

Veterans enjoy healing waters



Dale Cherney and Bob Nixon hold Dale's bluefish.



Capt. Tom Langman lands a fish for Army veteran Peter Sargent.

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The result was the creation of "The Beach Plum Inn American Heroes Saltwater Challenge."

A host of volunteers that included Menemsha charter captains, Betsy Larsen of Larsen's Fish Market, and the Derby committee pitched in along with the Nixons. Many other Islanders alerted by word of mouth and stories published in The Times and Gazette, also helped.

Doriana Klumick, Beach Plum assistant manager, who was at the heart of the organizing effort, said a Cape Cod Express delivery truck pulled up to the inn Friday. She was not expecting a delivery.

The driver ran inside and said he had read about the veterans visit in The Times and wanted to donate to the effort. He handed her a \$20 bill.

On Monday evening the Nixons hosted a reception and dinner at the Beach Plum Inn. The venue provided a postcard view of Menemsha Harbor and Vineyard Sound out to Gay Head.

Terri Perry of Gorham, Maine, was anticipating fishing the next day with veteran charter captain Scott McDowell, one of several cap-

tains who had volunteered their time. "I'm in it to win it," she told me.

I asked what branch of the service she had served in. "There's only one," she said with a bright smile, "the Air Force."

A communications specialist, she had learned to fly fish in Alaska. The hospital recreational therapist introduced her to the program in Maine where she lives now.

She does not let her wheelchair get in the way of fishing. "I get thrown around quite a bit, but I'm oaky with that," she said.

Retired staff sergeant Butch Freeman of New Gloucester Maine served in the Army for 27 years until his injury-forced retirement. Monday night Butch sat across from me enjoying a steak and a glass of wine. "What brought me to this place?" he said repeating my question. "A very bad day."

He added, "I was in Mosul when the tent exploded." He paused, seemingly expecting me to acknowledge with a glimmer of recognition what was for him a fact, but had for me and I suspect many others long since faded into the endless news cycle. "A suicide bomber," he explained.

I did a little research on Butch's definition of a bad day. It is worth remembering the next time you hear someone complain about a bad day of Derby fishing.

It was three days before Christmas, 2004. Butch was with other members of the Maine Army National Guard's 133rd Engineer Battalion sitting down for lunch in a mess tent at a U.S. military base in Mosul, Iraq.

The blast from a suicide bomber struck almost directly in the center of the dining hall where an estimated 400 American and Iraqi soldiers and civilian contractors were eating. More than 20 people were killed and at least 60 were wounded.

Married with two daughters and two grandsons, Butch said his recovery has been a long process. "I think I'm getting there," he told me and gave credit to his wife of 24 years.

He stumbled across fishing as an activity to get him outdoors. The trip to Martha's Vineyard was his third fishing trip arranged through the hospital's recreational therapy program.

His injuries forced him to leave the Army, a fact he regrets. "It was my whole life," he said. Asked what it

was he liked about the Army, he thought a minute and said, "I liked pretty much everything about it. I grew up there."

On Thursday morning I joined the group for breakfast prior to their departure later that day. Much of the talk was about the fish they had caught and the unforgettable reception they received when they walked into the Derby weigh station to weigh in their fish.

Former Vietnam era medic Kattrina Sangillo was beaming over a catch of 15 fish in two days. Pete Sargent, a Vietnam era Army infantry veteran, said every captain was different. He was also very intrigued about something he learned while fishing off Gay Head. "I found out about the clothing optional beach," he said. "My goal was to have fun and I exceeded that."

Stanley Munson went fly fishing with captain Charlie Finnerty. He told me, "I want it said for the record that the blind guy never got his line tangled." Then he added, "But I did hook Charlie in the nose." Charlie took the injury in stride because he already had a doctor's appointment scheduled for later that day.



Sarah, Jack and Bob Nixon hosted a welcome dinner for the veterans and Derby committee members at the Beach Plum Inn Monday evening.

