



SOAA
SPECIAL OPERATIONS
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



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A Word from Our Founder

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with pride and gratitude for what we have accomplished together in service of our Special Operations Forces Veterans and their families. At the core of our mission is a deep, unwavering commitment to those who have borne the burdens of our nation's most complex and demanding military operations. These warriors, often operating in the shadows, have given their all, physically, mentally, and emotionally. It is our duty and honor to ensure their sacrifices are not forgotten.

This year, we expanded our reach, deepened our impact, and continued to evolve in response to the unique and emerging needs of the SOF community. Whether through tailored transition programs, specialized mental health services, family resilience initiatives, or emergency support for those in crisis, our organization stood in the gap where others could not.

Our success would not be possible without the trust of our Veterans, the strength of our partners, and the generosity of our donors. Every life we touch, every story of recovery, and every step forward a Veteran takes is a direct result of your belief in our mission. You are an essential part of this community, and together, we are building a stronger, more resilient future for those who have served at the tip of the spear.

As we look ahead, we remain resolute in our mission to keep America safe by elevating the Ground Truth from the frontlines to the halls of power. The road is not always easy, but it is one we walk with purpose, with the legacy of service and sacrifice guiding us every step of the way.

With deepest respect and appreciation,



Daniel Elkins

Founder, Green Beret, SOF Combat Veteran



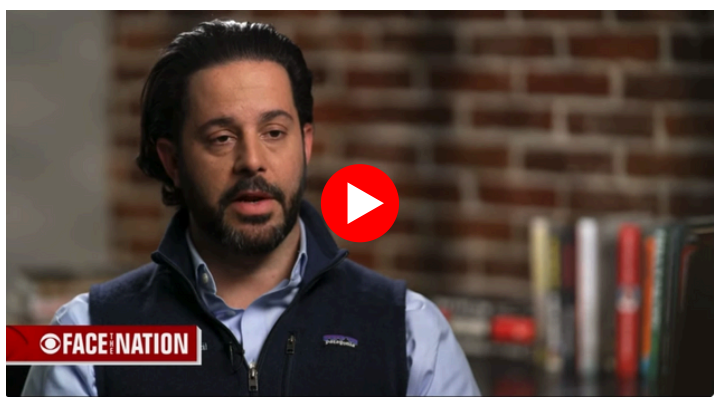
SOAA Operations

Crisis Intervention in Gaza: Life-Saving Missions



Amid ongoing violence in Gaza, SOAA partnered with the U.S. State Department, White House, and regional governments to evacuate over 538 U.S. citizens from

Gaza, including the mother of an active-duty soldier. Navigating extreme conditions, SOAA teams operated behind Hamas lines to facilitate complex rescue missions, showcasing unparalleled dedication and expertise. These efforts built on previous humanitarian missions in the region, emphasizing SOAA's capacity to act swiftly and decisively during crises. By providing these services



at no cost, SOAA affirmed its commitment to protecting American lives and strengthening its partnerships with governmental and non-governmental entities.

Building Bridges in Vienna: Supporting Afghan Resistance

In June 2024, SOAA leadership, including our founder, Daniel Elkins, and a board member, Scott Mann, traveled to Vienna for a pivotal meeting with Commander Masoud of Afghanistan's National Resistance Front. The delegation explored strategies for maintaining communication with Afghan resistance forces, whose efforts mirror those of the legendary Northern Alliance pre-9/11. This dialogue reaffirmed the importance of sustaining ties with former allies as a safeguard against extremism emanating from the region. Commander Masoud extended opportunities for future collaboration, emphasizing the necessity of unified efforts to prevent a resurgence of violent extremism. This engagement underscores SOAA's commitment to advocacy for strategic alliances and national security.



Operator Syndrome

Advancing Care for SOF Veterans:

SOAA has taken a groundbreaking approach to combat Operator Syndrome—a condition resulting from prolonged mental and physical stress endured by Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel.



