



OUTWARD BOUND
VETERANS

VETERANS DONOR REPORT

January 2017- December 2017



Changing lives through challenge and discovery

Thank You!!!



Thanks to generosity of our donors,
in 2017 Outward Bound served

432 Veterans

through transformative expeditions
that draw on the healing benefits of
teamwork and challenge in some of our
nation's most awe-inspiring
wilderness environments.

*"My week in the Rocky Mountains with
Outward Bound Veterans provided more
healing for me than four years of
therapy and prescription drugs.
I can't thank you enough."*

Jeyhson Jimenez
US Army
OIF, OEF Veteran

Outward Bound Veterans

Through Outward Bound Veterans service members and veterans take part in wilderness expeditions that are designed physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging. Overcoming these challenges as a group allows veterans the opportunity to re-experience the sense of strength and camaraderie that many veterans desperately miss while making the difficult transition to civilian lives.

While on expeditions veteran participants reconnect with the skills, resilience, and courage that defined their service. This invites their minds to shift from what they believe they can't do, and instead define themselves by what they can do.

Thanks to the generous support of donors Outward Bound is able to deliver these life-changing expeditions at no cost to the veteran participants.

Program Goals

- Provide veterans with the opportunity to re-experience the courage, sense of brotherhood, and sense of purpose associated with military service.
- Address and prevent mental health challenges associated with combat and veteran transitions.
- Validate their experience as veterans and feel less isolated while bonding with other veterans in a team-oriented environment.
- Translate military values and commitment to service to life outside of the military with a focus on continued service in their families, communities, and the nation.



2017 in Review

432

Total veterans served
in 2017

37

Unique wilderness
expeditions

13

Course areas across
the country

Expedition Locations



Veteran Perspective



I wish I could put into better words what Outward Bound Veterans has meant to me.

Let me begin by introducing myself. My name is Meghan Malloy. I have been in the US Army for nearly 15 years now completing five tours of duty to Iraq and Afghanistan as a medic and a cultural support team member where I served along side Special Forces soldiers. In that time I have seen some horrible things that continue to come to me every night in my dreams. Before my Outward Bound Veterans expedition I felt like my life had very little direction- just sort of living between deployments although I wouldn't necessarily call that living. I have been diagnosed with both PTSD and depression. In the army doctors deal with people like me by feeding us pills that are supposed to make us feel better, but really just make us feel numb.

I have been searching for something that would make me feel human again for a long time.

When I learned that I was accepted to attend a dog sledding course in Minnesota I can't begin to tell you how excited I was.

Once I got on the expedition I was definitely nervous, and hesitant to open up to anyone. The first day I was selected to be one of the first people to break trail in beautiful pure white snow. That meant a lot to me- that my instructors and the other veterans would put their trust in me.

The instructors spent a lot of time talking with me over the week. They actually just listened to me, were interested in what I had to say. That meant so much to me- to be talked to like a person rather than just a soldier.

While on the expedition the dogs quickly responded to my commands and to my touch, as I guided them under the watchful eyes of the instructors. Over the week we were so busy chopping wood, looking at wolf tracks, and stopping to admire beautiful sunsets that there was no time for me to think about my problems. For the first time I can remember I have been able to sleep through the night without nightmares.

I simply can't tell you how much this week has meant to me. I promise to do my best to take these lessons home with me, and to use them to help me cope with the challenges that I know await me now and in the future.

Thank you so much for helping myself and the other veterans on this expedition find a sense of peace.

Sgt. 1st Class Meghan Malloy, US Army

Highlights from 2017

On the Ground in Washington, D.C.

In 2016, Outward Bound USA was taken on as a pro bono client of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, an American international lobbying firm headquartered in Washington, D.C. In March of 2017, they hosted Outward Bound Veterans staff members for a day of meetings with congressional and senate staffers, offering us continuing opportunity to introduce our Veterans program and gain traction and interest from key stakeholders in government and policy. The greatest impact we have seen because of this partnership appears in the Senate version of the FY 2018 MilCon/VA Appropriations Bill, where, on pages 62-63, is a provision directing \$2.5 million of the Vet Center budget be “utilized to develop a program to partner with organizations that provide outdoor experiences for veterans,” of which Outward Bound could play a key role. The bill has advanced out of the Senate Appropriations Committee with bipartisan support, and now sits with the full Senate.

