

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



# SOAA

SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



ADVOCATING FOR THE  
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMUNITY  
FROM THE FRONT LINES TO  
THE HALLS OF CONGRESS



[SOAA.ORG](https://soaa.org)



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# FROM OUR FOUNDER

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, I reflect on the incredible journey we've undertaken together over the last year at SOAA. 2023 has been nothing short of remarkable, and it is due to the collective dedication and generosity of our members, donors, and supporters that we have achieved so much for the Special Operations Community. With pride and confidence, I can say that, because of your support, lives have been saved, vital legislation has been passed, and Operator voices have been heard on Capitol Hill and beyond.

In 2023, your generosity has enabled us to further our reach and effectiveness. We continued the fight for SIV expansion for our Afghan allies, maintained rotations of teams on the ground in Ukraine, providing critical training and non-lethal supplies, introduced the historic Jax Act and are proud to announce it has passed Committee in the House, championed increased access to Breakthrough Therapies for those suffering from PTSD and TBIs, and provided the Ground Truth from Operators with dirt under their fingernails to our leaders and policymakers.

Then the world's attention shifted to the ruthless terrorist attacks in Israel and subsequent war. We had all-volunteer veteran teams on-ground within a couple of days. They skillfully wielded their SOF training and networks to evacuate American citizens from Israel and Gaza. I could not be more proud of the herculean efforts of our members who sacrificed their time, resources, and personal safety to rescue fellow Americans in the most dangerous environments. Their desire to continue serving beyond their time in uniform is a testament to the character and servant hearts of Operators.

It's uncertain what 2024 will bring. The geopolitical landscape is complex and tenuous, but our vision for SOAA remains steadfast—to magnify the voices of Operators and their families—fighting for those who fight for us to ensure the mission success and lethality of those that bear the greatest burden. We are committed to being a beacon of support, inspiration, and camaraderie for the SOF Community.

None of this is possible without your belief in our mission. SOAA is more than just an organization; it is a family forged by shared experiences that come only from time spent on the battlefield. As we face the unknown of 2024, we will continue to fight for our fellow Operators, their families, and our allies. We will encounter new and different challenges and forge ahead – together. I am deeply grateful for your generous support, which allows us to continue making a huge impact for the SOF Community. I encourage you to dig into the next pages to celebrate the many successful missions you have helped make possible and dream about what the next year holds for the SOAA family.



Daniel Elkins  
Founder, Green Beret, SOF Combat Veteran





# SOAA IN UKRAINE



- 5 TRIPS INTO UKRAINE, WITH 1 PERSON ON-GROUND FULL-TIME
- \$2 MILLION IN MEDICAL EQUIPMENT DONATED
- 30 TONS OF HUMANITARIAN AID DELIVERED (FOOD, HYGIENE, BLANKETS, STOVES, ETC.)
- 1000+ LANDMINES/UXO DISABLED WITH NO INJURIES OR FATALITIES
- \$22K DONATED TO PROVIDE UKRAINIAN FORCES WITH OUTDOOR GEAR, COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, VEHICLES, AND TRAINING TO PREPARE FOR A LONG WINTER OF FIGHTING.
- 1250 UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS AND 50 CIVILIANS TRAINED IN TCCC  
(TACTICAL COMBAT CASUALTY CARE)
- 175 TRAINED IN EOD/SAPPER COURSE
- 250 STUDENTS TRAINED IN TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAM, EACH REQUIRED TO TRAIN 10 ADDITIONAL SOLDIERS
- 1000+ PROVIDED WITH COUNSELING AND CHAPLAIN SERVICES

# MISSION ISRAEL

4 TRIPS INTO ISRAEL

8 VOLUNTEER TEAM MEMBERS IN ISRAEL, 1 IN CYPRUS, 2 IN EGYPT

200+ AMERICAN CITIZENS EVACUATED FROM ISRAEL

20 AMERICAN CITIZENS RESCUED FROM GAZA

30 INTERNATIONAL AID WORKERS SAFELY OUT OF GAZA

ONGOING INITIATIVE TO MOVE MORE THAN 100 PEDIATRIC CANCER PATIENTS SAFELY OUT OF GAZA

TAUGHT SURVIVAL TECHNIQUES TO THOSE STUCK IN GAZA (I.E. HOW TO MANEUVER TO SAFE LOCATIONS, HOW TO DISTILL BRACKISH WATER AND URINE, AND HOW TO EXTRACT WATER FROM LEAVES)



**U.S. military veterans are helping Americans get out of Gaza**

Two U.S. organizations sent American military veterans into Israel and Egypt to support the evacuation of U.S. citizens after Hamas' sOct. 7 attack.

