

# Fishing for Forces

## Background

In November 2009 Lt Will Davies wrote A Letter From Helmand to Trout & Salmon wonderfully articulating that thoughts of days on the river bank were a great mental restorer in the somewhat fraught circumstances he was dealing with.

Christopher Robinson replied to the Editor that Will's letter struck many a cord. He had a wonderful 11 years soldiering, always taking his fishing rod to far flung places. His son, Edward, was Afgan bound soon and was also passionate fisherman. Time spent on a river bank was indeed a huge healer. He ended by saying that he had asked Will to fish with him next summer and maybe other readers might ask returning personnel to join them for a days fishing.

As a result of these letters in Trout & Salmon it quickly became clear that there was a great deal of support for the concept of offering some restorative time on the river bank to Service personnel returning from Operational Duty; Bill Howell wrote to Christopher Robinson and Andrew Flitcroft, the Editor of Trout and Salmon, suggesting the concept of Fishing for Forces.

## Fishing for Forces

Our view is that anyone who has been on an Operational Tour could do with a touch of peace and quiet and would benefit from the healing effect that a day by the water has to offer.

Our aim is to provide fishing for those returning from Operational Duty.

This also provides, in a modest way, a means by which those of us not in the Services can show our appreciation of what they do for us.

## Who is eligible?

All service men and women from the Navy, Army or Air Force who have returned from Operational Duty within the previous 18 months.

## What fishing are we looking for?

We will be grateful for any offers, so far we have received an eclectic and geographically wide range of offerings from Fishing Donors, varying from 10 people for a day on a trout lake to fishing syndicate members who just want to take one serviceman under their wing on their own beat for a day. Others have offered salmon fishing and coarse fishing.

Some offers are date specific, in other words a set date or dates in the year, others are more open ended and are 'by mutual arrangement'.

There will be some fisheries that can cater for wheel chairs and the disabled – but many that cannot. Some Donors will be able to cater for novice fishers and perhaps supply tackle for the day – other offers will be more suited to people with some experience.

The Donor Form has a section to fill in regarding the facilities on offer.

## How do we allocate the fishing?

One of our aims is to make the distribution of the fishing available as easy as possible.

We are working with the three Services' Personnel Branches to ensure that Units returning from an Operational Deployment are informed of Fishing for Forces offers within their geographical area.

We will encourage the Military Unit or individual to contact the Donor directly in order to discuss arrangements.

## How to Donate?

Please contact us, details below, and we will ask you to provide details of your offer.

In this, our first year, we aim to supply the Services' Personnel Branches with a full list of fishing available by the end of March. We will let all donors know when this has happened.

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