



ANNUAL **2021** REPORT



2021 Graduate Elizabeth Ponder celebrates with her sister Samantha Ponder. Elizabeth graduated from Auburn University with a degree in Human Development and Family Services. Samantha Ponder graduated from Auburn University with a degree in Global Studies in 2020. Elizabeth and Samantha are the daughters of Army SFC James Ponder who lost his life in 2005 while assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

This was a very productive year for Special Operations Warrior Foundation (SOWF). To all who supported the surviving children and Medal of Honor families we serve, please accept my most heartfelt thanks. Your support is making a huge difference in the lives of our families. In the paragraphs below I have highlighted our "Cradle to Career" approach, specifically some of the steps we have taken towards our top priority, student success — our focus being on SOWF children whose parent sacrificed so much for our nation. Please know there is additional detailed and related information offered throughout our website.

Preschool. Research shows that children who attend preschool are significantly more likely to attend a post-secondary education institution and in turn have a chance at higher satisfaction and earnings in their adult lives. We offer \$8,000 per student, per year in preschool assistance, setting the tone for their future growth.

Unlimited Tutoring. SOWF funds unlimited tutoring for our students, from kindergarten through college.

Students with Disabilities. SOWF also funds individually tailored educational programs to our students with disabilities, an opportunity that is being utilized more and more.

Private K-12 School Tuition Assistance. In Q4 of 2021, our board of directors approved private school tuition assistance of up to \$5,000 per student, per year, in kindergarten through 12th grade. Consistent with setting the tone in preschool, our hope is that the addition of this program provides parents an option for their child to attend the best school possible.

College Preparation. While in high school, SOWF offers students the chance to participate in our annual five-day college planning conference, Operation E.P.I.C. (Education Planning Information Conference), hosted in Tampa. Featured speakers in 2021 covered topics from personal financial planning to selection of college major and the admissions essay. We equip students with the practical information necessary to not only select the right school for them but also to make the transition to being a college student with as little disruption and anxiety as possible. Is E.P.I.C. value added? I think so, as 95% of students who attended E.P.I.C. in the last four years were accepted into the school of their choice.

College funding. It is also important to note that SOWF ensures fully funded college educations and additional educational opportunities to any public or private four-year college or university, or designated trade school. The choice is theirs.

Success. Approximately 80% of our children attend college, a university, or a trade school, and in 2021 our college graduation rate was over 95%. Our college attendance and graduation rates are 30% above the national average! Specifically, I credit our Scholarships and Family Outreach Team for this tremendous success.

CLAY HUTMACHER, PRESIDENT & CEO

— MAJOR GENERAL, USA, RETIRED

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PROGRAMS

Educational Programs

In 2021, the Board of Directors voted to add Private K-12 School Tuition Assistance to our educational programs. Special Operations Warrior Foundation ensures full financial assistance for a post-secondary degree from an accredited college, university, technical, or trade school. The array of programs now includes Preschool Funding, Private Tutoring, Support for Students with Disabilities, Private K-12 School Tuition Assistance, College Planning, College Scholarships, and College-to-Career transition support. In 2021, SOWF provided funding for 210 students in colleges and universities across the country and 38 students received their college degree.



Family Outreach

Our educational and family support services go hand-in-hand with our scholarship program. Our dedicated staff proactively contacts every family of fallen special operations personnel at the earliest appropriate time and then remains in steady communication through the years. In 2021, we reached out to the surviving families of 28 fallen Special Operations Forces personnel. To help each student reach their full potential, SOWF offers individual academic counseling, programs, and services to all eligible children beginning in preschool. SOWF's counselors are there to ensure that each student is on track to reach their goals. To help celebrate their special days, personalized birthday cards are sent to children and students of all ages. And, whenever the Scholarships and Family Outreach Team travel, our staff always make a point to connect with as many students as possible over lunch or dinner to spend quality time with each and their respective family.