CLICK IMAGE ABOVE TO READ THE HARROWING FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS OF ONE OF OUR BOARD MEMBERS, ALEX PLITSAS, AND ONE OF THE AMERICAN'S RESCUED FROM GAZA IN THE WASHINGTON POST.





# 2023 TOP PRIORITIES

## AIDING UKRAINIAN FORCES

We have not let up on supporting Ukrainian Defense Forces (UDF) as courageously face Russia's aggression. Our commitment to this cause is grounded in the somber understanding that more American heroes would be buried in Arlington National Cemetery if it were not for the unwavering, courageous support of our Allies. The U.S. has had boots on the ground in Ukraine since 2015. Deep bonds have been forged between our countries' Servicemembers. Abandoning our Allies in their times of need sets a dangerous precedent. As conflict persists, we recognize the importance of providing essential resources to UDF, ensuring they are equipped to face challenges on the front lines. From medical supplies to communication tools to life-saving training, our efforts aim to empower those defending their homeland with the resources needed to navigate complex situations.



Historic steps were taken to recognize women combat veterans from Cultural Support Teams (CST). We are proud to have helped introduce bipartisan legislation, aptly named the Jax Act, after our board member



and former CST, Jaclyn "Jax" Scott, alongside US Representatives Issa (R-CA), Crow (D-CO), Kiggans (R-FL), and Houlahan (D-PA), all Veterans themselves. While CSTs served under the same circumstances and at the same skill level as their male counterparts, they experienced a much different welcome home.

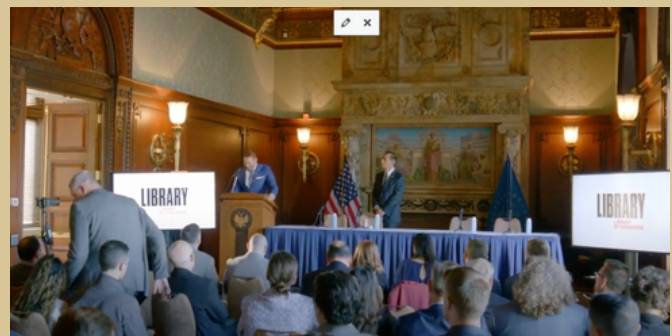
The Jax Act will right more than a decade of moral wrongs inflicted on these women warriors, so they will finally receive the care they need for their combat-related injuries.

## JAX ACT: CARE FOR CULTURAL SUPPORT TEAM VETERANS

## OPEN-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE

Leveraging the vast knowledge of Operators, we partnered with the OSINT Foundation to host panel discussions on the Role of Open-Source Intelligence in Future Competition and Conflict with the goal of

informing future policy. Hosted by Congressman Darrell Issa at the Library of Congress, we brought together moderators and panelists who are experts and practitioners in the field of Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT).



# MISSIONS ACCOMPLISHED



## 1 INTRODUCED JAX ACT IN BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE

On 23 March, the Jax Act was introduced in the House by an all-veteran, bi-partisan cast of sponsors led by Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA). With strong support from both sides of the aisle, the Bill has passed through Committee and is positioned for a full floor vote in the House in early 2024. Cultural Support Team (CST) veterans are another monumental step closer to receiving combat presumption, renewed reviews for service-connected disability ratings, and the subsequent care they have more than earned.



## 2 SPONSORED LAST OUT: ELEGY OF A GREEN BERET

SOAA member and Green Beret Veteran, Scott Mann, along with an all-military cast, brought the visceral experiences of so many post 9-11 Special Operators to life on stages across the country. It was an honor to sponsor the opening night performance, along with a life-changing workshop that brought the healing power of storytelling to veterans and their families.



## 3 HOSTED EVENTS FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND STAFFERS

We hosted multiple receptions for congressional staffers in 2023. We exist to inform policymakers of the unique missions Special Operations Forces are called upon to accomplish. Understanding the mission and, more importantly, the people who conduct them, is essential. We host these events to bring SOF Operators and Congressional Staff together to facilitate better understanding and better legislative solutions. We share a common goal: dedication to our nation's success. We cannot achieve that without sharing the unique challenges we face.





