



A SEMPER FI FUND SCAROL



WINTER
2018



"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach!" —Ebenezer Scrooge

SEASONS GREETINGS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL. A LOT can be learned from Charles Dickens' timeless Christmas tale. With each ghost comes a wise lesson about life that can be applied no matter our age, occupation, or current situation.

From the Ghost of Christmas Past we learn the importance of our choices. Fourteen years ago a choice was made to begin a nonprofit for injured veterans. The success of it, completely unknown. The Fund has now shaped so many lives, has helped so many people; all because of a single choice. There is never a guarantee on the outcome of our choices, but if we don't take a leap of faith—sometimes we can miss out on magical turning points in our lives.

From the Ghost of Christmas Present, we learn the importance of love and family—overcoming obstacles together. Life is not made up of what happens to us, it is made up of how we react to it. Much like the Cratchets—who had little to no comforts of life—we have love and family. We have learned over the years the power that love and family can have in aiding recovering service members.

From the Ghost of Christmas Future, we learn the importance of minding our souls—spreading goodness and hope. Doing what is good for the soul is not only the healthiest thing you can do for yourself, but for everyone around you. The Fund has allowed opportunities for one soul to help another, to learn from each other, to love each other.

The past, the present, and the future are what make life—life. Our past actions, our present reactions, and our future hopes all combine into a lovely existence that we are blessed enough to have on this earth. We are certainly blessed to have made the choices that led to this organization, to relish in what the Fund brings with each day, and to be hopeful for a future of continuing our important mission. With you—our donors, supporters, and team—our Future is Bright! Thank you for your support, your devotion, and your passion for "serving those who preserve our freedom."

Wishing you and yours a very joyful holiday season,

*Karen Guenther
President, Executive Director, and Founder

I LEARNED OF THE SEMPER Fi Fund in 2004 during a speech President Bush gave at Camp Pendleton. He spoke of the debt we as a nation owe those who serve, and that the government while doing much, cannot do it all in the care of our seriously wounded. He then singled out the Semper Fi Fund as an example of a charity that selflessly helps to fill the gap. I was struck by this message and by the mission of the Fund, so I sent in a donation. Karen Guenther called me some days later to give a personal thanks, and I remember asking her the fateful question, "How can I help?" Never could I have guessed that that speech, that call and that question could have brought me to this point. In August, I humbly accepted the appointment of the Board of Directors to become Chairman of the Fund. I have big shoes to fill, and I commit to give all I have and to apply all that I've learned in my years in business to fill them.

As we approach the holiday season, it is a good time to reflect on our many blessings as a nation. Those who each day put themselves in harm's way too often pay a heavy price for the freedoms we enjoy. We at the Semper Fi Fund work tirelessly to help in the recovery of many of those paying that price and we are able to do so because of your generosity. Thank you for your commitment to the work of the Fund and to the care of our wounded, seriously ill and catastrophically injured. Your donations allow us to "leave no one behind".

Lastly, I'd like to say thank you to our staff and volunteers who work night and day to fulfill our mission. They are truly the heart and soul of the Fund.

Seasons greetings and a blessed New Year,

*Bob Bowlin
Chairman, Board of Directors
Semper Fi Fund

FOR THE 7TH YEAR IN a row, **The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation** has issued its Double Down for Veterans match Campaign of up to \$10 Million for our Veterans! Bob and Renee join the Semper Fi Fund in our mission to provide financial assistance and lifetime support to post-9/11 combat wounded, critically ill and catastrophically injured service members and their families. This year, the funding will also help our pilot program, the LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund, serving catastrophically wounded Vietnam veterans. It's an exciting time of year and we are hoping to exceed previous matches with a historic landslide of donations this year—sending a strong message to our veterans that they will never be alone in recovery!

Through December 31, 2018, The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation will match all donations to the Semper Fi Fund, up to \$10 million, as part of the Double Down for Veterans campaign.

Bob Parsons, U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam veteran—recipient of the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry—and founder of YAM Worldwide, PXG and GoDaddy, announced the challenge via video address in his annual Marine Corps birthday salute.

“The successful transition for injured veterans back into civilian life is significantly enhanced by a supportive and loving family,” said businessman and Marine Corps Vietnam War veteran Bob Parsons. “The comprehensive programs provided by the Semper Fi Fund acknowledge this by providing much needed help not only for the injured veterans but also for their spouses, caregivers and kids.”

The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation has generously contributed to the Semper Fi Fund since 2012, totaling over \$41,000,000 in support, not including this year's campaign.

Donations to the Double Down for Veterans campaign can be made at www.semperfifund.org/match. Follow the progress of the campaign and learn more about those benefiting from the work of the organization on Semper Fi Fund's social media channels.



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ONE FAMILY'S LIFELINE TO RECOVERY

ARMY SGT ANDREW & WIFE Tori recall their amazing journey from battlefield injury through recovery and becoming a family.

