

TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
OPERATION HEALING HEROES FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

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

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

It was an important couple of months since the last newsletter. Due to your support, OHHF and TAVF were able to refer three veterans to Healing the Hero and another for the Stellate Ganglion Block Shot procedure. These referrals were directly from veterans who watched episodes of Operation Healing Heroes or from filming with veterans! Our mission to document the lives of veterans and assist them truly was accomplished again. The following testimonial by this veteran we referred says it all:

"I am a combat veteran who is having a super hard time with getting out and being a part of society. I love watching the show and what it stands for. I know we are supposed to get people to nominate us for the show, but I would love to come on the show because I love fishing more than anything, but I have a hard time getting out by myself and going. I'm trying to get into my local domiciliary at my VA to get mental health help as well. I watch you guys every Sunday morning. Just watched Mr. Frank Harris. Tell my brother he is loved, and I got your six. I'm 41 and did two deployments, and I can't find my place or my purpose. I would greatly appreciate if I could come be a part of your wonderful program. I will try and get someone in my family to nominate me. They all call me a hero, but I don't much feel like one. Thank you for everything you do and the help you give all my brothers and sisters in arms. God bless." DM-veteran

Upon learning of this, Frank Harris stated, "...That's great... as long as I can contribute to help heal a Veteran."



TAKE A VET
FISHING

A DAY of GIVING BACK



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HEALING THE HERO
HEALING TRAUMA ONE SOUL AT A TIME

Stella



TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
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VETERAN SPOTLIGHT



KEITH KNUDSON

Thank you for your service, Keith! Keith Knudson grew up in Edgerton, WI, and graduated from Edgerton High School in 1983. He wasn't interested in college and felt he needed to make some drastic changes in his life, so he joined the US Marine Corps.

Keith reported for basic training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, CA, in 1983. From there, he went to Infantry Training School at Camp Pendleton, CA, to become an 0311 Infantry Marine. He has been to a plethora of schools over the years, but is most proud of S.E.R.E. (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape) School and Pathfinder School, as well as a special shooting course administered by the Marine Corps. The Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, TX, was Keith's last professional military education.

Keith was deployed a few times in his career. His last significant deployment was during 2004-2005 to Iraq. He stated, "Haji tried to blow me up a few times...but I'm still here!" He retired from active duty out of Germany as a Sergeant Major with all the usual "bling." Keith is most proud of earning his Combat Action Badge (CAB), his Legion of Merit, and his USMC Good Conduct Badge. The Good Conduct Badge is the hardest to earn, and as he put it, "...a guy had to behave himself...or not get caught!"

Keith retired because of time. He stated that "Service wears on a guy or a gal. Rare is the leader that stays around long enough to retire and doesn't get old or broken." He always felt that if he couldn't outwork or outperform at least half his troops, it would be time to go. Following retirement, he and his wife, Kim, eventually ended up in the central Wisconsin city of Mauston. He currently works in a territory selling Volvo Construction Equipment and is trying to learn how to fish!

Keith feels that what we do for a vocation is irrelevant. No one will remember that he served for 37 years or remember what he did for work later. Folks will, however, remember how he treated them. If he has any words of wisdom to impart, they would be, "Be honorable, have a strong work ethic, and put your family first in all things mortal." SEMPER FIDELIS

Thanks again, Keith, for your service and for your commitment to protect this great country and our freedom. Your service will always be remembered.





TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
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HIGHLIGHTS



OPERATION HEALING HEROES

Operation Healing Heroes filming for 2027 is underway! Host Jay Garstecki and the production team of Keith Anderson and Javi Villarreal recently filmed in Florida with veteran Jose Pequeno and his mother, Nellie. Tommy Guinn was the featured veteran while filming in Texas. As an added bonus, the team was able to meet up with Allie Dwyer and her boys for a day of fishing! Allie is a Gold Star Spouse who recently appeared on an episode of OHH in March. If you missed this powerful episode, check it out on the OHHF YouTube Channel.



MISSION 22 WALK

Operation Healing Heroes President and teammates Jay & Kris Garstecki again took part in the Mission 22 Walk at the Beachwalk community in Englewood, FL, to raise awareness for the needs of veterans and their families by walking with the Mission 22 Flag. Jay walked close to 30 miles and stated, *"...I ain't gonna lie...I'm hurting."* Mission 22's Mike Bates walked 70 miles without stopping! See www.mission22.org for more information.