Support for Wounded, Ill, and Injured

SOWF provides severely wounded, ill, or injured SOF warriors with a financial stipend, up to \$5,000, to relieve the burden of unexpected expenses when hospitalized. Additionally, SOWF sends an iPad to help the service member communicate with family and friends. SOWF provided stipends to 25 wounded, ill, or injured SOF warriors in 2021. Since 2006, the Foundation has provided \$3.2 million to Special Operations wounded service members and their families.



ORGANIZATIONAL FINANCES

Through private donor and corporate support, third party and signature events and activities, and external grants, 2021 was a:

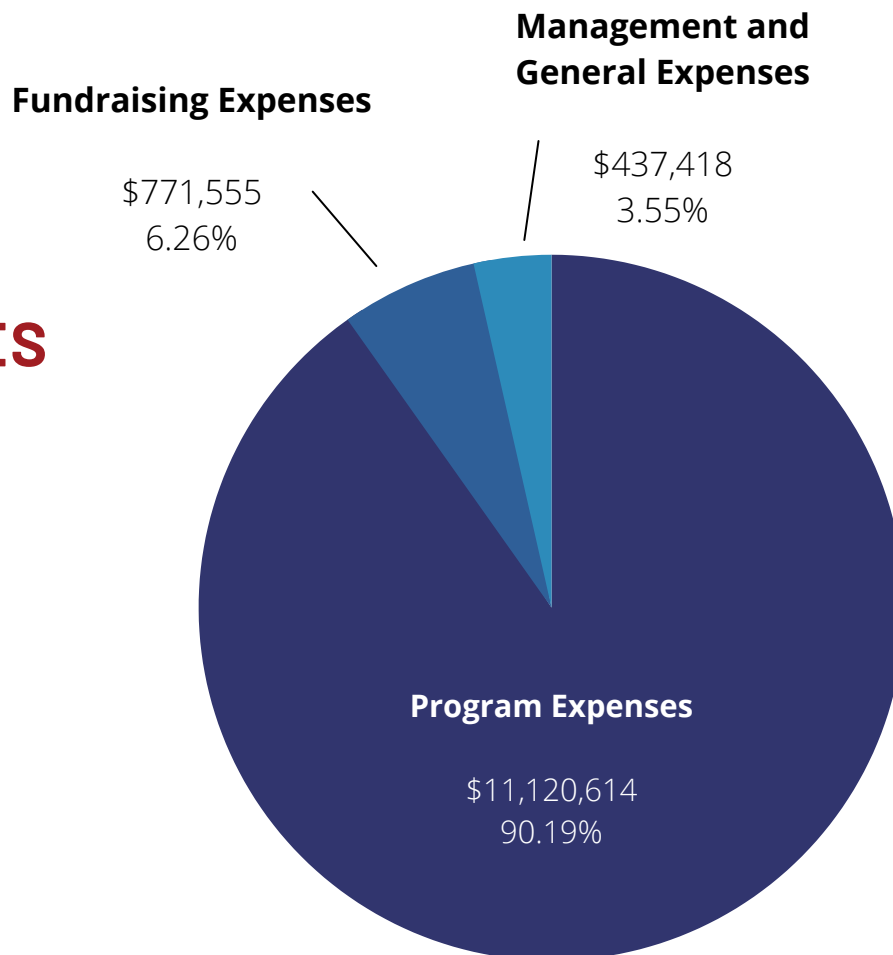
RECORD BREAKING YEAR!

Grand total funds raised: \$15 MILLION

Our monthly recurring donor base increased nearly 25% and we currently steward 817 donors.

