

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



SPiRiT
of AMERICA

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Contents

Letter from the CEO	03
2018 Operations Overview	04
Organizational Updates	05
Project Map & Numbers	06
Project Examples	07-09
Board of Directors	10
Advisory Board	11-12
Testimonials	13

Letter from the CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In 2018 Spirit of America completed 201 projects in 45 countries. Each project was in precise response to what US troops and diplomats said was needed to support the safety and the success of their difficult missions. With the support of Americans from all walks of life, we have had a growing impact:

- There are American soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who have lives and limbs because of Spirit of America's assistance. The same is true of innocent civilians our troops have helped.
- We have helped US Special Operations Forces prevent war in West Africa by meeting the needs of key tribes with livestock health assistance and giving hope to local youth by providing scholarships for veterinary education.
- We have helped US Army Special Forces save lives and defeat ISIS and other terrorist organizations in Iraq and Syria. By supporting our men and women fighting extremism, we help end the terrible suffering those groups cause.
- In the Philippines and Ukraine, we have worked with US troops and diplomats to provide local partners with critical resources they need to stand up to aggressors and end conflict.
- In keeping with the truth that "actions speak louder than words" we've proven that America's troops and diplomats are a force for good in the world. And, we've shown that America is the best friend and partner of those who seek a better life.

There is no other way to have this direct impact on the safety and success of our troops. There is no other way to have this impact on those who suffer from conflict and extremism. And, there is no other way to have this impact on America's security and leadership in the world. Our approach is to help local people help themselves. It works.

Based on our results over the last 15 years, in 2018 the US Congress passed a law recognizing Spirit of America's "important contribution in supporting the missions of deployed United States personnel around the world." This is the first time Congress has recognized a nonprofit for such an impact. In 2018 we also completed an agreement with the Department of Defense that provides the worldwide legal and operational framework for our collaboration with, and support of, the US military. We remain, of course, privately funded. We will never solicit or accept government funding.

Our all-veteran field team works on the ground alongside America's troops and diplomats to understand what is needed and how Spirit of America can help. Then we do it. And, we do it fast. But we couldn't do it without the support of people across the country - citizens serving the nation.

Thank you for being part of the Spirit of America team.



Jim Hake
Chief Executive Officer



2018 Operations Overview

Each Spirit of America project in 2018 was implemented in direct response to needs identified by US troops and diplomats operating in challenging, dynamic security environments overseas. Each project was highly targeted based upon the objectives of US personnel. In addition, each supports the initiative of local people and partners who are key to the stability of their communities, and ultimately, to the success of US missions abroad.

We apply Spirit of America's resources at the intersection of security, local needs, and US national interest. This makes deployed US personnel safer and more successful in their missions and helps local people not reached by large-scale aid programs. At the same time, we provide Americans with an opportunity to connect with, and support the work of, those who serve our nation abroad.

Our vision is that whenever our country sends our men and women to serve abroad, the American people are by their side as their partners, supporting their missions, supporting them as a force for good and assisting the local people they seek to help.

In 2018, Spirit of America provided assistance to address five key security and stability challenges, all identified as top priorities by deployed US troops and diplomats:

1. Reducing conflict and improving stability in the Middle East by supporting efforts defeat violent extremism, with a focus on providing critical humanitarian assistance and enhancing the capacity of US partners in both Syria and Iraq;
2. Countering extremism in Africa, working with US teams to confront the network of violent extremist actors threatening security and stability by providing opportunity to local communities and building the capacity of local partners;
3. Supporting US missions to counter transnational criminal organizations and drug trafficking organizations in Central and South America, with a focus on education and providing youth with opportunities that reduce recruitment into those groups;
4. Reducing conflict, strengthening relationship, and deterring Russian influence in Eastern Europe, building the capacity of local partners and addressing critical local needs.
5. Increasing the influence of the United States in Asia vis à vis China and Russia through community-based initiatives that promote education and values such as peace, tolerance, and democratic ideals, as well as countering extremism in Southeast Asia.



Organizational Updates

Recognized by Law

In August 2018, Congress recognized Spirit of America's unique contributions to US missions overseas in law in the 2019 John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act, the annual defense policy bill. Section 1092 of this legislation found that, "Spirit of America, a privately-funded, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, acting in partnership with the Department of Defense, has made an important contribution in supporting the missions of deployed United States personnel around the world." Moreover, the bill called for greater collaboration in the future, encouraging a stronger partnership between Spirit of America and the US military.

