

## Military Outreach USA Stand By Me Heroes 3020 Milwaukee Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062

Fall 2024

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#### **OUR MISSION**

Military Outreach USA is a faith-based Judeo-Christian organization focused on Veterans and First-Responder Communities, regardless of their denomination or beliefs, demonstrating the compassion, love and healing of Christ our Lord



WHEN YOU CAN'T RUN YOU WALK. WHEN YOU CAN'T WALK YOU CRAWL AND WHEN YOU CAN'T CRAWL WE WILL CARRY YOU



A message from our Founder

Major General (Ret) James H. Mukoyama U.S. Army 1964-1995

**Chairman & CEO of Military Outreach USA** 

Our nation is currently experiencing a very critical time in our history. October's natural disasters in the southeastern part of our country affected millions of our citizens and will exacerbate an already tenuous situation for our economy still reeling from inflation and a virtually uncontrolled southern border. We are in transition from our recent national election. On top of that the world has become increasingly unstable with wars in the middle east and eastern Europe and potential crises in the far east. We thank each of you who exercised your right and obligation as a citizen of the United States to vote for the candidate of your choice. We can be confident that, as always, God is in control.

In this issue of our newsletter, you will see how we have continued to be blessed with volunteers and community organizations and houses of worship involved in our activities to serve our military community and their families through our Veterans Exiting Homelessness Program, our Stand-By-Me-Heroes program, our progress in support of a Veterans Community Center and our new Moral Injury Research Program led by Dr. John Bair. The public response to my book "Faith, Family & Flag" continues to result in invitations to speak to corporations, churches, Veteran Service Organizations and government entities. The topic most requested is Moral Injury in connection with suicides.

We have entered the time of year where we traditionally seek financial donations from our loyal supporters and the public. Military Outreach USA is able to offer our services free of charge to Veterans and their families because of the generosity of our supporters including houses of worship of all faiths; Veteran Service Organizations such as the American Legion, VFW and Marine League; community service organizations such as Rotary International. Lions Clubs, Knights of Columbus and Lutheran Church Charities. We ask for your prayerful consideration to support our missions, especially helping homeless Veterans and reducing the epidemic rate of suicide among our military Veterans. Donations can be made by clicking here MILITARY OUTREACH USA.

#### Wheaton Leadership Prayer Breakfast

Major General Mukoyama with LTC Rod Irey, U.S. Army, Retired - a long-time supporter of MOUSA.



101 Year Old Jim Leichti, WWII Navy Veteran at the Downers Grove Senior Center Veterans Event.

General Mukoyama discovered that he and Mr. Leichti both attended Carl Schurz High School in Chicago, although at different times.





#### A message from Chappy

**Chappy Ferrer, President** 

#### **OPERATIONS UPDATES**

Thank you to the donors and organizations who support our programs. We ask for your continuing support to the programs below that have benefitted our Veterans and First Responders. It has been a blessed year for Military Outreach USA (MOUSA). We remain mission-focused: changing lives, reducing suicides and providing long-term solutions.

**Stand-by-me Heroes.** This program focuses on reducing the dark number of 22+ suicides per day in our Veteran community. The Deep Dive Report of 2022, supported by Alabama and Duke Universities, details daily Veteran suicides as high as 40 per day. The Coroner's Association of America has redefined the definitions of suicide; Veteran organizations condemn the lie of

16 suicides per day. The Veterans Administration bureaucracy uses complex algebraic formulas to estimate suicides: They appear afraid of using whole numbers and common sense, but this is the DC environment. Common sense should be the rule, not academics. We also continue to focus on our First Responders, with their growing number of suicides per month. Our Foxhole Soul Counselors continue to speak 1:1 with anyone struggling and our partnerships with the regional VA hospitals and CBOCs remain strong in saving lives.

**Veterans Exiting Homelessness Program** helps community organizations gather Move-In-Essentials (necessary items when moving into an apartment). Jim Dunne and his team continue to bear fruit along with the support of UNITS in Mundelein IL. We place a 10'x15' storage box on site of the collection, help advertise the collection event, and then return the storage box to the UNITS warehouse where the items are divided among three local VAs, veteran retirement homes and other veterans in the community. NOTE: If you or your church, company. neighborhood, school or organization would like to participate, we have a defined process and team to help coordinate your event.

Moral Injury Research Dr. John P Bair has retired after 30 years as a VA research psychologist but continues to impact veterans with his team's research on Moral Injury. When a hero graduates from high school or college, joins military service and is in a combat situation (aka kill or be killed scenario), many lose their innocence and moral compass. We remain focused helping our military and first responders with recovery and restoration of mind, body and soul. Focus on this trifecta is key for success- impacting the whole person.