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$12,329,587



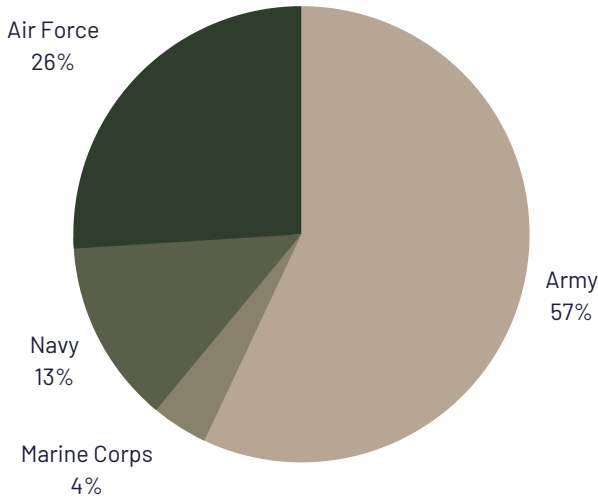
BY THE NUMBERS



THROUGH
12/31/2021

WARRIOR FATALITIES

FATALITIES
JAN - DEC 2021



1193

SINCE 1980

28

THROUGH 2021

966

CHILDREN
CURRENTLY
ELIGIBLE

330

LAPTOP
PACKAGES
PROVIDED SINCE
2007

440

COLLEGE
GRADUATES
SINCE 1980

1,575

TOTAL CHILDREN
SINCE 1980

168

STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN
POST-SECONDARY
SCHOOLS AT
YEAR-END

81%

OF OUR CURRENT
STUDENTS
ATTENDING POST
SECONDARY
EDUCATION ARE
ENROLLED IN
FOUR-YEAR
INSTITUTIONS

SEVERELY WOUNDED, ILL & INJURED

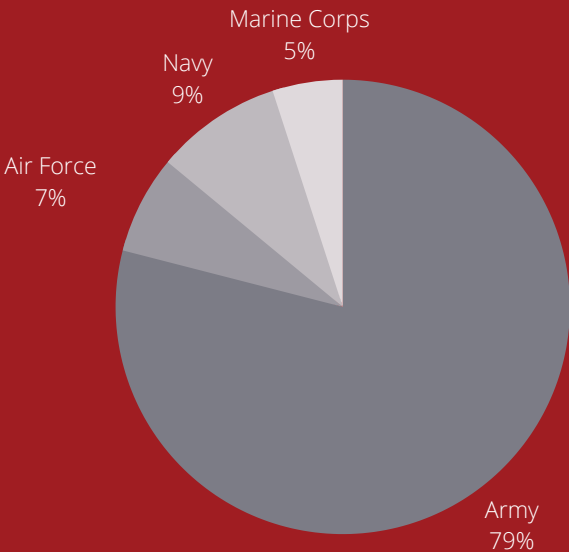
1169

SINCE 2006

25

SEVERELY WOUNDED,
ILL & INJURED
THROUGH 2021,
INCLUDING FOUR WHO
RECEIVED A 2ND
STIPEND

WOUNDED SOF
BY SERVICE





2021 COLLEGE GRADUATES



SIDNEY DYER



FORREST HAYDON



ALLI HOELSCHER



KYLE KLOMSTAD

Yvette Borjas graduated from National University with a degree in Criminal Justice. Yvette is the daughter of Air Force Sergeant Federico Borjas who lost his life in 2008 while assigned to the 416th Civil Affairs Battalion.

Brian Buege graduated from Troy University with a degree in Applied Computer Science. Brian is the son of Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Paul Buege who lost his life in 1991 while assigned to the 16th Special Operations Squadron.

Edward Castelo graduated from Southern New Hampshire University with a degree in Criminal Justice. Edward is the son of Army Sergeant Major Fernan Castelo who lost his life in 2013 while assigned to the 4th Military Information Support Operations Group.

Amanda Chapman graduated from University of Washington - Tacoma with a degree in Psychology. Amanda is the daughter of Army Sergeant First Class Nathan Chapman who lost his life in 2002 while assigned to the 1st Special Forces Group.

Sidney Dyer graduated from Florida State University with a degree in Sports Management. Sidney is the daughter of Army Chief Warrant Officer Two Scott Dyer who lost his life in 2006 while assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group.

John Eggers graduated from The Citadel with a degree in Business Administration. John is the son of Army Captain Daniel Eggers who lost his life in 2004 while assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group.

Sebrina Enos graduated from California State University - Fresno with a degree in Criminology. Sebrina is the daughter of Marine Staff Sergeant Darrel Enos who lost his life in 2012 while assigned to the 3rd Marine Special Operations Battalion.

Jason Ferguson graduated from Metropolitan State University of Denver with a degree in Brewery Operations. Jason is the son of Army Master Sergeant Richard Ferguson who lost his life in 2004 while assigned to 10th Special Forces Group.

