthetics at Walter Reed Medical Center.

Graduated Sentinel Garrett Jones completed tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. On his first deployment to Iraq, he was severely injured by an improvised explosive device (IED), resulting in the amputation of his left leg just below the hip. After seven months of intensive rehabilitation, including learning to use a prosthetic, he returned to combat. He was the first service member in US history to redeploy to combat in under a year from the time of amputation.



**Rear Admiral Winston Copeland (Ret.)** commissioned as an aviation reserve officer candidate. He graduated from the Air Force Test Pilot School and has flown more than 30 aircraft types. He has 1,330 traps (400-plus at night) and held squadron, air wing, ship, and strike group commands.

**Lieutenant General Rex C. McMillian (Ret.)** commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in January 1980 through the Platoon Leaders Class after graduating from the University of Southern California. He currently serves as a Marine Corps Reserve Major General and is a pilot for Delta Air Lines in his civilian employment.

**Col. John C. McKay (Ret.)** is an adjunct professor at California State University, Sacramento, and Olmsted Scholar (Spain). He served two combat tours in Vietnam, and was twice wounded. He saw duty during the summer of 1967 aboard a PCF, or “Swift Boat,” operating out of Vũng Tảo, Vietnam. He is currently working on his memoirs.



Sentinels of Freedom Supporters,

The Sentinel Program has, by far, been the most helpful and supportive community I have been a part of since separating from the military. The financial support helped to ensure I could continue to focus on my academic studies alleviating the stress that arises from not maintaining a steady paycheck. The personal support from everyone at SOF was incredible. I always felt that whatever problem came up, I could reach out to anyone there in a moment's notice for advice and encouragement. One of the most amazing things that happened was when I was in dire need of an internship to bolster my resume over my second year summer. I reached out to SOF for help and was immediately called by Mike Conklin, who put me in touch with the legal department at General Dynamics Mission Systems. Through this connection, I was able to secure the summer internship and work with a fantastic group of people at GDMS. This type of connection is just one of the many benefits that I encountered as a Sentinel.

Transition out of the military and pursuing higher education is difficult in general. When leaving the military there is little information provided (i.e., the TAPPS course) where, what to do and how to get a job, are thrown at you at a fast pace and with little guidance. Navigating the process of applying and getting a degree are equally as confusing. Managing these new aspects of my future while ensuring my family is taken care of, is a very difficult process. I found SOF when I began applying to law schools, not knowing if I was going to be accepted to any school. As soon as I received my law school acceptance letter, I applied to the Sentinel Program.

Fastforward, I graduated in May 2022 and have secured a post-grad position with an incredible law firm. The position is in Boston, MA where my family and I moved into our new home. I will be working in the real estate and finance field which is an area that I have been incredibly interested in for quite some time.

One of the biggest things I learned about myself over the last three years in the program is that I must continually instill confidence in myself and always push forward. During times where I lacked confidence or became less motivated to continue, I would be able to reach out to my program manager and talk through any issues. But one of the most motivating factors that always helped push me through that difficult assignment or endless study session was looking at the success stories on the SOF website and realizing I can keep going, keep pushing forward to achieve my dreams.



Thank you, Sentinels of Freedom for the support, guidance, and friendships that I have gained from the program.

Best,

*Casey Braden*

U.S. Navy, 1st Class Petty Officer  
Senior Explosive Ordnance  
Disposal Technician

Graduate from  
George Washington University  
Juris Doctorate



# ROTARY CLUBS

Local rotary clubs are well-known for their dedication to serving their communities through various initiatives, in our case, supporting veteran education, financial help in veteran needs, and organizing community events raising awareness about the needs of our veterans and promoting their well-being.

We are proud to have the relationship and mutual support from our local rotary clubs like San Ramon Valley Rotary, Dougherty Valley San Ramon Rotary, Rotary Club of Danville, and Diablo/San Ramon Valley Rotary.

