



A beautiful view from the 9th Annual Russell AL Deer Hunt. Photo credit to WWIA Guide Jeremy Smith.

### Notes From the Field: January 2019

Each year we build upon our past successes as we continue our mission to serve our Heroes by hosting world-class sporting events with the love and support of caring communities all to promote camaraderie through these shared experiences. WWIA started off the new year with five events in the month of January that included the opportunity to hunt deer, hog, quail, pheasant, duck, and geese. We're just getting started and have lots of incredible events to come, so stay tuned for more updates and highlights. Finally, don't forget to check out our January Spotlight featuring one of our exceptional event Hosts!



### Events and Fundraisers

#### 2nd Annual Long Leaf AL Whitetail and Quail Hunt

January 4th - 7th



Four of our Heroes traveled to scenic Bay Minette, Alabama for the 2nd Annual Long Leaf AL Whitetail and Quail Hunt. Our Heroes experienced four full days of first-class deer hunting, quail hunting with dogs, and enjoyed amazing food and accommodations while forming new bonds with their fellow brothers. All our Heroes found success in the field as each of them harvested a deer and quail and one even managed to harvest a hog. The beautiful surroundings at this event provided the perfect backdrop for healing and restoration to occur. All our Warriors happily went home with coolers of meat and a lifetime of memories from their time at Long Leaf. We extend our gratitude and appreciation to Host Andy McMillan, as well as his family and friends for hosting another spectacular event. Our sincere thanks as well to WWIA Guide Nick Fox for his support and care throughout this event.

*"I was thrilled to be chosen and what an event it turned out to be! This was my first time hunting both deer and quail. I am not good with new things, especially with people I do not know. However, this group of vets made it easy to learn and more importantly made it fun. Sharing our experiences, both good and bad, brought us closer together and felt uplifting. The Host was amazing, to include his caring family and friends. I could never have imagined total strangers taking their time and money to help people they do not know. Most news you hear about is negative, but events like this are what the public needs to see. All of this caring during this event was truly an honor, which I will never forget and will try to pass on to those around me."*

#### 8th Annual NC OBX Waterfowl Hunt

January 10th - 13th



The 8th Annual NC OBX Waterfowl Hunt proudly welcomed six of our Heroes to beautiful NC for waterfowl hunting, great food, and bonding time with their fellow Purple Heart recipients.

The incredible community support from arrival until the last day is one of the things that makes this event so special. One example of this is our Heroes being presented with hand-written letters from two local elementary schools on their first day, thanking them for their service and sacrifice. The time in the field was enjoyable as our Heroes harvested lots of waterfowl and shared many stories and laughs. On the morning of our Heroes final day, the [NC Patriot Guard](#), [Currituck County Sheriff](#), [Currituck County Fire Department](#), a limousine company, and members of the community gathered to honor and show their appreciation for our Heroes as they prepared to return home. It was a memorable experience that capped off a tremendous event. Additional thanks to the local businesses and restaurants that graciously served our Heroes throughout their stay. Special thanks to Hosts Larry Beasley, Tim Brown, and Timothy Spence for putting on another outstanding event for our Heroes. Special recognition and thanks to WWIA Guides Nick Fox and Jeremy Smith for their contributions throughout the event.

*"I had a blast! I wasn't sure what to expect. I don't normally like leaving my house. I'm happy just being home with my family. To get to the point, coming out was the best decision I have made in a long time. I had a blast, I was comfortable enough to cut loose with my newly made brothers. The community's hospitality was unforgettable. I feel great to know that people still care. I will be spreading and sharing my experience with all my Purple Heart vets about the WWIA. Outstanding Guys, thanks! "*

## 8th Annual SW Ohio Duck Hunt

January 18th - 21st



The 8th Annual SW Ohio Duck Hunt brought five of our Heroes together for four days of fellowship, camaraderie, duck and pheasant hunting. Although the weather was challenging this year, it did not deter our Heroes from sharing experiences and forming bonds in the field and around the dinner table. This event would not be possible without the tremendous financial support of [Safari Club International SW Ohio Chapter](#), [Clark County Sportsman's Club](#), and Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati Juice Club. Additional thanks to [Miller's Campground](#) for providing lodging and outstanding hospitality to our Heroes, and to WWIA Pro-staff Richard Wright for his continued support and efforts. Our gratitude and thanks to Hosts Dave Studenka and Dan Doli for putting on another top-tier event and to WWIA Guide Jake Whipkey for his support and care of our Heroes throughout the trip.

