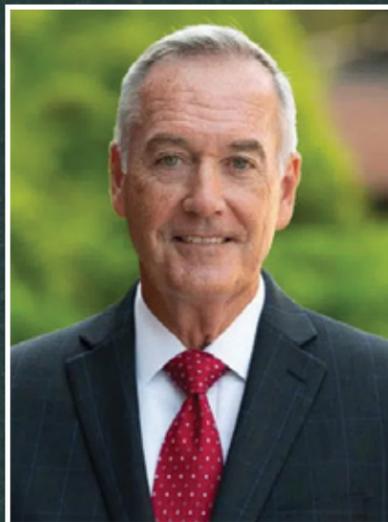


WINTER NEWSLETTER

One Fund, One Family.



DEAR FUND FAMILY AND FRIENDS:



Our fundraising theme this year is “One Fund, One Family” and a tribute to the generosity of the American people. Since our inception eighteen years ago, The Fund has remained resolute in channeling the generosity of our donors to serve our nation’s critically wounded, ill, and injured service members, veterans, and military families. Our donors enable us to deliver a tangible expression of the deep appreciation we have for the service and sacrifice of those we serve.

The Fund’s case managers, Veteran Leads, and visiting nurses deliver support when and where it is most needed. Their commitment and the relationships of trust they build, augmented by our programs, allow us to tailor our support to meet individual needs and ensure that no one that we serve is left to navigate their recovery journey alone. The extraordinary work of our staff is an extension of the goodwill and gratitude of our donors.

Each year, our mission, like our Fund family, continues to grow and evolve. Due to the challenging economy and our persistent outreach, we have experienced an increased demand for support. As we have done from the outset, we always face and overcome new challenges in one way – together. We have made a commitment to be there for our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coastguardsmen, and their families – and I’m confident we will continue to honor that commitment.

To that end, The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation will again sponsor our Double Down for Veterans Campaign

this year. We are truly grateful for Bob and Renee’s extraordinary generosity. Due to their leadership and sustained commitment, last year marked ten years of Doubling Down for Veterans, and we achieved our \$20 million goal, which included their \$10 million match dollar for dollar. Again this year, together as “One Fund, One Family,” we can “double down” to support our military families and provide unparalleled care to those who preserve our freedom. Thank you in advance for including The Fund in your holiday giving.

I wish the entire Fund team and your families a safe and joyous holiday season. Happy New Year and Semper Fidelis.

General, USMC (Retired)
Chairman of the Board
19th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
36th Commandant of the Marine Corps



Dear Fund family, it is one of the most wonderful times of the year ... the 11th annual “Double Down for Veterans” has begun!

At Semper Fi & America’s Fund, the support we provide lasts a lifetime – from the first moment of connection onward, every service member, veteran, and military family is part of our family forever. It is our utmost privilege to offer unparalleled care and support ... Today. Tomorrow. Together.

Last year, Double Down for Veterans reached new heights as we broke records during our 10th annual campaign when you raised **\$13.6 million**. With a \$10 million match from two cherished members of our Fund family, Bob and Renee Parsons, we surpassed our goal of raising over \$20 million to support our military

families. This year marks the 11th season of joining together with The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation to ensure our nation’s wounded, ill, and injured service members, veterans, and military families are never alone on their journey to healing and beyond.

To date, the Double Down for Veterans Campaign has raised \$169 million – because of your extraordinary support, we have made the impossible **possible**. Now, we invite you to join us in “doubling down” for our military families once again! From November 1st until December 31st, every donation made to Semper Fi & America’s Fund will be matched, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$10 million because of the incredible generosity of The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation and PXG.

Once again, thank you for your



tremendous generosity and heartfelt kindness. Your support has proven to be life-changing and lifesaving for our military families, and the effect that it has on those who preserve our freedom is awe-inspiring. We are honored to be **One Fund, One Family**.



