

LCAA Thank a Veteran Program

For the past several years the **Lake Coeur d'Alene Anglers Association** has been working to put together a way to thank veterans of current and past wars for their service. We developed a **Thank a Veteran Program**. Association members donate a fishing excursion as a small thank you for the huge sacrifice these men and women have made. With the help of the Healing Waters, a veteran's fishing group, and the outreach of individual veterans associated with the Veterans Association a list of interested veterans has grown. A list of LCAA members eager to participate has also grown.

No veteran wishing to go fishing has been placed on a waiting list. As of June 15th, nine veterans have been matched with a LCAA club member. The participating vet also may bring a friend, family member and/or service dog. Accommodations necessary to make the trip possible and enjoyable are made.

Every trip out so far has been a big success. Each veteran and fishing partner has left with a huge smile, a special LCAA patriotic hat and a day filled with fun memories. Some have even left with a fish for the BBQ!

It would be awesome to see the list of veteran participants and LCAA members willing to enjoy a day of fishing with a vet grow even longer. If you would like to participate email Benita Galland: bgal-land2@gmail.com

Below: Pete Wood's recounts his May 30th fishing trip with a Veteran and his daughter.

After talking on the phone a couple of times to set the trip up, we met at the Walmart in Post Falls at 6:00 a.m. to pick up a license and snacks for the trip. They were so excited.

The Vet had been in Iraq and his, now 9 year old, daughter was born just after he deployed the first time. He is now a single Dad who came back with a traumatic brain injury. He had to learn to write all over again and is now attending college at EWU.

His daughter was quite the outdoors type of girl already. She and her Dad enjoyed several outdoor activities together such as fishing, turkey hunting, archery shoots, bow fishing, and camping. I could tell they had a very special relationship. We got the boat on the water and they helped get all the rigging out and had lots of questions as we got to know each other better. We spoke with some of the other fishermen on the water to confirm the fishing was slow but some were still being caught. We trolled to Carlin Bay and got out to take a break before trolling back towards the launch. The Vet shared stories of his time in Iraq, his struggles to regain what he had lost, his future plans, and last but not least his adventures in raising his daughter on his own. Not once was he less than enthusiastic and upbeat about anything.



We only had one bite all day but it didn't really matter. We had an awesome day. I came away with even more respect and understanding of what our heroes go through, not just during their service, but in their attempt to return to normal life.

We ended the day by meeting my wife, Paige, at the local Dairy Queen to share stories over ice cream and plan a steelhead trip with our new friends this fall.