

Ken

From: Operation North State <mailbox@operationnorthstate.com>
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 12:41 PM
To: ken@kenobx.com
Subject: April Newsletter



APRIL 2021

THE ONS NEWS & REALLY!
Operation North State's Monthly Newsletter
Edition: April 2021

Hello,

In all of our lives, we often hear "So, What Will Tomorrow Bring?". And, in last month's ONS newsletter, I stated that early on in 2021, at Operation North State, we're all about Going, Growing, Giving and Gathering. Going – our fishing, cycling and golf outings are off and running for 2021. Growing – ONS has registered fifty-five new wounded warriors / DVets since the first of the year that are requesting to

attend our recreational outings. Giving – numerous new supporters, volunteers and sponsors have signed up to begin offering their support for 2021 and Gathering – seventy percent (70%) of the recreational support services ONS offered to wounded warriors / DVets prior to COVID are coming back on line for 2021!

So, What Will Tomorrow Bring at Operation North State? Well, we better have on new roller skates. Based on the conversations we are having with the veterans we serve, their needs – requests – issues are MANY.....

At Operations North State, we may not be able to totally satisfy all of the veterans requests. But, we listen to him, we quickly access where, when and how we may

be able to assist them and when their needs fall outside our realm of expertise, we immediately ask for other veterans' support services organizations to offer their assistance.

At Operation North State, we are so fortunate to have hundreds of volunteers, supporters, donors and incredible caring folks that love our veterans lending us a hand. Operation North State utilizing North Carolina's People, Places, Products and Pride (in an all-volunteer environment) to provide support services (our specialty is hosting recreational outings) that hopefully will put smiles on the faces of the veterans we serve.

Lend a hand when you can. We have numerous programs (cycling, fishing, boating and golf) that are in need of financial assistance and we need volunteers too – especially one-on-one fishing hosts and golfers and golf clubs to host foursomes which will include a wounded warrior / DVet, an ONS representative and their respective members.

We're so proud of the dialog below which took place between ONS and one of North Carolina's premier executives overseeing the health and welfare of our states veterans and active military members. We shared with this executive and incredible person, the daily interactions we have with the veterans we serve at ONS. We were blown away that not only did this executive respond and address each veterans' issue that we shared with him, but he turned the following information around in two days. Incredible! If you have a struggling veteran in your life – please, please share this information with them and/or their respective loved-ones.

Below is the conversation that we had with this healthcare executive.

Our comments to the executive: Hope all is well. We are wide open at Operation North State – tons of interaction with our veterans and their families, numerous new supporters coming on board, several new/special projects under way - one of which is on the national level but based here in North Carolina, several new communities / venues are asking ONS to come to their respective areas with our support services – fun times.

Below are a few things that ONS continues to observe within the veterans community we serve or struggling veterans and/or their respective loved-ones share with us. We'd just like to share with you what we are hearing.

#1 issue by far among our truly troubled veterans is “I can't get anyone to listen to my side of the story – all I ask is they listen to my side of the story before they find / consider me guilty”. This is mostly with male veterans telling us that the authorities (often law enforcement) take their wife's kid's, caregiver's side of the story and judge him before they even talk to me and consider my side of the story. I just want to be heard out”. We realize that a large percentage of the time the input and feedback of those loved-ones close to the vet are probably accurate. But, we're seeing a few cases where ONS has helped bring in a new / different veterans' support person/caseworker/ a new face that has listened to the veteran and the veteran has become a changed person - for the good.

#2 with our troubled veterans: there is almost no existence of financial budgeting / understanding at all in their lives and we're speaking of veterans that have families, responsibilities, dependents, etc. – these aren't veterans on the street.

#3 Dental needs and poor hearing are common – these conditions exist with probably 80 - 90% of those veterans that we interact with that are seeking help. Most don't like to talk about these issues but every one of them would like to improve their dental and hearing. We usually hear: "I can't afford it", "the VA doesn't cover it", we observe that they don't even know how to start the process, etc. We talk to veterans that are living in veterans' facilities that need these services, but they choose not to seek help because they can't afford it even if they understand what they need to do to get assistance. And, they have support staff right there in their living facility that can assist them – but, it's a cost issue. Self – Confidence is so low among veterans dealing with these two issues. Promoting and offering self – confidence is so needed – even baby steps would be nice. Note: There are several of the veterans that we serve that have had dental and hearing procedures completed over the past few years and their self- confidence is off the chart; and, they joyfully tell us so.