ARMY STAFF SERGEANT IAN RALSTON: A FAMILY TO COUNT ON

Staff Sergeant Ian Ralston never doubted that his life's mission would be to serve our country in the Army.

"It's the only thing I ever wanted to do," said Ian. "September 11th solidified my purpose for joining."

Ian became a combat medic, responsible for providing critical medical treatment to the wounded on the battlefield, and he served overseas during Operation Iraqi Freedom, faithfully protecting and keeping his fellow service members alive.

But on his second deployment in 2010, Ian found himself in a fight for his own life.

While on patrol, Ian's unit passed under a bridge, and an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated from overhead. Shrapnel from the blast hit Ian's vertebrae, instantly paralyzing him from the neck down. He was quickly medevaced to Landstuhl Army Medical Hospital, where the medical staff stabilized him for transport home — the beginning of his inspiring journey.

Back in the States, Ian underwent multiple surgeries and seven months of extensive rehabilitation before returning home for years of further treatment and steady healing. With support from his loving family, Ian's vast determination and endless courage shone in the darkest of times as he encountered Semper Fi & America's Fund, which welcomed him and his wonderful wife, Nicole, into The Fund family with open arms.

"Semper Fi & America's Fund is an incredible organization that does everything that they can to help out veterans and their families by providing financial services, adaptive equipment, family services, and well-being," he said. "They are incredibly passionate about what they do, and it is greatly



appreciated to be associated with people like them."

To ensure Ian's unique needs as a quadriplegic were always met, The Fund purchased essential equipment for Ian to safely travel, including a grant for an adaptive van designed to fit his wheelchair, a portable wheelchair ramp to help Ian navigate steps, and a portable generator to ensure Ian never lost the use of his ventilator or wheelchair while away from home. The Fund also installed a heating and cooling system in Ian's garage, allowing him to safely pursue his passions in his workshop year-round, and repaired the canopy on Ian's driveway to protect him from harsh elements while getting in and out of his vehicle.

"We know that we can count on The Fund family to bend over backwards to meet our needs and requests," said Ian. "The outpouring of support and passion that we have encountered has been incredible."

A remarkable testament to courage, strength, and positivity, Ian cites Nicole as the biggest motivator throughout his recovery, and now as the father of young twins, Ian has a newfound commitment to never let anything stop him from accomplishing whatever he sets his mind to do.

"When my twins were younger, they loved to ride around on my wheelchair and pretend that they could "push me" around the house," he said. "I was in a very dark place for a long time, but there were a few events that occurred that changed my outlook, and I try to stay as positive as I can now."

With The Fund providing a unique network of care that his family can always depend on — a promise that continues from injury through recovery and for a lifetime — Ian has overcome incredible hardships and extraordinary challenges, surpassing all expectations with determination, hope, and The Fund family always by his side.

PAST, PRESENT, AND STILL TO COME

The most famous holiday story has to be Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. Yet, near to the least famous character in the story has got to be Fred.

Fred is the nephew of Scrooge, the only son of Scrooge's late sister, Fran. Fred is the polar opposite personality type to his uncle. But then, isn't that the comical chemistry in every family? Fred is lighthearted, generous, cheerful, optimistic and most of all

forgiving. Might that be you? Of his uncle, Fred declares, "I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not ..."

Oh, I hope there are people in my family with the same forgiving thought! The chance for a clean slate and right what was wrong about the past heals a great deal. As Fred says, "This is the only time I know of the year when we open our hearts freely to one another ..."

This past year, I had two separate conversations: one with a Vietnam vet and one with an Afghanistan vet, separated by generations. One had needs now from long ago; the other needs for the way ahead. Semper Fi & America's Fund has

provided for those past, present, and will be to come, thanks to you.

So, if in doubt, think of Fred.

Blessings to all!

