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At The Mission Continues, we empower veterans to continue their service and empower communities with veteran talent, skills and preparedness to generate visible impact. We’re investing in veterans, equipping them with the tools and resources to lead a growing veteran volunteer movement. Through networks, training and pathways, veterans can continue to serve while creating meaningful impact in under-resourced communities.

**WHO WE ARE**

Our Service Platoon Program connects teams of veterans with community organizations and local volunteers to tackle tough challenges facing their communities. Service platoons seek to contribute to meaningful community objectives by consistently executing service projects, serving as mentors, or helping plan and lead community engagement activities. As a result of their volunteer service, veteran platoon members are empowered through personal growth, connectedness and community impact.

The specific objectives guiding service platoons may vary from city to city, but all platoons remain unified by a common goal: to tackle pressing local issues and create sustainable impact. Service platoons continue to expand in new cities to face new challenges. This is an exciting opportunity for veterans to lead community change, serving side by side with non-veterans and partners in their city.

**OUR GROWTH IN 2018**

This year, we were proud to pilot the launch of service platoons in seven new cities, bringing our total reach to 54 cities nationwide. Due to the growing number of veterans in our network, we invited those veterans in cities outside our operations to submit a proposal telling us how The Mission Continues could bring added capacity to the veterans and community organizations based there. This Veterans Day, we brought veteran-led impact to communities in: Augusta, GA, Boise, ID, Cedar Valley, IA, Columbia, SC, Killeen, TX, Tri-Cities, WA, and Tucson, AZ. So far, hundreds of veterans and volunteers have rallied around service events in these cities, and our team is excited to see the community transformations our volunteers make in the coming years.
81 VETERAN-LED PLATOONS CREATING CHANGE IN 54 CITIES

10 NEW PLATOONS LAUNCHED:
- AUGUSTA, GA
- BOISE, ID
- CEDAR VALLEY, IA
- COLUMBIA, SC
- COLUMBUS, OH
- EL PASO, TX
- KILLEEN, TX
- TRI-CITIES, WA
- TUCSON, AZ
- PUERTO RICO

PLATOON AREAS OF FOCUS:
- HOUSING INSTABILITY
- HEALTH AND WELLNESS
- FOOD SECURITY/HUNGER
- YOUTH AND AT-RISK YOUTH
- HIGH VIOLENT CRIME RATE NEIGHBORHOODS
- GREEN SPACES / COMMUNITY SPACES
- URBAN FOOD GARDENS/FOOD DESERTS
- MULTI-GENERATIONAL POVERTY
- EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
- IMMIGRANTS/REFUGEES

20,075 VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN VOLUNTEERS ACTIVATED

1,560 PLATOON EVENTS

91,802 HOURS OF SERVICE COMPLETED

$2,266,591 WORTH OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

* Based on Independent Sector estimate of the value of a volunteer hour at $24.69/hour in 2018
In fall 2018, The Mission Continues surveyed our platoon leadership team members. They told us about their experiences as community leaders, the quality and usefulness of the training they received from us, and the impact the program has had on them as individuals. Of those who responded:

- **92%** feel they have the ability to make a difference in their community.
- **88%** feel they have a greater sense of purpose.
- **86%** said their role on the platoon leadership team helped them become a leader in their community.
PLATOON SPOTLIGHT: PUERTO RICO 1ST PLATOON

OUR LOCAL MISSION

Launched in 2018, the Puerto Rico 1st Service Platoon is devoted to rebuilding the island after Hurricane Maria left devastation in her wake. As part of Operation Puerto Rico Resiliency, the platoon’s 122 volunteers have partnered with the National Parks Conservation Association and Hospital Panamericano to organize six large-scale service projects that helped complete deferred maintenance projects in national parks, conduct hurricane recovery operations, repair damaged homes, provide wellness opportunities for children affected by the hurricane, and more. Puerto Rico 1st Service Platoon is sponsored by the Bob Woodruff Foundation.

PROJECT HURRICANE MARIA REMEMBERANCE

To commemorate the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Maria, over 75 veteran-led volunteers gathered for a service project in Punta Santiago, a beachside community where the storm first made landfall. The volunteers repaired and repainted ten homes that were badly damaged by the storm, built bonds with the local community, and were able to network with a variety of veteran support organizations on the island.

PLATOON SPOTLIGHT: COLUMBUS, OH 1ST PLATOON

OUR LOCAL MISSION

The Columbus 1st Service Platoon was founded in 2018 and focuses their efforts in the Southside neighborhood of Columbus, where over a quarter of the population lives below the poverty line. The platoon partnered with the Mid-Ohio Foodbank to launch Operation Southside Thrive, devoted to fighting food insecurity in the city’s Southside. Platoon volunteers aim to improve access to emergency food assistance at local food pantries and soup kitchens and support the Foodbank’s urban farm, Clarfield Farms. This support improves the farm’s ability to educate residents about healthy food choices, raise awareness about hunger and feed the neighborhood.

VETERANS DAY 2018

Over Veterans Day weekend, the platoon continued to improve access to food resources throughout Columbus by setting out to convert an old greenhouse into an urban farm and learning lab at Hamilton Township High School. Volunteers worked with students to build three new garden boxes, prep the space for spring planting, add mulch and compost, and complete general repairs. At the completion of the project, the students announced that all of the produce grown in the new greenhouse will be donated to local food pantries in the Mid-Ohio Foodbank network.
PLATOON SPOTLIGHT: TACOMA 1ST PLATOON

OUR LOCAL MISSION

Launched in 2014 and comprised of nearly 400 members, the Tacoma 1st Service Platoon is one of the longest standing service platoons within the organization. Their main focus, Operation T Town, is to alleviate poverty and crime through community development. The platoon achieves this by rebuilding schools within the Hilltop and Lincoln School Districts, and through the creation of youth programs and safe places for the community to gather. Volunteers have restored community parks, helped to repair and preserve playgrounds, fostered youth mentorship programs within the school districts, and even constructed lending libraries throughout the Hilltop neighborhood.