Just wanted to share some of the observations we're noticing with the veterans that we are serving and communicating with at Operation North State. We're sure none of this is new to you but it's what we hear all the time not just from the veterans but their loved-ones too.

Utilizations of available support services would be life changers and life savers for so many veterans.

The Executive's Response and Recommendations:

I wanted to gather some information on this one so it took me few days to get everything together. If/when you hear these issues, we do have some resources available. Here is what we have:

#1 We have Veteran Justice Outreach Coordinators(VJO's) that can work with Veterans having criminal legal issues. The VJOs work with local law enforcement to provide education about dealing with Veterans, specifically Veterans in crisis. Most law enforcement agencies are aware that we have this available. VJO - Kate Sullivan covers Forsyth County, Guilford County, and the surrounding areas and her contact number is 704-762-5064. VJO - Carolyn Cardwell covers Mecklenburg County and surrounding areas and her contact number is 704-213-4055.

Related to Domestic Violence - Strength At Home: is a 12-week group therapy program for Veterans who use or are at risk of using aggression against their intimate partner. The program can help develop more effective ways to reduce tension and express. Annie Tucker, IPV Coordinator, is the point-of-contact. She can be reached through Social Work Service at 704-638-9000, ext 13699.

#2 There are some financial programs available through Community Link- About Us (communitylinknc.org) Education—education for first-time home buyers, with access to down payment assistance, how to set a roadmap to be mortgage ready, and how to make smart choices on services. Counseling—counseling to avoid foreclosure, and connections to mortgage relief resources. Free Tax Preparation—Tax preparation and filing assistance through our Volunteer Income Tax

Assistance (VITA) program Financial Empowerment Workshops—classes on financial literacy, understanding credit scores, and setting & obtaining goals for financial security <https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/> an online resource to explain what is out there in terms of assistance and has links to those services depending on where you live.

<https://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/financial-literacy/financial-resources.pdf#>

Some Benefits through the VBA, that might be helpful for financial planning:

MyMoney.Gov - MyMoney Home Great

federal website with lots of great resources- including budget calculators and more.

#3 For the majority of Veterans who do not meet eligibility for dental, the Social Workers refer to community resources, when they are available. see attached brochure as well as- <https://dentallifeline.org/north-carolina/>

There is specific dental eligibility for Veterans in The VA's GPD and Contract housing programs. The veterans become eligible for VA dental coverage after 60 days in the program. The facility case manager will alert GPD/Contract liaisons that the Veteran is in need of dental care, and the liaison enters a consult. This is usually a pretty quick turnaround for dental to get our Veterans scheduled. There are also various agencies in the community who will sometimes provide low cost/no cost emergency dental services. Currently, there are no organizations in the northern area that have funding for this but in Mecklenburg County CW Williams Adult Dentistry (704-393-7720) and Charlotte Emergency Dentist (704-412-5351) have recently assisted some of the HUD-VASH Veterans.

CURRENT / UPCOMING PROJECTS

Check our [Facebook](#) page for more details.

ONS' Upcoming Fishin' Outings:

April 20: Randleman Lake Top Shelf Fishin' Festival

May 12: Morehead City Top Shelf Fishin' Festival aboard the Carolina Princess

Daily: Host Boaters offering One-on-One Fishing Trips throughout the state to wounded warriors / DVets

Monthly: Pier Fishing at Randleman Lake

Note: Given COVID -19, ONS' normal annual schedule of eight Fishin' Festivals is down to just four Fishin' Festivals for 2021. Two will take place on Randleman Lake. The dates are April 20 and September 21 and two outings aboard the

Carolina Princess in Morehead City. ONS will charter the Carolina Princess for 70 folks that will be going out 35 miles for a full day trip. These dates are May 12 and November 5. Last fall's outing aboard the Carolina Princess was a blast; and, we cleared the bottom bringing back 460 pounds of fish!

When COVID - 19 leaves the building, ONS will be expanding its eight Fishin' Festivals to ELEVEN outings annually - unheard of and incredible; all made possible by great supporters, host communities and Host Boaters!!! We will keep the second outing at Randleman and the second outing aboard the Carolina Princess too. AND, we will be adding a much requested surf fishing Fishin' Festival; we are currently in discussions with Fort Macon State Park - nothing is finalized but things look promising!

One-on-One fishing outings are currently wide open at ONS; Host Boaters have already provided 23 one- on-one outings for this spring. Check out the smiles of the veterans at Facebook: [Tarheel Anglers Therapy Trail](#). Let us know if you would like to host a veteran; again, anywhere in the state; any type fishing; full day or half day outings. The veterans are ready to go; ONS can have you a veteran confirmed within 48 hours.

