

Mid-Atlantic Council 14th Annual Banquet *Emphasizing Education*

Wounded Warrior

MAC Members Show Appreciation



Two MAC fly fishers showed their appreciation for the service of First Lieutenant Eivind Forseth, a US Army Ranger wounded in Iraq, at the MAC Annual Banquet and Fundraiser Nov. 5.

Dr. Mike Saylor of Hagerstown, MD, made the winning bid on a to-be-custom-made fly rod in the auction. John Brognard and Don Fine of B&F Custom Fishing Rods would build the rod to Mike Saylor's specifications. However, Mike decided to give the rod to Lt. Forseth. So John and Don will make the rod to his specs, and Lt. Forseth will put the rod to good use both here in the MAC area and when he returns to his home in Billings, Montana.

Since a fly rod isn't much good without a reel, Noel Gollenhon of Gaithersburg, MD, the winning bidder on an Orvis Battenkill wide arbor reel, donated the reel to Lt. Forseth. With the help of the brace shop at Walter Reed Medical Center (WRAMC) in Washington, DC, Lt. Forseth has developed a device which enables him to operate the reel with his badly wounded right arm that has very limited motion and sensation.

Lt. Forseth attended the banquet as the guest of Tom Sadler, MAC's director on the FFF Board of Directors.

Lt. Forseth is a participant in the Healing Waters Fly Fishing Project, co-sponsored by FFF MAC and the National Capital Chapter of Trout Unlimited. The project has two programs which aid the Occupational Therapy Clinic at WRAMC by using fly fishing and fly tying to rehabilitate the soldiers, marines, and sailors who have lost limbs or the use of wounded limbs in Afghanistan and Iraq. Retired US Navy Captain Ed Nicholson of Port Tobacco, MD, an FFF member in the National Capital Chapter, heads up the fly fishing part of the project, and retired US Army Chief Warrant Officer John Colburn of Washington, DC, teaches the fly tying class.

On a related note, a number of MAC members have offered to take the wounded warriors on fishing trips to "secret waters" come Spring.

The Healing Waters Fly Fishing Project is a pilot for programs to be implemented by FFF clubs and TU chapters to help the rehabilitation of the several thousand wounded warriors in military and VA hospitals throughout the nation.

Fly Tying

A Learning Experience

Live and learn. How many times have you heard that old adage? Well, I really must be living because I've really been learning!

As a part of the Healing Waters Fly Fishing Project I've been teaching fly tying to four servicemen at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. That's no big thing in itself; I've taught quite a few fly tyers over the years.

What makes this class different and a real learning experience is that three of the men lost their left arms in action in Afghanistan and Iran. They were taking the tying class as a part of their occupational therapy to learn fine motor skills with their new artificial arms and hands. The fourth did not lose an arm, but his right elbow and hand had been badly wounded and had very little movement and almost no sensitivity. Fortunately, the three with artificial arms were right handed while the one with the wounded right arm was left handed. "That would simplify things," I thought.

The first class was held, and the learning began. Oh yes, the students did learn, but I probably learned more much more. That class involved just the basics: the fly tying tools and their uses, placing the hook in the vise, tying the thread on the hook, and doing a whip finish, either with the Materelli whip finisher or with the fingers. The video from the DVD set, *Basic Fly Tying* with Marve Nolte demonstrating the procedures, was projected on the wall, giving the students a clear view of the good clear demonstration.

The simple acts of adjusting the vise, placing a hook in it, and starting the thread on the hook—simple acts for us "temporarily able" folks—required special techniques because of the different types of prosthesis and an almost inert right hand. With the help of Sandy Burk, we were able to make adaptations that got the basics done.

Then came the whip finishing. The three with prosthesis were soon able to use the whip finish tool, but the southpaw was having trouble with it. So I had him try the two fingered whip finish. That was even worse, so I tried to demonstrate it for him.

I had been using the two fingered whip finisher for more than 50 years, but only with my right hand. After about 15 minutes of fumbling and failure, I tied a left-handed whip finish! After seeing me do it several times, the student tried it and soon was able to tie a whip finish with two fingers. With that success, the class was dismissed.

