



NOTES FROM THE FIELD: DECEMBER 2019



A beautiful early morning view from the 7th Annual Great Creek Deer Hunt.

Photo courtesy of WWIA Guide Jeremy Smith.

Notes From the Field: December 2019

2019 was an exceptional year for WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes as we ended the month of December with four outstanding deer hunting events across the Eastern United States. Our mission to bring honor, connection and healing to our Warriors would not be possible without the tremendous support, selflessness, and remarkable efforts from so many of you. We hope that 2020 will bring abundance, joy, and blessings to you and your loved ones. We enter into this new decade with excitement, looking for greater ways to reach and serve our tremendous combat-wounded community. Thank you once again for your faithful support, as together we continue the work of proudly serving our nation's Heroes.

Founder's Feature: 2019 Summary





As we close the books on 2019, I cannot help but reflect back over this past year and the 12 years since the inception of WWIA. I am both humbled and grateful for the distinguished Purple Heart Heroes I've had the honor and privilege of serving through the Foundation. I am also continually amazed at the individuals, businesses, and communities who rally around our mission and have helped make WWIA what it is today. The enduring friendships I've made have enriched my life and the WWIA enterprise immensely. The WWIA truly sets the standard for delivering world-class, life-changing, outdoor sporting events for our Purple Heart recipients.

So, what's the secret to our collective success? Like with most complex systems, the answer or solution has many layers. Most notably, with respect to the services we provide our Heroes, the #1 prevailing theme has to be "customer service." We are "dialed in" on that front. I read about it all the time in the testimonials – the Heroes repeatedly mention how wonderful everyone is, how comfortable they felt, how folks went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the event was exceptional and well planned.

The exceptional dedication and commitment of thousands of patriotic people across North America who work selflessly, tirelessly, and often behind the scenes throughout the year in order to give back and recognize the tremendous service and sacrifice our Heroes have made is remarkable. Your commitment to honoring our Heroes, telling others about WWIA, and enlisting the support of friends, family, and community partners has made all the difference. We are truly honored to call you our partners and friends and are indebted and thankful for your willingness to share your time, money, talents, and resources to aid in the healing and restoration of our Heroes.

In 2019, we served 209 Purple Heart Heroes over 45 events across 24 states and two foreign countries. As we embark into 2020, together we will continue changing hearts and improving the quality of life for so many of our Heroes and their families. I want to personally thank all of our Heroes, Guides, Associates, Pro-Staff, dedicated supporters, volunteers, and donors for your faithful partnership in serving our Heroes throughout this past year. We are blessed to be surrounded and associated with so many patriotic friends and I wish all of you a year full of blessings, health, and happiness.

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) John J. McDaniel



Events and Fundraisers

7th Annual Great Creek Deer Hunt

December 5-8 Alberta, VA



Four of our Purple Heart Heroes gathered in Alberta, Virginia, to take part in exceptional deer hunting, camaraderie, and fun at the 7th Annual Great Creek Deer Hunt. This four-day event allowed for hunting opportunities from stands, blinds, and with dogs. As everyone began to settle in, they had time for weapons familiarization and practice shooting. After enjoying a tremendous first-morning hunt, our Heroes were treated to a delicious lunch at "The Hill" where they were able to meet and socialize with members of the Great Creek Hunt Club. On the evening hunt no deer were seen, but one of the Heroes was able to harvest a nice coyote. The weather was ideal throughout the next two days of hunting, and although some nice bucks were spotted, they remained just out of range. This trip proved to be just what our Warriors needed, giving them an ideal balance of excitement and relaxation in a beautiful environment. After their time in the field each day, there was plenty of time for sharing stories, laughs, and building new friendships around the fire while they enjoyed meals such as Brunswick stew, homemade spaghetti (courtesy of Bubba's Restaurant), bacon-wrapped venison, and a traditional southern boil. We would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to Andy Wilson, the Great Creek Hunt Club, and the amazing event supporters for proudly hosting our Heroes and for their hospitality and care. Special recognition and thanks to WWIA Guide Jeremy Smith for his leadership and support throughout this four-day event.

"I cannot thank WWIA enough for giving me this opportunity to be a part of this trip. The bonds and friendships forged on this trip will not be forgotten. I was not given a hunting trip; I was given an unforgettable experience to reconnect with my fellow combat-wounded warriors. I was given something I have been missing since I have been away from the service. I have built new friendships with a great group of hunters that opened their homes and hearts to us. Words alone cannot justify how amazing this trip was. I am forever grateful and truly needed this experience to see what great Americans are still out there and are grateful for our sacrifices. Truly an honor and I am deeply humbled for getting this opportunity."