*"Time spent with fellow soldiers is always great. However, this hunt was a once in a lifetime experience with many memorable moments. This was the first event I have been a part of post-retirement with other branches of service, which made it better than my prior events. The time and effort that all support personnel put in to ensure we had an enjoyable time and ensure we had birds to shoot at were unmatched compared to anything I've been a part of. I truly hope I'm able to be a part of another hunt involving these guys. It is truly an honor to have been part of such a great experience. Thanks to all that made the weekend a success. I hope to keep in touch."*

## 7th Annual MD Duck & Goose Hunt

January 18th - 21st

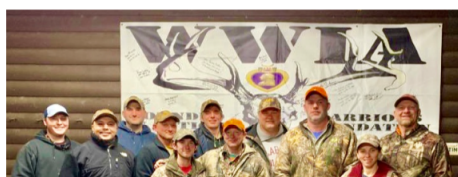


Six of our Purple Heart Heroes gathered in Easton, Maryland for the 7th Annual MD Duck and Goose Hunt. This four-day event featured world-class goose, duck and pheasant hunting. Our Heroes were able to successfully harvest birds, but the true highlight of the event was the opportunity to build strong new bonds with their fellow Warriors. Special thanks to [Talbot Rod & Gun Club](#) for allowing our Heroes to take in some trap shooting in preparation for the weekend hunt. We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to Host Brian Wegener and friends for their tremendous care and hospitality throughout this stellar event. High praise and gratitude to WWIA Guides Tim Spence and Gabe Fierros for their outstanding efforts and coordination.

*"What a great trip! Thank you WWIA for an awesome event. Meeting all of these great Americans was the highlight. Being able to shoot birds was a bonus. There was no shortage of good conversation, fun times, great food and some of the best hospitality I have ever seen or been a part of. Tim and Gabe did an excellent job ensuring everything was taken care of. Brian, Chip and their crew did so much to put us on the birds and make us feel welcome and comfortable. The ability for me specifically to be distracted from what I have going on in my life. To be around like-minded people helps to relax and calm me. I can't express enough how thankful I am for this experience. WWIA has provided one of the greatest events that brought warriors together and let them enjoy themselves with great Hosts and Guides."*

## 9th Annual Russell AL Deer Hunt

January 18th - 21st





Four of our Heroes gathered in Hawthorne, AL for the 2018 Russell Alabama Deer Hunt. This four-day event celebrated their 9th consecutive year of welcoming Heroes and provided them with some well-deserved time away from the burdens of everyday life. This allowed them to relax in the great outdoors, share stories, and build new friendships. Throughout their stay, they experienced top-notch food, lodging, and hunting. Our Heroes found great success in the field, as they harvested a plethora of both hogs and deer. As great as the hunting was, our Heroes spoke fondly about the new bonds formed between brothers and expressed their deep appreciation and gratitude to both the Hosts and the local community for honoring them throughout the event. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Hosts Ritchie Russell and Ira Everett for another outstanding event and for their tremendous support of WWIA and our Heroes throughout the last nine years. Special recognition to WWIA Guide Jeremy Smith for his support and attention to throughout this event.