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HIGHLIGHTS



THE BEACHWALK COMMUNITY, ENGLEWOOD, FLORIDA

The Beachwalk Community in Englewood, Florida, has been nothing short of amazing in their support of Operation Healing Heroes and Take A Vet Fishing. As a way to give back, OHHF and TAVF teammates Jay & Kris Garsteck and Michelle & Dave Eidsor held a pool party to show our appreciation. There was music, limbo, and more! By all accounts, it was a blast! Thank you everyone in Beachwalk!



EXPLOITS OF DVD

TAVF Pro Staff Leader Dave VanDoorn had the honor of introducing 2026 Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame inductee Capt. Jerry Costabule at the induction ceremony held at the Milwaukee Sport Show. Jerry is the first Great Lakes guide to hold this honor. He is also an avid supporter of TAVF and serves as a guide and contributes to our fundraising efforts. Congratulations and thank you, Jerry! DVD, along with staff guide Capt. Tom Stygar attended the West Dundee, IL, American Legion meeting to again chat with the members and receive a generous donation! In addition, DVD and Tom met with Chapter 311 of the Vietnam Veterans of America to create awareness for TAVF and to receive a generous donation!





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HIGHLIGHTS



FISHING 4 VETERANS

Volunteer staff guide and veteran Capt. Tom Stygar took a bunch of vets, along with some of their family members, ice fishing on Channel Lake and Petite Lake in northern Illinois! All were treated to a great breakfast! Thanks, Tom, for giving these veterans a great time and making tomorrow better than today!



THE PATRIOT ROD

Now available in honor of America's 250th Birthday and the 25th Anniversary of 9/11, you'll have the chance to own a limited-edition custom TAVF commemorative rod built on a St Croix blank emblazoned with the logos of TAVF, America's 250th, and 9/11!! There will only be 250 of these numbered rods available for just \$250! You will also be able to purchase a freshwater or saltwater version of St Croix's private label, Seviin reel. Go to www.patriotrod.com to order yours!





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SUPPORTING THE MISSION



CREVALLE BOATS

Crevalle Boats Partnership. Premier offshore center console boat builder Crevalle, in Wildwood, FL, has partnered with Operation Healing Heroes Foundation and provided a 26HCO Crossover Hybrid boat! This amazing boat will allow OHHF to document the lives of veterans via the OHHF TV show as well as the "Redeeming the Time" project, to help heal veterans through good times on the water, fishing. COO Roger Taylor stated that this is "...one of the most meaningful projects that Crevalle Boats has ever been involved with..." It will be powered by a Suzuki 350, provided with help from our partner Suzuki Marine. Thank you, Crevalle Boats for working with OHHF to honor veterans!



ONLY GIVING IN WISCONSIN

Only in Wisconsin Giving, the charitable arm of New Glarus Brewing, has again awarded Take A Vet Fishing with a generous grant to help us better honor our veterans! The grant will allow us to purchase a trailer to transport supplies needed for events, (2) Portable AED units to keep veterans safe, a portable PA system for events, and (2) portable Hotspot units to help events run smoothly where the internet is sketchy! Thank you, everyone at New Glarus Brewing, for this wonderful program and for making tomorrow better than today for veterans! Special thanks to Jason Rufer and the Only in Wisconsin Giving Board of Directors!





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JANESVILLE JETS HOCKEY

Janesville Jets Hockey invited Take A Vet Fishing to hold a fundraiser at the recent game between the Jets and the Anchorage Wolverines! The loyal Janesville Jets fans were again extremely generous in their support for veterans and TAVF! Although the Jets lost a hard-fought game by the score of 2-1, veterans were again winners thanks to the fans, players, and staff. Special thanks to Director of Fan and Partner Relations, Spencer Brochtrup, for making this happen again this year! The Jets' season, unfortunately, has ended, so make plans for next season to see the exciting Janesville Jets at the new Woodman's Sports and Convention Center! The new home of the Jets is the premier venue for hockey, sporting events, meetings, and more! See www.janesvillejets.com for schedule and ticket information! Thanks again, Janesville Jets Hockey, for your support! Take A Vet Fishing is looking forward to working with the Jets in the future!



THE GATHERING PLACE

The Gathering Place Fishing Club invited Take A Vet Fishing to speak at the February meeting. We were able to give a recap of the 2025 TAVF season and update everyone on what's coming for 2026! Fishing 4 Veterans and TAVF Guide, Capt. Tom Stygar gave an informative and insightful seminar on fishing Lake Geneva. Hopefully, it will help everyone be more successful next time on Geneva! The Club will be holding their annual Rummage Sale on April 12th! If you have things to sell or are looking for a good deal, this is a well-attended sale that should help! Admission is free! Please support this event at The Gathering Place in Milton, WI, to help the club continue to do its great work in the community! Thank you to the membership of TGP Fishing Club for supporting veterans and TAVF!