Peyton Fester graduated from Purdue University with a degree in Selling and Sales Management. Peyton is the son of Army Major Gregory Fester who lost his life in 2005 while assigned to the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion.

Forrest Haydon graduated from University of Chicago with a degree in Economics & Global Studies. Forrest is the son of Army Major Joseph Haydon who lost his life in 2005 while assigned to United States Army Special Operations Command.



MICHELLE LANE



ALISON LOFTIS



BENJAMIN MCCOY



ZACHERY MILES

Catherine Henry graduated from Fortis Institute – Pensacola with a certification as a Medical Assistant. Catherine is the daughter of Air Force Technical Sergeant James Henry who lost his life in 2005 while assigned to 352nd Special Operations Group.

Alexandra Hoelscher graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University with a degree in Forensic Science. Alexandra is the daughter of Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Hoelscher who lost his life in 2006 while assigned to Air Force Special Operations Command.

Sabrina Iijima-Steagald graduated from Pima Community College with a Fitness & Wellness Specialist Certification. Sabrina is the daughter of Air Force Technical Sergeant Jefferson Steagald who lost his life in 1999 while assigned to the 21st Special Tactics Squadron.

Joshua Johnson graduated from Fortis Institute – Nashville with a certification in Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC). Joshua is the son of Army Sergeant First Class Allen Johnson who lost his life in 2005 while assigned to 7th Special Forces Group.

Keyshaun Kentcy graduated from North Carolina A & T State University with a degree in Information Technology. Keyshaun is the son of Army Sergeant First Class Terry Kentcy who lost his life in 2001 while assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group.

Kyle Klomstad graduated from Blue Ridge Community and Technical College with a degree in Business Administration. Kyle is the stepson of Army Sergeant First Class Lance Vogeler who lost his life 2010 while assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment.

Kassandra Kocan graduated from University of Georgia with a degree in Animal Science. Kassandra is the daughter of Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Keith Kocan who lost his life in 2006 while assigned to United States Special Operations Command.

Michelle Lane graduated from Dallas Baptist University with a degree in Christian Studies. Michelle is the daughter of Army Sergeant First Class Mitchell Lane who lost his life in 2003 while assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group.

Sarah Lindenau graduated from Everett Community College with a degree in Cosmetology. Sarah is the daughter of Army Major Robert Lindenau who lost his life in 2008 while assigned to 95th Civil Affairs Battalion.

Alison Loftis graduated from University of North Carolina – Wilmington with a degree in Marine Biology. Alison is the daughter of Air Force Lieutenant Colonel John Loftis who lost his life in 2012 while assigned to the 866th Air Expeditionary Squadron.



ADAM LUNDELL

Adam Lundell graduated from Utah State University with a degree in Computer Science. Adam is the son of Army 2nd Lieutenant Scott Lundell who lost his life in 2006 while assigned to 19th Special Forces Group.



DESHAUN OSBORNE

Benjamin McCoy graduated from University of Massachusetts – Amherst with a degree in Military and Strategic Leadership. Benjamin is the son of Army Chief Warrant Officer Four Christian McCoy who lost his life in 2019 while assigned to 19th Special Forces Group,

Zachery Miles graduated from Sauk Valley Community College with a Computer Information Systems: Networking certification. Zachary is the son of Army Master Sergeant Bradley Miles who lost his life in 2016 while assigned to 7th Special Forces Group.

Deshaun Osborne graduated from The University of West Florida with a degree in Journalism. Deshaun is the stepson of Army Staff Sergeant Mark de Alencar who lost his life in 2017 while assigned to 7th Special Forces Group.

Octavia Osborne graduated from Johnson & Wales University - North Miami with a degree in Business Administration. Octavia is the stepdaughter of Army Staff Sergeant Mark de Alencar who lost his life in 2017 while assigned to 7th Special Forces Group.



OCTAVIA OSBORNE

Margaret Oswald graduated from Purdue University with a degree in Civil Engineering. Margaret is the daughter of Navy Cmdr. Peter Oswald who lost his life in 2002 while assigned to Naval Special Warfare Unit Four.



