A Note from Our Founder

Karen Guenther
President, Executive Director and Founder

And once again (and for the fifth year in a row), The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation and GoDaddy have joined us in our mission. Through December 31, 2016, all donations (up to $10 million) will be matched as part of the Double Down for Veterans campaign — you can donate at semperfifund.org/match. Bob and Renee have kicked off the campaign in matching our MCM’s $475,000, doubling it to $950,000!

I am truly the most blessed person I know. The holiday spirit of charity and generosity is something I get to experience all year round by watching our amazing team care for our veterans and their families. While numbers aren’t all in, of course, we’re on track to have our most productive year yet — helping 5,000 service members and their families with 22,000 grants totaling $20,000,000 in support.

And it’s people like you who make it all possible.

On behalf of all of us here at the Semper Fi Fund, as well as all those we assist: Thank you — all of you — from the bottom of our hearts.

General James F. Amos

A Note from Our Chairman

This newsletter is coming to you as the holiday season is upon us. And so, I am reminded that many of our fellow Americans who wear our nation’s cloth will not be spending the holidays at home with their loved ones.

These brave patriots — men and women who sacrifice their personal comforts so that we all can enjoy our freedoms — honor us all with their service. They make us proud — they deserve our profound gratitude!

This is where the Semper Fi Fund comes in. As you celebrate the holidays, I hope you will also honor those who serve and sacrifice by making a donation to the Semper Fi Fund.

This year, the Double Down for Veterans campaign makes your donation twice as valuable. Supporting the Fund’s mission is one of the best ways I can think of for every American to honor the service of military families from coast to coast, and around the world.

Thank you, as always, for your strong and generous support of our mission. May you and yours have a wonderfully happy and healthy holiday season. I remain…

Semper Fidelis,

General James F. Amos

FOR THE FIFTH YEAR in a row, The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation and GoDaddy are joining the Semper Fi Fund in its mission to raise funds to assist wounded, critically ill and injured post-9/11 service members and their families.

Through December 31, 2016, 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.

“The work being done by the Semper Fi Fund is providing ongoing, critical support for our country’s veterans,” said American entrepreneur and philanthropist, Bob Parsons. “We have a duty to do whatever we can to give back to the men and women who have sacrificed so much in their service to our great nation.”

Parsons is a U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and recipient of the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation has matched donations to Semper Fi Fund since 2012, and the $10 million match would bring The Foundation’s cumulative total to more than $31 million in donations to the Fund.

“I am so touched and humbled by the incredible generosity of Bob and Renee Parsons, and thrilled that they have enabled all Americans to double the impact of their donations,” said Semper Fi Fund President, Executive Director and Founder Karen Guenther. “We hope that anyone considering donating their hard-earned dollars to support our veterans this time of year will join the Double Down for Veterans campaign — it’s exciting to know that every dollar donated through the end of the year will work twice as hard to serve those who have served us all.”

Donations to the Double Down for Veterans campaign can be made at: semperfifund.org/match

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Double Down for Veterans

parsonsfoundation.org/double-down
The Fund’s goal for Team Semper Fi and Team America’s Fund is to provide encouragement and motivation. Powerful support for our wounded, critically ill and injured service members and their families. Here some of our athletes share their experiences and how they are succeeding thanks to this program...

"It's truly been a blessing interacting with the wide spectrum of athletes and horsemanship people. It's built and FORGED BONDS to give me a future."

"Team America’s Fund is a way to KEEP VETS ACTIVE. For me, it's a way to stay connected with inspiring athletes who are performing beyond their injuries. Together, I feel like we are FORGING NEW PATHS FORWARD as our community grows."

"Team Semper Fi is a vehicle that can get you wherever you want to go, however you have to drive the vehicle, fuel the vehicle, and take care of it. Whatever you do, DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO DO IT ALONE — do it with us and do it well. Just never, ever stop."