Inaugural Naples NY VFW Big Buck Hunt

December 5-9 Middlesex, NY



WWIA was proud to welcome a new, end-of-year event for three of our Heroes with the Inaugural Naples New York VFW Big Buck Hunt. Upon arrival, they settled into the lodge and sighted in their rifles in preparation for some outstanding hunting in the days to come. Everyone hit the stands early the next morning in anticipation of a great hunt. There was a great deal of deer activity early on, and our Heroes were able to harvest a seven-point buck and a beautiful doe. At lunchtime, they enjoyed venison chili and then dispersed to their stands again for the afternoon hunt. The evening dinner was at the [Redwood](#) and was graciously sponsored by [Community Bank](#). The next day started off right with one of our Heroes taking a gorgeous eight-point buck. Later that evening, the local Boy Scout Troop treated everyone to a special dinner and enjoyed some Q&A with the Heroes. It was a memorable evening and our Warriors were moved and appreciative of the troop's thoughtfulness. The final day delivered great successes in the field once again as there were two does and a five-point buck harvested. The hunting could not have been better over the five-day event and was only outdone by the bonds formed between brothers and the humbling show of support and care by the local community. A huge shout out and salute to Hosts Ken Gleason, Jason Perry, and the [Naples VFW Post 8726](#) for putting on an impressive and impactful inaugural event! Recognition and thanks to Becker's Meat Processing for generously donating the processing of the Heroes harvested deer. Additional thanks to Joshua Ver Hague of the [New York Department of Conservation](#), who was instrumental in securing hunting licenses for our Heroes, to taxidermist Brian Praque for his work and kindness in

donating European mounts, and to [Five Star Bank](#) for their thoughtful support. Our gratitude and appreciation to WWIA Guide Derek VanBuren for his assistance and care during this first-class excursion.

"Thank you for this amazing opportunity. When arriving in Naples I knew this was going to be a great time. The hospitality far surpassed any expectations. There was never a second in the day that if you needed something, there wasn't anyone around. The hunting property was outstanding, more than enough places to hunt and more deer than you could ask for. Hunting aside, I would come back here just to hang out with the community and the people who were with us day in and day out. Thank you again for this outstanding opportunity and an amazing weekend."

5th Annual Newfield Deer Hunt

December 5-9 Newfield, NY



The 5th Annual Newfield Deer Hunt welcomed four of our Heroes to Newfield, New York to enjoy the pristine wilderness of the Finger Lakes mountain region. Our Heroes settled into their cabins at [Wilderness B&B](#), and then enjoyed a nice dinner at the County Line Bar and Grill as they got acquainted with one another. The next morning our Heroes rose early and settled into their blinds to start their hunt for prized whitetail deer. Later that evening everyone dined at the [Shoe Inn](#) and feasted on an exceptional prime rib dinner while exchanging stories and common experiences. As they returned to their cabins, good conversations and camaraderie carried on late into the evenings over card games. The hunting opportunities proved to be challenging over the next two days, but the connections and friendships formed amongst our Heroes were far more valuable than the harvest. Our Heroes raved about the bounty of food throughout their stay and were humbled by the outpouring of appreciation and gratitude from the local community. Before leaving the event, our Heroes were gifted with venison summer

sausage to take home as a small memento of an outstanding trip. Our gratitude and thanks to Carol and Bernie Cook and the entire Cook family for hosting our Heroes and for their outstanding efforts and support throughout the past five years. Additional thanks to WWIA Guide Jon French for his valuable insights, coordination, and care of our Warriors.

"This past weekend meant more to me than any words can describe. We arrived as strangers from throughout the country and left with friends for life. The common similarities went beyond military service which formed a unique bond not often found in my daily task called life. I don't recall the last time I went five days laughing, smiling, and having a stress-free day let alone several days in a row. It's easy to get tunnel vision and feel isolated outside of service. This event reminded me that I am not alone. The outpouring of support from the Newfield and surrounding communities left me speechless. The Host family did everything they could to make us feel right at home and a part of the family. The volunteers delivering the endless supply of food kept an already big belly full and happy. Even though the deer evaded us like my chances of winning the lottery it didn't matter. The camaraderie was second to none and the memories will last forever. My sincere thank you to the Cook family, guides, volunteers, local community, and everyone else who helped make this event happen. I haven't felt this motivated in a long time and I owe that to this special event."

