

Pahrump Valley Times Article

Nevada Outdoor Adventure Foundation Launches

J. Adam Bedard

In July, the newly formed Nevada Outdoor Adventure Foundation (NVOAF) facilitated a tuna fishing trip from San Diego for recipient Nick Williams. This was the inaugural adventure which was largely funded by a generous donation from Valley Electric in Pahrump, NV.

The NVOAF is the Nevada chapter of the national organization, Outdoor Adventure Foundation. NVOAF provides hunting and fishing adventures for combat-disabled veterans under the age of 40 that were wheelchair bound caused by injury during active service or have lost a limb during active service. In addition, NVOAF provides adventures for young adults and children under the age of 25 with cancer or other life-threatening illness. The NVOAF was conceived and established by Lt. General E. R. "Buck" Bedard, USMC (ret.) who recruited family and friends to join him in the worthwhile endeavor. General Bedard says, "I grew up hunting and fishing and learned a great deal about self-reliance and overcoming challenges that nature presented. I wanted to pass this on and encourage those that are facing real, daily challenges in their lives. Nature provides us with strength and reasons to persevere."

Nick Williams was injured in Afghanistan when an enemy IED exploded beneath the vehicle Williams was manning at the time. After the dust settled and Williams awoke in a field hospital, he realized his left arm had been gruesomely injured. After several surgeries to try and reattach the arm were less than successful, Williams made the difficult decision to have the arm below the elbow removed. "Infection was the main problem," Williams remembers in his first interview with NVOAF members, "my hand was as black as a cocktail napkin. They told me that I would only have minimal movement in one or two fingers, and I decided to just have (the arm) removed."

Williams is a strong bearded man who is not afraid of new challenges. NVOAF set him up with a fishing trip for Yellowfin tuna aboard the Reel Champion docked in H&M Landing in San Diego, CA. Accompanied by board members and Chairman General Bedard, the group drove to San Diego, where lodging was provided by MCRD. The group settled in for the evening, anticipating a very early call to the dock. As the fishing gods would have it, they received a call informing them that the bite was happening later in the day, of late, and they could sleep until 9am. Even the fish, it seemed, wanted Williams to truly enjoy the trip.

The next morning, arriving promptly, the NVOAF fishermen boarded the Reel Champion, a 46ft beauty with Captain Gary Abbamonte and two mates. The trip commenced on time. The ocean was calm with only a hint of swell. Once the gear was out and the fish tales got spinning in earnest, the first fish hit the bait. Williams was immediately put on the rod and with the assistance of the fantastic mates helping to hold it steady, Williams fought an estimated 200lb tuna from the undulating Pacific. When the fish was approximately 20 yards from the boat, the fish jumped and with a quick slash of its head, threw the hook. All became still on the boat, as the beast slipped below the waves.

Adversity builds character. The crew re-baited and continued to fish. Williams had done his best and there was nothing he could have done better. The fish was destined to live a little longer. It dampened the mood for a bit...until the rod went off again.

This time, the mood was determined and unrelenting. Williams was back on the rod, fighting the fish with a fierce fortitude. When he would need a break, other members on the boat would jump in and maintain pressure on the fish. This one was not going to get away. All members of the boat were on the rod at some point, but Williams was the champion of the day, and after a long fight, the 140lb tuna was gaffed and brought on board by the expert crew.

After high fives and cheers subsided, Williams, exhausted and sweating asked for his phone. His call was to his parents. "It was the best day of my life," was overheard by NVOAF Chairman Gen. Bedard. Mission accomplished.

If you would like to go fishing from San Diego, NVOAF highly recommends contacting the Reel Champion at (619)222-1144. The expert crew was extremely capable and attentive. You will enjoy your time on the water with them. You can also request information at info@hmlanding.com

Seared Tuna with Wasabi Mashed Potatoes and Bok Choy



2 8oz Tuna Steak

Whipped Potatoes

Wasabi Paste

Fresh Baby Bok Choy 4 heads

Lemon

Salt

Pepper

Olive Oil

In a hot skillet, place the tuna steak that has been seasoned with salt and pepper and coated with olive oil for 2 minutes per side.

Prepare mashed potatoes and mix in 1/4 to 1/2 tsp of the wasabi paste to taste. Mix thoroughly.

Steam whole baby Bok Choy with lemon and water for 10 minutes. Serve immediately. Serves 2



Lt. Gen. "Buck" Bedard with NVOAF recipient, Nick Williams, proudly display 140lb. tuna caught aboard the Reel Champion.



Determination dominates the face of Nick Williams and mate of the Reel Champion while fighting tuna off the coast of San Diego.



NVOAF recipient, Nick Williams, and his 140lb tuna.



The 46 foot Reel Champion which leaves from H&M Landing in San Diego is your boat for fishing the Pacific.



NVOAF recipient, Nick Williams, and NVOAF director, 1st Sergeant Jay Foote, at the conclusion of a successful trip aboard the Reel Champion.