—*Reverend Christopher Merris
CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret.)*



THE GIFT OF GIVING BACK

One fall afternoon not long ago, I took my daily walk through Lake View Cemetery. Lake View is one of the oldest and most beautiful cemeteries in Cleveland and is the final resting place of thousands, including President James Garfield, Elliott Ness, John D. Rockefeller, and others. As I walked amongst those now resting, it struck me that we have but a small time on earth before we are called home. Our short time on this earth is both a gift and an opportunity given to us. In exchange, what will we do with this opportunity? What will we give back for this gift?

Those now resting at Lake View no longer have the chance to answer these questions. For the rest of

us, what will be our answers? Our wounded service members and their families have already answered those questions: their dedication and sacrifice will ensure that we will pass on to our children the greatest gift we will ever leave them: freedom.

At a time when less than one percent of Americans will wear the cloth of our nation, these men and women raised their hands and said "send me." By their service they have ensured the world is safer, the torch of liberty burns brighter, and we remain free. That's their gift ... what will be yours?

Semper Fi & America's Fund — and the many thousands who support it — are helping to answer that question because so many of these heroes and their families still need our help. Every day, we enjoy what they have given or preserved for us — the right to speak your mind, to worship as you see fit, the right to self-determination, the ability to

go to bed at night knowing that you and your family are safe ... these are gifts given to us by these young men and women who sacrificed on our behalf and continue to need us. As we close out this year and look to the promise of a new year, it's a good time to take stock and ask ourselves, what will we give back for all that has been given to us and that we enjoy every day?

May each of you be richly blessed in this upcoming holiday season, as we have been blessed by the sacrifice of others with this wonderful gift known only to a very few on this earth ... freedom!

—*C. Forrest Faison III
M.D. Sc.D (hon), FAAP
Vice Admiral, USN (Retired)
38th Surgeon General of the Navy
Sr. VP for Research and Innovation and
Chief of Health Strategy at Cleveland
State University*

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

The pandemic has exacerbated issues already facing our service members, veterans, and military families, including an increase in food insecurity from 10% to an alarming 20%. Furthermore, over the past year, the financial landscape and standard of living have changed for many service members, veterans, and military families. The cost of energy, food, and housing have all increased dramatically, with overall inflation up 8.5% just this past year. For injured, ill, and wounded veterans living on a fixed disability income, increasing prices may cause financial distress and aggravate medical conditions.

- Inflation: Basic Needs — Food, Rent, Gas, Utilities
- Travel and Lodging — Hospital stays and frequent travel to medical appointments are more expensive today.
- Increase Cost of Adaptive Vehicles — We are on our 2nd and 3rd replacement vehicles/the VA gives a one-time grant for adaptive vehicles.
- Increased Cost of Adaptive Housing Construction
- Increased Inpatient Mental Health Admissions
- Increased Need for PTSD Counseling
- Respite Care for Catastrophic Cases

November 1st–December 31st, your gift will be doubled with our Double Down for Veterans Campaign! Your support is invaluable!



Donate Now

- *Monthly Giving*
- *One Time Donation*
- *Stock, Mutual Funds, Bonds, ETFs*
- *Donor Advised Funds*
- *Legacy Society*
- *In Honor of or In Memory of Gift*
- *Employer Match*



CONTACT OUR DONOR TEAM TO LEARN MORE: 760-725-3680 (please press option 4)

MARINE MASTER
GUNNERY SERGEANT
ROSS BLAIN: NEVER STOP

Master Gunnery Sergeant Ross Blain has never let tremendous hardship stop him from achieving incredible accomplishments.

After faithfully serving our country for over two decades, which included numerous combat deployments to Syria, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, Ross suffered combat-related injuries that resulted in a traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), impairment to his lower back, and bilateral knee damage. But with Semper Fi & America's Fund walking alongside him every step of the way, Ross discovered the hope he needed to keep striving for a brighter future when The Fund provided him with a very special partner — his mobility service dog, Astro.