VERY EXCITING PROJECT: This is a special project that ONS began 2.5 years ago. We were made aware of a handicap access oversight related to all the veterans that desire to fish the two largest lakes that allow boats on them at Fort Bragg. There are 163,000 acres at Fort Bragg; there are probably a few dozen ponds and small lakes but there are only two large lakes that allow fishing from a boat. This need/ issue was brought to our attention by two of the wounded warriors / DVets that fish with us in our Fishin' Festivals. They want to use these lakes but can't without some handicap accessible equipment in place to assist them. We suspect thousands of other veterans and active military personnel too would benefit from these handicap improvements at the two lakes (Mott Lake and McArthur Lake). These two veterans also made us aware that the roads are often rutted out and the same is true with the graveled boat ramps. BUT, THE BIGGIE is that neither lake has pier/ramp/walkway facilities available to board a boat. Anglers have to board their boats from the shore and this isn't possible for most of our wounded warriors/ DVets. Bottom line, no handicap accessibility. This is quite an oversight and safety issue that needs to be resolved. The journey has been long but progress has recently been made; we are almost there. ONS is working with the Chief of Fort Bragg Wildlife (great guy and wants to help) on this project. He has several approvals NOW IN PLACE to construct the ramps and to make the needed road improvements happen. We aren't there yet. We are still trying to secure the funding on the Fort for the project and if not, we will need to take the fundraising efforts to the general public. Stay tuned; and, please feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions related to funding. More to come in a week or two. We are in the process of requesting a meeting with the Garrison Commander at Fort Bragg to discuss the project and funding requirements ASAP.

Lastly, for years, ONS' wounded warriors / DVets have mentioned to ONS that they would like for Operation North State to have its own boat - TO SERVE AS A MEMORIAL TO ALL VETERANS. Not all memorials have to be brick and mortar. Another great thing about this memorial is that not only will it service as a

memorial, but, ONS will be asking the state's premier anglers to use it and take wounded warriors /DVets fishing on the bass boat. Lastly, it will serve as a huge awareness campaign promoting veterans' issues. The boat will travel up and down our highways and byways, attend parades and events, etc. Our veterans tell ONS they never attend an ONS Fishin' Festivals that they aren't thinking about their fallen service buddies and those fallen brothers and sisters would be all over attending the quality fishing and fellowship provided by the Fishin' Festivals if they were still with us. We are moving a little slow on this project but getting ready to put the project in full gear.

The name of the boat will be "NC Memorial". There is already a Facebook page by that name. We have several financial pledges already. And incredibly, the boat dealership, Anglers Choice recently stepped up to offer to a boat at or near COST! This partnership is huge. We want the boat to be new or at least still under warranty and feature a large fishing platform (a 19" - 21; length boat) to assist with the veterans; handicap conditions. Feel free to contact ONS related to ideas and possible donors. NC Memorial is expected to have a 10 - year life. Donations / Contributions and Advertising budgets are good sources for funding.



CURRENT / UPCOMING OPERATION NORTH STATE PROJECTS -
CONTINUED:

Then, there are our Monthly Cycling Heals Vets Connect outing – the second Tuesday of every month at Salem Lake in Winston- Salem. Visit Facebook: Cycling Heals – Vets Connect for details And, Operation North State and its Host Golf Clubs host wounded warriors / DVets to quality rounds of golf. Visit Facebook: [Foursomes for Heroes](#) for details.

ONS Facebook Pages

[Operation North State](#), [Cycling Heals- Vets Connect](#), [Foursomes For Heroes](#), [ONS Toys & Tool Shed](#), [Tarheel Anglers Therapy Trail](#), [Terry Snyder](#),

CURRENT NEEDS

The Biggies are: Support of any of the projects mentioned above. And, we need

used bicycles, kayaks, Host Boaters providing one-on-one fishing outings throughout the state and Host Golfers and Golf Clubs offering our wounded warriors / DVets to join them in a foursome. ONS' needs change daily based on the needs that are being communicated to us by the wounded warriors / DVets we serve. Click on this [link](#) to view our Current Needs in a Facebook photo album. Again, our needs ARE THE WOUNDED WARRIORS / DVETS NEEDS AND REQUESTS; ONS is just the messenger. Send an email to mailbox@operationnorthstate.com to pledge your support. Our needs will be their needs /requests.

OPERATION NORTH STATE
151 WINDEMERE CT. WINSTON SALEM, NC 27127
(336) 764-5967
TO UNSUBSCRIBE CLICK [HERE](#)