



MEDIA FACT SHEET (updated 3/22/2012)

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FAST FACTS:

- Special Ops Survivors (*formerly the United Warrior Survivor Foundation*) was renamed in March 2012.
- The nonprofit organization was founded in August of 2002. This year (2012) marks its *10-year anniversary*.
- Special Ops Survivors is the *only* organization exclusively dedicated to serving surviving spouses of active duty Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Special Operations personnel who have died in combat or training since September 11, 2001.
- The mission of Special Ops Survivors is to *embrace and empower surviving spouses* of Special Operations personnel to help them build a future that their fallen heroes would have wanted for them.
- Special Ops Survivors focuses on serving the unmet needs of surviving spouses by *complementing the assistance provided by other organizations*.
- The loss of a spouse, under any circumstances, is a tragic and life altering experience. In addition to their loss, military surviving spouses face additional challenges. Amidst the grief that comes with a suffering a traumatic loss, surviving spouses find themselves needing to make important and immediate decisions for themselves and their families in a rapidly changing environment. *For survivors of Special Operations personnel, the grieving process can be further complicated* as the complete details of their loved one's death are sometimes unavailable due to the classified nature of the mission.
- The military surviving spouse community, while unfortunately growing, continues to remain relatively small. New survivors may or may not know anyone else who has gone through a similar situation and who can relate to them. Special Ops Survivors provides this connection for those who want it.
- The strength of the family directly affects the ability of our Special Operations warriors to successfully carry out their critical missions. Our operators who are currently serving can take comfort in knowing that their spouses and families will be cared for should the worst occur. Secure in this knowledge, our operators can better focus on the mission at hand.



QUOTES:

Elizabeth Brown, executive director, Special Ops Survivors:

“Special Ops Survivors understands the healing power of not having to weather a tragedy alone.”

“While we cannot bring back our survivors’ loved ones, we can help ease the transition to a new life – a life that honors the legacy of their loved ones. We do this by providing access to a community of other survivors who have gone through, survived and overcome similar obstacles.”

Names of the below surviving spouses can be made available.
Interview requests are also welcome.
Please contact Hannah Gregory at
media@specialopssurvivors.org.

“While I can only speak for myself, I have no doubt that many of my sentiments are shared by the other women you have helped. Your support, your time, your friendships, and your kindness have made a tremendous difference in our lives!!”

– Surviving Spouse of a Navy SEAL

The outpouring of support and kindness is overwhelming, and I find it difficult to find the words to describe how deeply I have been touched. I may have lost the most important person in my little world, but through that I have gained an entire extended family through you and the Foundation. You have all continually reminded me that the little people are not overlooked, and that the memories of our fallen are not forgotten. For that I thank you.”

– Surviving Spouse of an Army Special Forces soldier

“Thank you does not seem adequate. Everything was amazing! Something changed in me – can’t put my finger on it, but somehow I feel better, happier, ready for another step in the right direction.”

– Surviving Spouse of an Army Special Forces soldier

“I appreciate any interaction with the other women. It felt good just to talk to others and to listen to people who understand what I am feeling.”

– Surviving Spouse of an Army 160th SOAR soldier

“Thank you for the check that you provided to help offset medical costs. What a wonderful thing to do for us. Thank you also for the lovely Valentine’s Day card. To know that we are thought of and remembered means more than words can express. It put a smile on my face on a difficult day.”

– Surviving Spouse of a Navy SEAL



HISTORY/BACKGROUND:

In early 2002, word came that a Navy SEAL, Neil Roberts, had died in combat in the mountains of Afghanistan. Nick Rocha, a fellow Navy SEAL, felt compelled to do something to take care of the family Neil had left behind. Nick cut out a picture of Neil, made up a flyer and asked the owner of McP's (a local Coronado, California bar) if he would agree to host a fundraiser in Neil's honor. The owner agreed and the makeshift fundraiser yielded nearly \$1,100. Even though no further solicitations were made, donations kept coming in. Shortly thereafter, a total of \$2,900 had been raised for Neil's wife and child.

Eric Knirk, a businessman from Los Angeles, heard about the fundraiser and felt there was a need to do something more – much more. Eric wanted to assure that not only Neil's family but *all* surviving spouses of Special Operations personnel would be helped. Eric contacted Nick. The result of that conversation, and the meetings and conversations that followed, served as the driving force behind the establishment of "Frog Friends" in 2002.

Initially focused on helping the surviving spouses of fallen Navy SEALs, Frog Friends eventually expanded its focus to include serving the surviving spouses of all Special Operations personnel and became the United Warrior Survivor Foundation (UWSF).

In 2012, UWSF became "Special Ops Survivors," to better reflect who we are as an organization. Developed through a strategic process that included input from our survivors, the new name and logo represents our mission and our vision for the future, and underscores our commitment to those we serve.

SAMPLE MEDIA COVERAGE:

Special Ops Survivors Featured on CBS Evening News

(May 28, 2011) The United Warrior Survivor Foundation was the subject of a special segment aired on CBS News to honor Memorial Day. [Watch the segment on the CBS News site.](#)

Please see the News Section of our website for more information: www.SpecialOpsSurvivors.org

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