Agreement with the Military

Based on the language written into law in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, Spirit of America finalized an agreement with the Department of Defense in December 2018. This Memorandum of Understanding formalized SoA's groundbreaking relationship with the military, for the first time providing clear, consolidated guidance regarding how commanders could partner with a fully private organization to accomplish their missions.



This legislation and agreement are a powerful testament to the impact Spirit of America's unique citizen-driven model has had on the safety and success of America's troops deployed around the world. And, they provide a strong framework for our continued partnership with the military and unique contribution to security, stability, and progress around the world



Project Example: Syria



HELPING OUR TROOPS PROMOTE EDUCATION AND STABILITY IN SYRIA

At its peak, ISIS controlled vast swaths of territory across Iraq and Syria. The terrorist organization's reign was brutal, marked by atrocities and mass murder. While ISIS no longer controls territory, during the campaign to free eastern Syria from its grasp, the US-led coalition in Syria was engaged in another challenging task — establishing enduring stability.

To bolster the legitimacy of local governance and strengthen resistance to violent extremists, Spirit of America helped reestablish schools in areas recently liberated from ISIS control. This involved purchasing school desks, whiteboards, and backpacks with school supplies for thousands of children throughout eastern Syria.

Referring to SoA's assistance, one US Army officer noted the importance of this project, stating: "These efforts degrade and ultimately eliminate the conditions required to foster a resurgence of ISIS among an extremely vulnerable population group."



Project Example: Philippines



LIFESAVING SUPPLIES TO HELP US TROOPS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE ISLAMIC STATE IN THE PHILIPPINES

In 2017, the Abu Sayyaf Group, an ISIS-affiliate, laid siege to Marawi City in the Philippines. Though the US-aligned Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) emerged victorious from this brutal fight, immense casualties were sustained.

To treat these partner forces and help prevent future casualties in the fight against ISIS, US forces in the Philippines conducted Tactical Combat Casualty Care courses for the AFP. Spirit of America facilitated this training by providing critically needed individual first aid kits (IFAKs).

SoA supplied these local partners with lifesaving equipment, helped develop their medical capacity, and increased their survivability on the battlefield. Our support also reinforced the enduring partnership between the US and the Philippines as the fight against violent extremism persists.



Project Example: Gabon



HELPING US SOLDIERS STOP ELEPHANT POACHERS IN GABON

Gabon, on the western coast of central Africa, has historically been a haven for wildlife such as gorillas, chimpanzees, and elephants. Recently, however, the wildlife population has been decimated by poachers, many of whom are aligned with extremist groups such as Boko Haram. The illicit funds gained by slaughtering animals directly support extremism.

To counter these illegal operations and stop poachers, Spirit of America helped US Army teams on the ground in Gabon train local partners – known as the EcoGuards – by providing the tools they need to apprehend these vicious criminals.

This effort was crucial in helping build relations between our troops and the EcoGuards, and was a vital step in empowering these partners to stop trafficking in Africa.



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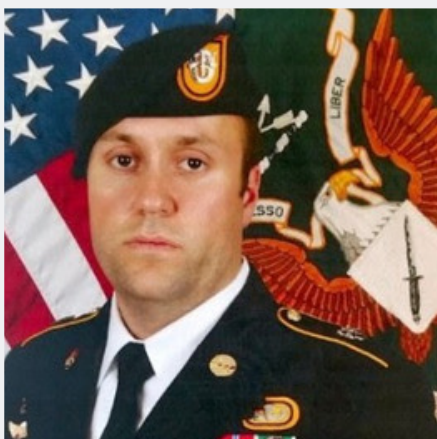


"The Spirit of America team has helped our troops save lives and defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Spirit of America has helped prevent war in West Africa, and has advanced security and American ideals in Eastern Europe in the face of Russian aggression... In the world today, actions speak louder than words. Spirit of America embodies this ethos, and is helping our troops and diplomats build a better, brighter, more secure future for freedom-loving people everywhere."

- George Shultz, Former Secretary of State

"When an operational leader chooses to put a Spirit of America team member in one of his vehicles or helicopters, it means the SoA person is deemed essential to mission success. In places like Afghanistan, Syria, the Philippines, and Somalia, Spirit of America is a trusted and valued partner of US special operations forces."

- Admiral Eric Olson, US Navy (Retired)



"There is no other organization like Spirit of America. I've never received that level of support and that sort of timeline in my 20 plus years in the Army. In terms of how people can help, short of picking up arms and joining us hand in hand there's no better way to support the troops."

- Master Sergeant Aaron Zwosta, US Army (Retired)