



Dennis Knepper

Carrier volunteers at camp for vets

Military veterans can use some R&R even after they've served. Milwaukee, WI Branch 2 member **Dennis Knepper**, an Army veteran and retired carrier, found a great way to enjoy the outdoors with fellow veterans, and then a way to return the favor.

A few summers ago, Knepper spent a week at Camp American Legion, a retreat for veterans on the shore of Big Carr Lake in northern Wisconsin. "I thought I'd go up there and try it out," he said. "It was a great time. I caught a lot of fish and met a lot of neat veter-

ans." He learned about the camp from other veterans at a training session for stewards.

But the Army and Army Reserves veteran, a former Huey helicopter crew chief who joined the Postal Service in 1988, didn't stop there. True to his service ethic, Knepper returned to the camp as a volunteer each summer to help his fellow veterans enjoy the same experience.

"Sometimes you help in the kitchen, cleaning up, wheeling veterans around," he said. "I take them out on the pontoon boat. All the fishing gear

is supplied, all the bait—all they have to do is come up there." As a volunteer, Knepper has also helped with camp repairs and upgrades.

Camp American Legion is designed to provide a refuge for Wisconsin veterans and active-duty service members who need a break or time to heal. The camp accommodates those with special needs or disabilities, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or physical injuries. A stay at the camp also helps unite the families of service members returning from overseas—and helps family members of a service member whose loved one did not return.

"If you're a veteran from any branch, and you have a medical or physical disability, you can go up there for a week and get your own cabin," Knepper said. "They'll take you fishing three times a day and there are other activities to do." In addition to great fishing, the camp features many other recreational and healing opportunities—games, a craft shop, a library and just relaxing and enjoying the quiet of the natural setting—and 21 comfortable cabins for visitors.

Knepper first visited the camp while recuperating from an on-the-job injury he suffered on his route. The injuries that veterans experience vary widely, and not all are from combat—one veteran at the camp was a nurse who hurt his back while moving a patient.

Knepper recalls a veteran in a wheelchair who was able to go fishing





on a boat for the first time since his injury.

“He said coming up here was the best thing that had happened to him in a long time,” Knepper said. “You get a lot of satisfaction from that sort of thing.”

Since 1925, the Wisconsin American Legion has operated the camp, which is supported by donations and volunteers. Veterans and their families

attend for free. For more information, go to campamericanlegion.org.

If you are a veteran in another part of the country, you might have a similar opportunity, as there are several dozen veterans’ camps and retreats operated by different organizations located across the country with similar amenities and opportunities. For more information, go to operationwearehere.com/VeteransFamiliesRecreation.html. **PR**

Images of Camp American Legion on Big Carr Lake in northern Wisconsin

NALC Veterans Group

Each November, America pauses to recognize those who served in the U.S. armed forces on Veterans Day (Nov. 11). Though the holiday was officially declared “Veterans Day” in 1954, its roots lie in remembrance of the day World War I ended, known as “Armistice Day.”

This month, NALC reflects on the fact that veterans make up almost a quarter of its members, active and retired. These veterans traded their military uniforms for letter carrier uniforms, and they continue to serve their communities and their nation.

More than 11,000 of these veterans have joined the NALC Veterans Group, which is designed to provide NALC

members who are military veterans access to information and tools specific to veterans’ rights and benefits within the U.S. Postal Service.

Often, gratitude is expressed in words such as “thank you,” but it’s rarely followed up with tangible action. The NALC Veterans Group is intended to be something tangible and useful. It seeks to provide all NALC members who also are military veterans—active full-time and part-time letter carriers, as well as retired letter carriers—with resources, information and a sense of camaraderie.

The NALC Veterans Group offers the chance to connect with fellow NALC veterans and to stay informed on relevant issues. Members receive a pin as



a symbol of gratitude for their military service and their membership in NALC.

To join the NALC Veterans Group, fill out the membership form and mail it to: NALC Veterans Group, National Association of Letter Carriers, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144. The form—along with useful information and news of interest to veterans—is available on our website at nalc.org/veterans. **PR**