



GALERAS OCEAN BEACH FOUNDATION FOR VETERANS

OPERATION BLUE ASCENT



Dive Deep. Heal Strong. Rise Together.

From darkness to light. Represents the upward journey — from the ocean’s depth (and inner pain) toward hope and transformation.

Program Overview

Mission Statement:
“To empower veterans through the transformative experience of scuba diving — fostering healing, camaraderie, and re-newed purpose beneath the surface.”

Purpose:
Operation BLUE ASCENT provides veterans with an opportunity to explore the ocean as a pathway to recovery — blending adventure, therapy, and connection. This program helps veterans manage stress, PTSD, and physical injuries while reigniting the sense of teamwork and mission that defined their service.

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PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Healing Through Immersion:

Use the calming, weightless environment of scuba diving to reduce anxiety, promote mindfulness, and improve mental health.

2. Rehabilitation and Resilience:

Offer adaptive dive training for veterans with physical injuries, focusing on strength, mobility, and confidence.

3. Connection and Purpose:

Recreate the camaraderie and trust of military life through shared underwater missions and team challenges.

4. Ocean Stewardship:

Engage veterans in conservation dives — reef cleanups, coral planting, and marine research — giving new purpose through service to the planet.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Phase 1: Orientation & Readiness

- Welcome ceremony and briefing on the program's goals
- Introduction to instructors, dive buddies, and mental health support staff
- Safety and adaptive equipment workshops

Phase 2: Dive Training & Certification

- Veterans complete Open Water Diver Certification (or Adaptive Diver Certification); Advanced Diver; Rescue Diver.
- Classroom sessions and confined-water training in shallow ocean
- Focus on teamwork, communication, and overcoming challenges
- Guided open-water dives at local reefs, lakes, or ocean sites

Phase 3: The Mission Dives

Veterans participate in themed “missions” such as:

- Operation Reef Guardian: coral restoration or debris removal
- Mission Unity: buddy-system exploration dive focusing on trust and calm
- Operation Freedom Depth: final celebratory dive symbolizing transition and renewal

Phase 4: Reflection & Reintegration

- Group debriefs led by veteran counselors and psychologists
- “Mission Ceremony” recognizing each participant's achievements
- Opportunities to become mentors or dive ambassadors for future cohorts

Support Components

- On-site trauma-informed staff and dive therapists
- Adaptive scuba gear for veterans with mobility challenges
- Partnerships with local dive centers, VA programs, and marine conservation organizations
- Scholarships for qualifying veterans to cover certification and travel costs