Town Hall and Training On the 4th Thursday of every month except December we hold informational discussions of important topics via Zoom. Our Town Hall is unafraid to tackle tough subjects and provide solutions that will impact our veterans and first responders. Too many organizations fail to focus on controversial subjects that can help our heroes. We cannot cower against bureaucrats and others attempting to diminish the sacrifices of our heroes and their families. We also provide training for the general public and for our Foxhole Soul Counselor (FSC) teams across the country - NCOs, officers, psychologists, nurses, everyday civilians who can learn a simple framework and help those who are struggling to avoid a fatal mistake. Academics is not the solution to help an estimated 21 million veterans. The Veterans Administration admits they do not have the resources to assist all veterans. We do make a difference.. Email us if interested in intervening and saving lives of our nation's heroes.

Veterans Community Center Initiative (VCC) We are partnering with Standby-My Heroes to help raise \$5M to help save lives as they look to convert a building in the West Suburbs of Chicago. This facility will house 20 female, 20 male and 10 veterans with children 24/7. The residents agree to attend all their VA medical appointments, training programs and help with job placement and support from the VA's HUD-VASH program. Within 12 months, the veteran will graduate, and another will fill that slot. Our trained staff will provide a non-judgmental atmosphere, with physical and spiritual support as part of the recovery and restoration process. Donations can be mailed to the Stand-By-My Heroes, 1138 Cypress Lane, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007 or go onto the MOUSA website and donate online to the Veterans Community Center or click on the QR box below.



# Ce

# Veterans Community Center (VCC)





Scan QR below to access to brochure and donation card.



#### **VETERANS COMMUNITY CENTER PRESENTATION**

#### **HEROES**

**Military Repatriation Escorts** are provided for those Veterans who were lost MIA (missing in action) and whose remains have been recovered.



In our group of Illinois

As the remains and escorts approach the city limits, local residents, police and fire departments, businesses and others line the

In our area of Illinois this year, escorts were provided for

1st Lt. Edward T. McGuire - US Army Air Forces, WWII;

The rides are solemn, reminding everyone that freedom requires a great

streets, offering a final salute and thanks for the 2nd Lt. Porter - US Veterans service and for the family's sacrifice.

Army Air Forces, WWII;

PFC Buddy Myers -US Army, Korea;

CPL Seloover - US Army, Korea:

PFC Harry Jerele -US Army, WWII;

and CPL Ortiz - US Army, Korea.

price. These the are honoring and actions a grateful traditions of nation.

These escorts, organized by Rolling Thunder, are scheduled with family members present. This is emotional for the family and escorts alike. Some family members have waited for decades for the closure of having their hero back home.

### Great Lakes Naval Station Support



It's not often we get to meet future heroes from the Great Lakes Naval Station because upon graduation they quickly begin their service to their country. However, in November Hanover Park IL Mayor Rod Craig and Chappy were invited to a meet and greet at the Navy Station.

When Chaplain John McIntosh learned that we needed to unpack a 45 foot trailer which was filled from top to bottom with donated furniture for our SBMH Veterans Community Center initiative, John spoke Chief Emmanuel with Perez mustered up 7 graduated machinists awaiting their orders to begin their service in the Navy.

The following week all had coffee together and then began work. Within two hours, with Dave Skinner leading the process, all was unloaded and stored into a warehouse. This was unbelievable for a stuffed 18-wheeler! Afterward we broke bread together, beginning prayer, and it was time to sit and talk with our future heroes Wendy Vach, Troy Albuck and Nick Ivanovic.





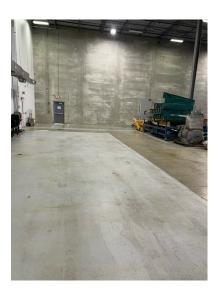
It was obvious to us senior folks the volunteers were more than elated to get off-post and meet with civilians and veterans.

All shared experiences and laughed together. It was an honor to meet with these young heroes and share stories. Everyone left with a smile.

We are grateful to the Great Lakes Naval Center for their help and friendship.







# Warehouse Storage Space Donated by local business

The warehouse space to store the furniture that was donated for the Veterans Community Center was recently provided to Stand By My Heroes at no cost by Round Ground Metals (RGM), a steel manufacturing company in Hanover Park IL. In 1988 Andrew Strzalkowski established Round Ground Metals. The entrepreneurial spirit than Andrew brings to RGM has been the cornerstone on which they have grown. Today, the RGM Family continues to have the desire and

commitment to personal and professional growth, building a better future for everyone. The spirit of RGM lies with its people having a unique combination of experience and youth, which provides for stable guidance and fresh perspectives. They may manufacture steel, but their success comes from developing people.

