



Members of Veterans of Foreign Wars Downriver Post 7487 prepare lunch for their honored guests. • Honored American Veterans Afield guests pose for a photo following their fishing trip Sunday in Lewiston. • They were treated to lunch soon after at the Moose Lodge on Water Street.

VFW HOSTS SOLDIERS FROM WALTER REED

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

Veterans from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, were treat-

ed to lunch Sunday at the Lower Niagara Moose Lodge 584 in Lewiston. They were the guests of Veterans of Foreign Wars Downriver Post 7487.

Cmdr. Gordon Spencer said, "This is what the VFW does: We take care of veterans, and they take care of us."

Former Cmdr. Bill Justyk added, "I think it's a plus for us – for our VFW and our community. These guys, they like to come here. And I think every year we should continue to do this, if possible."

The meal, catered by Favorites Pizza & Wings, was the culmination of a weekend trip to the River Region. Similar excursions were held in 2018 and 2019.

Event coordinator Steve Macdonald said, "Honored American Veterans Afield is just happy to be back in Lewiston, out fishing this morning with six veterans. And

now we're excited – and hungry; we're gonna go to lunch with the VFW. They hosted us a couple years ago, and are doing it again today. We're super-happy.

"We have three Marines, three sailors, and one Army guy. For your readers who are sharp on the math, that's seven. I'm including myself. I'm a Navy veteran. Very fortunate that I came home with all my fingers and toes. A couple of these guys weren't that lucky. Each one of these veterans has paid a price – whether they served just a couple of years or 20 and retired."

Prior to lunch, the veterans went fishing with captains from Eastern Lake Erie Charter Boat Association.

Macdonald noted, "The Niagara was nice to us; we were able to catch some fish, and we're having a good time. We're gonna wrap up today with an old-timey gun shoot

– muzzleloader shoot – and then we'll head back down to Walter Reed and get these guys back in the process."

They had more luck on Saturday, pheasant hunting with the Fin, Feather, and Fur Conservation Society (3F). More than a dozen birds were collected.

"It was a good day yesterday," Macdonald said. "To kind of recap the whole weekend, we had some great coaching and shooting training Friday morning; and then we got to tour Old Fort Niagara. The history there is amazing. And then we got some more shooting training yesterday morning with some more great coaches. And then we did do some pheasant hunting yesterday afternoon. And it went pretty well. We got a good number of birds. So, plenty happy with that.

"We were able to pick out a couple nice birds. The guys, a number of them, this is the first time pheasant hunting. So, they're gonna get those birds mounted. We got those packed up and on ice, ready for the trip to the taxidermist. And then this morning, we got out and we caught a couple fish. And a couple firsts there, too. One of our guys caught a walleye – never caught one before.

"Just really, all around, the folks up here have been super to us, and we really appreciate it."

The VFW is set to hold a poppy drive from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 6-7 at DiMino Lewiston Tops. It will then hold the annual Veterans Day observance at 11 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 11, at the "Circle of Honor" monument in Academy Park.

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