

# Fundraiser: Shields for Our Deputies

## Upgraded Body Armor Needed

by Fred Hernandez

It was a snowy day in Colorado Springs on December 9, 2007. The services at the New Life Church were coming to a close but a gunman in the parking lot had just begun firing his rifle as he made his way into the building. It was to be a great tragedy as two were killed and three injured as a result of the attack. Fast forward to November 27, 2015, once again in Colorado Springs, this time at a Planned Parenthood facility. A rifleman opened fire and held responding police at bay in a five-hour standoff that only ended with a SWAT team breaking into the building and taking the man into custody. The gut-wrenching result: three killed and nine injured. One of the fatalities was a police officer with five other police personnel injured. In both tragic incidents, Jake Skifstad, a fourteen-year veteran of the Colorado Springs PD was present, and he sadly noted, particularly in the Planned Parenthood incident the police officers did not have rifle rated protection.

It was then that he felt the need to act and decided to create a non-profit in order to make the community, and the public in general, aware of the this dire need to protect the lives of those who serve and protect the public. On that day the idea for SHIELD616 was born. A 501 (c) 3, SHIELD616 was formally established in November of 2015 by Skifstad who continues to serve as the President and CEO.

As of today, SHIELD616 has

succeeded in outfitting over three thousand five hundred (3,500) officers and firefighters across twenty-two states with the lifesaving protection they need. The biggest presence



is in Minnesota, Wyoming, Texas, Colorado and Nebraska.

Each kit, made to order and to the specific measurements of the receiver, costs \$2,100 and includes the following items: Angel Armor All Day Rifle Protection & Revision helmet. The protective vest itself is an Angel Armor RISE 2.0 + Truth SNAP 308 C Plates, the only patented modular plate system on the market today featuring dual strike faces, ultra-light and with multi-hit capability. The Truth SNAP plate system integrates into the RISE soft armor vest to allow officers to comfortably wear rifle protection all day. These units are NIJ (level III A) soft vest + NIJ (level III) rifle rated plates. (Our Custer County deputies currently only have pistol rated vests.) The head protection is a REVISION product of the highest quality known in the industry as BATLSKIN Viper A3, designed specifically for law enforcement, which

stops NIJ III A level threats delivering top rated ballistic and head impact protection. Not only will law enforcement benefit from the high quality of this protective gear, the very name of the company which supplies it implies a biblical assurance coming directly from Ephesians Chapter 6 verse 16; "Take up the shield of Faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." Hence the appropriate name SHIELD616.

In Custer County, Colorado, a group of citizens concerned for the safety of the hard working members of the local Sheriff's Office, have banded together to form a team that will work to raise funds, as well as themselves donating, to the noble cause of outfitting our law enforcement personnel



with the best possible protection as they commit themselves unselfishly to the work of protecting the public. The focal point for donations and more information is the *Sangre de Cristo Sentinel*. All donations should be by check or money order only

(please no cash) made out directly to SHIELD616 and delivered to *The SDC Sentinel* newspaper at 601 Main Street, Westcliffe, CO or mailed to P.O. Box 179, Westcliffe, CO 81252. Records will be kept of all donations and they will be forwarded to SHIELD616 corporate headquarters in Colorado Springs. You may also donate online at [www.shield616.org](http://www.shield616.org). Please select Custer County as the agency. All money donated will stay within our community to better protect our officers.

There are eleven sworn deputies in the Custer County Sheriff's Office. Each kit for a deputy has a cost of \$2,100 so the goal is to outfit each of them requiring a total of \$23,100 for this effort. We are asking for your assistance to help us reach this goal.

As soon as the stated goal is reached a meeting will be scheduled at which time each of the officers will be individually measured to insure a perfect fit of the equipment. The products are all made specifically to order and once they are ready there will be a formal function at which time the protective kit will be officially presented to each officer. We encourage everyone in the community to assist in this worthwhile project to protect those who protect us. Any amount is thankfully accepted.

For more information, please contact *The SDC Sentinel* at 719-783-3360 or email [sdcsentinel@gmail.com](mailto:sdcsentinel@gmail.com) or contact SHIELD616 attn. Marcy Deeds at 719-400-8780 or email [marcy@shield616.org](mailto:marcy@shield616.org).

All donations should be by check or money order only (please no cash.) Make checks out to Shield616 with "Custer County" in the "for" line. Mail to SDC Sentinel, P.O. Box 179, Westcliffe, CO 81252. Thank you for supporting our deputies.