Army Staff Sergeant First Class Dale Cherney went to Walter Reed Hospital, he weighed in Tuesday. Now he was getting ready to return to Walter Reed Hospital, he proudly displayed on his Derby hat for

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64th Derby Results

(Through Tuesday, September 29)

Grand Leaders

Boat bluefish: Thomas J. Rapone, 13.81.
Shore bluefish: Angela J. Deltorto, 13.01.
Boat bass: Stephen J. Pietruska, 44.68.
Shore bass: Colin T. Britt, 29.22.
Boat bonito: Joe H. Turney, 9.12.
Shore bonito: Brian Gracie, 6.98.
Boat Albacore: William A. Pate, 12.66.
Shore Albacore: Keith A. McArt, 16.55.

Overall Leaders

All-Tackle Division

Boat bass: (1) Stephen J. Pietruska, 44.68 (2) Evan Metropoulos, 40.88; (3) Charles P. Finnerty, 40.53. Shore bass: (1) Colin T. Britt, 29.22; (2) Dana A. Rezendes, 28.23; (3) George P. Moran, 27.70. Boat bonito: (1) Joe H. Turney, 9.12; (2) Kenneth P. Baracchini, 8.90; (3) Joe Eldeiry, 8.64. Shore bonito: (1) Brian Gracie, 6.98; (2) Craig P. Salvaggio, 6.35; (3) Donald R. Sicard, 6.25. Boat bluefish: (1) Joseph P. Canha, 13.27; (2) Henry R. Fauteux, 13.20; (3) Tom Norbury, 12.89. Shore bluefish: (1) Angela J. Deltorto, 13.01; (2) Michael J. Mulcahy, 11.56; (3) John F. Schillinger, 11.36. Boat albacore: (1) William A. Pate, 12.66; (2) Lenny F. Beford, 12.12; (3) Jared E. Fisher, 11.42. Shore albacore: (1) Keith A. McArt, 16.55; (2) Mark Campos, 13.24; (3) Bernie B. Arruda, 10.38.

Fly Rod Division

Boat bass: (1) Paul W. Dimaura, 16.64; (2) John C. Rapone, 15.37. Shore bass: (1) Joe A. Dart, 16.59; (2) Tim P. Sheran, 15.84; (3) Herbert C. Tilton, III, 13.42. Boat bonito: (1) John C. Rapone, 5.77; (2) W. Brice Contessa, 5.73; (3)

Brian K. Nunes-Vais, 5.67. Shore bonito: (1) W. Brice Contessa, 6.38. Boat bluefish: (1) Thomas J. Rapone, 13.81; (2) Paul W. Dimaura, 8.68; (3) W. Brice Contessa, 7.81. Shore bluefish: (1) Art Crago, 4.74. Boat albacore: (1) Rob D. Morrison, 12.12; (2) John C. Rapone, 10.63; (3) Noah C. Maxner, 10.55. Shore albacore: (1) David A. Nash, 9.34; (2) Paul S. Sharpe, 9.01; (3) Jared Hull, 8.92.

Junior Division

Boat bass: (1) William C. Kadison, 27.49; (2) Townsend R. Morey, 20.87; (3) Jack W. Hewitt, 15.92. Shore bass: (1) Curtis J. Farrell, 17.71. Boat bonito: (1) William C. Kadison, 7.48; (2) Christopher A. Mayhew, 6.87; (3) Maggie M. Riseborough, 6.53. Shore bonito: (1) Evandro Medici, Jr., 4.45. Boat bluefish: (1) William C. Kadison, 11.06; (2) Caelan K. Watts, 10.56; (3) Donald F. O'Shaughnessey, Jr., 10.28. Shore bluefish: (1) Hunter D. Wojslaw, 8.08; (2) Derrick C. Weckman, 7.00; (3) Dawson Riggs, 3.83. Boat albacore: (1) Bryan Carter, 12.39; (2) Alec B. Cobban, 10.53; (3) Emily M. Turney, 10.31. Shore albacore: (1) Curtis J. Farrell, 10.96; (2) Cameron Maciel, 6.79.