# Veterans Exiting Homelessness Program (VEHP)



## Beds-for-Vets Program

Our Veterans Exiting Homelessness Program includes our Beds-for-Vets program. Since 2016, We have supplied 2,987 beds to veterans across our nation, thanks to the support of people like you!

Funds for these "Welcome Home" beds come to us from a grateful nation - individuals, schools, VSOs, civic, social and faith-based organizations - to honor veterans for their service and sacrifice and to encourage them in their new lives now that they are off the streets and out of the shelters.

Thank you to all who hold this program in prayer and to those of you who financially support this way of honoring the men and women who served us so well.

Thank you for the beds you provided to four of our veterans who recently moved into housing after being homeless for a year or more.

VA Case Manager

Thank you for providing beds for the residents we were able to place in the into the newly opened Otto Veteran's building in Chicago Heights.

Mark Clark, VA Peer Specialist, HUD-VASH

If you know of potential opportunities to fund this program and allow qualified Veterans to sleep in their own beds, please let us know. For

some, these "Welcome Home" gifts are the first beds of their very own they have ever had, and it is a great way to show our nation's appreciation for their service and sacrifice.

Many companies want to reward employees (or retirees) who volunteer at non-profit organizations - by matching or giving CASH to the organization! It is as simple as asking your employer. Or ask a family member and your friends if they work for an employer that rewards volunteering or matches donations. Contact <a href="mailto:TomasaReis@militaryouteachusa.org">TomasaReis@militaryouteachusa.org</a> for more information.

#### Move-in-Essentials Collections

Mundelein UNITS helped during collection, transfer, storage and distribution of Move-In-Essential items collected by Hope Community Church, Glenview



Thank you to Jim Dunne, Gil Walker (UNITS representative) K.J. Mukoyama and the members of Hope Community Church in Glenview IL for collecting Move-in-Essential items for veterans served by Jesse Brown, Hines and Lovell VAs in the Greater Chicago areas.



#### How you can reach us!

SBMH Help line - 877-734-4244
For additional information please email us at Info@militaryoutreach.org or leave us a message on our website by clicking here.

Stand by me Heroes (SBMH) Chapters

**SBMH Northern Illinois** 



**Sgt. George Gandara**, President, Tricksters Native American Veterans of Illinois, conducting a blessing ceremony at the **100th Fisher House** under construction at **Captain James A Lovell Health Care Center** in North Chicago IL



#### Faith, Family and Flag: Memoirs of an Unlikely American Samurai Crusader

by Major General (ret) James H Mukoyama.



Military Outreach USA's founder, General Mukoyama, is well known for his strong faith, his love of family and his country. He has written an inspiring and personal recounting of his youth, his military career and his work among the Asian-American community and his continuing dedication to the veterans who have given so much for our country.

The book is getting lots of publicity from podcasts including interviews by Dennis Prager and Jocko Willink. For a recent podcast with John St. Augustine: <u>Listen Here</u>

Books are available through Amazon with net proceeds given to the General's home church and to Military Outreach USA.

**Support Over Stigma**, one of our partners founded by Zoeie Kreiner, focuses on reducing the number of suicides among veterans and first responders. Her team of volunteers provides care packages to deployed troops

and first responders to remind them that they are appreciated. Each care package, gift, snack and visit includes cards and letters of encouragement and resources on where to find help if they or someone they know is struggling with thoughts of suicide.

Volunteer to donate items or pack boxes in Geneva, IL. <u>For more information</u>, click here. or call 630-492-0308

First-responders, active duty and veterans struggling with anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, moral injury? We can help! Call 630-492-0308.

Zoeie Kreiner with General Mukoyama and his wife KJ and Michelle Senatore, President of the West Suburban Foundation for Carol Stream American Legion Event



#### **UPCOMING EVENTS FOR VETERANS**

The Veterans Assistance Commission Newsletter from December 2, 2024 is chock full of information helpful to veterans. Check it out here

The Chicago Botanic Garden and the Robert R McCormick Foundation invite veterans to work and learn with other veterans and make professional connections through their Veteran Internship Program May 19-August 9, 2025. Interns work on the Chicago Botanic Garden grounds in Glencoe, IL, 32-40 hours a week in a designated area suited to their career path or interests. Salary is \$18.93/hour with a \$50/ week travel allowance, a boot/shoe allowance and uniforms as needed. To apply: https://tinyurl.com/Veteran-Intern