*"This experience has been completely astounding. Meeting fellow veterans, Purple Heart recipients, seeing Jorge shoot his first...and his second deer as well as having a close bond that falls into place with the other service members is one of those feelings that seldom happens and can't be replaced. The Hosts of the Russell AL hunt showed more appreciation and hospitality than I feel I deserved. It was far from what was expected and very heart-warming. I wish I knew how to express my appreciation and gratitude for this experience and opportunity. Jeremy, thank you for everything. You helped us grow close and have a great time. It felt great to spend the weekend with you and the other two. The WWIA really gave me a sense of worth and appreciation (which I try to be modest about), but this made every blood, sweat and tear a valuable experience for me. Thank you."*

#### The Inaugural WWIA 5K is Coming!

**WWIA 5K**  
Run. Walk. Stroll.  
29 June 2019 - Al Lopez Park  
Benefiting Purple Heart Recipients

**LET'S HIT THE ROAD  
IN SUPPORT OF OUR  
PURPLE HEART HEROES**

The WWIA 5K has been rescheduled! That means you still have time to get yourself, your friends, your family, and your co-workers registered. Join us on Saturday, June 29, 2019. This timed 5K offers you the choice to run, walk, or stroll through beautiful Al Lopez Park. Our race is professionally timed, and the Overall Top Male and Female finishers will receive prizes. Top Male and Top Female finishers in each age category will also be acknowledged. Stay for our after-party for ice cream, awards, and more! Discounted registration is available for Veterans who show their Military ID or Driver's License with a "V" symbol at packet pickup with Promo Code VET20. Purple Heart recipients will be able to participate free with registration to WWIA by using Promo Code PHFREE. Visit <https://wwiaf.org/heroapplication/> and complete all three steps at the top of the page. Proceeds benefit the WWIA. We also have limited sponsorship opportunities available. Please email us at: [info@wwiaf.org](mailto:info@wwiaf.org) for more information. Thank you.

#### WWIA January Spotlight

**HOST SPOTLIGHT**

**WWIA**

**MARY LOU REISDORF**

It is with great honor and pride that we introduce you to our January Spotlight Feature, WWIA Host Mary Lou Reisdorf. Mary Lou currently hosts the NY Upland Bird and Couples Defrost and will celebrate her 10th year this September. Mary Lou has graciously shared

...about her life and her experiences. Mary also has graciously shared some of her thoughts and experiences regarding WWIA, and we hope that you will be as inspired and moved by her story as we are.

**Mary Lou, can you give us a brief introduction and tell us a little about yourself and your family?**

I was born in a small town, Cattaraugus, south of Buffalo, NY. It was an amazing place to start my beginnings, with a wonderful mother, father, 2 brothers, 1 sister, many relatives, and great friends. I attended college earning my BA and Master's in Education. I had the pleasure to teach in MD, GA, as well as three years of teaching for the military in Japan and Germany. I returned to NY and married Jim (JR) Reisdorf in 1978 and we were soon blessed with our daughter, Christie. We moved from a small-town, Arcade, NY to the Rochester, NY area in 1979 and I continued to teach in that area while Jim was a co-owner of a business, Information Packaging. We were able to travel and even bought a 2nd home in Holden Beach and spent a lot of time there. I ended my 35 ½ year teaching career in 2001. In 2005 we purchased 75 acres of land in Palmyra, NY calling it "Bear Hill Farm and Hunt Club", the name coming from the last black bear in Wayne County that was shot on the property. It quickly became our favorite place to spend time. We added a barn, pavilion, pond, etc. and used the land regularly to entertain friends, target shoot, and ride the beautiful trails. I love our property, traveling, cards, board games, reading, movies and just being with our many friends/families. It was always Jim's dream to use our property to help those who had served in the military. Unfortunately, my husband Jim passed away on November 7th, 2013. I have since continued a wonderful life with best friends, enjoying time at Bear Hill Farm, great travels, and the best part is hosting the WWIA NY Upland Bird Hunt/Couples Retreat, which is now held on our property.

**How did you first get involved with WWIA?**

Jim served as a Marine in Vietnam, honorably discharged in 1969. He also served in the Army Reserves for 4 years, being honorably discharged in 1988. He never spoke about his experiences in Vietnam, he simply could not talk about it, or even see any war movies. Jim had an amazing personality. He was a loving, great husband, father, and friend. In 2009 Jim was watching TV and saw a WWIA event hosted by John McDaniel. I wasn't home at the time, but when I returned, Jim explained the event and said, "Mary Lou, we can and need to do this". I agreed completely!! He called John and thankfully he said yes to our request to host an event and in 2010 we hosted our very first hunt. It was an amazing experience and so rewarding to us. A great time to give back! I can't even begin to explain the change in Jim after that, but he finally started to share his past experiences with family and friends. I believe it was all a result of him giving back to others.