Mini Junior Division

Boat bass: (1) Dylan Kadison, 28.02; (2) Brendan R. Morris, 27.15; (3) Nolan Bouchard, 19.31. Boat bonito: (1) Dylan Kadison, 6.67; (2) Mike B. Metcalf, 5.95; (3) Brendan R. Morris, 5.33. Boat bluefish: (1) Gus N. Hoy, 11.14; (2) Victoria Scott, 10.45; (3) Nolan Bouchard, 10.20. Shore bluefish: (1) Brendan R. Morris, 8.84; (2) Tristan R. Blair, 4.27. Boat albacore: (1) Brendan R. Morris, 8.33; (2) Katherine G. O'Brien, 7.90.

Daily Winners

Wednesday, September 23

All Tackle
Boat bonito: (1) Tara Morris, 8.54; (2) Carl P. Sherr, 7.44; (3) Steve J. Baccelli, 6.51; (4) William Pappastratis, 6.22. Shore bonito: (1) Pedro Guzman, 5.36. Boat bluefish: (1) Henry R. Fauteux, 13.20; (2) Gary R. Look, 12.01; (3) Tom Norbury, 12.01; (4) William E. Welch, 11.85. Shore bluefish: (1) John F. Schillinger, 11.36; (2) Peter L. Shepardon, 10.62; (3) Elizabeth B. Mellon, 10.33; (4) Stanley W. Brown, 9.97. Boat bass: (1) Corliss Maciel, 27.33; (2) Nils Leaf, 25.07; (3) James J. Stinemire, 24.39; (4) Billy L. Sweeney, 23.79. Shore bass: (1) Colin T. Britt, 29.22; (2) Joseph J. Rogers, 24.02; (3) Glenn J. Stalgren, 23.67; (4) Dana A. Rezendes, 23.52.

Fly Rod Division

Boat bonito: (1) John C. Rapone, 5.77.

Junior Division

All Tackle
Boat bonito: (1) Quinn C. Keefe, 4.94. Boat bass: (1) Nolan Bouchard, 19.31; (2) Brendan R. Morris, 17.61.

Thursday, September 24

All Tackle
Boat bonito: (1) Taylor Collins, 7.59; (2) Glenn Peters, 6.56; (3) William B. Allen, 6.01; (4) Charlie G. Canfield, 5.76. Shore bonito: (1) Steven J. Wood, 5.78; (2) Tim Waite, 5.51. Boat bluefish: (1) James E. Joyce, 11.78; (2) Sam T. Bell, 11.43; (3) Ben T. Ross, 10.55; (4) Paul F. Porter, 10.01. Shore bluefish: (1) Brian J. Flaherty, 9.73; (2) Ted Krawiecki, 8.46; (3) Andrew L. Scheriff, 8.09; (4) Patricia DuPlessis, 5.89. Boat bass: (1) Michael Lovuolo, 35.56; (2) John Narkewich, 26.10; (3) Mark S. Morris,

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Oak Bluffs blaze

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the building. Firefighters sounded three short blasts from the fire truck air horns, the signal to evacuate.

Once the interior attack ended, flames broke through the roof again, and firefighters began attacking the flames from above. A powerful stream of water was poured into the home from the aerial platform. About 12:20 pm, the flames were finally out, but not before most of the roof had collapsed.

Throughout the day, about 50 firefighters were involved in battling the blaze. The first firefighters on the scene called for mutual aid from the Tisbury and Edgartown departments.

Tragedy hits home

The D'Arcys lived in the home with their two small children. Mr. D'Arcy, a stonemason by trade, is well known on the Island as the co-owner of Contemporary Landscapes, a large Vineyard Haven landscaping firm. Before the birth of her children, Kimberly D'Arcy was a teacher at the Charter School. Mr. D'Arcy arrived at the fire scene just minutes after it began, and watched with remarkable composure from a neighbor's lawn. Some time later, Kimberly D'Arcy returned from the beach, but was stopped near the end of the street, where firefighters had blocked access. She was still unaware that her home was on fire. Mr. D'Arcy ran to the end of the street where she was waiting. Surrounded by friends and family who supported them literally and figuratively, the couple

walked back down Carole Avenue, where Ms. D'Arcy fell to her knees in tears at the sight of the flames. The two parents held their children close, helpless to do anything but watch the devastation. In the end, the home, and nearly all of its contents, were destroyed by the water and flames.

"It was surreal," Mr. D'Arcy said. "You don't think it's ever going to happen to you."