"After leaving the military, which was something I was invested in for 20+ years, it was probably one of the lowest points of my life. But meeting Astro and building that relationship was this remarkable shift in my mindset," said Ross. As Astro recently passed away in July 2022, Ross is currently on a journey with The Fund to find a new service dog. "It's a very invaluable relationship that a veteran has with his service animal ... the soothing that a dog can give you is indescribable and really changes your spirit in a very positive way."

Along with paying for service dog training and vet bills, The Fund offset the cost of a massage chair, a specialized mattress, adaptive workout equipment, and water therapy to ease Ross' chronic pain and frequent migraines associated with his TBI. To ensure Ross had all the support needed to live a life full of peace and happiness,

The Fund also provided funding for music therapy to help with his PTSD, as well as family support grants that allowed his wife and children to remain by Ross' side throughout his recovery to provide invaluable care during the toughest times.

"Semper Fi & America's Fund has been a game changer for my family and me," said Ross as The Fund's unending, all-encompassing support has made certain that Ross and his

family can fully focus on what matters most — his journey to healing.

As a father and husband to Gemma, Ross serves as a shining example of living each day with purpose and joy, and for him, The Fund is a family that "uplifts and offers positive support and resources. I'm not going to let my disability define my happiness," he said, then added the advice he often gives to others, "Never stop striving for greatness."



INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

Service Member & Family Support

From Injury Through Recovery

- Bedside Support
- Housing Assistance
- Transportation Assistance
- Adaptive Equipment
- Visiting Nurses
- Caregiver Support & Retreats
- Skip's Kids Program
- LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund for Vietnam Veterans
- Disaster Relief

Transition

Integrating Service Members Back Into Their Communities

- Veteran to Veteran Support
- Apprenticeship Program
- Education & Career Assistance
- Veteran & Unit Reunions

Integrative Wellness

Tools to Improve Body, Mind, and Spirit

- NeuroFitness
- Tim & Sandy Day Canine Companions Program
- Arts & Music Program
- Horsemanship Program
- Video Resources
- Post-Traumatic Stress Support Program
- Peter Murphy Sports Program — Team Semper Fi



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**ARMY STAFF SERGEANT
SAMUEL SHOCKLEY:
LIKE FAMILY**

The Fund is honored to be on this amazing journey with him, ensuring he has everything needed to accomplish these incredible goals.

With a strong desire to serve our country at a young age, Staff Sergeant Samuel Shockley joined the Army just after graduating high school and deployed three times — twice to Iraq in 2007 and 2009 and once to Afghanistan in 2012, where he was critically injured by an IED. Samuel suffered a broken wrist and the amputation of multiple fingers, part of his arm, and both of his legs above the knee.

During his initial hospitalization, Semper Fi & America’s Fund provided family grants to cover his mother’s travel expenses and loss of income, allowing her to remain at her son’s bedside throughout his many surgeries and months of recovery.

“Semper Fi & America’s Fund is a fantastic organization that has been there through some of the most challenging times I’ve ever faced,” he said.

To help Samuel regain his independence, Semper Fi & America’s Fund offset the cost of replacing his flooring and widening his door frames to accommodate his wheelchair, ensuring that he could easily and safely move about his home.

The Fund also provided grants for Samuel’s wife, Emely, to attend a Semper Fi & America’s Fund caregiver retreat, where Emely found all-important solidarity with those in similar situations as she received the necessary educational and emotional support for her ongoing role as a caregiver.

Samuel is now an avid athlete who is currently pursuing his MBA, and

“ I OWE A LOT OF MY CURRENT PROGRESSION AND ACHIEVEMENTS BECAUSE OF SEMPER FI & AMERICA’S FUND, INCLUDING THE FANTASTIC STAFF MEMBERS WHO ALWAYS MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE FAMILY. ”



**Grants by Program:
Fiscal Year 2022**

► Family Support Program

Family Assistance: \$9,881,000

Housing: \$7,921,000

Transportation: \$4,735,000

Adaptive Equipment: \$1,905,000

*Total Family Support Program:
\$24,442,000*

► Transition Program

*Education and Career Assistance:
\$1,273,000*

*Military to Civilian Transition:
\$1,011,000*

*Total Transition Program:
\$2,284,000*

► Wellness Program

PTSD, TBI, and Medical: \$2,242,000

*Recovery Through Sports:
\$2,278,000*

*Jinx McCain Horsemanship:
\$366,000*

Total Wellness Program: \$4,886,000

**TOTAL GRANTS:
\$31,612,000**



DEAR FUND FAMILY,

Happy Holidays!