National Veterans Art Museum (nvam.org) Project Fellowship program. Empowering our country's veteran artists. Inaugural NVAM Community Arts Project Fellowship Program. NVAM Fellows will be granted \$5,000-\$30,000 to develop an exhibition and workshop that is core to their artistic practice. Fellows will also be provided with an advisor for mentorship from professional artists both veteran and non-veteran. Time to reflect inward, space to share outward. Applications Now Open - Due Jan 15, 2025

Greater Chicago Veterans Food Pantry at Hines VA Hospital, building 9, auditorium. Every Thursday from 10 am to noon. Providing food for those who served. DD214 & photo required.

4th Thursday every month at 7:00 pm central. Stand by Me Heroes Town Hall. Zoom discussions on topics of interest for For more information click here. Next meeting January 23, 2025.

Animal Therapy for Veterans and their families. Last Sunday of each month 10:30 AM to Noon. SoulHarbour Ranch, Barrington IL www.soulharbourranch.com RSVP: Jodie@ 855-408-7685 or call Veteran Liaison USAF Pilot, Lt. Colonel Gina Stramaglio 316-708-9788.

Military Families - 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30 pm CST in person or via Zoom. New expanded location in Gurnee: Maria's Tribe, a support group for veterans' spouses, caregivers, partners and loved ones offers an opportunity for members to share personal experiences, feelings and coping strategies. Maria's Tribe and Bodyworks for Vets, 135 N Greenleaf St, suite 210, Gurnee. 312-818-9721



**Veterans Pet Supply Pantry:** 4th Thursday of every month 10AM to Noon at Hines VA Hospital, Bldg 9, 5000 5th Avenue Hines IL in conjunction with Hinsdale Humane Society. Includes cat/dog food, cat litter, cat/dog toys 630-323-5630 **Click here for more information** 



#### **SBMH Florida**



Chapter director Phil Jelen is in Englewood, FL. He is a proud member of American Legion Post 113, Rotunda West, FL, and VFW Post 5151 in Streamwood IL.

Chapter Directors Rick and Gwen (Leah) McCool are in Seminole FL. Leah serves on the MOUSA Board of Directors and writes the *Worthwhile Women* articles for our quarterly newsletter. Leah is transitioning to the position of our Director of Operations with MOUSA over the coming months.



#### The Chaplain's Corner

Chappy Ferrer - Founder, Stand-by-me Heroes, Standby-My-Heroes and Our Priority Family Faith has been and will always be the foundation of our hope! Our link to our God is nothing less than faith which always delivers. Some say "I have faith", but in reality, they have set many barriers between God and themselves. When you pray in faith and then doubt, you have just told God you do not believe.

I continue to boast of the many God-things that continue to occur through our volunteer family. Despite what happens on earth, it is faith that overcomes all things - even those we cannot see. However, we have witnessed God prevailing through and in us. Millions across the planet, will testify of life's purpose and victories because they are able look up above, where our God patiently awaits. You want to know God? Read! Learn to walk in the steps of righteousness and we too will walk as His champions.

2025 is almost upon us. I pray all will experience a blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas. Should you desire life-impacting events, give them away to others through in-person sharing. A very large number of Americans are looking to new possibilities. We easily tire of preaching and hate. We never will accept any teachings of socialism or communism. We have witnessed a clear intervention of God's preferences. The United States of America was founded upon faith-based, not religious, principles. Our 1776 Declaration of Independence records many words and concepts from the1611 King James version of the Bible. What an awesome and divine start! Though Hollywood and liberal thought continue to oppose the "Remnant of God," God's Grace has freed families and lives and prospered family and friends. Our light comes from above and continues to shine here and abroad pursuing a soul's freedom that neither death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things, height, depth, or creatures can subdue. We stand upon these proven promises from above.

In 2024 we witnessed our country's former president survive assignation attempts and by a clear majority of election results he will become our 47th President of these United States. It is clear we are not as divided as liberal media stated. We pray for our upcoming President, his team and the many global challenges all face today and tomorrow.

As a consistent faith-based organization, filled with varied faith partners, we are helping our nation's heroes who are feeling so desolate and lost. No matter our religion, race, station in life, past or present, by signing that bottom line to serve this nation, these servicemembers became America's heroes. Though struggling, there is hope! Some have learned to manage their moral injury, post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, sexual traumas and more have overcome and are managing their issues today. Join us and be restored by learning to manage the pain that can diminish. Contact us via our website and begin a new mission, obtain a new victory.