"In less than two years in the sport of Triathlon, I have progressed rapidly and have the Team to thank for all of the support and opportunities to travel to races. Thank you Team Semper Fi and Semper Fi Fund for helping me FIND MYSELF and MY CALLING AGAIN."

"The people at Team semper fi and the Semper Fi Fund, they get it in a way most people don't. They helped me in so many ways that all I had to do was take care of myself. THATS HUGE to be able to FOCUS ON RECOVERY and not have to worry about so many other things."

"Team Semper Fi has given me the strength in more ways than I can explain to continue to MOVE FORWARD one step at a time just as it takes one step at a time to finish a marathon."

To learn more about this program and to check out upcoming events!

GO TO: semperfifund.org/how-we-help/team-semper-fi/
What is it? Semper Fi Fund Unit Reunions are multi-day experiences that enable service members of any unit that deployed together in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom to re-establish friendships, initiate peer groups and facilitate group healing.

Why is it important? During Unit Reunions, participants are provided with information and resources from representatives of veteran service organizations and experts in topics such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). These sessions generate conversation among unit members, helping them realize they are not alone in the challenges they face.

Unit Reunion Program

2/7 Unit Reunion, California
1/25 Unit Reunion, Boston
3/1 Reunion, Oregon

Unit Reunion Participant:

First off, there are no words that are adequate to encompass the tremendous amount of gratitude that all of our men expressed and intended to be passed on to the Semper Fi Fund during our 3/1 Scout Sniper Gunfighter Reunion. For a group of men that are quiet, humble, and were asked to do a difficult job during the war it is undeniable by the smiles on all their faces and laughter shared throughout the weekend the help we received from you all to help put this on was absolutely priceless.

Our brotherhood is a strong bond that is forged through the crucible of our unique and intense life experiences together. It is something that is difficult to explain to the outside world, but when we are together no words are needed to explain what we are experiencing. It is an unspoken happiness. It simply feels like we never left each other. The connection and bond is that strong. To be able to reconnect in one of the most beautiful parts of Oregon where Chief Joseph camped his Nez Perce Indians at one point was an honor and a privilege. It was made better to be able to spend quality time together with no distractions up in the mountains, where life slows down, the men can think with a clear head, and really embrace and enjoy the brotherhood and family that we all have together. Some of us hadn't seen each other in 10 years or more. It was a powerful time, surrounded by great Americans.

We appreciate everything that Semper Fi Fund is doing to help put these reunions on. It is our contention that these kinds of gatherings are the most healing and restorative life-changing events that veterans can experience. It is not only a joyous occasion and good time, but gives us all something to look forward to as we continue to plan these reunions in the future and go back to our busy lives. Most importantly when we are together it grounds us, and makes us all better men. When we are reunited we are all individually reminded of the high standard of Ethos that we all carry with us every day, so that when we leave to go home it is not a sad goodbye, but a powerful boost to go off and take care of our individual responsibilities in life. On behalf of all these men we thank each of you for your individual contributions and Semper Fi Fund for supporting our reunion. We already have Labor Day 2018 scheduled on the books!!!

Semper Fidelis,
The Thundering Third Scout Sniper Platoon OIF/OEF
I am writing you as a mother and caregiver to my son. A few years ago we were in a really dark place. My son had nine visits to the hospital for suicidal and homicidal thoughts. He suffered with PTSD and nightmares and also struggled with concentration and memory problems.

Some of the programs we have utilized through Semper Fi Fund have changed our lives. The one that has helped my son recently is the Jinx McCain Horsemanship Program. I attended the Dixie Challenge trip with my son and the staff was exceptional at making the guys feel valuable and letting them see their own self worth. Their energy and demeanor were contagious and rubbed off on the veterans. My son had respect for himself and other people; most notably he hadn’t talked to his father in 16 months prior to the trip and that week of returning home he rekindled that relationship. It was nice to see him hug his father and it was a real moment of healing for my son and our family.