**Why do you choose to be a WWIA Host?**

Hosting our WWIA event has been an amazing adventure. It has given us a chance to honor and respect what these Purple Heart recipients have sacrificed for each of us in America. Initially, in 2010 and 2011 we only hosted Purple Heart Heroes. Shawn Horsley was one of those Heroes. He lives near Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. Because Shawn and his family were close to where we had a home, we were able to spend time with Shawn, his wife Fae and their 2 sons each time we were there. After hearing Fae's stories as a Hero spouse, learning about her own pain, the many sacrifices she had made, responsibilities she had to fulfill, and her enduring love for Shawn, I told Jim, "we have to include the wives for the sacrifices they have also made". We shared our thoughts with John McDaniel and in 2012 we proudly welcomed Heroes and their spouses to our event, officially changing our title to WWIA Upland NY Bird Hunt/Couples Retreat. It is hard to explain the dynamic impact of making this a couple's event. The wives, some of whom have also served in the military or were themselves awarded a Purple Heart, now have the opportunity to share their own experiences, cares, and concerns with others who have walked in their shoes. The Heroes love their pheasant hunting experience and the wives love the wine tour, brunch and spa treatments, which many of them have never done before. We try and bring balance to our events, as we feature specific times for the spouses to be together time for the Heroes in the field, and couple and community time. Both the Heroes and their spouses share invaluable information with one another. After Jim's passing, I wanted to continue in his footsteps, and I hosted three couples in 2014. With a great deal of support from an amazing local community, it has been such an amazing adventure. I feel so blessed to be able to do this and have made some amazing friends along the way. In 2015 we changed from hosting the event at Whispering Pines Hideaway to our property in Palmyra, Bear Hill Farm and Hunt Club. Jim's dream came true!!

**What has been the biggest benefit for you since becoming involved with WWIA?**

Hosting this WWIA event has become the passion in my life. It is a chance to honor and respect what these Purple Heart recipients and their wives have sacrificed for each of us. To see so many wounds healed, great camaraderie and true friendships made is an amazing gift. It is an honor to see so many of them "walking in as strangers and leaving as best friends" between the time they arrive on Friday and leave on Monday. Many who have come (mainly Vietnam Vets) did not really believe they should be here but thanked God that they were. Many did not share their experiences during the event but when they returned home, they started sharing with family and friends. Even some of the wives who attended our event reluctantly, left grateful that they came. We have been grateful to hear that our couples' event has enhanced relationships. Some of the Heroes and their spouses have asked us "why are you doing this for me, I don't deserve it". My response is always, "you deserve this and so much more". I am thankful for the remarkable support this event receives from so many local individuals and businesses and am so happy to live in such a patriotic community. There is nothing quite as moving as reading the testimonials of the Heroes and their spouses who share how this event has enriched their lives and given them hope for a better tomorrow. The tears shed when the Patriot Guard Riders of NY escort us to our farewell dinner on Sunday night is incredibly humbling, and the look on the wives faces when the limousine comes to pick us up for our wine tour is priceless!! I have been blessed to help others start their own WWIA events and if anyone needs my help regarding this, please let me know.



#### Sponsors and Friends

**We would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following supporters for their gracious contributions and dedication to WWIA and our Heroes.**

