

## ***Veterans Destin Fishing Event***



***Our Wounded Veterans Destin Fishing Event*** was held the weekend of October 19, 2013.

- 16 veterans including 15 men and 1 woman
- 1 LTC's, MSGT and SGT's and SSG's
- some veterans with multiple purple hearts, many decorations and up to three (3) tours in Iraq and Afghanistan (one gentleman was 'blown up' **twice** on two different tours)
- two SGT's with broken backs but with **outstanding attitudes**
- **one 'Special Ops' MSGT who has reenlisted to help his fallen comrades---** great attitude
- some family members accompanied their spouses

**Callahan's Restaurant** in Destin on Friday evening: As we entered the restaurant, everyone in the restaurant acknowledged us. The owner is totally supportive of the Veterans and our support and gave us a phenomenal discount for the twenty five plus Veterans and guests. Two of the guests present were Joyce FeBreeze and her husband. Joyce is a business owner in Destin and well connected to the business community there. She has devoted her time in support of these veterans and will assist us with business support through donations for our future trips. Her husband is a wounded vet himself.

**Saturday Fishing Offshore on the *Pescador*3:** We really had the best fishing trip yet at Destin including many Amberjack, Red Snapper, White Snapper, Bonito, Remora and a Shark. The fishing was great and all caught multiple fish, enjoyed the water, comradeship, and great lunches prepared by Publix in Destin. The fishing was so hectic at times that on two occasions we had four folks 'hooked up' and had two doubles (two fish on the same line). Due to the slot limit on AJ's, we had to release all AJ's over 22" and all Red Snapper. One of our Veterans caught the biggest fish (Red Snapper) which taped about 32" long and we estimated it weighed over 22 pounds—a big Snapper!

**Saturday Evening Dinner Cookout:** We had about fifty people, including some board members, friends and supporters, some new members, and of course the veterans. All enjoyed the steak, chicken and fish (caught that day) cooked on a huge grill with all the side dishes. The weather was outstanding and everyone enjoyed the time, friendship, great food and football on the TV. The boat's owner, Mike Whitley is a huge supporter of SCI and the veterans, was present and donated this trip and will donate another trip at our banquet in late January. In addition, he will attend our banquet and will be recognized there as a veteran himself and supporter.

Our contact at Maxwell AFB who manages the Mid Bay Shores' reservations and has helped us confirm our cabins during the busy season was present at the dinner and baked desserts for us. I presented her an SCI packet with our Mission Statements along with pictures from past trips and she will work with her superiors in order to further reduce our already great cabin pricing. She was very complementary of us and our support of the vets and her father is a WWII veteran.

**Sunday Morning Recognition and Awards Ceremony:** We held this event in one of the Cabins at the **Mid Bay Shores** housing and attendance was outstanding and we had some fun and laughs. An overview of the SCI mission was reviewed and our Georgia Chapter commitment under the Humanitarian Arena in support of the Wounded Veterans. As you know, Corporate Bass Pro Shops is engaged now and their local General Manager, Gary Feduccia, donated the prizes for our fishing awards and additional T-Shirts, and fishing towels.

In addition to the awards and donated items, we presented each veteran with an SCI 'Hunter Ambassador' Certificate and they were very appreciative of the recognition. We did review the fact that SCI supports Hunters' Rights and the Second Amendment on gun rights.

Many of the veterans made personal comments to us during the event that this was the nicest trip they had ever been on and really thanked us for our support and commitment to their rehabilitation. Some want to help us with future events and in selecting the veterans for these trips since they can speak from experience. We still think that this clearly demonstrates we are really making a difference in their lives. One individual who arrived in Destin only after MSGT Harmon promised his mother that he would oversee him during the event left our event a different person. (His mother has been assigned to him as a primary care giver). A few of us saw his transition from a very quiet and introspective individual who would not look you in the eye to a very changed individual who 'initiated' conversations with us about the trip, showed us a few pictures he had taken on the trip and did the 'high five' with Wes Bond during our departure. This is what drives us forward and thank you for your continued support here!!!

I have enclosed a few shots from the trip and we are following up with a few of the Veterans who need a little more help from the medical community at Ft. Benning and are working with Patrick Harmon and LTC Case to communicate with LTC Feger, the WTB Commander, on the next steps in the process.

I have listed Board Members and friends who participated on this trip and are recognized for their time away from family and never ending support on this trip:

Wes Bond (new SCI member), Margaret Hice and myself. Patrick Harmon, MSGT (ret) and LTC Case (still active) are key members of the support group. Patrick and LTC Case have made our lives much easier through their initiatives, strength and willingness to 'give it all' for the Wounded Veterans. As always, Margaret did an outstanding job in support throughout the entire event and Wes Bond impressed everyone with his fishing expertise as well as his caring attitude for the Veteran's individual needs.

Thanks again for all your support here and to the members who spent so much time and effort for the veterans support. This makes over **133** veterans that we have addressed on SCI Georgia trips in the past 6 years.

PHOTO GALLERY - Click on photo to see full sized



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