6th Annual DoubleCreek Lodge TN Rifle Deer Hunt

December 6-9 Hohenwald, TN



Four of our Heroes closed out the 2019 hunting season in picturesque Hohenwald, Tennessee at the 6th Annual DoubleCreek Lodge TN Rifle Deer Hunt. This exciting four-day event provides a relaxing environment that allows for plenty of bonding and fellowship while providing ample opportunities for our Heroes to harvest whitetail deer. As exhilarating as the hunting is, the connections and friendships made during the event make this an ideal way to end the year. The Heroes on this event always speak about it feeling like a home away from home as it's the perfect place to unwind while taking in the amazing food and first-class southern hospitality. We would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to Shelley Cohen and Dennis Reynolds for graciously hosting our Heroes and for their dedication and support throughout the years. Additional thanks to the many supporters and volunteers who go above and beyond each year to

make this event possible. Special thanks to WWIA Guide Gabe Fierros for his efforts and leadership throughout the event.

"I want to say how much this has helped me. There are so many ways that it has. I have never hunted before and this part was the best. From all those who put the event together to those who supported it, thank you. A great display of folks who had a lot of knowledge in hunting to super hospitality at its best. The volunteers were outstanding, and I appreciate Gabe and my Guide Jake. Hosts Dennis and Shelley were awesome. Very nice folks and beautiful home and amazing accommodations."

THANK YOU for Supporting WWIA During this CFC Season!



Thank You

to everyone who supported WWIA with a CFC pledge and also to those who represented WWIA at their local CFC events. We extend our gratitude and appreciation for your faithful support.



The 2019 [Combined Federal Campaign](#) (CFC) has officially concluded and we would like to express our sincere appreciation to everyone that made a pledge to WWIA through their CFC selection. We are honored and grateful for your support and thank you for partnering with us to bring honor, connection, and healing to our combat-wounded veterans. Special thanks to everyone who represented WWIA at a local CFC event educating people about our mission and message. We are humbled by your dedication and support of our Purple Heart Heroes! THANK YOU!!

Our Gratitude for Your Thoughtful Giving!



GIVING TUESDAY

[GIVING TUESDAY](#) was on December 3rd! We want to express our gratitude and appreciation for everyone who generously helped WWIA raise \$1,445 (through Facebook Giving) during this special day of giving. THANK YOU for supporting and giving back to those who have given so much to us! We appreciate you standing with us in changing lives, healing hearts, and creating lasting change for our Purple Heart Heroes.

WWIA December Spotlight





ASA BARRETT

It is our honor to recognize and introduce you to this month's Hero Spotlight, Asa Barrett. Asa proudly serves as a WWIA Guide and takes a great deal of pride in assisting Hosts and serving his fellow Purple Heart Heroes on events across the country. We appreciate Asa taking the time to share some of his personal and professional journey with us and how WWIA has been an integral part of his story. We hope you enjoy getting to learn more about this outstanding Hero.

Asa, can you please give us a brief introduction and tell us a little about yourself?

My name is Asa Barrett, I'm 33 years old and I live in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. I've lived in Oklahoma my entire life and enjoy traveling across the United States for either hunting/camping trips or for work. I am an avid outdoorsman and love hunting, fishing, camping, kayaking, or basically anything outdoors. I work as a Project Manager for a low voltage cabling company that specializes in fiber optics, access control, camera and communication systems.

I joined the Oklahoma Army National Guard in 2009 as an Infantryman and I have two younger brothers that served with me as well. In 2011, I deployed to Afghanistan. My youngest brother Mason, who was in a different battalion, also volunteered and deployed with me. We both served in the same company and the same combat outpost. While we were deployed, our brother Joseph deployed as well. So, all three brothers were serving abroad at the same time and in the same country! Needless to say, our parents spent a lot of time praying.

Two weeks into my deployment, my vehicle was hit by an IED and I was awarded the Purple Heart medal for my injuries that occurred from the blast. Years after my Purple Heart, I found WWIA and now proudly serve as a Guide for the Foundation. I enjoy the privilege of spending time with and taking other Purple Heart recipients on WWIA events.

How did you first get involved with WWIA?

I became involved with WWIA in 2018, when my boss, a fellow veteran, told me about John McDaniel and the Foundation. He mentioned what WWIA stood for and I knew right away that I wanted to be a part of it. I signed up to attend an event and was chosen for a hunt at Camp Hackett in Phillips, WI. I was excited for the opportunity to travel and hunt with other Purple Heart recipients, but in the back of my mind, I hoped that it would lead to greater involvement with the Foundation.

