

Georgia Aquarium Underwater Reenlistment

What is the program?

Georgia Aquarium's Underwater Reenlistment Dives offer a unique experience for those who choose to continue to serve their Country. The Dive Team facilitates a dive in the Ocean Voyager exhibit for the reenlisting, enlisting officer, and witnesses (a total of up to 8 divers). The divers who are reenlisting and the officer are connected to a wireless underwater communication system. The audio is broadcasted to the dry side of the Ocean Voyager theater where friends and family can witness the ceremony from a priority area.

How may I be considered for an underwater reenlistment?

Once you have approval from your chain of command, send a request including name, contact information, origin, date of original enlistment, unit, relative accomplishments, and state the significance of reenlisting at the Georgia Aquarium. Send this to: mhilliard@georgiaaquarium.org.

When is it offered?

We have scheduled three opportunities for underwater reenlistments in 2017: February 27, May 15, and September 18.

Support in the water?

Our Dive Team is trained to anticipate and support the needs and requirements of participants for the reenlistment dive. There is a maximum of eight slots per program. GAI's Dive Team have full authority and control in any event related to the dive program and are trained as emergency first responders.

What can the participants expect?

The Underwater Reenlistment Dive Program begins at 1000. We provide wetsuits, booties, and all dive equipment. Divers will attend a briefing, change into their bathing suits & wetsuits, and gear up on the deck of Ocean Voyager. The time schedule is strict in order to coordinate with the dry-side of the exhibit. Divers enter the water at 1145. The group rehearses the ceremony in the shallow end of the exhibit. At 1155, the dive group swims over to the Ocean Voyager theater window. At 1200 the live ceremony begins. After the ceremony is complete, participants on the dry side sing the Star Spangled Banner, then the divers are free to high-five their families and take more photos. The divers tour around the exhibit and exit the water.

After a quick shower and change into dry clothes, divers will receive a photo certificate, a t-shirt, and souvenir video (to be mailed later). We also challenge our divers to join Georgia Aquarium's mission to conserve and protect our aquatic environment.

Friends and Family OR What happens on "the dry side?"

The "dry side" of the reenlistment ceremony refers to the Ocean Voyager gallery theater window. The theater is open to the public and a section of the theater window is roped off for the family members to view the ceremony. A Georgia Aquarium narrator explains to the guests what is about to happen underwater. Around 1155, the narrator begins to read a short

biographical piece about the divers who are reenlisting. The ceremony begins at 1200. The guests in the gallery can hear the audio in real time as the oath is being said.

What does Georgia Aquarium need?

- At least week prior to the program date, Georgia Aquarium needs a completed roster of the participants sent by email. Roster will be emailed to NCOIC for completion.
- All divers must provide proof of Open Water Scuba certification or higher, or a Letter of Reciprocity.
- 16 General Admission tickets will be provided for family members viewing on the dry side.
- The enlistees must provide a *short* bio for the dry side presentation:
 - Name
 - Origin
 - When they originally enlisted
 - Unit
 - Relative accomplishments
 - Why Georgia Aquarium?
- All in-water participants must complete the online waiver no later than two business days prior to the event. <https://www.smartwaiver.com/v/dive/>
- The Aquarium also needs support from your program with either short on-camera interviews or written feedback. Identify participants or group leaders who are willing to answer a few short questions on camera. This feedback is important in securing on-going funding to ensure the continuation of the program.

How do we get into Georgia Aquarium?

Meet Georgia Aquarium staff at the Ballroom Entrance at 1000. Your group will be issued 8 dive tickets and 16 general admission tickets. The distribution of these tickets is up to the discretion of the group leader. Additional guests must purchase their tickets at the box office in the front of the Aquarium. A list of all guests should be cleared with the program manager at least two business days prior to arrival.

Contact Information:

Veterans Immersion Program: Mike Hilliard mhilliard@georgiaaquarium.org

ROSTERS: Please send to dive@georgiaaquarium.org, sgaze@georgiaaquarium.org, mhilliard@georgiaaquarium.org

Off-site Bus Parking: Marshalling Yard past GAI on Ivan Allen Jr. Boulevard, (404) 223-4105

Dive Immersion Office: (404) 581-4122 or (404) 581-4123