

U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

contact: paoci@eur.army.mil
phone: 49-6221-57-5815 / DSN 370-5815
fax: 49-6221-57-6376 / DSN 370-6376



RELEASE #2008-02-01-03

Feb. 1, 2008

WOUNDED U.S. ARMY EUROPE SOLDIERS IN ITALY SNAG SOME THERAPEUTIC RELAXATION DURING FISHING EXCURSION

By Gary Kieffer

Editor, U.S. Army Europe Garrison Vicenza *Outlook*

VICENZA, Italy -- They say fishing is good for the soul. For Soldiers assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit on Caserma Ederle here, a day trip to Laghi Verdi in nearby Valproto di Quinto Vicentino Jan. 23 was a way to relieve stress by spending a sunny day among friends and comrades sharing a bit of friendly competition.



GARY KIEFFER

U.S. Army Europe Soldiers assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy fish in the Laghi Verdi in Valproto di Quinto Vicentino. The outing provided the wounded troops a day of relaxation and friendly competition to see who could catch the most and biggest fish.

Richard Boudreau was the man behind the event.

“I tried to figure out something that would benefit the Soldiers and get them out of the barracks for some fun,” said Boudreau.

“I figured fishing would be the easiest way to get the most Soldiers involved.”

Boudreau, who coordinated the event with the WTU and local Morale, Welfare and

Recreation officials, was well supported by a number of people and organizations.

Boudreau wrote more than 35 letters to potential sponsors asking for donations of money and prizes. He received several responses, many from local businesses and organizations

such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter, Global Credit Union, Community Bank, the Caserma Ederle commissary and Vicenza's MWR Outdoor Recreation facility.

“I went to Chris Wolff at Outdoor Rec and explained to him what I wanted to do and what I needed from them. They just stepped up to the plate and said yes,” he said.

“This was a no-brainer for us,” said Wolff.

“Dick headed this up and we supplied the funds necessary to get the licenses and pay for the fishing fees. This was a great way to help out our wounded Soldiers and invest our resources in a way that all of them could readily enjoy.”

“This took a lot of coordination,” said Staff Sgt. Patrick Chaplin, NCO-in-charge of the WTU. “Boudreau has been so proactive, driving the entire event for us.



GARY KIEFFER
Spc. Ramon Avilesrosario shows his first catch of the day during a trout fishing outing at Valproto di Quinto Vicentino, Italy Jan. 23. The trip was designed to provide some relaxation for Avilesrosario and other wounded U.S. Army Europe Soldiers assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit at nearby Caserma Ederle in Vicenza.

“This is all part of the healing process. We have different levels of injuries, so this is a good event to allow the maximum number of Soldiers to participate.”

“We get the guys out on a great day and stimulate their minds and challenge them a bit. They all seem to be having a good time; that’s what it’s all about for us. Many of them have never been fishing before,” he said.

More than a dozen Soldiers took the opportunity to visit the lake and try their hand at snagging a few trout.

“This was a good way for us to get out of the barracks and have fun as a unit,” said Pfc. Aaron Parris.

“The WTU folks take great care of us. I’ve been in the unit for six months now.

“I’m not an avid fisherman, but this was nice; to get out here and enjoy some down time together without anyone reinjuring themselves.”

Participants competed to see which individuals and teams could catch the most fish, and for the honor of largest caught by a Soldier. The prizes included coolers, a fishing rod, and a reel provided by sponsors. There were also handouts of baseball caps and bags.

A total of 86 fish were caught. Sgt. Steve Lourigan snagged first place with 14 fish. Second place went to Staff Sgt. Patrick Chaplin, whose 11 fish weighed a total of 3.5 pounds, followed closely by Spc. Ramon Avilesrosario, whose 11 weighed in at 3.5 pounds. Parris caught the largest fish -- a 7-pounder -- hooking the private a spin-casting rod and reel combination and a \$50 prize for his efforts.

In addition to angling, participants were treated to a typical Italian lunch of pasta and grilled meats with potatoes.

For Spc. Nancy Van Maaren, the fishing excursion was a first. But -- judging by her enthusiasm for the day's event -- not a "last."

"I didn't get a chance to fish back in Texas. I had a great time," she said. "I'm hooked."



www.hqusareur.army.mil