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PHOTO BY JENNIFER WILLIS

Michael McCastle, a Portland Community College student, Navy Veteran and world record endurance holder, pulls a truck last May in the desert of Death Valley, Calif. to raise awareness and donations for veteran's organizations working on suicide prevention. His next feat to further the cause will be a run of 20 miles a day for 100 days.

Endurance Champ Helps Veterans

Uses strength to raise donations for suicide prevention

BY CHRISTA MCINTYRE
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Michael McCastle, a retired Navy officer, four-time world record endurance holder and a Portland Community College student, has set a date for his sixth physical challenge to raise money for veterans groups working to prevent suicide.

McCastle is the founder of the 12 Labors Project, his Vancouver-based organization which raises donations for a variety of causes, a name inspired by the ancient Greek mythological hero Hercu-

les and his 12 miraculous physical feats.

Performing superhuman tests of physical endurance to inspire and help the community by raising money for non profits, McCastle has found there is no strength greater than the strength found in service to those in need.

Beginning on April 11, he will attempt to run 20 miles every day for 100 days in a row to raise awareness of the high veteran suicide rate in the United States, currently around 20 lives lost each day.

He says no American has attempted such a running record.

Part of the donations raised will go towards two veteran non-profits, Operation Enduring Warrior and the National Alliance to End Veteran Suicide, and to a veterans retreat where former soldiers

struggling with combat-related Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) can work in a safe environment with a dedicated trained staff to reconnect mind, body and spirit with equine therapy, yoga, meditation, mental strength seminars and outdoor therapies.

McCastle's previous endurance feats have raised \$30,000 for charity and earned him several records. He wore a 40 pound vest for a 50K run to benefit Children's Cancer Research in 2013; won his first World Record in a benefit for wounded veterans in 2014 when he flipped a 250-pound tire for a distance of over 13 miles and over 10 grueling hours.

In 2015, McCastle rope-climbed a height equal to Mount Everest, a full

29,029 feet in just under 27 hours to raise donations for Parkinson's research in honor of his father, who lost his life to the disease. He also shattered the Guinness World Record for the most pull-ups in 24 hours, 5,804 pull-ups while wearing a 30 pound pack.

Last May, McCastle pulled a 2016 Ford F-150 pickup truck for 22 miles in 19 hours across California's Death Valley to raise awareness for veteran suicides, a cause he took up after the loss of a friend's brother to suicide.

You can visit McCastle's website to learn more about him and his 12 Labors Project at twelvewelaborsproject.com. To donate to his 6th challenge you can visit his crowd funding site at gofundme.com/veteran-suicide-retreat-fund.