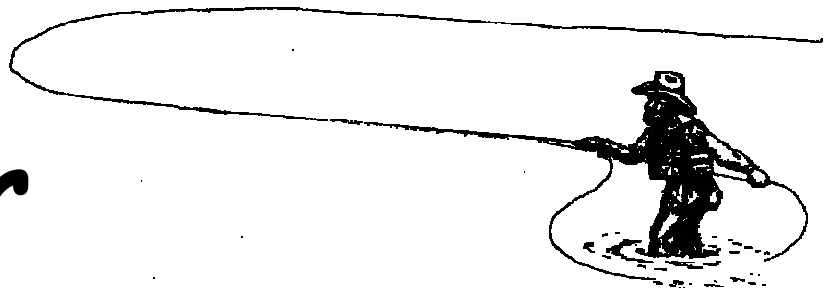
The motivation and determination of these guys is something to see. They know that besides learning something useful, they are developing the fine motor skills that will help them do many other things with their prosthesis and wounded arm and hand. They are also involved in the fly fishing part of the Healing Waters Project so they will be able to use the flies they tie on their fishing trips in the Spring.

I am probably learning more than the students. Besides learning to do a left-handed whip finish, I am learning to make other adaptations to compensate for the prosthesis and the wounded limbs. I'm also learning that the plans I made about teaching the class were only a very rough guide. The class will take longer than expected, and further adaptations will have to be made.

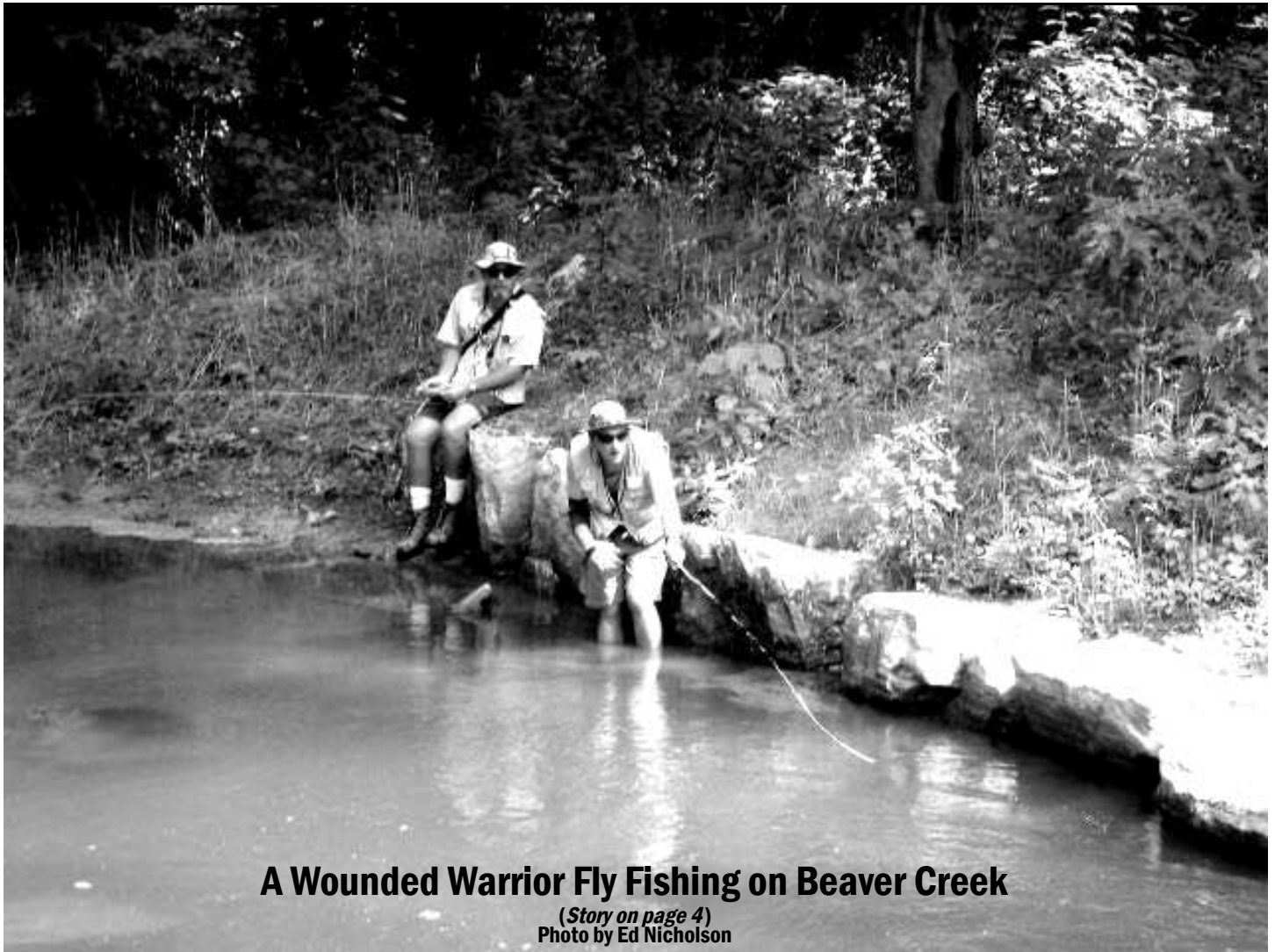
This is far from being the easiest job I've ever done, but the rewards are great. Just knowing that I'm helping these guys learn to use their wounded hands and prosthesis and have confidence in their bodies is reward enough.