MARGARET OSWALD

Lauren Owens graduated from Lipscomb University with a degree in Fashion Merchandising. Lauren is the daughter of Army Captain Bartt Owens who lost his life in 2002 while assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

Summer Padgett graduated from Auburn University with a degree in Public Relations. Summer is the daughter of Army Sergeant Timothy Padgett who lost his life in 2007 while assigned to 7th Special Forces Group.

Chase Patton graduated from Durham Technical Community College with a certification as an Electrical Line Technician. Chase is the son of Army Sergeant Major Jerry Patton who lost his life in 2008 while assigned to United States Army Special Operations Command.

Christine Pierre graduated from Strayer University with a degree in Business Administration. Christine is the daughter of Army Staff Sergeant Edwidge Pierre who lost his life in 1991 while assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.



LAUREN OWENS



SUMMER PADGETT



CHRISTINE PIERRE



CHASE PATTON

Elizabeth Ponder graduated from Auburn University with a degree in Human Development and Family Services. Elizabeth is the daughter of Army Master Sgt. James Ponder who lost his life in 2005 while assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

Taryn Speer graduated from University of North Carolina – Wilmington with a degree in Exercise Science. Taryn is the daughter of Army Sergeant First Class Christopher Speer who lost his life in 2002 while assigned to United States Army Special Operations Command.

Nathan Roberts graduated from Fort Myers Technical College with a degree in Welding Technology. Nathan is the son of Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts who lost his life in 2002 while assigned to Naval Special Warfare Command.

Jared Thomas graduated from Auburn University with a degree in Professional Flight Management. Jared is the son of Army Warrant Officer Three Jason Thomas who lost his life in 2018 while assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group.

Lauren Russell graduated from Texas State University with a degree in Social Work. Lauren is the daughter of Army Sergeant First Class Michael Russell who lost his life in 2005 while assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

Samantha Tycz graduated from D'Youville College with a degree in Exercise and Sports Studies. Samantha is the daughter of Army Sergeant First Class Peter Tycz who lost his life in 2002 while assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group.

Hannibal Santiago graduated from Marquette University with a degree in Computer Science and Mathematics. Hannibal is the son of Army Sergeant Anibal Santiago Jr. who lost his life in 2010 while assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment.

Noel Vose graduated from BAU International University with a degree in Graphic Design. Noel is the daughter of Army Chief Warrant Officer Two Douglas Vose who lost his life in 2009 while assigned to 10th Special Forces Group.



ELIZABETH PONDER



LAUREN RUSSELL



JARED THOMAS



SAMANTHA TYCZ

Interview with SOWF Graduating Senior Greyson Gilbert

On November 27, 2006, six-year-old Greyson Gilbert's father, Air Force Major Troy "Trojan" Gilbert, lost his life while serving in Iraq. Troy served as part of the 309th Fighter Squadron from Luke Air Force Base in Arizona and was in Iraq in support of a Special Operations task force when he was killed. Greyson, now a Special Operations Warrior Foundation student, is currently a senior at Clemson University majoring in Health Science with a minor in Psychology. From August to December 2021, he studied abroad in Thailand. Entering his last semester at Clemson, Greyson was kind enough to join SOWF for a candid Q & A. To read the full interview, visit the Blog section of specialops.org.



Q: You were six years old when your father was killed in the line of duty. What do you remember of your father before he was killed?

A: I was young, but thankfully I do have some memories with him. Most revolved around him having fun with us: driving in his old truck jamming to loud music; how he would come into my brother's and my room at night to tuck us in and instead we'd end up on the floor in a heated wrestling match; or going out and kicking the soccer ball in the field near our house. As I grow older, I'm more and more impressed with how he was able to be so dedicated to his work, yet always keep his family first.

Q: What do you consider to be your father's legacy, both as a father and as a man? What enduring values were important to him?

A: Anybody who knew him would say that he worked harder than most, but at the same time he truly cared for people. He made people feel known, and heard, and taken care of. That's something that I really value, a trait that I want to embody as well.