While at Camp Hackett, I quickly found that it wasn't just about the hunt. I saw and felt the heart of the Foundation and knew that I needed to be a part of it. I spent time and got to know John and Jake. Toward the end of the event, they asked me if I would like to be a WWIA Guide. That's how my journey with the Foundation began.

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

The biggest benefit for me has been the friendships I have made. Being able to go on outdoor

events with my brothers and sisters, and to talk, listen, and connect with them through stories and experiences is a form of therapy. Time spent around a campfire with friends is something you cannot measure the worth of. I get so much fulfillment from each event that it charges my "batteries." Knowing that I can help put a smile on someone's face, give words of encouragement, and make life-long memories for someone speaks to my soul.

What is something you would like others to know about WWIA and your own experience with the Foundation?

I've met some of the most loving and caring people within the Foundation. The people and communities that support WWIA are absolutely amazing. I've been touched by all of the incredible support and outstretched hands of people all over this great country. I have personally felt the love and healing work that WWIA promotes. I've seen Heroes come to an event with heavy hearts and then see them leave with full hearts and smiles on their faces. I've had Heroes tell me how much the event meant to them and how it has changed their mindset toward life. This is why I stand behind WWIA.

What would you say to others who are considering getting involved with WWIA either as a Hero or in any other capacity?

I would say, "do it." You won't regret it. My involvement has been a life-changing experience and I am so thankful it has become a part of my life. On the surface, these events may just seem like a hunting or fishing trip, but they are so much more. Any involvement with WWIA, whether it be as a Hero, volunteer or supporter, you walk away with a full heart. It's amazing to be a part of it in any capacity. WWIA changes lives for the better and it's amazing to be a part of that.



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:

Joseph Vander Zanden Estate \$10,320.82

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Donations toward 6th Annual Western PA Turkey Hunt

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Donations toward 6th Annual Western PA Deer Hunt

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**Donations toward 6th Annual DoubleCreek Lodge TN
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Highland Corporation Charitable Foundation \$1,000

**Donations toward Inaugural Naples NY VFW Big
Buck Hunt**

Naples Memorial VFW Post 8726 \$500

9th Annual SW Ohio "Fowl in Your Face" Waterfowl Hunt

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Thank You Fisher House for Your Outstanding Support!

Thank You



for your outstanding support of our Heroes!



www.fisherhouse.org



We would like to recognize and thank our friends at Fisher House for their exceptional support of WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes. Fisher House is a WWIA Silver Star Patron for graciously providing over \$125,000 (collectively) in airline flight tickets to our Heroes through their Hero Miles Program since 2016! We are looking forward to partnering with them again in 2020. Their partnership makes a tremendous impact as it allows WWIA to connect our combat-wounded veterans to other Purple Heart recipients through outdoor sporting events that promote healing and restoration. Thank you, Fisher House, for your outstanding dedication and faithful support in serving our Heroes! Learn more about Fisher House and their Hero Miles program and see how you can help by visiting them at www.fisherhouse.org.

Our Sincere Thanks to Ammo.com!



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have to do is select WWIA as your preferred "Freedom Fighter" option from the drop down menu at checkout. And right now, you can also save 20% off any order of \$200 or more! Simply go to <https://ammo.com/wwia-supporter> to get started and find out more information. Our sincere thanks to [Ammo.com](https://ammo.com) for their tremendous support and to everyone who chose WWIA as their "Freedom Fighter" designation when ordering previously. We are honored by your support of WWIA and our Heroes and applaud your outstanding patriotism!

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Thank you for your faithful support!

Share Your WWIA Story or Experience With Others!

W W I A



WWIA was honored to be a top-rated nonprofit in 2019! Thank you to everyone who took the time to share your experience and feedback to help us achieve this wonderful honor over the past 5 years! If you haven't shared your own WWIA experience, would you please consider leaving us a review? Sharing from your own personal experience will help others learn more about the Foundation. Your support of WWIA & our Purple Heart Heroes is greatly appreciated. Click [here](#) or go to <https://greatnonprofits.org/org/wounded-warriors-in-action-foundation-inc> to share your WWIA story and to read what others have had to say!

Want to Learn More About WWIA? Visit Us Online!



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and how you can get involved! Visit us today! [Click Here!](#)

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