The greatest casualty is being forgotten

As part of the Diversity Awarenesss Lecture Series, Alaska Fisheries Science Center presents two speakers who will share their experiences working with men and women returning from Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Short videos will also be shown.

Claire Armistead, Kodiak Laboratory, AFSC

Linda Gillespie-Gateley, VA Puget Sound Health Care System

Tuesday, April 21, 2009
noon – 1pm
Observer Training Room, building 4, room 1055

NOAA Fisheries Honors Our Wounded Warriors

During the summers of 2007 and 2008, a total of 70 severely wounded U.S. veterans from the Iraq war and Afghanistan conflict were invited to Kodiak as part of a rehabilitation program offered by the Wounded Warrior Project. This non-profit organization provides much-needed support and a wide range of programs to assist our severely injured service members as they rehabilitate and transition successfully into civilian life.

NOAA Fisheries' Kodiak Laboratory staff provided first class tours of the Kodiak Fisheries Research Center, and showed the veterans the shellfish and groundfish research that takes place in the North Pacific. Eligible to further their education using the Montgomery GI Bill, one veteran commented that he was inspired to change his field of study to fisheries science!

Kodiak Laboratory and NOAA Fisheries Enforcement staff volunteered their time to take these Wounded Warriors on a number of saltwater fishing, river fishing, and sightseeing trips, documenting these adventures via photos and video. NOAA employees, the community of Kodiak, and its service organizations proudly joined to support this project and give a measure of hope and inspiration to those who have sacrificed so much.

Linda Gillespie-Gateley

is a licensed clinical social worker serving as Lead Program Manager for Operation Enduring and Operation Iraqi Freedom at VA Puget Sound Health Care System. She has worked with returning combat soldiers since the inception of the program in 2004. Initially, she was one of 10 clinical social workers assigned to work at a local military treatment facility to assist our wounded returning service members with the transition of care to the nearest VA facility. Her responsibilities include program development and oversight in the Puget Sound Region as well as consultant to the other program managers.