All of these Rotary clubs support our mission and our efforts to better serve our community of veterans, student veterans, and military families.

Together, Sentinels of Freedom and local Rotary Clubs aim to create a stronger, more supportive community for our Sentinels, Veterans, Recruits, Blue and Gold Star Families. We look forward to the positive impact that this collaboration will have on our community for years to come.



*San Ramon Valley Rotary*



*n2grate / BlueAlly Federal / Wells Fargo*



*New York Life*



“The impact our Rotary Clubs have made on the lives of our veterans is immeasurable, and their ongoing support has allowed us to continue our mission of empowering these courageous men and women as they navigate their transition towards career success.”

MIKE CONKLIN  
Chairman & CEO of Sentinels of Freedom  
Rotary Club Member



SENTINEL

# ZEESHAN PARVEZ

U.S Marine Corps, Corporal  
University of California, Los Angeles  
PhD in Materials Chemistry



After completing high school, Zeeshan joined the Marine Corps and served as an explosive and demolition expert in the Marine Special Operations Command. His deployments exposed him to clandestine environments and caused service-related injuries that led to the development of a depressive disorder and chronic pain. Upon receiving an honorable discharge, Zeeshan struggled with the isolation he felt after leaving the service, but with therapy and the help of his service dog Dante, he worked towards building a support network and finding ways to express himself.

In spring 2020, Zeeshan was accepted into the SoF program and received a housing subsidy, mentoring connections, resume assistance, case management support, and networking opportunities to aid in his job search. With the assistance of Cameron Markowitz, a fellow Sentinel graduate who works at Northrop Grumman, Zeeshan secured a fulfilling job after completing his PhD studies at UCLA.

Currently, Zeeshan works as a Principal Signal/Image Processing Engineer and finds the role very satisfying, as it has allowed him to expand his technical expertise into artificial intelligence and machine learning. He is excited about the future possibilities in this field.

In addition to his professional pursuits, Zeeshan maintains the level of intensity he experienced in the USMC by teaching wingsuiting on weekends and traveling to mountains to wingsuit off of them.

“SoF housing support allowed me to free up assets so I could support parts of my self-treatment plan which was not covered by the VA. Their program not only allowed me the means to find my sense of purpose, but also the means to recover and find gainful employment with favorable circumstances.”

*Zeeshan Parvez*

## COMPANIES THAT HAVE HIRED OUR SENTINELS IN 2022

Adobe  
Aspen Surgery Center  
Austal USA  
BlueHalo  
Booz Allen Hamilton  
Cape Fear Valley Health  
Cross Engineering Services  
Daymark Recovery Services  
Dechert, LLP  
Decisive Point Consulting Group

Delaney Radiology Group  
Department of Homeland Security  
Discovery Charter Preparatory School  
General Dynamics Information Technology  
Goldman Sachs  
Greenberry Industrial LLC  
Guggenheim  
Indus Technologies  
Warrior Scholar Project  
Irvine Valley College

Joint Base San Antonio  
Lockheed Martin  
Long Island Anesthesia Physicians, LLP  
Madison College  
Missing Hearts Project  
Moncrief Army Health Clinic  
Northrop Grumman  
Nystrom & Associates  
Orlando Health  
Pamela Wasabi Bakery

Partners Group  
Rudolph & Sletton  
Shields & Stripes  
Sparks Fly Candle Co.  
Unstuck Living  
US Dept. of Veterans Administration  
Yale New Haven Health System  
Zumar Industries



## 2022 OUTSTANDING SENTINELS OF FREEDOM

## CORPORATE MEMBERS

Every year, Sentinels of Freedom recognizes exceptional corporations and their esteemed leaders for their unwavering support towards our mission.

