



Mission Debrief

OPERATION WAKE SURF

MONTHLY UPDATE

Operation Wake Surf hit the road in a big way this month, traveling 1,500 miles to bring our mission to the incredible veteran and first responder community of Tennessee. Our team pulled heroes from nearly every branch— everyone except the Coast Guard this round—and the energy on the water was electric. Each set behind the boat was a reminder of why we do this work: connection, healing, and the simple joy of play that so many of our protectors rarely get to experience.

One moment in particular captured the heart of the trip. After one of our veterans finished his run, his wife pulled me aside and said she hadn't seen her husband smile that big since high school. That's the impact your support makes possible. It's not just a day on the lake— it's a spark, a reset, a reminder that these heroes deserve joy as much as anyone. As we look ahead to the next stop on our mission, we carry these stories with us, fueled by gratitude and the unwavering belief that healing can happen one wave at a time.



MEET THE SUPPORTERS

THIS IS.... SOUTHERN CHARM RETREATS

Southern Charm Retreats started their partnership through one of their homeowners who was already involved with the organization and passionate about its mission. After seeing the impact OWS was making in the community, they knew they wanted to support the work.

Over the past year, the General Manager of Southern Charm Retreats has worked closely with our team, homeowners, guests, and community partners to grow their Lake Norman portfolio while ensuring exceptional service. Several homeowners have since joined in, contributing through donated stays, event support, and other opportunities that help advance OWS's mission. Looking ahead, Southern Charm hopes to see OWS continue expanding its reach so more Heroes and their families can benefit from its meaningful programs in 2026 and beyond.



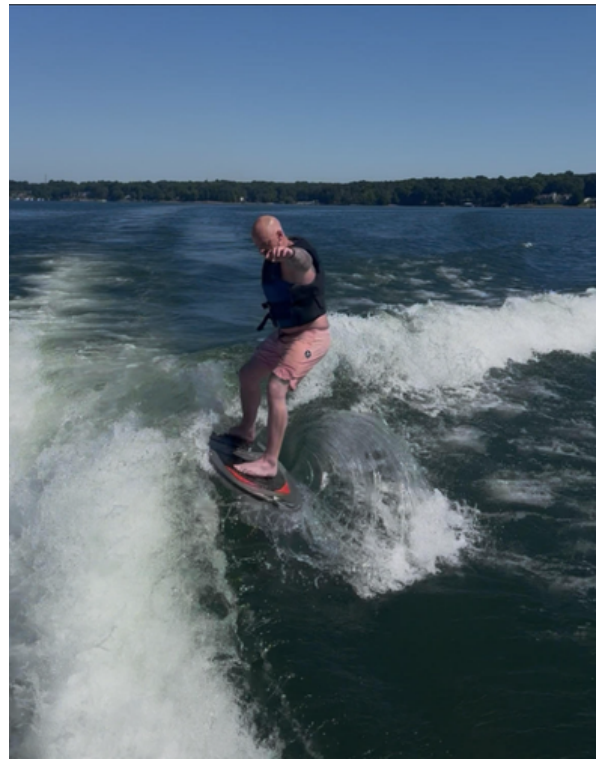
HERO SPOTLIGHT

THIS IS MICHAEL MCINNIS - FIRE FIGHTER-

Michael first discovered Operation Wake Surf through longtime friends Tom Newman and Chris Marich, who had been involved with the organization for several years before inviting him to experience an event firsthand. An avid outdoorsman, Michael has always gravitated toward adventure—snowboarding and snowmobiling in the winter and spending summers near any body of water he can find. But nothing prepared him for the impact OWS would have on him. After attending his first event on Lake Winnepesaukee in 2023, he immediately connected with the mission, the community, and the people—especially leaders like Robby and Rick, whose passion for serving veterans left a lasting impression. His involvement deepened even further during the three-day event at Lake Norman, where he met partners, fellow veterans, and others who share his love for the sport and the healing power it brings.

Beyond the water, Michael's life is rooted in service and family. He recently retired from the New Hampshire Air National Guard after 21 years of military service and continues to serve his community as a lieutenant with Nashua Fire Rescue, now in his twentieth year on Ladder Company 1. At home in Portsmouth, New Hampshire—where he and his wife Alycia have lived for 15 years—he is a proud father to two daughters, seven-year-old Mavea and newborn Meadow.

Michael credits his high school sweetheart, Alycia, as the center of his world, and he carries that same sense of gratitude into every OWS event. For him, Operation Wake Surf is more than a sport or a weekend on the lake—it's a life-changing community that brings people together, honors service, and creates moments he will cherish forever.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

OPERATION WAKE SURF IS A 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT COMPANY

Whether you donate time, talent, or financial support, it allows us to host free and unique events to honor the heroes of this great country.

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