John Colburn

Mid-Atlantic Flyfisher



Autumn 2005 The Quarterly Journal of the Federation of Fly Fishers' Mid-Atlantic Council Vol. 4, No. 3

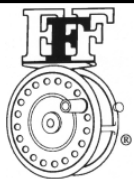


A Wounded Warrior Fly Fishing on Beaver Creek

(Story on page 4)
Photo by Ed Nicholson

IN THIS ISSUE:

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING	2
FFF MAC 14TH ANNUAL BANQUET	10
FIRST MID-ATLANTIC FLY TYER'S EXPO	11
WORLD CHAMPION ATLANTIC SALMON FLY TYER	12



Representing fly fishers, their clubs, the fish and the waters in
Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland,
Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia



Cover Story

Wounded Warriors Fly Fish Beaver Creek

Three wounded warriors from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, led by FFF member Ed Nicholson and five volunteers from the National Capital Chapter of TU, had a chance to try their fly fishing skills on Beaver Creek Saturday, August 13. Two of the three were able to hook up on trout despite the 95 degree temperature, but no trout were brought to hand.

The cover picture shows First Lieutenant Eivind Forseth, an Army Ranger, tempting a rising brown trout while his coach, Mark Eusis, observes. Lt. Forseth's right arm was severely damaged by an Improvised Explosive Device in Iraq. Fortunately he is a southpaw and casts left-handed. His Army Ranger skills helped him sneak up on the trout. This trout did not take his fly. A trout at a different location was hooked, but broke off.

The trip to Beaver Creek was part of a fly fishing and tying project being conducted by the National Capital Chapter and the Mid-Atlantic Council of FFF. Ed Nicholson heads up the casting and fishing program while John Colburn will teach a fly tying class to service men and women who have suffered arm and hand wounds in Iraq and Afghanistan. Those classes will begin after Labor Day.

The fly rods and fishing equipment are donated or loaned to the program. The fly tying tools are loaned to the program by FFF MAC, and the materials have been donated by several suppliers or purchased by FFF MAC at reduced prices from Angler's Lie in Arlington and the Orvis stores in Tysons Corner and Arlington, all in Virginia.