Q: Going back to when your father lost his life... do you remember those emotions? Can you tell me what that was like for you at six years old?

A: I remember getting off the school bus and walking home with my brother like any other normal day. The one thing that has stuck with me is walking into the house and seeing my grandpa and my mom crying in the living room. I think that I

thought that was strange. As a first grader, hearing news like that is hard to grasp. My primary concerns were lunch and recess — I mostly just wanted to keep living a normal life, not fully grasping how much my life was turning in that moment. The impact of that loss has been a slow, steady journey that's forever ongoing.

Q: What has been the most challenging thing about the loss of your father throughout your life?

A: Naturally, Gold Star kids are the minority in most circles they are in. It was easy to feel a little alienated, growing up where most of my friends still have both of their parents. Feeling like you had no one who understood you or could truly relate to you — that was the hardest part growing up. Learning to be open was a challenge. Thankfully, I realized that even if people can't fully understand your experience, they can still care about you and help if you let them.

Q: Do you remember when SOWF came into your life? What are your earliest memories of Special Operations Warrior Foundation?

A: If I remember correctly, I think SOWF came into my life very early on in my college journey, as we got connected through some friends who had also received college support from them. I remember two striking things from those early days — first, that even though my dad technically wasn't Special Operations, he died in support of a Special Ops mission, and SOWF felt so strongly about helping because of that fact. My dad died saving Special Ops lives, and he, and by extension I, via SOWF, were welcomed like family. That was special. Secondly, I remember how it felt to get the message that I was fully covered, that anything I could ever need while in college was going to be helped with by SOWF. That was a supreme weight lifted off my shoulders — one less thing I need to worry about, and something that has honestly helped me focus on my education and outside interests!

WHAT WE PROVIDE

YOUR GIFT ENCOMPASSES:

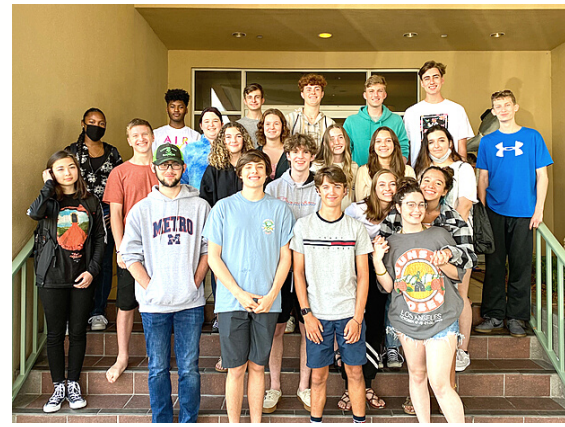
Scholarship support, including tuition, books, fees, room and board, transportation and associated miscellaneous expenses at the student's school of choice.

NEW COLLEGE FRESHMEN RECEIVE A LAPTOP AND PRINTER PACKAGE

Our fully funded college educations and additional educational opportunities, "cradle to career," include:

- Preschool programs for children ages 2 – 5 (up to \$8,000 per year)
- Educational programs specifically designed for students with disabilities
- Private school tuition assistance (up to \$5,000 per student, per year, kindergarten–12th grade)
- Unlimited private tutoring for students of all ages (kindergarten through college graduation)
- Access to online tools for ACT/SAT test preparation
- College planning conference (EPIC) hosted by SOWF for high school students
- Access to online college planning platform, College Success Academy
- College to Career transition program, including funds available for internship relocation and opportunity to study abroad

If you or someone you know may be eligible for our programs, please email SOWF at: scholarships@specialops.org



22 enthusiastic high school students at our 2021 Education Planning Information Conference (EPIC).



Emily Kraines, surviving spouse of Technical Sergeant Peter Kraines, who was killed in training in 2019.

Emily is pictured with her two children Harbor (age 4) and Hazel (1 year old).

Photo courtesy of The Space Between



We were honored to receive our 16th consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. This honor demonstrates solid accountability and sound financial health – fewer than 1% of nonprofits have maintained a 4-star rating for 16 consecutive years.

