



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 13, 2021**

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\* Video interview capable

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## **Great Lakes “Shark” to Swim with Cannonball for Veterans** *Dreyer announces new 22-mile swimming event in Chicago*



**Jim “The Shark” Dreyer is including 48 swimmers in his mission to support disabled combat Veterans battling suicide.** *Photo: Jena McClurken*

**(Chicago, Illinois)** [Jim “The Shark” Dreyer](#) is introducing a 22-mile public swimming event in Chicago and will himself swim all night with a cannonball to support disabled U.S. combat Veterans in July of 2022. Dreyer, age 58, of Grand Haven, Michigan, is an accomplished open water swimmer who has [swum across all 5 Great Lakes](#) and been [recognized as a Stan Lee Superhuman on the History Channel for aquatic feats of strength.](#)

[The first annual Reach the Beach – Chicago swim](#) will be organized by Dreyer and held July 9, 2022. The 22-mile swim starts and finishes at Chicago’s Oakwood Beach. At sunrise, participants begin swimming 11 miles to a point due east of Navy Pier beyond the Lake Michigan horizon. On the return swim, it is another 11 miles toward the distant Chicago skyline where they must finish before sunset.

Limited to 48 swimmers who have raised funds for Dreyer's [Swim Mission 22 Veterans Program](#), 12 teams of 4 swimmers may participate in a relay race or distance competition. Unique awards are offered for both teams and individuals, including replica *War of 1812* cannonballs mounted as trophies. Each team is provided their own dedicated support boat and crew.

***“While this competition, set with America’s tallest and most spectacular skyline as a backdrop, has obvious rewards - the greatest reward is knowing that while literally swimming for new horizons you are creating new horizons for Veterans,” Dreyer said.***

- [Watch Reach the Beach – Chicago Video](#)

The cannonball trophies tie into Dreyer's [Dusk 'til Dawn Cannonball Swim](#), part of his joint swimming effort on July 11th and 12th with the [Veteran Swim Team](#) - 4 disabled combat Veterans who will be selected to participate in Dreyer's *Swim Mission 22 Veterans Program*. The joint swim, expected to meet or exceed 22 miles, is to raise awareness for the [estimated 22 Veterans who die by suicide daily](#), often due to post-traumatic stress (PTS) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), referred to as the “invisible wounds of war.”

Dreyer will swim while symbolically bearing 22 pounds of deadweight (negative buoyancy) strapped to his body, including a cannonball - and in his words, “Sink or swim (S.O.S.) for Veterans.” He will begin from Chicago's Oakwood Beach at sunset on July 11th and swim for 9 hours overnight to the furthest point offshore he can reach before sunrise. His goal is to swim at least 11 miles to the turnaround point on the *Reach the Beach – Chicago* swim course.

At sunrise on the morning of July 12th, the *Veteran Swim Team* will rendezvous with Dreyer somewhere beyond the Lake Michigan horizon and make the swim back to shore to complete the roundtrip. This swim culminates months of positive goal-oriented training through the program for the Veterans. The Veteran Swim is made possible through the fundraising efforts of *Reach the Beach – Chicago* swimmers.

“The actual weight of the cannonball I will be carrying pales in comparison to the true weight of the burden our heroic men and women of the armed forces carry from their valorous sacrifices for our freedom,” Dreyer said. “When the Veterans complete their swim, the cannonball, once a symbol of their burden, will be presented to them as an honorary commendation and will now represent their empowerment to overcome challenges and a new beginning. Their courage will once again inspire us all.”

- [Watch Dusk 'til Dawn Cannonball Swim Video](#)

“While the 22-mile *Reach the Beach – Chicago* swim course has the significance of being the **same distance as an English Channel crossing**, I believe our swimmers recognize the greater significance of the number “22” in the military community. We thank the fundraising swimmers who share our goal of making the number “22” irrelevant.”

Swimmers interested in participating in *Reach the Beach – Chicago* will be asked to sign up for a waitlist from which teams will be awarded entry invitations primarily on a first-come-first-served basis.

For complete details on *Reach the Beach – Chicago*, Jim “The Shark” Dreyer’s *Dusk ‘til Dawn Cannonball Swim*, and the Swim Mission 22 Veterans Program, [go to the Swim Mission 22 website](http://SwimMission22.com) (SwimMission22.com).

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## MEDIA RESOURCES

Find the following materials & information relevant to this story at [SwimMission22.com/media-resources](http://SwimMission22.com/media-resources):

- Photos & *Swim Mission 22* logo
- Raw video footage
- Find swimmers from your area

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