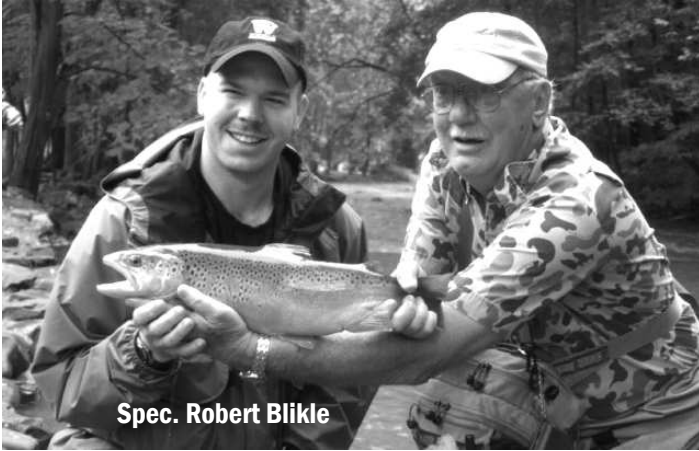
The Wounded Warrior Fly Fishing Project will be an on-going one and will be made available to both FFF and TU so other clubs and chapters around the country can teach fly fishing and fly tying to many of wounded warriors in the military and Veterans Affairs hospitals.

Any FFF members who wish to donate usable fly fishing or tying equipment and materials should contact John Colburn by e-mail (preferred) johnwcolburn@msn.com, by snail mail at AFRH-W 1122, 3700 N Capitol St NW, Washington, DC 20011-8400, or by phone at 202-545-8776. Donors will receive a receipt for their donations from FFF. The donations may be tax deductible under FFF's 501c3 status and IRS regulations.

Since some equipment and materials may have to be purchased, cash donations are invited.

John Colburn

Going First Class Wounded Warriors Fish Private Waters



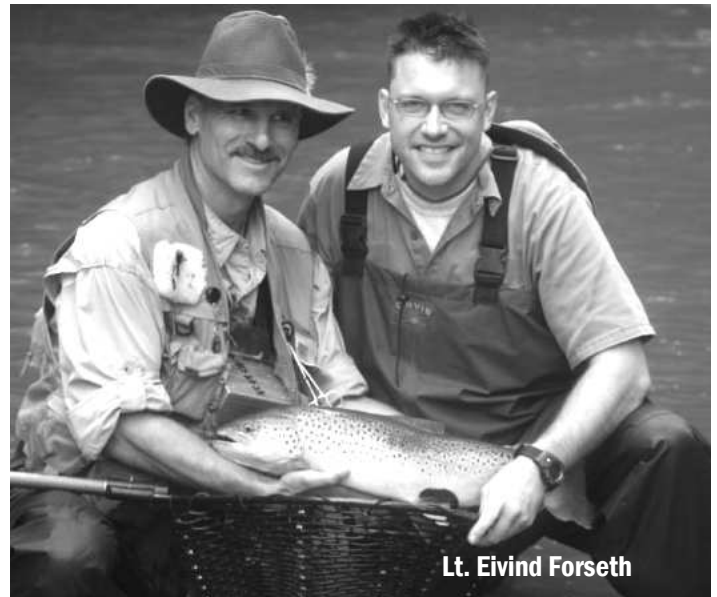
Spec. Robert Blikle

On August 30-31 five wounded warriors from Walter Reed Army Medical Center were the guests of the Spring Ridge Club on Spruce Creek in Pennsylvania. They paid much higher dues for the experience than the \$75,000 membership fee and \$4,260 annual dues the regular members pay or the \$2,400 normally charged four people for lodging and two days guided fishing on some ten miles of private limestone streams. Combat wounds are a high price for anything.



Spec. Richard Ingram

Escorted by FFF member Ed Nicholson of the National Capital Chapter of TU, and Captain Tim Valentine of WRAMC, First Lieutenant Eivind Forseth, an Army Ranger; Army Specialist Robert Blikle; Army Specialist Richard Ingram and two other soldiers whose names are not available, fished Spruce Creek and the Little Juniata, guided by guides from the Spring Ridge Club. All of the guys caught lots of nice trout, some going 27 inches. Ed and Tim got in a little fishing, but mostly ferried the warriors around to different beats on the streams.



Lt. Eivind Forseth

Ed Nicholson reported, "We stayed in one of their guest houses and enjoyed fabulous meals and service in beautiful surroundings."

More fishing trips are planned for these and other wounded warriors as a part of the FFF MAC and National Capital Chapter TU Wounded Warrior Fly Fishing Project.

Photos by
Ed Nicholson