

TWO NON-PROFITS ... ONE MISSION ...

TAKE A VET FISHING NEWS

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

Thanks to your support, we were able to send two veterans to the Stella Center in Chicago for PTS relief with the SGB procedure. These veterans were able to be there together to support each other during the procedure. The feedback from one of them says it all:

"...everything went well today. Honestly, the best way I can explain how I feel right now is a little bit lighter. My thoughts and emotions aren't crushing me at the moment, and that feels like progress. In a world where so much feels uncertain and heavy, the one thing I never question is your love and support. It's incredibly hard for me to ask for help — and sometimes even harder to accept it — but you've never once made me feel like a burden. I'm beyond grateful for you... for standing with me even when I struggle to stand on my own. As for what's next... I'll keep fighting the best I can. I know there will be hard days ahead, but knowing you're in my corner gives me strength I wouldn't have on my own."



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OHHF and TAVF were also able to provide Healing the Hero founder and partner Dan Jarvis with a pop-up booth to be used at events, which will help Dan better create awareness for the wonderful TRP Therapy used to help veterans struggling with PTS.





TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
OPERATION HEALING HEROES FOUNDATION

VETERAN SPOTLIGHT



BILL HOTTEL

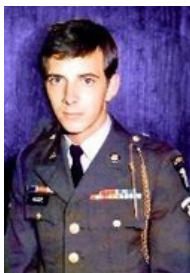
Thank you for your service, Bill! Bill Hottel was born in Brainerd, MN, in 1949 and graduated from Bloomington-Lincoln High School in 1967. He was confident he would be drafted, so he enlisted in the US Army in 1967. Bill did very well on the ASVAB test and originally wanted to be a helicopter pilot, but was unable to do so due to his eyesight. He then decided to pursue work in the intelligence field as a coordinator. At one point, he wanted to become a paratrooper but his father, a WWII Marine Corps veteran, talked him out of it. Upon completing basic training at Fort Campbell, KY in October of 1967, he went on to Fort Holabird, MD, for Army Intelligence School, then to Fort Sheridan, IL, with the 113th Intelligence Group. Having volunteered to go to Vietnam, he was ultimately assigned to the 101st Airborne Intel Group in Bien Hoa, where he proved intel agents' reports.

After a year in Vietnam, Bill was sent stateside and continued to work in the Detroit field office, working undercover at protests and demonstrations. He stated that due to his military-style haircut, he was easy to identify that he was undercover! After three years of service, Bill was discharged in August of 1970. He then "took a few years off" before starting a cleaning business in the Minneapolis area in 1973. Bill then went on to become a realtor in 1976 and worked in the Twin Cities area as a realtor for 48 years.

Feeling the need to give back, Bill founded a non-profit organization, Camp Gratitude (www.campgratitude.org), in 2010 after noticing a change in the public's attitude towards veterans post 9/11...especially towards Vietnam veterans. He knew what veterans and their families go through and what the "new normal" had become, and did not want families to wait as long as some of the Vietnam Veterans to be thanked for their service.

Camp Gratitude is a week-long camp held each June for veterans and their families with the mission to help every family that attends to relax, have fun, and build strength and connection following deployment. All at no charge! The first camp was held in 2011 for six families with very primitive accommodations. Since then, at least 200 families have attended the camps at the Veteran Campground on Big Marine Lake near Marine on St. Croix, MN. The facilities are excellent, with many fun activities and resources available for families. When asked, the families in attendance state it's the other families there that is the best part of the camp.

Bill currently lives in Eden Prairie, MN, has one son, and enjoys life and helping veterans along with his partner of 14 years, Yvonne. He recently fulfilled a lifelong dream of skydiving at the age of 76! Bill highly recommends young people to consider joining the military. He feels it is important for young people to look forward to the future as time passes, regardless, and take advantage of what the military has to offer after serving. Thanks again Bill for your service and welcome home!



TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
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EVENT SPOTLIGHT



SEAFOOD FEST AT JOHN'S PASS IN MADEIRA BEACH

Seafood Fest at John's Pass in Madeira Beach, Florida, came sooner than expected. Normally a January event, Seafood Fest took place in October this year. No matter when it happens, the generosity of those in attendance never ceases to amaze! The funds raised through merchandise sales and donations, and the awareness created, will help us to continue to serve our nation's heroes. Thank you, TAVF-OHHF team members Jay & Kris Garstecki, for making this awesome event happen!