TAKE A VET FISHING
A DAY OF GIVING BACK

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OPERATION HEALING HEROES



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HELP SAVE THE HEROES WHO SAVED US

Every Day, 22 U.S Veterans Take Their Own Lives

Too many of our heroes are fighting battles long after they return home

JOIN THE HEROES CIRCLE

YOUR SUPPORT CHANGES LIVES

- ★ U.S. Military Veterans
- ★ First Responders
- ★ Gold Star Families

Providing life-saving PTSD treatment and support



Join the Hero Circle. Operation Healing Heroes has implemented an easy way to be sure you are involved and allow us to continue to honor and assist our veterans. The Hero Circle program lets donors give recurring donations for just \$22 per month. The number 22 is significant as it brings awareness to the 22 military veterans who take their own lives every year. Please consider being part of this great program. By joining the Hero Circle, you always know the impact you make. See www.operationhealingheroes.org or use the QR code for more information!

JOIN THE \$22/MONTH HERO CIRCLE

- ✓ Document more veteran stories
- ✓ Fund PTSD treatment programs
- ✓ Bring hope to heroes & families
- ✓ Reduce veteran suicide

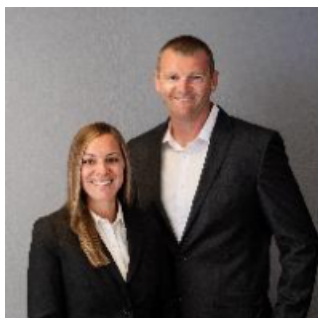
SCAN HERE TO JOIN



OperationHealingHeroes.org

WELCOME, FREEDOM CLAIMS AGENCY!

Welcome, Freedom Claims Agency of Kimberly, WI, as a resource partner for TAVF and OHF! Thank you, owners Greg & Dr. Leah Brittnacher, for all you do for veterans. Greg is an Air Force veteran, and Leah is a licensed psychologist, a combination that is sure to make the VA claims process smooth and as stress-free as possible. At Freedom Claims Agency, they are dedicated to helping veterans and their families navigate the VA disability compensation process with clarity and purpose. As a VA-accredited advocacy organization, they bring a deep understanding of VA procedures, regulations, and medical evidence requirements to every case. From expert consultations and claim audits to evidence gathering and direct filing, they provide accurate, personalized VA appeals services designed to secure the benefits veterans rightfully earned.





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THE BEN JACKSON FOUNDATION.

OHHF and TAVF are proud to support the Ben Jackson Foundation. This amazing non-profit organization was founded by Gold Star Family, Larry & Jen Jackson, after an accident took the life of their son Ben, shortly after leave from his deployment in Japan, for a visit with his parents. The mission of the Ben Jackson Foundation is to help newly enlisted members of the United States military reunite with their families. Their vision is a world where every member of our armed services can reunite with loved ones without added financial stress. Since 2018, the Ben Jackson Foundation has awarded over \$500,000 to active-duty service members to bring them home. Larry recently was the featured guest on the OHHF Feel the Heal Podcast. Thank you, Larry, a Navy veteran, and Jen for your service!



MILITARY VETERANS MUSEUM

Oshkosh, WI, is home to an amazing and informative attraction, the Military Veterans Museum. TAVF and OHHF had the pleasure of meeting with President Stu Tribbey and board member Ted Striley to discuss how we can partner on veteran events. Looking forward to working with you! If you are ever in the Oshkosh area, please make a point to visit this amazing museum. It will take you through military history and give you an up-close look at lots of military vehicles and weaponry. You won't be disappointed, and it's all free of charge! MVM's annual open house will be held on May 2nd. See www.mvmec.com for more information.





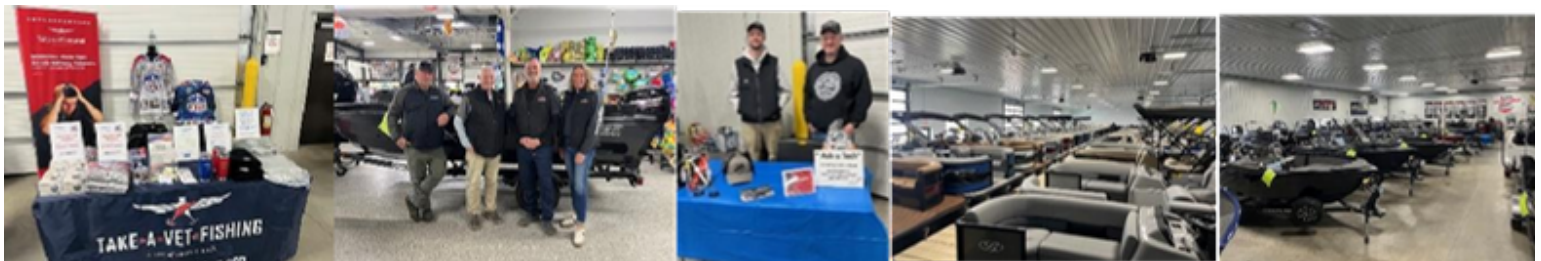
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CEDAR LAKE SALES OPEN HOUSE