Long before the flames were extinguished, the Island's sense of community and generosity was evident.

"There were people who came up to us while we were standing outside the house and put money in our hands, that we don't even know," Mr. D'Arcy said.

Yesterday, he reflected on the loss, the outpouring of support he has experienced since the fire, and his relief that his family was not at home. "Knowing that, I don't feel any different when I have nothing, than I did when I had everything I needed." Most of the couples' family members and close friends were still on the Island after attending a christening the day before. With the help of local merchants, they have taken care of the family's immediate needs, including temporary living space. Plans are under way for a future event to raise funds for long-term needs.

"We'll be fine," Mr. D'Arcy said. "I have a list of 50 phone calls, everybody I've ever probably met on Martha's Vineyard called to ask what they could do." ♦

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PHOTOS BY STEVE MYRICK

Fire raged through the D'Arcy house Monday, and flames burst through the roof as it collapsed.



Friends and family support Jack and Kimberly D'Arcy as they approach their burning home.

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told me over breakfast Thursday.

Dale has been in the hospital since October 14, 2007. "I'm hoping to be home by April 2010," he said. Home is the small town of Mosinee, Wisconsin. "I'm going to go home and do nothing for a while."

The trip to Martha's Vineyard provided Dale with his first ferry ride of any type and first opportunity to fish in saltwater. He said he was very glad to have the opportunity.

It would be easy to think that the men and women we see in news reports on combat patrols are the only folks in harm's way. But

every member of the military signs on for a degree of risk, irrespective of the assignment

Dale was with the 376th Finance Management Unit on his third tour of duty. He was, relatively speaking, in a safe area when Camp Liberty suffered a mortar attack on Oct. 10, 2007.

"Three of us were coming out of the chow hall," he said. "We were heading to our vehicle when the siren went off and someone said, 'not again.' I turned around to look at the person who said not again. There was a clicking sound and a flash of light and I remember being on the ground with direct pressure on my neck."

Dale went in and out of consciousness. He remembers being wheeled down a hallway with the sounds of a helicopter in the background. He remembers nothing between that moment and two months later when he woke up at Walter Reed.

He had lost his left leg below the knee and his left eye, his spleen had been removed and he suffered from various abdominal injuries.

Dale told me he had been in Iraq during two previous tours in seemingly far more precarious places. He noted that when he was injured he was in a seemingly safe place. "Fate has a funny way of dealing with stuff," he said without a hint of irony.

Recovering at Walter Reed he latched onto fishing as a way to get out of the hospital, meet people and engage in some physical activity. Retired Navy Capt. Ed Nicholson, a fisherman and hunter, who founded Healing Waters, suggested that Dale make the Vineyard trip.

Over eggs, toast, and coffee in the elegant Beach Plum Inn dining room, Dale told me he joined the military in 1984 because he wanted to serve the country and he did not have money for college. "I was a poor person," he said, "and the only other direction I had was a factory job and I wasn't interested in a factory job."

He said the Army had been a wonderful experience. He had traveled the world, seen the pyramids, Budapest, Panama, Germany, and served on UN missions.

Now he walks with a cane and has one brown eye and one blue eye, or two brown

eyes depending on his mood. "I have some fun with it," he said. "Most people are too polite to say anything."

Knowing what he knows now, I asked, what did he have to say about his decision to enter the military.

"I wouldn't change a thing in the world even with the injuries," he said. "I was just in a bad place at a bad time. I can't be angry so I just have to deal with what I have. I just have limitations now. I can't do things the way other people do them so I have to find other ways to do them."

I turned to Butch, seated next to me. What

had his military experience meant to him?

"The military is my life," Butch said. "I think of the Army as a family."

He said he took one thing away from Healing Waters. "It is okay to be a survivor. Because that is half the battle, because your friends died right next to you," he said.

Dale and Butch noted that each has a special date coming up. It is the day each commemorates his survival and the deaths of military comrades.

"You call it your alive day," Butch said. ♦

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Butch Freeman held up a bonito at the weigh station.



PHOTOS BY RICHARD FRANKLIN

Tamar Franklin, Terri Perry, and Peter Sargent with the catch of the day.