

**Sergeant First Class Andrew Ostman** enlisted into the United States Army Reserve in 2004. In 2006 transferred to active duty as a 13F, Fire Support Specialist (Fister). Fisters are trained to be the eyes of Death. His main task in the Army is to train soldiers to seek and destroy the enemy. Andrew twice deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom with the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). He also completed one deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve with the 10th Mountain Division (Ft. Drum, New York). Sergeant First Class Andrew Ostman suffers from severe spinal nerve damage and was medically retired from the U.S. Army in January of 2019.

Andrew didn't really know what Operation Motorsport was and one day he was just standing in formation and someone asked for volunteers to go to a race at Watkins Glen. He guesses what eventually peaked his interest was that he would actually be working with an actual Pit Crew during a live race. I've always had a thing for fast cars but the only thing I knew about motorsports was from my Mom watching NASCAR on Sundays.

He was asked what skills he felt he could bring to a race team. Dedication ... he might not be a paid member on a team, but while embedded Andrew dedicates himself to that team. So much so that they had to grab him and tell him to take a break because they could see he was in pain and wouldn't stop. The team treated Andrew like he was one of their own. Andrew said, "They helped me when he was hurting and gave me grief when I deserved it like I was one of theirs. They all made me feel welcome." With Operation Motorsport he says he found a team he could be a part after his time in the Army came to a conclusion. Operation Motorsport is a team that he looked forward to continuing to work with in the future. Although he can't make every race, the ones he does make he'll be with family.

When asked what doors these opportunities opened for him, and how it has affected his outlook, "I can say it's given me a drive to get other service men and women out there and connected to Operation Motorsport. Although I didn't make it to the Race of Remembrance last year, I fully plan on participating in one eventually. Operation Motorsport gives that soldier a weekend away from the world. It gives them a team to be a part of, another sense of belonging. It took away my anxiety for the weekend and let me focus on something new and exciting. I see it as sort of a healing process for service men and women."

Currently Andrew is utilizing his newly aquired CDL by driving for Alegra Motorsports, whom he initially had the opportunity to work alongside at a previous race. Unfortunately, he's not able to make it to every race but he's grateful for both Operation Motorsport and Alegra for opening these doors for him. The races he does get to attend he's flown to Tampa and hops in a truck to the next destination, whether it be NY or Nevada, and he's loving every second he is with the team.

In Andrew's words, "No race team works in isolation. A driver is only as good as the rest of the team and vice versa, pit stops and the quality of the car on that given day. The one thought that echoes through all the beneficiaries' profiles is the teamwork. They are treated and respected as part of a team. They are Excited to be out doing something different. They are Engaged because they are made to feel they are one of the team and every job, every role is important to the success of that team. And they leave Empowered to continue with Operation Motorsport, engage other service men and women to connect with the program, or get on with a calling they have ... whether that be in automotive, creative arts, journalism, engineering or otherwise."