Over the past year, SOAA facilitated comprehensive endocrine testing for a cohort of SOF veterans, uncovering critical health markers often overlooked by traditional medical channels.

Highlights included significant increases in key hormone levels and the early detection of thyroid cancer for one participant.

By providing access to nutraceuticals and advanced diagnostics at no cost, SOAA not only improved quality of life for these veterans but also set a precedent for addressing the unique health challenges faced by the SOF community.

(Note: no prescription medications were given)

Operator Syndrome is a novel diagnosis with a poor prognosis and no defined cure

Years of high mental and physical stress can lead to a disruption of the neuroendocrine system.

Results

Total Testosterone	▲	36%
Free Testosterone	▲	37%
IFG-1	▲	08%
Vitamin D3	▲	106%
Triiodothyronine (T3)	▲	30%

Of note, by obtaining a thorough set of labs that a primary care provider does not commonly order, one SOF Veteran in the initial group was able to catch thyroid cancer early. Due to the lack of understanding of the unique risk factors that SOF veterans face, such as repeated exposure to heavy metals and radiation, the labs that caught this veteran's cancer had not been identified through normal medical channels. His deteriorating symptoms were attributed to poor sleep, stress, depression, and poor diet. **Therefore, without SOAA's support and extensive testing, this veteran may not have had the cancer caught and treated in time for the best possible outcome.**

Pathways to Success

Expediting Education for Special Operations Forces

We are dedicated to empowering our nation's warfighters as they transition to civilian careers and pursue higher education. Recognizing the value of military training and experience, SOAA has worked tirelessly to create an expedited degree pathway in partnership with Indiana Wesleyan University. This innovative program enables Special Operations Forces (SOF) members to earn a bachelor's degree in a year or less by converting their military training into college credits. Participants take one class at a time at the tuition assistance rate, ensuring affordability and accessibility.

This year, SOAA hosted two community-based events to promote the program, one on May 15 and another on August 15. Leading up to each event, SOAA briefed nearly 200 Special Operations students in their classes, providing detailed information about the degree pathway and its benefits. These events culminated in social gatherings attended by approximately 50 Special Operators, fostering camaraderie and awareness within the SOF community.

As SOAA continues to spread the word about this expedited degree pathway, we remain committed to ensuring that service members receive the college credit they have rightfully earned through their military service. This initiative exemplifies SOAA's mission to support the success of SOF members in their post-military endeavors.



DOD SkillBridge

As a DOD SkillBridge partner, SOAA hosted four fellows throughout 2024. All four fellows were placed in the private sector or continued to graduate school.

The SkillBridge is an integral program that allows Servicemembers to spend up to six months in private industry or with Non-governmental Organizations to prepare them for what is likely the most stressful transition of their lives—going from the military to becoming a civilian.

“

I highly recommend the SOAA SkillBridge program to fellow service members looking to bridge the gap into civilian employment. SOAA works with the SkillBridge fellow to put them in the best position for success rather than putting them through a meaningless pipeline to boost numbers. Following the SkillBridge, I was fortunate enough to be offered a full-time position with the company while working alongside many fellow SOF Veterans.

Austin Myers
SOAA SkillBridge Fellow

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Public Impact

WRITTEN BY
AMAL ALI

PUBLISHED
OCTOBER 2024

LOSING AFRICA

CHINA'S ECONOMIC TAKEOVER IS
AMERICA'S STRATEGIC DISASTER



Reports & Letters to Congress

Losing Africa

Amal Ali, one of the esteemed members of our Board of Advisors, wrote this insightful white paper arguing that while the world has been preoccupied counterterrorism, China has gained long-term geopolitical control through conomic investments. We agree this is a strategic blunder, and urge policymakers to focus on both military and economic engagement, as China's investments in Africa are creating dependencies that will have long-term consequences for global power dynamics. Read the full piece, [HERE](#).

