

3rd Annual Wounded Warrior Hunt

On April 10th as with opening day of spring gobbler many folks get ready and head to the woods to start their hunt. So it was for the 3rd Annual wounded Warriors Hunt except for one thing. There were 15 hunters with a wide variety of challenges from walking wounded to wheelchair bound, 15 callers and 15 videographers.

Again the hunt was put on by the Virginia Hunter Education Association with a host of vendors supplying different needs from a complete set of camo clothes from Outfitters Tuff to a variety of turkey calls from Buck Gardner and Limb Shaker. With Food Lion donating food and Somerton Hunt Club the cooking.

Bruce Wilds from Hunter Specialties handed out handmade box and slate calls from a group of children who signed each with a word of encouragement to each veteran participating.

As in the last two hunts, the base of operations was at Rob and Cindy Zepp's farm, Desert Winds, in Suffolk with a multitude of volunteers from Nansemond River Baptist Church, VDGIF, the Hunter Education Association, Hunters for the Hungry, **Rick Hendricks** Collision Center. Also on hand were area hunt clubs and other folks who just wanted to help.

Donations came from various resources including Food Lion in cooperation with Tyson Foods for all the meats and DaShields who discounted other items we needed including a shotgun that was given away to one of the veterans.

Land use was also donated from area farms that are leased to Somerton and Borderline hunt clubs in both Virginia and North Carolina.

As to the hunters, as always they were treated like royalty and rightfully so from the time they arrived to the moment they left. Everyone involved wanted to make sure the veterans were taken care of in a manner that would leave no doubt in their minds that we all appreciated them and their service to our country.

As with any event of this size and number of people involved it takes a year to get everything in order and culminates to the end result in just a few short days. In the week of the hunt there were last minute details and changes to the original plans. There were also last minute personnel swaps and all the other things that made it come off without a hitch. Rob makes it look easy, but like the old duck adage, smooth on the surface but swimming like crazy underneath, seems appropriate.

When all was said and done early in the morning Rob kept getting call after call stating "Bird Down" over and over again to the sum of 6 spring gobblers.

As the event was winding down and all the veterans, hosts and volunteers were saying their goodbyes the 2 things remain the same and true. We will be back next year and we never can say "Thank You" enough to our servicemen and women who daily put themselves in harm's way to keep us and our way of life safe.