March 2012 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, while on patrol with my squad moving towards a village, I stepped on a pressure plate IED resulting in the loss of both my legs and severe internal injuries.

Shortly after arriving at Walter Reed Medical Center, my wife, Tori, and I had our first experience with Semper Fi Fund (SFF). I don't remember this, because I was undergoing so many surgeries—but Tori said a SFF case manager came to visit while I was still in the ICU. She introduced herself and explained what SFF does. This was our first experience, and it left an incredible impression. Tori came to Walter Reed with very little as far as clothing. SFF helped her get settled for what would be a very long recovery. Since then, SFF has helped us with grants, family support, and aided in my "Recovery through Sport."

THE BEGINNING

Andrew and I had been married less than three months when he was injured. Thankfully, we had a "blast-proof" foundation for our marriage. We were best friends for 5 years before we began a "romantic" relationship. I received a phone call from a number I did not recognize. I was in disbelief. I questioned the caller to be sure he really had the "right" Smith. I was praying the commonality of the last name had led to a mistake; however, it was my husband who was injured. I was advised to immediately return to my "home address." I quickly realized that they needed to know where to send the car if Andrew did not make it. I survived the initial days, weeks, and months by relying on my faith. I was in constant prayer for Andrew. Once I got to see Andrew the first time, I knew we could beat this. We were

a team, and we were going to conquer it. However, we needed help, both tangible and intangible. Enter SFF and one of their case managers. Days after we arrived at the hospital, I have a vivid image of a woman walking in and giving me some clothes and a check. I was confused.

WHY WAS THIS STRANGER GIVING ME THESE ITEMS?

She didn't know the blessing that she was in that moment. I was in a cold ICU wearing tank tops for days at a time. With the check she gave me, I had my friend who lived in the area go purchase me a pillow for the ICU, a jacket, and some tennis shoes. My flip-flops weren't cutting it in the ICU.

HAS BECOMING A FATHER AFFECTED YOUR RECOVERY?

Tori and I have always had a heart for adoption so in the summer of 2016 we submitted our paperwork. Our son is now a little over 21 months old and every second has been awesome. He has been a huge blessing to both of us. Each day, he is a large part of the reason I push through any pain that may arise. I want to be the best I can be (for him). I want him to be proud of his dad and the man that I am.

FOR TORI: WHICH OF THE SEMPER FI FUND PROGRAMS HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN?

I have been able to take part in a couple different retreats for caregivers. We were at Walter Reed for almost two years. We gained friendships built through shared tragedy and triumph. Those types of friendships are unbreakable and rare. Because of SFF, I am able to see my Walter Reed sisters at least once a year—and without our husbands! For one weekend, we try to focus on ourselves and laugh

through some of the struggles we face throughout the year. For example—tripping over your spouse's spare leg.

CAN YOU SUM UP WHAT THE SEMPER FI FUND MEANS TO YOUR FAMILY?

SFF means that we are never alone. SFF stays intimately involved and is a constant lifeline. In particular, our case manager has been such a blessing to us both. Most organizations provide for wounded service members only what their needs are in the moment. Semper Fi Fund looks deeper and holistically. They realize the importance of the family unit and provide for the emotional well-being of the caregiver as well.







YEAR IN
PHOTOS



FROM THE DESK OF Santa Claus



| | | GRANTS: |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Family Support | \$7,379,000 | 12,300 |
| Housing | \$5,766,000 | 2,300 |
| Transportation | \$1,416,000 | 1,100 |
| Transition Career & Education | \$3,470,000 | 3,100 |
| Specialized Adaptive Equipment | \$1,321,000 | 500 |
| Recovery Through Sport | \$2,133,000 | 2,900 |
| PTSD/TBI | \$1,433,000 | 4,000 |

➔ \$22,918,000
Assistance Provided
➔ 5,800
Service Members &
Families Touched

TOTALS: \$22,918,000
Total Grants: 26,200

\$785 MILLION
OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO DATE



F414
\$15,500,000
16,000 grants

F415
\$19,000,000
20,000 grants

F416
\$19,500,000
22,000 grants

F417
\$22,000,000
25,000 grants

F418
\$22,918,000
26,200 grants

NICE

NAUGHTY



A PICTURE IS WORTH A 1,000 WORDS

TAKE A MOMENT TO LOOK at this picture. The longer you look at it, the more extraordinary it gets. Here is Marine Gunnery Sergeant Brian Meyer—moments after an IED exploded while he was attempting to dismantle it. Sustaining the loss of his leg, arm and other serious injuries, Brian ordered his fellow Marine to take this snapshot. This photo was to be an inspiring reminder—that no matter how bad things can get, you can smile through it and continue to thrive.

The smile in the photo represents the strength and resolve that Brian has lived throughout his recovery. After Brian's injury, he quickly went through Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and then to the United States. The Semper Fi Fund (SFF) assisted his family with airfare, hotels, and lost wages while he was recovering. Once Brian was released from the hospital, SFF provided an adapted vehicle and training for his service dog. Brian focuses on recreational therapy with the Fund and now is helping other veterans by sharing his experiences.

