

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to take this time to hopefully clear up the confusion and address the delays that the recent article by the Department of Veterans Affairs has created. While we are so very excited to see that our programs have reached the eyes of the VA and they felt the need to highlight our services we provide combat wounded veterans, this has created an influx of over 1700 applications and confusion over what "qualifies" a veteran for our programs. Unfortunately due to this overwhelming response we have to make some internal changes to operate the best we can. This decision has already shown unpopular by some but as a whole everyone is completely understanding.

When we started in 2017 we grew at a very fast rate in order to help every combat wounded veteran we could. I personally have made it my mission to help everyone I can, but we simply cannot afford to help everyone who has applied as our funding is extremely limited and we are a very small organization. While we strive to one day be one of the large nonprofits with multi-million dollar budgets, we simply aren't there yet. In the interim, we have decided to temporarily filter our applications for a 100% funded trip by focusing on veterans who have received a Purple Heart.

This allows us to continue operating until we can afford to open our programs and funding back up to those who did not receive a Purple Heart for their injuries. We are still very willing to help organize "veteran-led" fundraising programs so each wounded veteran can locally fundraise their trip here or if any veteran would like to pay their way to get to Roatan and join a group - that offer still stands as well. We have had veterans in the past pay their flights to come join us and have enjoyed their trips tremendously.

Unfortunately there seems to be an issue with some of the veterans who are applying who are questioning our legitimacy or "threatening" to out us to the VA or on social media if they are not selected to go on a trip. I would like to state that the VA has open knowledge of how we operate and the folks claiming to 'out' us to the VA would be doing themselves, our nonprofit, and the VA a disservice by creating unnecessary work for all parties involved.

We really do not want to see the negativity continue due to the current financial restrictions we have. If you have been denied a 100% funded trip for the time being, we would ask for both your help and patience. The more outreach and engagement we can get from those who support the organization, the quicker we can raise funds to expand our scope to include a wider spectrum of candidates. As the old saying goes - "Help us help you."

If you can donate to our organization to help broaden our outreach, please visit [warfighterscuba.org/donate/](http://warfighterscuba.org/donate/). If you don't have the funds available, please help us raise awareness and increase our visibility among the veteran-focused community by sharing our mission (via social media, word of mouth, etc). I will continue to not receive any salary or payment for my time to help bring scuba to every wounded veteran I possibly can. I appreciate all of the support that has been shown to us so far and hope to grow our organization to be able to handle the overwhelmingly positive responses to our VA endorsement.

Thank you for your time, your service to our great nation and your patience as we overcome the obstacles that will inevitably present themselves during our growth.

Sincerely,



Nicholas W. Powers  
President & CEO