

U.S. Veteran Charities: Beyond Lip Service

Written by Ginny Grimsley

Wednesday, 17 October 2012 09:43

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SEAL Team 6 Author Discusses Value of Legit Nonprofits

With the war in Afghanistan set to end in 2014, and the Iraq war having ended two years ago, charities that help veterans and their families may be busier than ever – but without the public awareness generated by an ongoing conflict.

Support for the war effort in Afghanistan is on par with the unpopular Vietnam War during the early 1970s, according to a recent Associated Press-GfK poll; only 27 percent of Americans support the effort in Afghanistan. A fundamental difference between then and now, however, is Americans' nearly unanimous support of U.S. troops, says J. L. Narmi, author of *SEAL Team 6, bin Laden and Beyond*

(
www.narminovels.com
).

“The vitriol expressed toward our Vietnam veterans by many was disgusting, but I think we learned from that injustice, and most Americans think the troops deserve much more support than they’re getting,” says Narmi, who comes from a military family. All proceeds from his book sales will go to support veterans’ charities.

“The problem is that funding, whether it’s through government or private charities, doesn’t match the expressed support,” he says. “And I worry that will only get worse as these soldiers move out of the public eye and try to take up peace-time lives.”

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Narmi cites some good resources for Americans looking for quality charities that support the troops:

• **The Wounded Warrior Project** (www.woundedwarriorproject.org): With advances in protective gear and life-saving medical technology, fewer troops are coming home in coffins than in previous wars, but more are coming back with lifelong injury. This charity seeks to foster a generation of well-adjusted wounded service members, and to raise public awareness about their needs and how fellow military men and women can help each other.

• **The Navy SEAL Foundation** (www.navysealfoundation.org): As detailed in Narmi's novel, SEALs are among the most physically and mentally talented individuals in the world. But they, along with their families, endure enormous stressors, many of which are never discussed due to the nature of their duties. This charity supports these elite warriors and their families.

• **Charity Navigator** (www.charitynavigator.org): Whether or not you think you know about the legitimacy of a charitable organization, it doesn't hurt to take a few minutes to verify an organization's status. This site is widely recognized by investigative reporters to be a reliable resource in reporting a nonprofit's activity. The above two groups, in which Narmi has donated money, have been verified via Charity Navigator.

• **Still not sure?** ... Skepticism is understandable. It seems the more we hear or read about charities, the more we learn that we shouldn't simply take their word for how donations will be spent. Media coverage spotlights those outlier groups that are clearly fraudulent; however, most charitable organizations are absolutely streamlined, with workers donating their time or receiving a minimal wage. It has never been easier to verify a charity's reputation. Additionally, for those with the time and willingness, individuals may create their own nonprofit. Narmi is working to set up his own, called Hire the Vets!

"If everyone who said they support the troops gave just a modest amount to help a veteran that has risked his or her life for our freedom, we would come across far fewer tragedies on the news about vet-related joblessness, homelessness and suicide," he says.

About J. L. Narmi

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J. L. Narmi comes from family with deep roots in the military; his brother, retired Rear Admiral Ronald E. Narmi, worked closely with SEAL teams throughout his career. Narmi's fascination with the Navy SEALs resulted in "SEAL Team 6, bin Laden and Beyond," which was completed just eight days before the real-life mission that resulted in bin Laden's death. He is a graduate of the University of Iowa and earned his MBA from Creighton University. Narmi is a graduate of the Securities Industry Institute of the Wharton School – University of Pennsylvania.