



US Army Corps of Engineers
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Wounded warriors

play sports together for more than 40 years

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By Robert Kidd

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (May 9, 2013) – David Aguilera and Daniel Hernandez, wounded veterans, met during tough times and forged a friendship that has kept them and their families moving forward together over the past 40 years – while playing a variety of wheelchair sports.

These two friends from the central valley of California were among more than three dozen veterans who came together May 4, 2013, for some bass fishing and story-telling during “Take a Warrior Fishing” – a special event hosted at Success Lake, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District park near Porterville, Calif.

Aguilera, an Army veteran, was injured in Vietnam when a mortar round hit his foxhole. Hernandez, a Marine, was injured in a motorcycle accident about the same time and the two men met while undergoing rehabilitation therapy at the Fresno Veterans Administration Hospital in 1972.

“We got into wheelchair basketball and road racing in the 80s, under the coaching of Dick Thomas, a man who really spearheaded advancements in wheelchair sports,” said Hernandez. “We also got involved in some track and field events, but our big sport together was tennis.”

“I even introduced David to the lady who is now his wife,” smiled Hernandez.

Hernandez admits the passing years have changed which sports appeal to the pair.

Along with bass fishing, “we lean toward bowling,” said Hernandez with a grin. “There’s something to be said for a sport where you can push a button for table service.”

The Success Lake “Take a Warrior Fishing”

Photos



The “Three D” team sets out for fishing – from left are Daniel Hernandez, David Aguilera and Darrel Joy, along with volunteer crew members. Photo cropped for emphasis. (Photo by Robert Kidd)



David Aguilera, foreground right, baits his line for another cast, while Daniel Hernandez, left, and a volunteer crew member look on. Photo cropped for emphasis. (Photo by Robert Kidd)



event, sponsored by numerous corporate donations, gave 40 wounded veterans and their families a chance to relax and share food, fishing and funny stories with one another and their hosts.

Fishermen from several regional bass fishing clubs provided their expertise and their ultra-modern bass boats. A small army of volunteers helped guide activities – including a dozen members of the Marauders baseball team from Monache High School and 20 personnel from the Wal-Mart distribution center in Porterville.