Each year, our winter newsletter feels like an annual Semper Fi & America's Fund holiday card. We get to send out updates, share our milestones, and celebrate the closing of another year with you, our Fund family. The pictures mark the passing of time and illustrate how our family grows and changes. It hallmarks the lifetime of care we can embark on with each of our service members, veterans, and military families.

As those we serve grow and evolve, so does the rest of our Fund family — our donors, supporters, and staff. We find, with each passing year, more and more people embrace our mission. Our work is more important than ever as we keep our sacred promise to ensure our wounded, ill, and injured, and our military families are never alone or forgotten on their long road of recovery.

All the service members we have assisted since inception have a loving case manager who helps them navigate any challenges in their path. Our most catastrophically injured also have one of our visiting nurses and V2V Veteran Leads to join in the triad of support and help guide them in holistic care — body, mind, and spirit.

One of the key findings that emerged last spring from our strategic planning efforts is that the suicide rate of service members assisted by The Fund since 2004 is 30% lower than the rate for the overall combat-wounded population — an illustration of the tireless work and support of our Fund family. I truly

believe the comprehensive scope of the programs and services we provide — adaptive sports, horsemanship, neurofeedback, financial support, and many others — helps take the burden off navigating medical care and working through life after injury or illness toward the best quality of life possible.

All of this, combined with the frequent touch points from our dedicated and passionate team, makes all the difference. And it is truly and absolutely because of your financial support that keeps The Fund strong and at the ready. We are forever grateful that you believe in our mission and help us take it forward so that no military family will be alone.

God Bless you ALL and sending our wishes for the very Happiest of Holidays!

Karen Guenther

*President, CEO, & Founder
Semper Fi & America's Fund*



MARINE CORPORAL AMMON LANG: A PLACE TO TURN

For Corporal Ammon Lang, who lost both of his legs after stepping on an IED while leading a group of Afghan police to safety, The Fund family means "having a place to turn that I know cares and will do their best to help," he said.

Critically wounded, Ammon returned to the States and first encountered Semper Fi & America's Fund when members of the case management team visited his hospital room — a meeting that proved life-changing. To make certain Ammon could fully thrive post-injury, The Fund provided a grant for an adaptive vehicle, allowing newfound independence and perfectly fitting his unique needs as a double amputee. The Fund also ensured his wife, Kiri, had all-encompassing support in her new role as a

caregiver — a vital network of care and encouragement that Kiri can depend on as her role continues today.

"Their commitment to our family has impacted us greatly. We are regularly contacted by The Fund asking about our needs and checking on our welfare," said Ammon.

Ammon, Kiri, and their four children love spending time outdoors together, and Ammon has discovered a passion

for building furniture, which has inspired him to start his own woodworking business. Each day, Ammon lives with the knowledge that his future is one filled with hope and limitless possibilities, knowing with The Fund faithfully by his side, he will always have a place to turn for unending care that lasts a lifetime.

SEMPER FI & AMERICA'S FUND HAS PROVIDED INVALUABLE CAREGIVER TRAINING AND RESPITE.



A+ from CharityWatch, one of only three veteran nonprofits to receive their highest rating

4-Star Charity Navigator rating for ten consecutive years; an achievement attained by only 2% of charities

Awarded the Candid/GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency



Donations may be made online:
THEFUND.ORG

Please send check donations to:
Semper Fi & America's Fund
825 College Blvd, Suite 102
PMB 609
Oceanside, CA 92057

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