The commendable leadership exhibited by these corporations, along with the invaluable internships, career development programs, job training, in-kind services, and networking opportunities they provide, serves as a testament to their profound respect for our veterans but also as a remarkable investment in our communities. 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

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

GENERAL DYNAMICS  
Mission Systems

## PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY

Jimmy Harris - Chief of Community Relations

## AMERICAN AIRLINES

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

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

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



## NORTHROP GRUMMAN

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

CHUBB

## CHUBB

Jennifer Newsom - Senior Vice President, Commercial Insurance



## CHEVRON

Jessica Allen - COCO Communications Coordinator

Juliet Don - Corporate Affairs Representative





WWW.UDEMY.COM

## SENTINELS OF FREEDOM & UDEMY

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 programs. Sentinels of Freedom and Udemy announced their partnership on Veterans Day in 2021. The platform is now offered as a resource for all Sentinels to take courses to upskill their current knowledge and excel both in school and the workforce.



### SENTINEL JASON KARIMKHANI

Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army  
American Military University  
Bachelors of Arts Intelligence Studies

"I really appreciate the access to Udemy that Sentinels of Freedom gave me. When I started a new job as a Cryptologic Analyst/Operator, they gave me an office and basically told me to learn a few things. I have been using the Udemy courses to learn Linux, Python, and Gi; among other things.

I have been able to leverage that knowledge to make myself more valuable to my new employer and it may have opened some doors to other roles. During my interview, I told the hiring manager that I had worked for a few years as a training manager for 350 Soldiers. After we found out I would be at their office for a few months they asked if I could rework the training program for their DOD interns. It happened to be along those same lines of the training that I had been studying on Udemy!"

*Jason Karimkhani*







### SERVICE

Provide our client companies superior service and engagement that positively connects companies to their customers.

### FAMILY

Provide jobs in Business Process Outsourcing for spouses of Military families to assure them financial support and career opportunities to thrive and achieve.

### COMMUNITY

Provide financial support to severely wounded veterans by pledging over 30% of our proceeds to the Sentinels of Freedom.

**TRIPLE IMPACT CONNECTIONS** is a unique, Veteran-Owned communications solutions firm based solely in the US, utilizing primarily the spouses of American soldiers.

The revolutionary Triple Impact business process outsourcing (BPO) model grew out of a unique bonding moment in time. Three West Point classmates met at their 40th class reunion and conceived a way to fill a major void in the way businesses communicate. A year later, they allied with a top tech expert and a high-powered CEO to create the unique and powerful Triple Impact Connections company.

Triple Impact Connections 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. They have a deep understanding of customer relationships, change management/ customer transformation strategies and the technical expertise to help their clients exceed the goals they have for their customers.



### **DAVE RAMSEY**

Money stress is a daily reality for many individuals and families. Dave Ramsey offers the Ramsey+ program that includes the best resources and budgeting tools, designed to give everyone a proven path to get out of debt, save money, and live a life free of money stress. Ramsey+ gives families access to: Financial Peace University, premium access to EveryDollar budgeting app, free audiobooks, 20+ hours of additional courses, a free one-on-one coaching call, exclusive access to event livestreams, discounts on products from their partners, and more.

### **AMERICAN CORPORATE PARTNERS**

American Corporate Partners (ACP) is a national nonprofit organization focused on helping returning veterans and active duty spouses find their next careers through one-on-one mentoring, networking and online career advice. More than 1 million veterans are expected to transition from the armed forces to civilian life over the next five years. ACP engages the American people in a unique volunteer opportunity to provide career guidance to returning military as they transition back into civilian life. They believe that the biggest issue facing our returning service members is not unemployment – it's underemployment.



