



For Immediate Release

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Navy SEAL Foundation's Tragedy Assistance Services Go Long Way to Help Families of Fallen SEALs

(Virginia Beach, Va., Sept. 20, 2011) – In good times or bad, the Navy SEAL Foundation has one mission: to provide immediate and ongoing support and assistance to the Naval Special Warfare community and their families. Just hours after foundation leaders learned of the Aug. 6 tragedy in Afghanistan, staff, board members and volunteers mobilized to face the sobering work ahead—helping the families of the 17 Navy SEALs and 5 Naval Special Warfare support personnel who died, alongside soldiers from the 135th and 158th Aviation Regiment of the Army and airmen from the 24th Special Tactics Squadron of the Air Force, in service to their country.

“This is the kind of news the Navy SEAL Foundation fears—but prepares for in our role to provide tragedy assistance for families who have lost a loved one in training or combat,” said retired Vice Adm. Albert “Bert” Calland, III, USN, chairman of the Navy SEAL Foundation.” This is a resilient community, but they just received their hardest blow ever, and the foundation is here to help them today, tomorrow and during the challenging times ahead.”

Tragedy assistance is an integral part of the foundation's work, and two days after the mass casualty in Afghanistan, the Navy SEAL Foundation staff was ready to

address the surviving families' most pressing needs—to gather their loved ones and honor the fallen.

“Most people don’t realize that there are multiple memorial services for the family members to attend,” explained Kristi Cummings, a Navy SEAL Foundation board director and marketing and communications committee chair. “Collectively, these can be very costly. Once the military has paid for certain expenses, the foundation steps in to provide or supplement transportation and lodging costs so the immediate family members may take part.”

The foundation works closely with the Naval Special Warfare Command to identify specific needs for specific families. The foundation will cover respite childcare for surviving spouses and grief counseling for the children. Sometimes, it’s the small things that mean the most, such as stocking the family’s pantry with groceries.

“Everyday tasks can seem overwhelming when you are facing a tragedy such as this,” said Cummings, whose spouse is a retired Navy SEAL.

The needs don’t go away after the memorial services either, she added.

“Circumstances arise as these families are trying to rebuild their sense of ‘normal,’” she said. “The foundation is very flexible. If it fits within our tragedy assistance parameters, we will make it happen.”

The educational needs of the surviving children are also important to the foundation, which provides a new computer every three years for the surviving children until he or she enters college. The group will also supplement the child’s college education to defray selected expenses as deemed appropriate.

In addition, the foundation will connect newly surviving spouses with those who experienced the loss of their husband years ago.

“Who better to help them get through these days?” said Cummings, who noted the spouses and children of the fallen are welcome to be a part of the Naval Special Warfare community as long as they wish. That’s why contributions are so important.

“We need to build funds so that we can support these families moving forward,” said Cummings. “The foundation has a saying, ‘never to be forgotten,’ which our board of directors holds dear.”

To make a donation to the Navy SEAL Foundation, mobile phone users can text “SEAL” to 90999 to donate \$10, or individuals may donate online at www.navysealfoundation.org.

About the Navy SEAL Foundation

The Navy SEAL Foundation provides support in times of adversity and achievement to U.S. Navy SEALs, Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen, Naval Special Warfare support personnel and their families. The foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was formed in 2000 and underwent a name change in January 2011 when The SEAL-Naval Special Warfare Foundation and the Navy SEAL Warrior Fund combined their organizations. The mission of the Navy SEAL Foundation is to provide immediate and ongoing support and assistance to the Naval Special Warfare community and their families. The Navy SEAL Foundation is headquartered in Virginia Beach, Va., at the SEAL Heritage Center, Joint Expeditionary Base, Little Creek. Information is available at www.navySEALfoundation.org and on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/navySEALfoundation>.

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