

Blue-collar boaters on Boston Harbor honor disabled veterans with 65th annual fishing trip

By Kerry J. Byrne | July 20, 2023



Volunteers help load people onto boats during the 65th annual disabled veterans fishing trip in the fishing community of Houghs Neck in Quincy, Massachusetts, on July 19, 2023. (Windy Berry Hogan)

The sacrifices of America's wounded warriors are honored each year with a patriotic spectacle hosted by the lobstermen of Houghs Neck, a historic 400-year-old fishing community on [Boston Harbor](#).

The tight-knit neighborhood of blue-collar boaters hosted its 65th annual [disabled veterans](#) fishing trip on Wednesday.

It's a tradition that began with the grandparents and great-grandparents of today's boat captains.

"Houghs Neck is a [community of patriots](#)," Kevin Gomez, president of Harvey's Salt Water Fishing Club, which organizes the event each year, told Fox News Digital.

"We're just working-class people. Lobstermen, plumbers, bricklayers, electricians. Taking care of our veterans just gets passed down through the generations," he said.

Some 200 disabled American warriors are bussed into the peninsula community in [Quincy, Massachusetts](#), each year from veterans' hospitals across the state.

Scores of volunteers help roll veterans in wheelchairs down the ramps and onto the [fishing vessels](#).

The boats sail out into Boston Harbor with police boat and fire boat escort.

Windy Berry Hogan, a Houghs Neck native and mother of four, has participated in the veterans fishing trip since she was a child in the 1970s.

She was introduced to the event by her fisherman father, Jay Berry, who died when she was just 11 years old.

She crewed a fishing boat on Wednesday, helping veterans bait hooks and handing out drinks.

"The next generation is involved in the tradition. I bet my dad is smiling about this," said Hogan.

"I believe [the love of this day](#) is passed down in our families and that is why it has had 65 successful years."

Gomez, the event organizer, said at least one veteran joined the festivities for the first time this year.

Kevin Mulvey of New York was [Army best buddies](#) with Gomez's uncle, Raymond West, who was killed in Vietnam on Dec. 13, 1968.

The West/Gomez family recently found Mulvey on social media and invited him to the fishing excursion. The family met Mulvey on Tuesday night for the first time.

"Kevin tried to resuscitate my uncle when he was hit by a mortar shell," said Gomez.

"My uncle died in this guy's arms. It haunted him his whole life. Meeting him provided a bit of closure for all of us. My parents took him to Raymond's grave." He added, "He was so pumped to be here. It was a great day."

More than a dozen lobster boats line the docks stern to pier. The traditional open sterns of lobster boats provide an ideal platform for American heroes struggling with mobility issues to get onboard. The patriotic spectacle began in the 1950s when local lobstermen hosted disabled vets from [World War II](#) and Korea.

It continues today with a new generation of lobstermen who take out veterans of Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

"This is Houghs Neck at its best, giving back to those who gave the most," neighborhood resident Scott Campbell told Fox News Digital.

"Our fishing community, our veterans, our American way of life — it's always been this way in Houghs Neck."

Hard-working lobstermen donate their time, gas, money, sweat and labor each year, despite daunting challenges such as over-regulation from government that make it nearly impossible for individual fishermen to live off the sea.

Harvey's Salt Water Fishing Club raises thousands of dollars each year to help fund the event by selling paper flounder placards at local pubs.

For a donation of \$5 or \$10, supporters write down the name of a friend, family member or other loved one and tape the tribute to the barroom wall.

The walls of pubs around the city are filled with the fundraising flounder each summer. It's a cap tip to local lore.

The City of Quincy, located next to Boston, is best known as the birthplace of great patriots John Adams and John Hancock, the two men who ignited the American Revolution.

He departed from the very same spot where the disabled veterans set sail to fish each summer in Boston Harbor.

The spirit of patriotism forged by the hometown Founding Fathers permeates the city today.

"There is something very special about this community that dates back to the inspiration of the Adams family," Quincy Mayor Tom Koch told Fox News Digital.

"Despite being an international figure, he [John Adams] remained firmly entrenched here in his hometown."