Perry Outmuscles 18.5-Pound Striper

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If ever somebody deserved a good day it would be Charlie Perry.

He served his country honorably, and he is a patriot. Perry is also a Vietnam War veteran, having served there from 1967-69. He is a survivor, a courageous one at that.

Perry is also an accomplished fisherman. On Saturday, Perry accomplished something more in the Take A Warrior Fishing event on West Point Lake. Perry, the Marine Corps veteran, is as good with a rod and reel as he is with a rifle.

The Stone Mountain native caught the “big fish” in the fourth annual event at the Highland Marina Resort. Burger King is right. It takes two hands to handle a whopper. Perry needed both hands to even have a chance to catch his 18.5-pound striped bass.

It was a trophy fish. Perry got the trophy, and the fish got some live bait. Perry caught his striped bass in 24 feet of water. The fish was hooked just 15 minutes after the fishing event started.

And the striped bass took Perry on the ride of his life.

“He hit it and took off. He bent my pole about in half, and my line was singing. I was loving it,” said Perry.

His striped bass only made this day more spectacular for the Vietnam veteran.

“This is something that I look forward to,” Perry said of the Take A Warrior Fishing event. “This is camaraderie, and it is relaxing. I’m meeting a lot of people.”

LaToya Burnett was on the lake with a purpose as well. Burnett, originally from Anniston, Ala., has been in the U.S. Army for eight years. She is stationed at Fort Benning, and she isn’t afraid of danger. Burnett has served in Iraq and Afghanistan. She has seen the fight, and she has been in the middle of it.

But on Saturday some high fives and torrid fishing was the theme on West Point Lake. Burnett was one of 53 military veterans who were being honored.

“This means a lot to us. This is exciting and relaxing. When you go to Afghanistan and come back this is like letting your hair down,” said Burnett.

She was impressed with the fishing, too, particularly hers.

“I’m improving a lot, but I was anxious and nervous. I like the pull (from the fish),” said Burnett, the former high school prep star in Anniston (in softball, volleyball and basketball).

And according to Burnett, “There was a lot of anticipation (out on the lake).”

Burnett had the most catches in the Take A Warrior Fishing event. Burnett reeled in 70 crappie. Burnett baited her hook with live minnows. The end product was crappie and a trophy for Burnett.

She caught all of her fish in 14 feet of water. Burnett was fishing with Capt. Joey Mines.