

OPERATION CORPORATE TROOPS

SITUATION

Northeast Florida's military personnel provide tens of thousands of volunteer hours in our community. Their volunteer service enables the success of many local efforts: Paint the Town During Rehab Week, the Jazz Festival, the Florida-Georgia Game, HabiJax homebuilding, the Sea & Sky Spectacular, Bell Ringing during the holiday season, volunteer work in elementary and middle schools throughout the area, and many other projects. The declaration of war against terrorism and the military's heightened security alert has increased the chance that Northeast Florida will see many of her military citizens deployed overseas or more restricted in off-base activities.

In addition, civilians have a deep need to contribute in a meaningful way to the war effort. While civilians can't "ship out" overseas, they can work to strengthen their community at home and be ready to fill in for military volunteers if necessary.

In recognition of the military's commitment to the community, their call to focus on the war and in the event they may be called away, we propose a joint effort between civilians and our military to ensure continuation of the volunteer service these men and women would normally perform.

STRATEGY

Our strategy is to mobilize volunteer troops from corporations and private organizations through "Operation Corporate Troops – Keeping Our Community Strong" and to create a system to identify needs of non-profit organizations.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Our overall goal is to link corporate volunteers to the needs of non-profit organizations that depend on the military personnel volunteerism to achieve their mission. Specific objectives are:

- To establish a volunteer resource list for military volunteer coordinators in the event they have more requests than they can fill;
- To recruit corporate partners committed to keeping our community strong;
- To create a positive outlet for civilians who feel a need to "do something" about the war effort;
- To increase awareness of the contributions of the military to our community; and
- To strengthen the relationship between civilians and the military in our community.

TACTICS

Implementation will entail:

- Securing the commitment of a corporation to lead the effort by recruiting other corporations to enlist their volunteer teams (Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida volunteered to lead the effort without hesitation);
- Creating an effective resource list for the military volunteer coordinators (Volunteer Jacksonville's web-based "Gateway" database will be used to manage this part of the effort);
- Securing the commitment of local government (the City of Jacksonville's Veteran Services division stands behind the program, and the City's "Jax Cares" volunteer program has asked for information about Operation Corporate Troops);
- Establishing a way for corporate volunteers to connect with military personnel assigned to off-shore duty (such as video messages, notes and cards);
- Creating an emblem for the program to build civilian pride in contributing to the war effort and keeping our community strong; and
- Generating awareness of Operation Corporate Troops through media coverage (a media conference is set for 11 a.m., Wednesday, October 17, 2001 at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida's Deerwood Campus).

KEY MESSAGES

- Our men and women in uniform not only keep our shores safe by fighting the war on terrorism, but they also strengthen our community through their volunteerism here at home.
- If our military personnel are called away to fight the war on terrorism, we want them to know their volunteer work will not be left undone.
- Our corporate troops will keep our community strong through volunteer service.
- Terrorism will not destroy America or our community. We will remain strong. And each of us can contribute to the effort.
- We're proud of our military, and we will be here for them just as they are there for us.