# MISSIONS ACCOMPLISHED

4

## EVACUATING AMERICANS OUT OF ISRAEL AND GAZA



Within days of the horrific attacks in Israel and Gaza, we responded. The highly specialized backgrounds and existing in-country networks of our members gave us clear understanding of the boundaries between government duties and where we could act as force multiplier, providing support for evacuations. Our team members, many of whom have extensive experience in counterterrorism and hostage rescue, effectively filled the gap between military and government intervention and the bureaucracy involved in escaping a war zone. To date, we've aided in the rescue of nearly 300 American citizens.

5

## SECURED GRANT FOR RESETTLING AFGHAN INTERPRETERS IN THE U.S.

Through the Welcome Fund, we were honored to receive a grant for \$70,000 to help resettle Afghan Interpreters and their families safely in America. Since May 15, 2023, 193 volunteers have joined together to provide housing, occupational, and other critical support services to 9,009 Afghan nationals.



6

## ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS FOR SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS

We are grateful Congress is joining the fight to find alternative, effective treatments for those suffering with Post-Traumatic Stress, Traumatic Brain Injury, Operator Syndrome and other service-connected conditions. This year we joined with countless Veteran's Organizations and Congress Members in



fighting to include Servicemembers and Veterans in ongoing research on psychedelic assisted therapies such as MDMA-assisted-psychotherapy and psilocybin-assisted-psychotherapy, as well as increasing access to and affordability of alternative treatments like yoga, mindfulness meditation, and acupuncture, which have proven helpful in the journey to recovery.



# ENGAGEMENT NUMBERS

51,695

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

1,228,000+

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

50+

MEDIA APPEARANCES

375+

LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

153

NEW DONORS





# MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

WITH NEARLY 30 TV APPEARANCES, 5 RADIO SHOWS, 11 IN-PRINT PUBLICATIONS, AND 3 PODCASTS, SOAA WORKED TIRELESSLY TO BRING THE GROUND TRUTH TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. CLICK THE VIDEOS BELOW TO WATCH A FEW OF OUR TOP MEDIA HITS FROM 2023.



BOARD MEMBER, JACLYN "JAX" SCOTT, ON AMERICA'S NEWSROOM: AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN SOLDIERS



BOARD MEMBER, ALEX PLITSAS, ON FOX NEWS WITH BRET BAIER PROVIDING UPDATES ON OUR RESCUE MISSION IN ISRAEL.



BOARD MEMBER, JEREMY THOMPSON, DISCUSSES THE SITUATION IN ISRAEL ON FOX BUSINESS WITH STUART VARNEY



MSNBC DID A VETERAN'S DAY SPECIAL FEATURE OF OUR WORK EVACUATING AMERICAN CITIZENS FROM ISRAEL AND GAZA



# THE YEAR AHEAD

## 1 SKILLBRIDGE PROGRAM FOR SOF COMMUNITY

Over the next year, we will be building out a SkillBridge program tailored specifically for the SOF Community. By seeking out and partner with defense and emerging technology companies, we aim to supply transitioning Servicemembers with meaningful SkillBridge Fellowships, making the exit from active duty more seamless and less stressful.

## 2 TECH INCUBATOR

Alongside our SkillBridge effort, we will create a tech incubator that will match veterans with innovators who provide high-demand capabilities for the warfighter.

## 3 SENATE COMPANION FOR JAX ACT

The Jax Act is on track to be passed by the House in early 2024. Once passed, our goal is for the Senate to adopt and pass the same stand-alone Bill.

## 4 LOCAL SOAA CHAPTERS

Veterans need fellow veterans. We are thrilled to start building local SOAA chapters across the nation in 2024. Chapters will host events in their communities geared for bringing the SOF family together.

# ANTICIPATED EVENTS

Our goal is to host several new and exciting events throughout the year for the SOF Community. Stay tuned for more information at [soaa.org](https://soaa.org) and social media platforms.

**SOAA SPONSORED SHOOTING TEAM AND EVENTS**

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS NATIONAL SECURITY PANEL 2.0**

**SOAA AND EMERGING TECH CONFERENCE**

**LOCAL SOF COMMUNITY-BUILDING EVENTS**

**OUTDOOR ADVENTURE RETREATS**



THANK YOU! WE COULD NOT HAVE ACCOMPLISHED  
SO MUCH FOR THE SOF COMMUNITY THIS YEAR  
WITHOUT YOUR PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT.

WILL YOU JOIN US IN 2024?