Brian is currently enjoying some home improvement projects: building a small wood-working shop and a chicken coop. "I enjoy creating a comfortable environment that takes care of itself to a certain degree," Brian told us. "Agriculture, animal husbandry and producing the healthiest food for my family create a hunger for knowledge that I never acquired in school."

Brian truly exemplifies learning from the past, relishing in the present, and hoping for the future. He never forgets the events that have brought him to where he is now. He uses the lessons and fortitude he gained from those experiences to continue to serve his country by inspiring other veterans to grow from their past (no matter how horrific) and use it to achieve post-traumatic growth. For the future, Brian focuses on how he can continue this mission.



"A high-ranking USMC General mentioned very casually that he thought that photo may be one of the most famous photos of the wars of my generation...that shocked me. This made me think, what could we do to monetize this photo and help others. I could think of no greater steward than the Semper Fi Fund...The Semper Fi Fund embodies the faithfulness that is at the core of serving something greater than yourself...Technically I am the subject of the photo, not the owner, Sgt. Eric Lunson is the one who gave the photo to the Fund."

Brian wishes for this photo to remain a beacon of hope for all veterans, and he hopes that the Semper Fi Fund can benefit from the proceeds of auctioning off the photo to the highest bidder.

He wants everyone to have the opportunity to experience the same care and support that he had during his injury. Brian's smile will change lives.

There will be more information on the auction of Brian's famous photo—stay tuned www.semperfund.org





PAST

FAMILY SUPPORT: “Semper Fi Fund is more than the best nonprofit organization—they are family. From the moment I first met my SFF case worker until this very day, Semper Fi Fund has been there every step of my recovery.” —Christian, Master Chief, U.S. Navy

Our story began in the spring of 2003. Just back from Operation Iraqi Freedom, the first wave of wounded Marines and Sailors landed at Camp Pendleton, California. A dedicated group of Marine spouses gathered around a kitchen table armed with passion and \$500. The SFF was born. That \$500 has been transformed into today's assistance of over \$185,000,000 to 22,000 service members. Our oldest program is our Family Support Program. Starting at the bedside our team handed out miracles. Every day, the Semper Fi Fund experiences lives transformed by hope!

Our Family Support Program includes: bedside financial assistance, housing assistance, transportation assistance, adaptive equipment, Tim & Sandy Day Canine Companion Program, Caregiver Retreats, and Semper Fi Fund Kids Camp.

PRESENT

WELCOME HOME: Two simple words that have incredible meaning and conjure images of reuniting families, parades and service members being engulfed in love and support from a grateful nation. Much like “the greatest generation” our current service members are lauded as heroes—and deservedly so! However, there is a generation of war-fighters where the words “Welcome Home” were never uttered. In spite of, and perhaps because of this lack of welcome, these unsung heroes blazed a trail that has set up benefits and services that current active duty service members benefit from today. This program is named after Vietnam War veteran, Purple Heart recipient, philanthropist and entrepreneur Bob

Parsons. Mr. Parsons, along with his wife Renee Parsons, are Founders of The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation who have generously contributed \$41,000,000 over the past 7 years to the Semper Fi Fund. The LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund has expanded our mission to care for veterans from all US military service branches who were catastrophically injured from combat operations in Vietnam.

Welcome Home!



FUTURE

NEUROFEEDBACK: “This has been an experience I will never forget, and I hope the other veterans who participate will get as much benefit as I did.” —LCpl USMC

It's an exciting future with neurofeedback in our toolbox to heal and repair sleep disturbances, anxiety, memory and focus. This non-invasive and non pharmacological training is already producing overwhelmingly positive results. The wars fought in Iraq and Afghanistan resulted in more traumatic brain injury (TBI) and cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than any other conflict in history. These invisible injuries have the power to take over our heroes' daily lives.

NeuroFitness is performance-based training allowing the brain to function in new ways forming new synapses and self-regulating activity. It is a painless, easy to use system. Each participant's brainwaves are accessed using an EEG, then, a personalized protocol is generated, and the healing begins.





*“God Bless Us, Every One!”
— Tiny Tim*

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SEMPER FI
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Donations may be made online:
SemperFiFund.org

Please send check donations to:
Semper Fi Fund
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For any additional information,
please email:
info@semperfifund.org



A+ RATING
from CharityWatch

Platinum Seal of Transparency
from GuideStar



THANK YOU
for Serving Those Who Preserve our Freedom

\$185,000,000
GIVEN IN ASSISTANCE TO SERVICE MEMBERS

We've helped
22,000
wounded heroes & their families

100 Grants processed per day



OPERATES WITH AN AVERAGE OF 7% OVERHEAD SINCE INCEPTION

SEMPER FI FUND SINCE 2004