**THANK YOU!**

**Donations:**

**James Eastman: \$5,000**



Thomas Shollin: \$800

Kyle Swanson: \$600

Towerwood Social Club (in coordination with Jay Bird & Trish): \$599

**Donations toward 5th Annual NY Kuneytown FLX Ducks & Bucks:**

Kuneytown Sportsmen Club Banquet: \$10,000

Waste Connections: \$650

**Donations toward Camp Hackett:**

Wurl-Feind-Ingman VFW Post 2687: \$1,000

**Donations toward 2nd Annual Long Leaf AL Whitetail & Quail Hunt:**

Baldwin Pole: \$1,000

**Donations toward 8th Annual SW Ohio Duck Hunt:**

Safari Club International SW Ohio Chapter: \$3,500

**Donations toward 4th Annual Newfield Deer Hunt:**

Raymond E. Whaite: \$1,500

**Donations toward 4th Annual Eagle River Muskie:**

James and Shawn Stemper: \$1,400

**Donations toward Mercer Muskie Madness:**

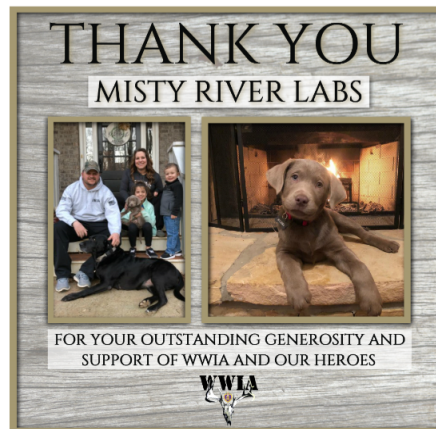
Gateway Lodge / Host Wayne Reibe: \$4,815

**Hides for Heroes:**

Waupaca Foundry Inc.: \$674

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Thank You, Misty River Silver Labs!



*WWIA Hero and Guide John Keeney and family proudly welcome "Steel" into their home.*

Please join us in welcoming the newest member of the WWIA family, "Steel". Steel is a beautiful Silver Lab from [Misty River Silver Labs](#) in Glasco, Kansas. A huge THANK YOU to Tom Colby of Misty River Labs for donating this beautiful puppy to our very own WWIA Hero and Guide, John Keeney in Dawsonville, GA. It was Tom's wish to donate one of his pups to WWIA in our mission to bring healing and restoration to our combat-wounded Warriors. Additional thanks and gratitude to Aaron Esterl and Jackie Kyle for helping raise him. John plans on training Steel for waterfowl hunting and bringing him on many future WWIA events. John and his family will be forever grateful for the opportunity to raise another gun dog and watch him work on behalf of our Heroes. Thank you, Tom Colby and Misty River Labs for such a thoughtful donation and for your outstanding support of WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes.

#### Ozarks Christian Academy Fundraises for WWIA!



Students at [Ozarks Christian Academy](#) recently participated in a Casual for a Cause day where students are allowed to wear non-uniform attire if they pay \$1 per piece. Proceeds are then donated to a selected charity. WWIA is honored to have been selected as the recipient of OCA's fundraiser and we sincerely thank all of the faculty and students for their tremendous support of WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes.

#### Help Our Heroes with Hero Miles!

**HERO MILES™**

**DONATE YOUR MILES  
TO AN AMAZING CAUSE!**

[www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org)



Fisher House has been a phenomenal supporter of WWIA and our Heroes, donating flights to and from many of our events for our combat-wounded Warriors. These flights are made possible through frequent flyer mile donations made by individual airline passengers. If you would like to donate some of your own frequent flyer miles toward this amazing cause, visit Fisher House online at [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org) to learn more and see how you can help!

#### Help Support WWIA Through Vehicle Donation!

**Help support WWIA by donating  
cars, trucks, motorcycles,  
RV's, boats, airplanes, heavy  
equipment, farm machinery, etc.  
(running or not) to CARS.**



**Moving Forward Together**

You can help support WWIA and our Heroes by donating your car, truck, van, SUV, boat, motorcycle, ATV, RV, trailer or airplane. V-Dac recently joined the CARS team to help continue providing opportunities to support non-profits through vehicle donations. You will still work with the same outstanding representatives that you have come to trust with your donation needs. Simply click [here](#) to start the donation process or call CARS toll-free at 855-500-RIDE (855-500-7433) to have a donation staff specialist help guide you through the donation process. If you would like to learn more about how the CARS vehicle donation program works, please click [here](#). We thank you in advance for your support!

programs, services, products, events, [about us](#), and contact information for your support.

Want to learn more about WWIA, visit us on online!



Our website is full of information about who we are, how we serve our Purple Heart Heroes, and how you can get involved! Visit us today! [Click Here!](#)

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