THE RED WHITE & BREW - TOAST 2 TROOPS EVENT

The Red White & Brews-Toast2Troops Event took place in Englewood, Florida, on Nov 8th! This first-ever event, put on by TAVF & OHHF, featured live music, craft beer, food, veteran support groups, and vendors, all to honor veterans and create awareness for veterans dealing with PTS. It was all hands on deck for the TAVF-OHHF team to make it happen. Special thanks to Jay & Kris Garstecki for laying the groundwork for this annual event! Country music star and TAVF-OHHF partner Jessie G headlined the music event, and Paul Sr. of Orange County Choppers was on hand for a meet-and-greet and autograph session with the Patriot Bike!





TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
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HIGHLIGHTS



THE EXPLOITS OF DVD.

TAVF Ambassador and Pro Staff Leader Dave VanDoorn was recently invited to speak, along with several other veteran support organizations, at the West Dundee, IL Rotary Club Veterans Day event and meeting. The luncheon was packed, and every branch of service was represented, highlighted by six WWII veterans ranging in age from 98 to 106 years old! Please support these local service groups as they support veterans and many other worthy causes in your community!



SEASON 10 FILMING FOR OPERATION HEALING HEROES

Operation Healing Heroes wrapped up recently with an episode featuring veterans Dr David Tharpe and Scott Meador of Project Healing Heroes! The hard work has begun for OHHF film crew Keith Anderson and Javier Villareal, as they are working to edit and produce the emotional and informative season 10 episodes which will air on Discovery Channel beginning on January 11th and run through March 29th. Thanks Jay, Keith, and Javi for your hard work and dedication to honor these heroes and be sure their stories are not forgotten!



The OHHF "Feel the Heal" Podcast with host Jay Garstecki will be up and running on January 11th, 2026, wherever you get your podcasts! These podcasts will document how the veterans we've helped have done and are doing.



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HIGHLIGHTS

Rod building works! TAVF was again proud to be a part of a veteran rod building class organized by Rod Building Guild members Jeff Somers and Dan O’Kane! TAVF provided reels for all who participated and had the opportunity to chat about what we do for veterans. Your support for these rod-building classes can provide much-needed relief and a sense of accomplishment. We’re looking forward to more of these great events! Thank you, Wisconsin Hero Outdoors, in Delafield WI for hosting the event and hospitality!



St Pete Bike Fest in Clearwater Florida was again a huge success and OHHF was proud to be part of it with the Patriot Bike! This annual four-day event is hosted by Bert’s Barracuda Harley Davidson and OCC Roadhouse. Thousands of people and hundreds of bikes were on hand for music, food, and the annual bike ride led by Paul Sr of OCC! Thanks, Jay, for being there and spreading the word!



TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
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HIGHLIGHTS



Eby Family Dental in Fort Atkinson WI again held their annual Veteran Event! TAVF was invited again this year to thank and create awareness for veterans on all we have to offer. It was a pleasure to meet many veterans and there were a couple who attended TAVF events! Dr. Stacy Eby and her staff at Eby Family Dental have been taking this day for the past 12 years and providing free dental care to veterans! Since the inception of the event, Eby Family Dental has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of free dental care! Thank you, Eby Family Dental, for supporting veterans and your hospitality! It was an honor to donate TAVF blankets to help keep your patients comfortable.



The Patriot Bike built for OHHF and TAVF by Orange County Choppers, has been on display to create awareness for veterans with PTSD, anxiety issues, and much more. Stay tuned for where you can see this work of art and possibly meet Paul Teutel Sr of OCC! To help us keep the bike doing its work for veterans, please visit www.thepatriotbike.com for more information and to donate!





TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
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SUPPORTING THE MISSION



Thorne Bros Custom Rod and Tackle of Blaine MN has been a staunch supporter of veterans, TAVF and OHHF for many years. Not only is owner Ben Olsen a past OHHF show host and board member, but he also supplies OHHF with custom rods as gifts specially made for the veterans featured on the show. Thanks, Ben, for all you have done and still do for TAVF and OHHF! See www.thornbros.com or call 763-572-3782 for more information!



ENBRIDGE ENERGY AND NORTHERN CLEARING

Enbridge Energy and Northern Clearing work together not only to be sure that safe, reliable energy is delivered to our homes, but also to be sure we can continue to provide assistance and honor to veterans! These companies have been an integral part of what we do. Thank you so much for your support!

