

Marine Veteran helping other Veterans cope with PTSD through deep sea fishing



Marine Corps Veteran Brian Barber Sr. knows firsthand how difficult life can be once you take off the uniform and leave the battlefield behind you – he’s been living it for more than 10 years.

“Seeing Veterans like myself, wounded and broken from battle affects your day-to-day living in ways that you can’t imagine,” said Barber, who served from 1995 to 2005 as a radio operator and did tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

According to the National Center for PTSD, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are the longest combat operations since Vietnam. Many stressors face these Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) troops.

As an OEF/OIF Veteran himself, Barber wanted to do more for Veterans dealing with PTSD.

“I felt like I needed to do more for my fellow Veterans. Fishing and serving Veterans. I love the therapeutic aspect,” said Barber, who decided to combine his passion for deep-sea fishing along with his admiration for his fellow Veterans by offering free fishing trips to his fellow Veterans.

After discussing the idea with a couple of his Veteran buddies, he started Barber’s Anglers Anonymous Ventura Coast, a nonprofit group on Arroyo Grande in California. The group’s focus is on helping disabled Veterans and Veterans who are coping with PTSD.

A group of 15 Veterans was treated to a free fishing charter on the open sea near Anacapa Island a few months ago. The trip was the first for the nonprofit operation and included equipment and meals.

“The idea of taking my fellow Veterans, Servicemen and women who suffer from PTSD fishing and helping them feel peace for any length of time, is not only therapeutic and rewarding for them, but for myself as well,” he said.

Barber has scheduled his next trip for May with more Veterans. “When you say the word ‘Veteran,’ people take it personal. I want it to be personal,” he said