Also, we publish weekly a 5-day short devotional that challenges heart, mind and soul. This devotional goes out to folks in England, India, Indonesia, Philippines and North America. Interested in leading a small faith-based group? Need to speak with someone? Send email to Ourpriorityfamily@gmail.com. We are blessed! It is time to bless others.

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION:** Foxhole Soul Counseling



Foxhole Soul Counselors (FSC) from our SBMH Chapters attend events and engage with anyone who asks for 1:1 Soul Counseling. Not only are those who lost comrades continuing to hurt, but we must not forget their families and friends.

We hear souls crying out for someone to 'Stand-by-me.' Our Foxhole Soul Counselors are there to speak

with anyone suffering from a soul pain, moral injury or PTSD. Foxhole Soul Counselors focus on faith, not religion, to restore one's whole person and to walk with them as friend, as family.

These men and women, intervening for others, are making a difference resulting in wounded men and women choosing life instead of suicide. We are grateful for those who befriend those calling out for someone to Stand-by-me!

More than 22 Veterans each day take their lives because their order of priorities are skewed. FSCs have befriended many and saved lives simply by being a friend. Our FSCs include, but are not limited to, NCOs and officers, counselors, psychologists, nurses, as well as civilians.

These individuals volunteer 10 hours a month engaging and offering support to Veterans and First Responders who are struggling with the invisible scars of wars and traumas, domestic challenges, crime. FSCs speak 1:1 with our heroes and recognize and empathize with their inner battles. Our stabilizing priorities focus, without exception, on God first, then family, country and others. We begin with the most important truth: our mission is to be fruitful and multiply. To those struggling we become one who sticks closer than a friend: One string alone can be pulled apart but multiple strings are not easily separated.

#### HELP LINE ((877)734-4244.

Conversations are private, names are never released and you can use your call sign.

#### SUICIDE AWARENESS & PREVENTION

Are you worried a Veteran or service member in your life is considering suicide? **ASK.** Asking about possible suicidal thoughts opens communication, breaks isolation, and validates emotions, reducing stigma and providing an opportunity for immediate support. Then, **SEEK HELP.** 

#### **Moral Injury and PTSD Medical Studies**

John P. Bair, Ph.D, Clinical Psychologist, Retired
Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, Active WOC Researcher.
Adjunct Faculty, National Louis University.

Dr. John P. Bair and Pastoral Counselor and Researcher Katherine Nimrod host

bi-monthly men's meetings on Saturdays in downtown Glenview, IL.

These gatherings focus on Post-Traumatic Growth, fostering it through conversation, laughter, bonding, storytelling, work, restoration, forgiveness, healing, and being generative.



Referrals Accepted: 847-302-3110

#### MONTHLY TOWN HALLS VIA ZOOM

Donna Adams, Behavioral Specialist 40 years (retired) BSBA, BSN, MSPsy, BYS, FSC Director of Education for Foxhole Soul Counselors

4th Thursdays of every month via Zoom Next meeting: January 23, 2025 at 7:00 pm central



Thank you to all interested in impacting our veteran and first responders. Attending our monthly Town Halls will benefit all organizations when speaking with our heroes who are struggling with Moral Injury, Post-Traumatic Stress, Military Sexual Trauma and more.

Our mission is to reduce the veteran suicide rate of 22 plus per day and the growing number among first responders. This national opportunity will allow organizations to grow and impact their local communities. We seek to partner with you, create small groups and more.

Our Town Hall meeting on November 21 offered a recap of our accomplishments for 2024 as well as discussion regarding opportunities and goals for 2025. We will take a break in December and **resume on January 23**, **2025** with a Zoom discussion beginning at 7:00 pm central time.

All of our Town Hall presentations increase awareness of Veterans' needs and concerns as well as the growing number of suicides among First Responders.

Goals for 2025 include:

- 1. Establish a dedicated women's group tailored to their specific needs, including family.
- 2. Locating and applying for appropriate educational grants to fund our growth.
- 3. Active recruitment of new, dedicated Foxhole Soul Counselors.

On 4th Thursdays at 7 pm central, Click here to join our Zoom Town Hall No meeting in December; next meeting January 23, 2025.

Meeting ID: 849 8231 5899 Passcode: 584428

One tap mobile

- +13126266799,,84982315899# US (Chicago)
- +13092053325,,84982315899# US

#### **Need Help?**

SBMH Help line - 847-734-4244

## For additional information please contact us at Info@militaryoutreach.org

To receive our newsletter electronically every quarter, click on the Newsletter box on our website at Military Outreach USA

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