Northern Clearing Inc. is the industry leader in right-of-way clearing, restoration, access road construction, vegetation management, conservation, and mat services. Since 1966, Northern Clearing has been one step ahead of the competition. With the ability to adapt quickly and efficiently to meet industry standards, Northern Clearing can successfully manage the most challenging projects. With our customers' needs in mind, Northern Clearing places an emphasis on customer satisfaction while maintaining a superior level of safety, compliance, and production.



At Enbridge, their goal is to be the first-choice energy delivery company in North America and beyond for customers, investors, regulators, policy makers, and employees. As a diversified energy company, they are uniquely positioned to help accelerate the global energy transition and do it in ways that are ethical, sustainable, and socially responsible. They're advancing new low-carbon energy technologies-including hydrogen, renewable natural gas, and carbon capture and storage.





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SUPPORTING THE MISSION



Steve & Nicki Stricker generously supported TAVF and OHHF again this year and we can't thank them enough! TAVF was awarded a grant from the Steve Stricker American Family Foundation again in 2025. They also supported the annual TAVF-OHHF Golf Outing at Edgerton Towne Country Club. Since 2016, the foundation has raised over \$21,788,000 for hundreds of charities! The impact the Stricker family has had on the community of Edgerton, WI, and the surrounding area has been nothing short of amazing-thank you Steve & Nicki!



Aaron's Custom Tying of DePere WI is again holding its annual Season of Giving Fundraiser! Owner Aaron Splan has been supporting veterans and Take A Vet Fishing by offering a collector tin filled with specially made custom fishing jigs and local chocolate. Through December 31st, for a \$25 donation, you will receive the kit and can enter into a grand prize drawing for a load of TAVF gear! All proceeds go to TAVF! See www.act-fishing.com! Please support this and all businesses that support our veterans!



It's truly a blessing for TAVF and OHHF to honor and serve veterans and their families. None of which happens without the selfless dedication of the guides, volunteers, sponsors, donors, TAVF/OHHF staff, and Fishing 4 Veterans guide staff. Please know that whatever capacity is served, you have our heartfelt thanks and appreciation!





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SUPPORTING THE MISSION



Great Clips Clippings. Not only has Great Clips been supporting TAVF and OHHF for many years on a corporate level, but we also have the support of many franchisees. In particular, we would like to thank Sarah & Scott Floy, owners of at least 10 salons in the Chicago area market and recent Great Clip Franchisee Community Award winners for their generosity and help with supporting our mission to support veterans. Thank you and congratulations, Scott & Sarah!



Suzuki Holeshots. Suzuki Marine USA wins inaugural EPIC Award at the 2025 IBEX show! Suzuki Marine USA was honored with a 2025 EPIC Award from the editors of Soundings Trade Only magazine, the leading business journal covering the recreational boating industry.

Suzuki Marine was chosen as an EPIC Award Winner for the Sustainability Category. According to the EPIC Awards website, the Sustainability Category was established to “recognize projects that use inventive design to meaningfully reduce harm to the environment,” and for “developing products with consideration to end-of-life cycles, a thoughtful utilization of materials for packaging, shipping, industrial design and components.”





TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
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SUPPORTING THE MISSION



Recon With Recon.

Recon Boats not only builds a world-class boat, but also has a world-class ProStaff team to put the product to the test and prove the benefits of owning and fishing from a Recon Boat. All to help put you on fish and be safe and comfortable doing it. For more info and to contact these Pro Staff members, see www.reconboats.com.



Steve Gensen



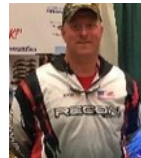
Brenden Garrigan



Dustin Carlson



Andrew Maus



Andy Hendrickson



Fred Brogle



Scott Allen



John Nienow



Brandon McPeak



Tom Dietz



Fastenal Focus. The 2025 NASCAR schedule wrapped up in November at Phoenix. This also wrapped up the 15th year Fastenal has partnered with RFK Racing. This partnership helped drive innovation, performance, and a shared commitment to excellence. We here at TAVF and OHHF strive for the same to be sure our veterans are treated and served with the respect and assistance they deserve.



ROUSH • FENWAY • KESELOWSKI • RACING



TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
OPERATION HEALING HEROES FOUNDATION



UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming Events

- Operation Healing Heroes Season 10 airs on the Discovery Channel - January 11th
- Feel the Heal Podcast begins January 11th
- Strike Out PTSD Bowling Event, Arizona - April 12th
- The Gathering Place Fishing Club Rummage Sale-Milton, WI, April 12th
- TAVF Event Madeira Beach, Florida - April 20th
- TAVF Event Madeira Beach Florida - April 22nd

To Donate use these QR Codes:



TAVF



OHHF