Duality-SOAA White Paper

We partnered with technology company, [Duality](#), to author a white paper detailing how Special Operations Command (SOCOM) can monitor our Special Operators' digital signatures, ensuring they won't be compromised online. Duality uses 'zero footprint' dataset checks to ensure soldier readiness. Read the white paper, [HERE](#).



Support for Ukraine

We sent a letter to Congress urging them to pass the Ukraine Aid Package, which would supply Ukrainian forces with the equipment, training, and supplies needed to maintain and advance their resistance against Russian tyranny. Read it, [HERE](#).

Prohibiting Foreign Access to American Genetic Information

We sent a letter to the House Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs supporting the "Prohibiting Foreign Access to American Genetic Information Act of 2024," which would enhance our ability to prevent exploitation, protect the integrity of technological advances and intellectual property, and mitigate these risks by establishing appropriate safeguards to protect U.S. citizens, including military personnel and their families. Read it, [HERE](#).

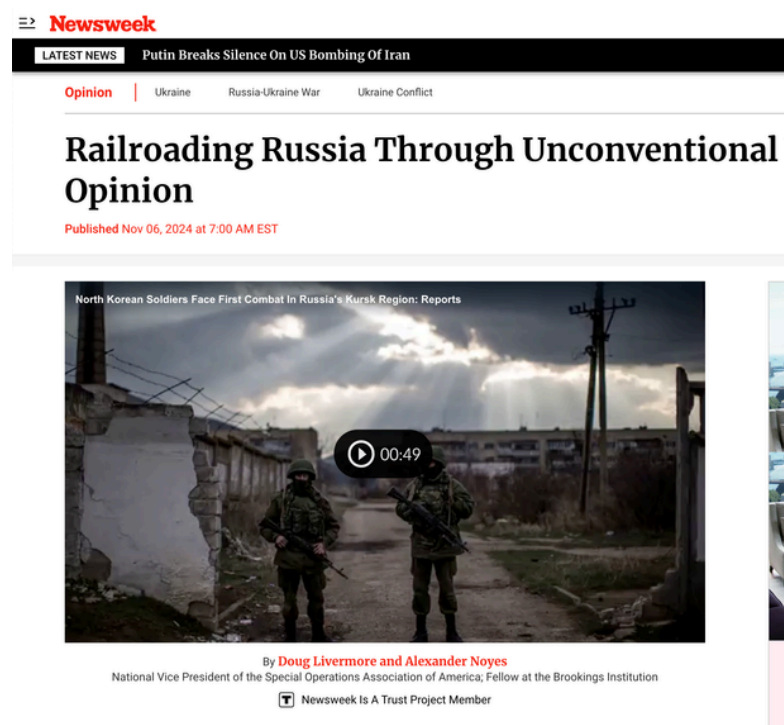
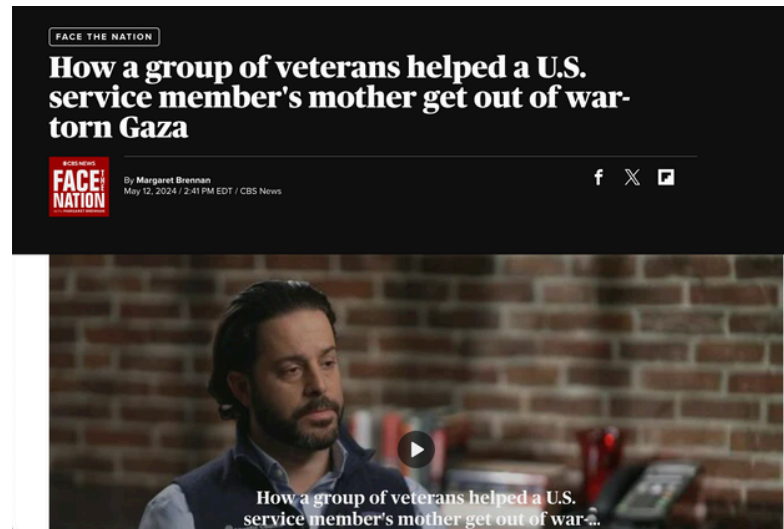
Afghanistan Policies

Together with our partners, Moral Compass Federation, No One Left Behind, and Ukraine NGO Coordination Network, we sent a letter to the House Foreign Affairs Committee encouraging them to prioritize taking crucial steps to honor the promises made to our Afghan allies, address the moral injury carried by Afghanistan Veterans, and support systems of aid to our Special Immigrant Visa, P1, and P2 allies. Read it, [HERE](#).