I also wanted to let you know the caregiver retreats I have gone on have been amazing. The resources, camaraderie, the speakers and relaxation have changed my perception. These retreats and the friendships I have made with other caregivers have given me hope and renewed strength to keep moving forward in the journey to heal my son. So, with the most heartfelt gratitude thank you from me and my family.

The Semper Fi Fund does amazing work. They’re willing to do whatever they can to assist someone through a major life-changing event. It’s almost intangible: They address a lot of things with funding, but it’s hard to put your finger on that charm that they put into people’s lives by helping out.

It’s the little things, like a Christmas ornament the organization sends every year. This little piece of metal — it means the world to me.

I found out about this event to help with stress and relaxation and to top it off, be with a group of amazing women to relate to how you feel. To know I came out of this weekend retreat with more knowledge of how to treat myself and to talk to my husband with love and encouragement, I feel like I got an energy boost of confidence even for myself. I was feeling low and like I honestly couldn’t go on.

Initially I hesitated to come to the retreat because it was out of my comfort zone. That fear stems from being so isolated at home. I’m very grateful and blessed to have the opportunity to be a part of this retreat and surrounded by other caregivers sharing the same experiences. ‘What I will take away with me is the new friendships made and simply knowing I am no longer alone. I’m happy I came!’
**Apprenticeship Program**

What is it? It helps post-9/11 service members find meaningful trades, careers and small business opportunities through short-term, vocational education and apprenticeships with trade experts.

Why is it important? It helps establish mentoring relationships with leading industry experts, who themselves are often veterans, and provides a powerful and productive way for service members to reintegrate into the community.

Luis Surla, a Petty Officer 1st Class in the Navy, says: “To be part of the team is very important and this is especially true for our heroes who transition from the military to civilian life. The Apprenticeship Program fills that void. We want to feel a sense of belonging. When I am truly engaged, I feel and believe I really belong. All of us are faced with fears, but all of these fears, as prominent and powerful as they are, pale in comparison to the big one. The biggest fear is we live a life of insignificance — that what we do doesn’t really matter. Being part of the Apprenticeship Program says otherwise; we belong and we matter.”

**Caregiver Support Program**

What is it? It encompasses a variety of activities and outings designed to assist the spouses, parents, siblings, extended family members and close friends who drop everything to care for a wounded, critically ill or injured service member.

Why is it important? Caregivers take on a wide variety of roles critical to the recovery process: nurse, aide, cheerleader, psychologist, physical therapist, homemaker, cook, healthcare advocate and so much more. We understand the challenging and stressful nature of what caregivers do all day, every day.

Khieda King, wife of Master Sergeant Cedric King, United States Army: “They really want to make sure that the caregivers get that recharge. After a full year I felt burnt out. I hadn’t been taking time out for me. I started going to the caregivers’ dinners that Semper Fi Fund and America’s Fund would put on, I’d do little things for myself — with time, the pressure went away.”

**Veteran to Veteran Program**

What is it? It helps service members transition to civilian life in their communities by providing training, support and empowerment.

Why is it important? V2V is successful because veterans know best how to help other veterans and service members develop the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the transition to a productive civilian life. Semper Fi Fund Veteran Leads work closely with case managers, the Veterans Integrated Services Network and VA healthcare providers to provide a motivational and personal approach to helping service members.

Jasper Heilig, a Master Sergeant in the Marines who is a Veteran Lead, says: “I think what makes the V2V program so effective is having someone who’s kind of been there, done that. As a Veteran Lead, I can relate to a lot of what these guys and gals have been through. Being able to say I was there, having to go to the VA for my appointments, all the rest — it’s just something that someone that’s never done it doesn’t really know.”
Donations may be made online:
SemperFiFund.org

Please send check donations to:
Semper Fi Fund
825 College Boulevard
Suite 102, PMB 609
Oceanside, CA 92057

Donate today and give a legacy for tomorrow. Please consider joining our Semper Fi Fund Legacy Society and continue to make a difference in the lives of our service members forever.

For any additional information, please email: info@semperfifund.org

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

For donations, the Fund’s federal tax ID number is 26-0086305.