## 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.



**"I'm grateful that Wynn was in my corner! My transition from military service has been difficult and humbling at the same time. A decision to purchase a franchise model that practiced deceptive financial performance presentations resulted in an unprofitable first year, monthly franchise fees, threats from my franchisor, and overwhelming stress piled on top of complex trauma from military service.**

**Fortunately, SoF didn't leave me on the front lines without support. Mike sent his friend Wynn and his tribe to surround me as I navigated my first knockdown. They stood in my corner and coached me back up on my feet to stay in the fight. As a result, I'm still in this fight, a little wiser and with a renewed sense of purpose. Sentinels of Freedom has allowed me to pivot into my next chapter with a shiny new degree and insight from some incredibly patriotic professionals; for that, I am tremendously grateful!"**

*Eric Ballester*

### SENTINEL ERIC BALLESTER

Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force  
Combat Controller, 724th Special Tactics Group  
University of Arizona, eMBA Graduate

"It was a distinct pleasure and honor for me to be able to interact and become friends with Eric as a Sentinels of Freedom Ambassador and Mentor. When we first met over lunch at my home I was obviously very impressed with Eric's "tip of the spear" resume, his maturity, openness, honesty and his sincere commitment to make his challenging transition to the civilian world as successful as possible. After numerous meetings, emails, phone calls and help from other business professionals working together Eric created a strategic plan designed to assist and arm him with the tools and knowledge to accomplish his transition goals for he and his family."

*Wynn Tyner*

### MENTOR

Wynn Tyner, SoF Ambassador / Mentor  
Retired General Manager  
J.W. Marriott Camelback Inn Resort & Spa





# VETERAN SUPPORT CENTER

"Sentinels of Freedom embodies Galatians 6:2 "Bear one another's burdens, and in this, you fulfill the law of Christ." They understand that student veterans are a particular population with unique needs. Therefore, when I told Mike about our student veteran's burden without hesitation, he sprang into action, called me, and said the total amount to update the Lipscomb University Student Veterans Lounge would be covered. I do not have the words to express how grateful I am to the Sentinels of Freedom."

*Jimmie L. Handley Jr.*

Jimmie L. Handley Jr.  
Assistant Director of Veteran Services  
Lipscomb University



## SENTINEL TYLER ANDERSON

U.S. Army, Staff Sergeant  
Lipscomb University Graduate  
Bachelor of Arts Integrated Studies (Spanish & Business)

Tyler deployed to Afghanistan twice, serving as a rifleman, sniper, grenadier, machine gunner, team leader, and squad leader. During his first deployment, he re-enlisted for an additional three years.

While conducting combat operations in 2010, Tyler stepped on an IED that was attached to a jug of homemade explosives, causing him to lose his left leg and left index finger. Following medical evacuation, he underwent several months of recovery and learning how to use a prosthetic leg. Not one to let his injuries get the best of him, Tyler now lives an active lifestyle in various activities such as scuba diving, wakeboarding, CrossFit, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

Tyler was accepted to Lipscomb University to pursue a bachelor's degree in integrated studies with a focus in business and Spanish and was accepted to Sentinels of Freedom for support while completing his educational goals. SOF provided financial assistance towards housing and a mentor team in Nashville to provide guidance and support. While completing his education he also worked full-time as an intelligence analyst with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). After graduation Tyler worked as a SWAT Officer before being accepted to attend the FBI Academy to become a special agent.

"I am not sure words can fully express the gratification I have for SOF. The first thought that comes to mind is security: like a good battle buddy, I always know SOF has my back. This allows me to hold nothing back when attacking my goals...SOF gives me a giant edge on my competition."

*Tyler Anderson*

## LISTEN TO OUR PODCAST SERIES VETERANS NEVER STOP SERVING

Mike Conklin, Chairman & CEO of Sentinels of Freedom, hosts our podcast series. Every Thursday Mike chats with a Sentinel about their journey from impact to rehabilitation, returning home, transitioning to higher education, and onto their career objectives.

Their stories of successful transitions from military life to fulfilling career dreams are powerful and inspiring. We hope you will join us to listen to their stories and understand the after-service value they bring to our nation.