Outward Bound Veterans was also able to formalize a partnership with the Office of Strategic Partnerships at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). On May 17th and 18th 2017, Outward Bound Veterans was a partner at the VA’s annual Brain Trust conference. The Brain Trust, in its second year, facilitates national, forward-thinking solutions in the areas of mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The conference brought together thought-leaders from the government, nonprofit, for-profit, and philanthropic sectors in a two-day event to network and align our work.

Our work with Akin Gump has also resulted in a larger spotlight on Outward Bound and our educational programs and Veterans programs across the country. In April of 2017, Outward Bound was invited to testify before a congressional subcommittee of the Department of Energy & Commerce, as part of a distinguished panel of stakeholders in the outdoor recreation space, entitled “Outdoor Recreation: Vast Impact of the Great Outdoors.” Other panelists included REI, the Outdoor Industry Association, and Columbia Sportswear, as the congressional subcommittee learned about the value and benefit outdoor recreation has on driving an economic industry and how Outward Bound’s programs drive personal development and resilience which runs parallel to markers of personal and professional success in that economy. Ginger Mihalik, Executive Director of Outward Bound Baltimore Chesapeake Bay School, represented Outward Bound at the testimony, where she presented the results of our University of Texas study, showing our Veterans treatment model’s effectiveness at increasing overall mental health. Overall, we are finding wide-ranging interest and support for Outward Bound Veterans on both sides of the aisle in D.C., and look forward to expanding and growing our partnerships and opportunities.

“This week I discovered that I am a strong person. Much stronger than I had given myself credit for. My life is not over yet. Thank you!”

Michale Lemlin
USMC, OIF Veteran

Outcomes

We evaluate our progress through a continued commitment to both qualitative and quantitative research. Outward Bound Veterans contracted with the University of Texas - Austin in 2012 to complete a research study with the goal of better understanding the program's impact on veterans. Participants were evaluated pre-course, immediately post-course, and one-month after course end. The results suggest that Outward Bound Veterans provides both interpersonal and intrapersonal benefits for veterans.

Mental Health Findings

- Overall mental health showed clinically significant improvement from pre- to post-course and from pre-course to one-month after course end
- From pre-course to one-month after course, veterans' anxiety and depression symptoms on average decreased (improved) by 8.2% and 7.4% respectively

Interpersonal Findings

- Sense of social connection increased on average by 10%
- Loneliness decreased by 10.6%

Therapeutic Findings

Emotional restriction decreased on average by 13%

- Attitudes towards seeking psychological help improved by 10%
- Confidence to use resources to promote personal growth increased by 12.6%
- Interest in gaining insight about themselves increased by 19.7%

The overall significant results show that the Outward Bound Veterans treatment model helps to increase overall mental health, interpersonal relations, resilience, sense of purpose, and greater interest in personal growth, relating to their emotions, and seeking help. This is especially intriguing since many veterans find nature recreation programs more appealing than conventional clinical treatments.





OUTWARD BOUND VETERANS

In a time of unprecedented military conflict less than 1% of the population of the US has served in the military. For the past 16 years they have carried the burden of multiple deployments to conflict zones across the globe often leaving behind fathers, mothers, wives, husbands, brothers, sisters, and children to serve people they have never met.

The costs associated with that service are well-documented. So much so, that the challenges veterans face often-times overshadow the positive aspects of military service, and the skills veterans bring with them as they transition to civilian lives.

While we must continue to recognize those challenges, it is equally important to honor their service by finding unique ways to reconnect veterans to the strength and skills that defined their service.

At Outward Bound we believe veterans are investments, not charity, and we are honored to have raised over \$12 million to serve over 6,000 veterans between 2007-2017.

That work would not be possible without the kindness of our donors, and are eternally grateful for their support that allows us the opportunity to do the work that we love.

On behalf of Outward Bound and the veterans that we serve, thank you.

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