


Special Forces Association

Organizational Development Action Plan

Executive Summary

April 2010



Introduction

This is a summary of the Organizational Development Action Plan presented to the Board of Officers on April 1, 2010. The purpose of the Plan is to stabilize and strengthen the Special Forces Association (SFA). It delineates specific action steps that respect the fraternity of the retired Special Forces (SF) brotherhood, and that build programs that are responsive to the needs of the active duty SF soldier.

A SF working group¹ guided the planning process. The Plan reflects the group's deliberations, and the results of 58 interviews conducted with those closely affiliated with SFA. Interviews included two sessions at Ft. Bragg with 21 active duty soldiers.

Preface

The SFA is at risk of organizational decay. There is a disturbing incongruence between the grass-roots, informality of the SFA and the heroic legacy and rigorous standards of the SF. Technology, communication, and management information systems lack sophistication; Chapters operate independently with no collective potency; and there is little standardization of programs or services. SFA's organizational issues are *systemic*. There is a serious strategy-structure disconnect – the structure does not support strategic success and sustainability. While almost everyone in the organization recognizes the need to “get the young guys” involved, the Association is out of touch with the today's active duty SF.

Strategic Focus (Moving Forward)

The Plan proposes a Special Forces / Green Beret National organization (SF/GB) that is both a fraternal and a service organization solely dedicated to the history, brotherhood, and support of retired and active duty SF and their families. With 85+ Chapters around the globe and proposed regional staff offices closely aligned with SF Active Duty / National Guard groups, SF / GB National will become the undisputed voice of the SF.

Moving forward, the organization's strategic focus is:

- *History*: Preserving and honoring the history of the SF
- *Comaraderie*: Facilitating life-long camaraderie of SF soldiers

¹ Terry English, chair; Kenny Cannon; Philip Kensinger; John Cleckner; Gary Borrowdale; Jim Ringland; Tom Bolton; Butch Young; Bruce Parkman; Jimmie Spencer. Shelli Bischoff-Turner of Nonprofit Impact, was the lead consultant that completed the research and authored the report.

- *Service*: Serving active duty SF soldiers and families through information, advocacy, assistance and direct service programs
- *Advocacy*: Advocating on those issues crucial to the respect, safety and well-being of the SF.

Description: Services and Programs

The Plan proposes a two-pronged structure, housed under the umbrella of a National organization.

Fraternity: The SFA is a fraternal organization that honors and serves the SF retiree and active duty and their families. SFA Chapters provide opportunities for camaraderie, socializing, and recreation, as well as connection to a brotherhood that is there in time of need. SFA is the membership organization.

Active Duty Programs: The GB programs are the charitable, service operation that provides direct services to the active duty soldier, retirees, veterans and their families. Programs range from wounded warrior services, to technical assistance in navigating bureaucratic systems, to post military career guidance and placement. The GB programs operate alongside each of the Active Duty / National Guard SF groups. They are critical as liaisons between the organization, the Soldiers and Command. GB programs is the service delivery organization.

SF / GB National: The SFA and the GB program operate under the SF / GB National office (501(c)(3) umbrella). The organization provides data management and financial services to the SFA and undertakes a strategic fundraising effort to support GB program development and implementation. The office coordinates all communications and information of interest for Chapters and active duty soldiers to ensure consistency and accuracy. Representing ***both*** the 22,000 membership base and the proposed seven active duty related offices, SF / GB National is the leading advocate and spokesperson for the SF worldwide. *SF / GB National has the power, influence and potency of the collective whole and is the voice of the SF.*

Organizational Development Imperatives

The plan defines the structure, staffing and systems to re-invent and rejuvenate the organization. The three most critical components to implementation and success are staffing, governance and funding.

Staffing: The single most important factor to success is the quality and leadership of a full-time professional, paid CEO. This position must be filled through an objective and systematic national search based on the job description and qualifications defined in the report. The CEO is responsible for the development of the organization and for defining and delivering high-quality, relevant services; fundraising; public relations; and organizational development.

The development of the organization also depends on Regional staff, with specific functional expertise (in programs, communications, or advocacy), who will be added as resources allow.

Governance: The second most important factor in creating a successful organization is the quality, influence, and coordinated effort a high-level, high-functioning Board of Directors. The SF / GB National Board of Directors will operate as a governing board with primary responsibilities for strategic direction, policy, fundraising and public relations. The Board must include prominent and influential SF personnel, businessmen who have shared interests, and other interested parties who recognize the value of the highly trained diplomatic warrior. Board members will be expected to make a financial donation to the organization and to assist in fundraising solicitations on behalf of the organization.

Revenue Model and Budget: Without the right leadership, both at the staff level and at the Board level, resources won't matter. The revenue model for SF / GB National is a fairly traditional philanthropic model. SFA, the (c)(19) operation, will continue to benefit from membership fees and from local special events. The GB programs, the (c)(3) operation, will benefit from philanthropic contributions, grants, and corporate partnerships.

While the proposed initial budget is modest, the organization should not be positioned as one which is a "resource poor," grassroots operation. The re-invented organization culture, from its inception, must have a powerful, proactive, and influential persona.

Conclusion

A detailed action plan, organization charts, job descriptions and a budget completes the Plan. The proposed dual –focused organization both respects and honors the legacy of the SFA and its significant fraternal contributions, while creating stronger and more relevant services for the active duty. The working group believes that Plan should and will attract the investment needed to create a more potent and meaningful organization.

The Board of Officers agreed in concept to the Plan and to bring it forward to the President's at the 2010 annual convention.