



# THE GREAT OUTDOORS



## Battling a big one

Fish tales come in all sizes and are usually predictable – the story ends with the one that got away. Not so in the case of **Danny Delahunt, Americrane**. Not only did the fish in his story get caught, but it was the tournament winner. And the story doesn't end there ...

On Oct. 29, Delahunt and his wife, Julie, took part in Fishing for Freedom II at Choke Canyon State Park near Three Rivers, an event sponsored by the **South Texas BASS Federation, Quality Bass Club** and the **Valero Volunteers**.

"The event brings together members of the Texas fishing community with wounded U.S. soldiers hospitalized at Brooke Army Medical Center for a day of fun, relaxation and competition," said Delahunt.

An avid bass fisherman and a major military history buff, Delahunt paired up with **Army Sgt. Harry Willis** for the fishing tournament. Willis, from northern California, was wounded Sept. 1 in an ambush in Iraq.

"Harry told my wife and me that he'd fished before, but only from the bank. So going out in a bass boat was going to be a new experience for him," said Delahunt.

"As we headed out on the lake, reality hit me hard. The war in Iraq went from watching Fox News in my living room, to the 20-ft. deck of my bass boat," he said.

"Here I was, a 44-year-old who had only experienced war by seeing pictures on TV or in the newspaper, sitting next



Sgt. Harry Willis and Danny Delahunt show off the winning bass in Fishing for Freedom II. Photo by Cathy Leach.

to a young, brave American soldier who was recovering from being shot through both legs during an ambush. It was truly a surreal experience for me."

Delahunt continued. "I could not fathom the turmoil Harry, his family and fiancée must have gone through when he was injured."

"And here he was, sitting next to me doing something as normal as bass fishing on a beautiful fall day! I felt truly privileged," Delahunt said.

Delahunt wanted nothing more than to help Willis catch the biggest bass that day. His wish came true. After approximately 70 anglers weighed in,

Willis claimed first place in the Big Bass category with a 6.84-lb. fish.

"I don't know who was more ecstatic, Harry or me!" Delahunt said. "At the awards ceremony I was so proud to see Harry receive his prizes – a plaque and a new fishing rod."

"As we watched Harry board the bus back to BAMC, I suddenly realized how emotional the day had been," Delahunt said. "To know I helped make Harry's day a memorable one is quite rewarding; however, Harry made my day, too, and I hope he knows that. It was a day I shall never forget." –kf





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## Big tuna, little tuna



Gonzales holds the 50-lb. amberjack caught near Freeport.

**Gilbert "Spider" Gonzales, Metropolitan Contracting**, and his son **Joshua** took a fishing charter boat 200 miles off the coast near Freeport in search of the big, yellowfin tuna Nov. 12-13.

The 30-hour fishing trip aboard the Big E began with some shallow water fishing for amberjacks, grouper and

blackfin tuna, and eventually into 2000-ft. waters for yellowfin tuna.

"Well, we didn't get the big tuna, but we caught three amberjacks that weighed 50 lbs., 30 lbs. and one about 25 lbs. We also caught six blackfin tuna that weighed 10-20 lbs. and a 15-lb. grouper," Gonzales said. "We had a great time."

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