

Wounded warriors are getting to enjoy outdoor adventures

LEN LISENBEE



Len Lisenbee's column runs every Thursday in the Daily Messenger.

There are few organizations that are more highly respected than the Wounded Warriors. While all of our veterans are a national treasure, those who have been wounded in action while defending our nation, and who are partly or totally disabled because of those injuries, deserve special praise.

There are actually seven different yet closely interrelated Wounded Warriors organizations. One of them, Wounded Warriors in Action (.org), attempts to locate qualified vets who have an interest in hunting and/or fishing. These individuals are offered tremendous opportunities to participate in world-class trips.

The goals of WWIA are truly laudable. They want to Increase Self-Reliance, Bolster Self-Confidence, Enjoy the Great Outdoors, Promote Spiritual Healing and Wellness, and Instill a Sense of Belonging to each vet that joins them for a hunting or fishing experience.

John McDaniel is the founder and driving force behind this organization. He lives in Apollo Beach, Fla., and is himself a veteran of Special Forces. And after talking with him extensively, I believe his every waking moment is spent on behalf of "his guys" and seeing that they get as many great outdoor opportunities as he can arrange and deliver.

Each and every hunting or fishing event could be considered a "trip of a lifetime." But the wonderful part of



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Wounded Warriors come to Whispering Pines Hideaway. (From Left: Charlie Buisch, Tim Juliano Sr., John McDaniel (kneeling with Darby), Tim Juliano Jr., Wally Bishop, Jim Reisdorf, and Ron George (kneeling with Bo).

each experience receives the most emphasis, the number of vets participating in any one event is generally limited to one to three individuals, with two being the most common number. And the various destinations read like a list of dream hunts and fishing trips.

Trophy deer hunting in South Dakota, elk hunting in Colorado, Montana or Utah, fishing for giant tarpon and SCUBA Diving in the Florida Keys, or fly fishing in the Great Smokey Mountains are just a few of the possibilities.

Accommodations range from first class hotels to stays at incredible private hunting and fishing lodges. And transportation, more often than not, is on private jets with the use donated by various individuals and corporations.

Last week I had the opportunity to join in and observe one such event. Two veterans, Wally Bishop and Tim Juliano Sr., traveled with McDonald to the Whispering Pines Hideaway shooting preserve near Lyons, Wayne County, for two days of qual-

swales, weedy thickets, woodlands, and crop and hay fields that is owned by Charlie and Carol Buisch. While memberships are encouraged, it is open to the public for day hunts by reservation. It is one of the most picturesque pieces of real estate I have ever had the pleasure of hunting.

These gentlemen would spend both days hunting over McDaniel's one year old Braque Francais dog Darby (the original breed that the pointer came from) and Buisch's well-trained Brittany, Bo.

It is events like this that sometimes cause a misty haze to form in the eyes of this crusty old game warden. It is the generosity of Charlie and Carol Buisch in opening their hunting preserve to two of America's Finest that always gives me a lump in my throat. And it is organizations such as Wounded Warriors in Action that increases my pride as an American.

I thank everyone involved for including me in this special occasion.