

WWP News & Media: Veteran Group Outings, Charity Events, Helping Vets

## Muskie Mayhem Sinks Its Hooks into Veterans Served by Wounded Warrior Project

LONG LAKE, Minn., Dec. 5, 2016 [/PRNewswire-USNewswire/](#) -- The cold autumn weather didn't slow a group of wounded veterans from engaging in some fishing mayhem in Long Lake at a gathering hosted by Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP). WWP program events like this give wounded warriors an opportunity to rediscover the spirit of camaraderie they enjoyed during their military service – in a safe, relaxed atmosphere that accommodates injuries and social anxieties.

Ten guides led the participants to prime fishing spots, where the warriors were able to enjoy clear skies and calm waters. Many of the warriors were first-timers at fishing, but even a fishing veteran like Jason Halverson was surprised by what he experienced that day. The Army veteran landed a huge catch, worthy of a cliché too-good-to-be-true fishing story.

"I landed a 43-inch muskie with a head that could have easily taken my hand off," Jason said proudly. "It was amazing reeling in that monster of a fish. I have been fishing for 34 years in Minnesota and never caught one of these bad boys until now!"

It was a big moment of confirmation for Jason. Originally, he wasn't sure about coming to the event and being among other wounded warriors. After a WWP teammate called him and explained how helpful it can be to rekindle bonds similar to those formed in the military, he was persuaded to come out.

"I hesitated in participating in events for a while because there were guys and gals who had it much worse than I did," Jason said. "That was my thought process. They needed it more and were more deserving. But then I realized I needed that encouragement and help too – I needed the chance to heal. Since then, I have participated in so many different amazing experiences with Wounded Warrior Project and feel truly blessed. When I find myself in a bad spot or feel like nobody sees I need some encouragement, Wounded Warrior Project staff have always recognized what I need and stepped up to empower me."

In a [WWP survey](#) of the injured warriors it serves, more than half of survey respondents (51.7 percent) talked with fellow Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn veterans to address their mental health issues. Jason found the interaction with other warriors on the boat to be the highlight of his day – bigger than the fish he reeled aboard.

"Once you get over the initial nervousness of meeting people you don't know, you realize that you know all of them – they are all just like you," Jason explained. "They are all veterans, and you will find that bond you have likely been missing since your time in the service ended. The WWP gatherings I have attended so far have been true blessings to me and my family. Each one is a chance to meet new brothers and sisters – and as a result, my support network has grown dramatically in the last few years. I find myself making positive choices again."

Despite the cold weather that is common in Minnesota, Jason sees every chance to get outdoors as a needed moment of peace in his otherwise busy life. Even though he hesitates and needs a push sometimes, he knows making an effort to attend WWP program events can make all the difference.

"No matter what I have going on, or how busy I am, I need to find time to be at peace," Jason said. "I can get

that in a natural environment, away from the chaos of life every now and then. Wounded Warrior Project events like this help me with that."

To learn more about how WWP's programs and services are making an impact on the lives of wounded warriors, visit <https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/>.

### **About Wounded Warrior Project**

#### **We Connect, Serve, and Empower**

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP connects wounded warriors and their families to valuable resources and one another, serves them through a variety of free programs and services, and empowers them to live life on their own terms. WWP is a national, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit [woundedwarriorproject.org](http://woundedwarriorproject.org).

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For further information: Mattison Brooks - Public Relations Specialist, Email: [mbrooks@woundedwarriorproject.org](mailto:mbrooks@woundedwarriorproject.org), Phone: 904.646.6897

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