

## Pu'ali Koa Kahiko Summary

**Mission:** To promote Hawaiian canoe paddling for healing veterans with PTSD

**Category:** Health & Wellness

**Contact:** Wendall DeVera, President

**Address:** P.O. Box 1257, Wailuku, HI 96793

**Grant History:** N/A

<b>2022 Request:</b> \$73,000 for canoeing equipment costs
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**Notes:**

- Start up, grass roots organization designed to help veterans struggling with PTSD.
- Hawaiian canoe paddling is beneficial to the mind, body, and spirit and helps veterans share a common military bond while working on the healing process.
- Canoeing promotes comradery and trust.
- Collaborates with Maui Veterans Center for counselling and therapy.
- 14 veterans currently participate. Would like to expand.
- Request is for \$73,000 to cover purchase of canoes, trailer, paddles, life jackets, and insurance.



**Pu'ali Koa Kahiko**  
**P. O. 1257**  
**Wailuku, HI 96793**  
**Wendall DeVera**  
**(President)**

re: 501(c)(19) & IRS non profit designation  
EIN # 87-3792469

attn: Tammy Davis Cownie, JD, MACL

Aloha Tammy

As of this correspondence the IRS has not sent us our non profit designation. I have been in conversation with **David Barrett**, and he suggested that we send in our proposal while we wait for our non profit designation.

Our proposal follows, being a Vietnam Veteran myself and an avid Paddler for over 45 years I know how paddling has changed or should I say made better the affects of PTSD. And yes there is team work and comradery in regular outrigger paddling, but when paddling with other Veterans whether it be combat or other Veterans, the feeling of team and comradery has a different feeling.

Sincerely  
Wendall DeVera

President  
Pu'ali Koa Kahiko

## **Pu'ali Koa Kahiko**

### **Brave Older Warriors**

Pu'ali Koa Kahiko is a grass roots organization on the island of Maui providing a Hawaiian canoe paddling experience for US Military Combat Veterans and Military Veterans who experienced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Military Sexual Trauma while in uniform. These veterans share a common military bond. This bond view is seen in Junger's seminal book where he called the combat veteran's bond a 'tribe mentality', (Tribe, 2016). These veterans share common experiences; a brotherhood developed with close knit bonds with other combat service members, bonds not commonly experienced in the general civilian population. After serving in the military, Combat Veterans need to readjust back into the civilian community and the community needs to adjust to these veterans being an integral part of society. Combat Veterans need the physical, the mental, and the emotional support from their former veteran brothers/sisters that all Combat Veterans experienced while in service. These 'essential needs' components are vital to the veteran's successful readjustment back into civilian society and their overall healing process.

The healing process uses outrigger canoes and becomes a journey for the each of the veterans. The Hawaiian hula and hula studios (halaus) promote more than steps to Hawaiian music (mele), likewise, Hawaiian outrigger canoes are not simply vehicles. Outrigger canoes are essential strands in the fabric of Hawaiian culture; each canoe is a singular and constant reminder of the battle against the elements and the personal fight each paddler faced while in the boat with his canoe family (ohana). Hawaiian history through the ages shows Hawaiian Warriors travelling via outrigger canoes. These warriors, crossing open ocean, needed to work together with trust and comradery. These are the same essential elements central to the Pu'ali Koa Kahiko experience; these are the same values that veterans relate to their combat service.

Pu'ali Koa Kahiko provides a transformative experience for program members. This program uses a traditional physical activity, in a team setting that puts no pressure on the participants. The program affords the veterans the opportunity to participate in a true Hawaiian sport while relying on each other, a reliance that was a learned and was an imperative part of their military past. Through the support of the Maui Veterans Center, the Pu'ali Koa Kahiko program coordinates with center counselors/therapists (Combat Veterans themselves) who paddle as part of the program. Everyone in the program works together in the boat; paddlers experience a shared experience, and behold nature in a one of a kind awesome setting. It is truly a cathartic experience for the modern Hawai'ian Warriors.

