

## **Blackwater Sponsors Divers 4 Heroes**

Scuba experiences for wounded veterans

By Dana C. Richardson

In 2006, while on vacation, Boris A. (Bo) Twillman, a Blackwater Worldwide contractor, and his wife Debbie Twillman saw several wounded veterans just trying to cope with their combat related trauma. Many of the veterans were missing limbs and were struggling in wheelchairs or with crutches. This firsthand experience moved the Twillman's and to assist the wounded vets, Bo and Debbie founded Divers 4 Heroes, a non-profit organization.

Divers 4 Heroes' mission is to connect with combat veterans and to help the physical rehabilitation of the wounded veterans through Scuba diving as recreational therapy. Bo became a certified scuba instructor in 1993 and Debbie received her certification in 2006. The enjoyment of the underwater world prompted Bo and Debbie to share these experiences with the brave men and women of the military and private contractors who had given so much of themselves to defend our country's freedom. Scuba diving is a proven recreational therapy for wounded patients and wheelchair patients as it provides a weightless, chair-free experience allowing them to float effortlessly in water.

Divers 4 Heroes offers a safe and enjoyable scuba diving experience along with full open water certification with certified PADI Master Scuba Diver instructors and Handicapped Scuba instructors. The instructors not only teach but assist and *buddy up* with divers that require special assistance. The first Discover Scuba clinic was a huge accomplishment and met each veteran's needs beyond expectations. Currently, Divers 4 Heroes plans monthly dive clinics to introduce more veterans to scuba diving and also offers quarterly scuba diving trips to the Florida Keys for certified divers.

To continue the veterans diving and certification program, Diver 4 Heroes welcomes sponsorships and donations. Individual and business sponsorships are available along with the Becoming a Scuba Buddy sponsorship program. All donations and sponsorships help the organization cover equipment, training, certification, transportation, lodging and meal expenses for the veteran heroes.

Recently, Dennis Granger, Director of the Blackwater Worldwide Tampa office received a request from Bo Twillman for Blackwater to sponsor the wounded veterans program. Blackwater acknowledged the request and was honored to support some of America's veterans by sponsoring 30 veterans. Dennis also gave an individual donation and he continues to volunteer at least once a month at Divers 4 Heroes as a *dive buddy*.

Bo and Debbie Twillman would like to thank the men and women of the United States military for defending our freedom and making sacrifices for our defense. Bo stated, "Blackwater Worldwide and Dennis Granger should be utterly satisfied with their sponsorship as they are giving back to the great men and women who fought for our country."

For further information on Divers 4 Heroes visit the website: [www.divers4heroes.org](http://www.divers4heroes.org)

Picture Caption:

Dennis Granger presents the sponsorship check to Bo Twillman, founder of Divers 4 Heroes.