

# Gulf War Veteran goes “fishing with America’s finest”

Bill Watts focuses on helping fellow Gulf War Veterans



Posted on Wednesday, August 19, 2020 10:00 am Posted in Health by Vantage Point Contributor 139 views

William “Bill” Watts, Sr., earned numerous awards during his service, which included tours in Egypt and Korea and service as a Gulf War combat Veteran. But the reward he values most today is the one he receives as an advocate helping his fellow Gulf War Veterans with their individual challenges.

“I am in favor of Veterans helping Veterans. Quality of life begins with quality of health care,” said Watts. Watts’ work with Veterans has earned him the Congressional Veterans Commendation Award. His work includes volunteering with Veterans in his community and meeting with researchers and health professionals to make sure that the health concerns of Gulf War Veterans are recognized and addressed.

Watts (photo above) and others are now marking the 30th anniversary of their Gulf War service. Watts served in the U.S. Army from 1989 to 1996. He was in the 4/5 ADA 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd Infantry Division, 24th Infantry Division and 3rd Infantry Division.

**Fishing the Everglades to reduce stress**



One of Watts' passions is helping Veterans manage their health problems by finding non-drug alternatives. As a resident of the South Florida city of Doral, he volunteers with the non-profit [Fishing with America's Finest](#) and also serves as the group's director of operations. *Fishing with America's Finest* takes combat Veterans bass fishing in the Florida Everglades to help reduce the stress and anxiety from PTSD.



[Long Description](#)

*Gulf War Veteran William "Bill" Watts, Sr.*

"We try to teach them to the point that they can go on fishing tournaments if they want to." He is also a team member of [Dive4Vets](#), a group that takes Veterans who suffer from physical and mental health issues scuba diving to help to heal. Watts is eligible for the [Gulf War Registry](#) and [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits Registry](#) and enrolled many years ago.

### **Researching the health of Gulf War Veterans**

Watts understands that some Gulf War Veterans are older. They may not be comfortable with completing an online-only registry like the [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#). A local [Environmental Health Coordinator](#) can help with this process.

Watts also is a member of VA's [Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses](#). He participates in research on the health of Gulf War Veterans at the Miami VA Hospital. He also volunteers to coordinate and recruit local Veterans for research.

---

*Stephanie Eber, MPH, is a health science specialist for Post Deployment Health Services.*