Here in Hawai'i, the only true Hawaiian activity that provides a vital answer to the veteran's needs is outrigger canoe paddling,. As an island and statewide cultural physical focus, outrigger canoe paddling brings combat veterans and community members together. For the veterans, once in the 6-man canoe, they experience for the first time that re-connection to their fellow veteran paddlers; it is the first time they experience that re-connection and trust each veteran felt while in combat; it is the first-time combat veterans find themselves as role models to others in the paddling community. Veteran paddlers develop a respect for the ocean, the land, and the community. This is respect for the Hawai'ian culture and in turn the community develops a greater appreciation and respect for its own modern Hawaiian Warriors. Pu'ali Koa Kahiko creates a basis for this cultural competence. Yes, they are Combat Veterans but more importantly they are accepted by the paddling community, they are respected in and out of the water, and they are vital members and role models for the community here on Maui.

The proposed program using outrigger canoe paddling brings these veterans to a 'better place'. The veterans experience a physical workout, a cultural connection,

and a particular view of the wai (ocean) and the aina (land). This program has paddling, as its central activity, available to combat veterans, a benefit fulfilling many of their needs. Every paddling session as paddlers rest and stop during the course of the paddling workout time is carved out to view the sun rising over Haleakala (House of the Sun), to observe whales passing close by, and to recognize the birdlife passing overhead. This gives veterans an opportunity for self-reflection and appreciation of their surroundings. This time period also allows an opportunity to share personal thoughts with their fellow combat veteran brothers and sisters. These reflective time periods provide combat veterans intense moments when they recognize themselves as beneficiaries of those Combat Veterans who did not come home.

Program practices provide these veterans the opportunity to load and unload canoes, use pre-paddling stretching techniques, gain insights on proper equipment usage (paddles, personal flotation devices) learn the rationale for 6 man canoe seat assignments, participate in open ocean canoe paddling, and provide the possibility of post paddling 'cool down' comradery sessions. Veterans are introduced to the culture of Hawaiian outrigger paddling: the history, the canoe materials and construction, the canoe specific vocabulary, and the particular open ocean elements affecting canoe paddling,

At present, 14 identified veterans participate in the identified program. Paddling takes place in Kihei and is limited, at this time, to two days a week. Open ocean paddling is the main activity for the veterans. The time spent on the ocean, depending on weather conditions, ranges from 1 hour to 2 hours. This activity assigns each veteran to a seat in the 6 man canoe. Each veteran has a paddle fitted to their height and reach, and personal floatation device (pfd). An advanced veteran paddler is in

the canoe for paddling instruction and canoe directions. At this time, canoes, paddles, and personal flotation devices are on loan from a local canoe club.

Other Combat Veterans are sending participation queries from divergent Maui island locations for inclusion in Pu'ali Koa Kahiko, and, to voice their need to expand the program outreach island wide. Maui data shows over 11,000 military veterans with approximately 35% of those veterans identifying as having served in combat. Currently the program is investigating and developing memorandums of understanding to provide a broad island wide corporate base of support for launch sites, transportation of veteran participants from outlying areas, and hosting larger paddling gatherings to further the reconnection of the modern Hawai'ian Warriors across the island of Maui.

The future of Pu'ali Koa Kahiko is set in motion, not only in the canoe paddling activity but in the program's expansion. Pu'ali Koa Kahiko's plan calls for:

- serving 50 or more veterans in the identified program,
- including veterans with physical limitations in terms of transport to paddling sites and assistance boarding and exiting the canoe,
- expanding to the towns of Kaanapali, Kahului, Paia, and Lahaina,
- purchasing 2 proprietary 6 man canoes
- purchasing 1 proprietary canoe trailer,
- purchasing 12 personal floatation devices,
- purchasing 10 outrigger paddles and 2 outrigger steering blades
- coordinating with local Veterans of Foreign Wars and Veterans Administration programs as part of the long range vision
- identifying corporate and philanthropic organizations and presenting detailed proposals for program support
- creating a viable, replicable program for use on the other major Hawai'ian islands

## **Pu'ali Koa Kahiko Program Budget**

Internal Revenue Service 501 (c) 19 designation fee (paid)	<\$600>
2 Ozone 6 man outrigger canoes	\$36,000
1 Double Wide Outrigger Canoe Trailer	\$26,250
10 Quickblade Outrigger Canoe Paddles	\$4,800
2 Quickblade Outrigger Canoe Steering Blades	\$725
12 Personal Floatation Devices	\$1,200
Umbrella Insurance Coverage (liability and Property year 1)	\$3,300
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	<b>\$72,875</b>