**SENTINEL**  
**HT TRAN**  
U.S. Army



**SENTINEL**  
**CASEY McEUIN**  
U.S. Army



**SENTINEL**  
**DEREK ABBEY**  
U.S. Marine Corps



**SENTINEL**  
**ANDREW COUGHLAN**  
U.S. Army





## SOF MERCHANDISE

## NEW TO 2022

We have teamed up with Bonfire, a free online store that allows us to raise money for our Sentinels by creating, uploading, and selling custom Sentinels of Freedom shirts, coffee cups, and tote bags directly to our supporters. **Our merch campaigns are mission focused and designed to help spread awareness through promotional branding.**

Best of all, we are verified through Bonfire as a non-profit, which reduces our processing fees from 8% to 3.5% allowing for more of your purchase to go directly back to the wounded veterans enrolled in our Bridge for Education program.



Veterans Never Stop Serving  
\$30.00



Available in 6 styles



Sentinels of Freedom Alumni  
\$30.00



Available in 5 styles



Coffee with Conklin Cups  
\$24.00



Available in 1 style



**SCAN  
TO SHOP  
& SUPPORT**



*Mike Conklin, Greg Russell, VP of Elite Roofing Supply, and his family*



## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

# IT DOESN'T TAKE A FORTUNE.

Even the support of a few people will make a direct impact on the post-military lives of our Sentinels.

## 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, gather a team and host a walkathon, or organize a golf scramble tournament at your local golf course. 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. What a great story!



## WE HAVE COMPANY MATCHING



Double the Donation maintains the largest, most robust, and accurate matching gift database in the industry. If a donor is eligible for a matching gift opportunity, we'll find it.

Donate more money to veterans from corporate matching gifts program. Check to see if your employer participates.

## 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 2022.



## CRYPTOCURRENCY

Making your crypto donations through The Giving Block gives you the most reliable way to reduce your capital gains taxes while supporting a cause of your choice.

## OTHER WAYS TO DONATE

- Stocks - Real Estate - Life Insurance
- Corporate Grants - Foundation Grants





## JOIN SENTINELS OF FREEDOM'S FUNDRAISING COMMUNITY

The need doesn't go away with one donation, consider joining our fundraising community and make an ever bigger impact on our Sentinels lives.

We are a citizen led non-profit and rely heavily on our supporters so we ask you to join our fundraising community where you will set a donation goal to raise funds by sharing your individual page with family, friends, and coworkers.

We even partner with Double the Donation, a search engine to look up your employer to see if the company will match your donations!

Even if 500 people support with just a \$10 donation that's \$5,000 that goes directly to helping support severely wounded veterans with our program!

ONLINE  
FUNDRAISING  
with  
*Classy*



Associate Supporter \$500

Once you hit your goal of \$500 you will become part of our fundraising community and receive a one-of-a-kind SOF coffee mug, tote bag and notebook.

FUNDRAISE



Bachelors Supporter \$1,000

Once you hit your goal of \$1,000 you will become part of our fundraising community and receive a one-of-a-kind SOF coffee mug, tote bag, notebook, and a SOF t-shirt. Also, as a VIP within our fundraising community, you will receive priority seating with one of our Sentinels at our Annual Gala in Danville, CA.

FUNDRAISE



Master Supporter \$3,000

Once you hit your goal of \$3,000 you will become part of our fundraising community and receive a one-of-a-kind SOF coffee mug, tote bag, notebook, and a SOF t-shirt for you and a friend. Also, as a VIP within our fundraising community, you will receive 2 priority seats with one of our Sentinels at our Annual Gala in Danville, CA.

FUNDRAISE



Doctorate Supporter \$5,000

Once you hit your goal of \$5,000 you will become part of our fundraising community and receive a one-of-a-kind SOF coffee mug, tote bag, notebook, and four SOF t-shirts. Also, as a VIP within our fundraising community, you will receive four priority seats with one of our Sentinels at our Annual Gala in Danville, CA.

FUNDRAISE







SENTINELS OF FREEDOM

P.O. Box 1316 San Ramon, CA 94583  
Phone: 925-380-6342

Federal Tax ID: 20-8139201

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**SCAN TO MAKE A DONATION**