Take A Vet Fishing was invited to be part of Cedar Lake Sales Open House on March 15th. We were able to create awareness for what we do as well as get generous donations from patrons. Thank you, Alan Bell, Brian Bell, Tracy Ellingson, and the staff for making this happen and for supporting veterans and Take A Vet Fishing! See www.cedarlakesales.com for more information on everything boating and fishing!



GREAT CLIPS CLIPPINGS.

We all know how much our hairstyles can affect our appearance, our confidence, and even our outlook on life. By supporting Wigs for Kids, we're able to help children and young adults experiencing hair loss feel and look like themselves ... and live their lives.

Participating Great Clips salons are proud to provide free haircuts to anyone who wants to donate their hair to Wigs for Kids. By supporting Wigs for Kids, its donors and recipients, Great Clips is able to help give children and young adults experiencing hair loss a boost in confidence and self-esteem. See www.wigsforkids.org or www.greatclips.com for more information.

Thank you, Great Clips!

Great Clips





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SUZUKI HOLESHOTS



TAVF and OHHF partner Suzuki Marine is proud to support the next generation of marine professionals. This year, Suzuki donated two DF9.9BES5 engines to the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding so students can gain hands-on experience with fuel-injected engines as part of their Matein Systems curriculum. The program will help prepare students for careers across the marine industry.



RECON WITH RECON

Hand-crafted one at a time. Recon Boats have a serious fishing interior matched with a big water hull. Recon Boats perform whether crushing big waves or fishing your way across complex structure. You can be assured to be safe and comfortable in a Recon! Thank you, John and everyone at Recon Boats, for your support!





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CREVALLE CASTINGS

What happens when a boat designer tires of designing boats that don't interest him? He starts his own company. That's exactly what Crevalle vice president and chief designer Nick Engels did. Instead of designing the same old, same old, Nick wanted to build boats that pleased both fishermen and families. There was a definite opportunity to appeal to both audiences, yet no other builder was satisfying that need. In 2013, Nick teamed with Chad Jaros, vice president, and founding partners Winston Bailey and Hugh Dailey to form Crevalle, a boating brand owned by Littoral Marine, LLC, based in Wildwood, Florida. Nick's goal was to design and build high-quality hybrid boats that delivered features no other boat builder supplied to the market.



Hugh Dailey, Co-Owner



Winston Bailey, Co-Owner



Roger Taylor, COO



FASTENAL FOCUS

What started with blood drives is now growing. Fastenal has joined the American Red Cross Disaster Responder Program! They are doing this because when disaster hits, every second counts. Now, they're helping communities prepare for and recover from disasters. From staging supplies to supporting military families, their commitment means faster relief when emergencies strike. Together, they're making a difference.



TAKE A VET FISHING, NFP
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MONTHLY BRIFING



PLANNED GIVING

The number of veterans needing assistance is continuing to grow, and our goal is to help as many as possible to reduce that number for those dealing with general anxiety disorders and post-traumatic stress to lower the number of veteran suicides, which currently stands at 22 every day. This is accomplished not only with the resources we offer but also by honoring and thanking veterans for their service with the TAVF events. **Planned Giving**, whether by recurring monthly donations, bequests from wills, disbursements from investments, or other long-term commitments, not only ensures veterans are taken care of but also ensures that the legacy of the giver is always part of the good things that happen. Please contact Mark Richardson at mrichardson@takeavetfishing.org or 608-751-2351.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Veteran Resource Fair - Stoughton, WI VFW Post 328 April 11
- Strike Out PTSD Bowling Tourney, Sun City West, AZ, April 12
- TAVF Event-Madeira Beach, Florida, April 20
- TAVF Event- Madeira Beach, Florida, April 22
- Hero Fest Pinellas Cty Veteran Assoc - Palm Harbor, FL, May 2
- Vet Fest Lake Villa, IL, VFW Post 4308 - May 2nd
- Military Veterans Museum Open House, Oshkosh, WI - May 2