SALUTE TO SERVICE

In partnership with the Seattle Seahawks and Lyft, the Tacoma 1st Platoon gathered 85 volunteers to continue their mission of community development at the Compass Housing Alliance, an organization that provides resources for those experiencing homelessness through innovative approaches. Tasks for this service project included repainting and revitalizing community rooms in the housing center, completing repairs to the property, building new furniture for the children’s game room, and decorating the center to provide much-needed color and cheer.

PLATOON SPOTLIGHT: EL PASO 1ST PLATOON

OUR LOCAL MISSION

El Paso 1st Platoon was founded in July 2018, and has held seven service events since with no plans to slow down anytime soon. Recognizing the need to combat food insecurity and hunger across the Chazimal community, El Paso 1st Platoon, sponsored by Prudential, has partnered with Bowie High School, a public school in the area which boasts a large community garden. Together, they seek to improve access to food resources such as fresh produce and to educate the community and students through a safe and productive learning environment. The platoon provides valuable manpower to Bowie High School, ensuring that the garden is well-maintained and functional.

SUMMER SERVICE SLAM

As part of the 2018 Summer Service Slam, in which over 250 veterans took part in eight service projects from coast to coast, El Paso 1st Platoon hosted their inaugural service project. The platoon gathered nearly 80 veterans and volunteers from the El Paso community to make their initial mark on Bowie High School, including volunteers from Prudential, Paso Del Norte Borderplex Veterans Coalition, and City of El Paso officials. El Paso 1st rolled up their sleeves and improved the Bowie Garden’s drip irrigation system, organized the garden shed, planted seeds, harvested produce and herbs, and conducted garden bed maintenance including weeding, pruning, and grass removal.
PLATOON SPOTLIGHT: WASHINGTON, DC 1ST PLATOON

OUR LOCAL MISSION

The Washington, D.C. 1st Service Platoon, launched in 2013, is part of a five-platoon force in our nation’s capital that has engaged thousands of veterans and volunteers in service, fueled by BAE Systems, Boeing, SAIC and Carlson Wagonlit Travel. The platoon’s main operation, Operation DC Kids, is committed to improving the conditions of underserved communities in the DC metro area through an active investment in its youth and families. The platoon is unique in that their service events also include some form of lesson, game, or youth mentorship, such as woodworking, introduction to archery, or a basketball competition. Volunteers have completed projects at local schools and community centers, and have repaired and refurbished sports fields, built outdoor furniture and garden beds, and engaged in regular cleaning and organization efforts for their community partners.

SEPTEMBER AT SUMMER RIDGE

Washington, D.C. 1st Platoon truly works to gain the trust and buy-in of the community members they serve, and their efforts at Summer Ridge Apartments remain a testament to that commitment. Volunteers teamed up in the Summer Ridge neighborhood to assist the community center in building new garden beds, creating a water mitigation system for the building’s entrance, and creating a butterfly garden for youth. During the course of this project, volunteers got to know the local community members and the platoon leader, Pierre Larkin, taught an introduction to archery class where folks learned the fundamentals of the sport.

PLATOONS AND PROGRAMS

Service platoons supplement the success of our national programs by adding capacity to projects, building relationships with community partners prior to an event, and providing crucial knowledge of the community for our out-of-town program participants. Most recently, platoon members from the Los Angeles Service Platoons joined us for our 2018 Mass Deployment: Operation Watts Is Worth it, a team-based event that mobilizes veterans alongside local partners and volunteers in a single city for a week of transformative community impact. They attended community meetings in the Watts neighborhood for nearly a year leading up to the event, were on site to greet and help register guests, assisted in project prep days, and more. Our service platoons also ensure that the work doesn’t stop once the official event is over—we know that after a national event ends, platoons will still remain an active presence in that community.
HOW TO GET INVOLVED

In partnering with local community organizations, platoons are addressing identified community issues through service projects and civic engagement. Service platoons provide valuable support through their time and resources to offset the needs of their partner nonprofits. Corporate partners, who are invited to support the program and play a critical role in the success of a platoon’s mission through financial contributions, outreach and employee participation. Together with our partners, platoons are able to reach greater audiences to achieve increased community impact and empower more veterans as they experience personal growth and connection through their continued service.

To champion our efforts and support a service platoon, please contact Kat Cheshire at (703)577-2659 or kcheshire@missioncontinues.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 SERVICE PLATOON SPONSORS

ADP Foundation
All Within My Hands Foundation
Anonymous
American Express
BAE Systems
Bank of America
Bob Woodruff Foundation
Booz Allen Hamilton
Bridgeview Mortgage
Coca Cola Foundation
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Neighborhood Allies
Nestle
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Veterans United Foundation
Wasserman Foundation
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REPORT FOR DUTY WITH US

With over 80 service platoons, The Mission Continues offers opportunities for community engagement nationwide. Find your next event at missioncontinues.org/events.

Arlington, TX  
Atlanta, GA  
Augusta, GA  
Austin, TX  
Baltimore, MD  
Boise, ID  
Boston, MA  
Cedar Valley, IA  
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Columbia, SC  
Columbus, GA  
Columbus, OH  
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Sacramento, CA  
San Antonio, TX  
San Diego, CA  
San Francisco, CA  
Seattle, WA  
St. Louis, MO  
Tacoma, WA  
Tampa Bay, FL  
Tri-Cities, WA  
Tucson, AZ  
Twin Cities, MN  
Washington, DC