In the Media

Throughout the year, SOAA engages national media outlets to share the important work we're doing, advocate for the Special Operations community, and to offer expert opinion for a better informed public.

By speaking with media outlets like **CBS**, **Newsweek**, **The Hill**, **Military Times**, **Task and Purpose**, **The Wilkow Majority**, and many others, we're able to reach a larger audience and make an even bigger impact.



Pioneering Thought Leadership

SOAA-IWI Irregular Warfare Conference

In July 2024, SOAA partnered with the Irregular Warfare Initiative (IWI) and BAE Systems to host its inaugural Irregular Warfare Conference. Over two days, more than 150 attendees, including policymakers, defense leaders, and industry experts, gathered to discuss the evolving landscape of irregular warfare. Keynote addresses by senior Department of Defense officials and dynamic panel discussions on the future of Irregular Warfare. The conference fostered a collaborative exchange of ideas and laid the groundwork for future initiatives in this critical area. SOAA's leadership in convening diverse stakeholders reinforced its role as a vital voice in advancing U.S. national security strategies.



Library of Congress Panel

SOAA's second inaugural OSINT panel discussion featured senior members of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial Agency, and leaders in the private sector supplying national security practitioners with the software and training to do their mission. OSINT has gone through a revolutionary change with more data public every day and has an outsized role to play in the future of special operations in conflict and competition.



Fundraising & Awareness



Ruck the Mall

SOAA spent Memorial Day weekend with SOAA Members and their families rucking around the National Mall to honor our fallen. Memorial Day is a somber time for so many veteran families and to stay strong and connected, we gathered in a symbolic place that stands for everything those who gave the ultimate sacrifice fought for.

Wegmans Wineglass Half Marathon

SOAA partnered with Corning Glass Veteran Network to run the annual Wineglass half marathon to raise money for the JAX ACT and all CSTs. Our Executive Director, David Cook, and former Platoon Leader and 3rd Group Officer, Jordan Berry, led the SOAA and C-Vets Team.



Engagement Numbers

61,055

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

1,986,000+

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

111,094

NEW WEBSITE VISITORS

400+

LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENTS



Strategic Priorities for 2025



Operator Syndrome: Targeted Care for America's Elite Warriors

“Operator Syndrome” is an emerging clinical term describing a web of neuro-endocrine, cognitive, and musculoskeletal problems that plague many Special Operations veterans after years of high-tempo combat and blast exposure. SOAA aims to push for broader DOD/VA screening standards so every Operator can access the proactive care they've earned.

Jax Act: Proper Recognition & Benefits for Female Cultural Support-Team Veterans

Our effort push DoD and VA to review and correct the military records of the ~300 women who deployed on Cultural Support Teams with Special Operations forces from 2010-2021, formally classifying them as combat veterans and unlocking the rank credit, VA health care, and disability benefits they earned.

SOF Alumni Network: Channeling Global Operator Expertise to Policy

Former Operators embedded in tech hubs, frontier markets, and working in conflict zones hold real-time insights beyond traditional intelligence, but lack a formal pathway that carries their knowledge to Washington. SOAA aims to create a secure alumni network and pilot a pathway to bridge that gap, delivering authentic ground truth to U.S. decision-makers to keep America safe.

Thank You

**Your partnership and support
have been instrumental in
everything we achieved for the
SOF Community this year.**



Will you stand with us in 2025?