

Equipping America's veterans with vessels, tools or vehicles to start a business or pursue career education.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 7, 2020

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## **WORK VESSELS FOR VETS EQUIPS A SEVERELY INJURED GREEN BERET FOR A NEW FUTURE IN LEATHER WORKING**



“Every once in a while, Work Vessels for Vets has the honor to offer a hand up to a remarkable hero. In December 2019, we purchased machinery for a most humble, and severely injured Army Special Forces Green Beret Major (ret) McCave,” said Cathy Cook, Executive Director.

Here is what he wrote in his application. “I’m a retired Special Forces Green Beret and a 100% Disabled Veteran that retired in 2017 after 17 years of service. I was injured and spent over a year in the hospital and with all my injuries I had to retire early, however, I now find that doing leather work and metal work has really helped me to find my purpose again. In fact, I have been teaching local Veterans some of the Cowboy trades to keep paying it forward.” – Maj. Michael McCave, USA (ret) of Lovettsville, Virginia

“This 2016 account by “Brother of Mine” organization chronicles what happened to this brave soldier.” wrote Cook.

In 2006, Michael deployed on his first of four combat tours to Iraq for 15 months. Michael decided to try out for special forces selection and was selected in 2008. He was deployed to the Middle east, Africa and eastern Europe. On a combat deployment in Iraq, two weeks before [his] daughter was born, Michael was injured while on an Advanced Special Operation, where he suffered an injury in an unexpected small arms engagement. Michael was very fortunate to be wearing his chest plate which took two rounds to the chest. Thankfully, he only suffered broken ribs, a torn shoulder and a mild TBI and was able to get home, just in time to see the birth of his daughter.

In later part of the 2013 Major Michael McCave, who was a senior training officer, sustained a HALO (High Altitude Low Opening) parachuting accident on October 8, 2014 during a HALO operation at Yuma Proving Grounds. Major McCave was in the midst of a HALO jump when a student began having difficulty and required Major McCave to close in during free fall to provide assistance before the necessary window of time to pull his shoot ran out. Major McCave assisted him successfully, however after helping the student, his threshold of time to pull his shoot began to run out. Major McCave quickly deployed his main parachute, however, there was a defect and his reserve shoot quickly came out due to a safety mechanism built into the parachutes, which will automatically deploy the reserve chute if you are still traveling at terminal velocity through 1500 FT AGL. As a result, both shoots were deployed in the air and became entwined and went above, then below his body and stayed tangled like that for the rest of his jump.

Major McCave freefell to the ground at 119 mph with no protection other than his faith and trust in God that he would be saved. Miraculously, Major McCave’s life was spared by the grace of God, however he sustained two



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Work Vessels for Vets learned of Maj. McCave's need for equipment by the referral from a fellow veteran who had received a "vessel" from WVFV earlier in the year. It turned out that McCave was a mentor to him and other vets in vocational rehabilitation programs.

"The Major was so humble in his request. He did not want to ask for much, and wasn't sure he deserved an award," noted Cook. "But after learning of his grave injuries and determination to succeed, we were even more determined to find and send the tools he needed, adapted if necessary, to help him increase his leathercraft business and support his family."

Work Vessels for Vets awarded \$6000 in specialized leather-making machinery to Major McCave. Manufacturers of the leather sewing machines and grinders discounted the tools by over 25% to honor this remarkable soldier.

Work Vessels for Vets is in its 11th year of success in equipping more than 2000 injured veterans in all fifty states with tools for self-employment valued at \$3 million. A recent survey of awardees revealed that more than \$10 Million in economic activity per year is being generated by the more than 500 new veteran-owned businesses and they have created over 1000 new jobs. Through this journey Work Vessels for Vets has remained a small but mighty, all-volunteer organization, maintaining an administrative overhead under 1% to earn the Great Nonprofits TOP RATED NONPROFIT award, the coveted GUIDESTAR PLATINUM national rating for efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of mission and the designation as an Accredited Charity by the Better Business Bureau.

Visit [www.WVFV.org](http://www.WVFV.org) to learn more and read about the veterans who have received assistance.

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