



NOTES FROM THE FIELD: August-September 2024



Purple Heart Heroes enjoying time together around the campfire at the 11th Annual Central Pennsylvania Cast & Blast in Rebersburg, PA. Photograph courtesy of WWIA Guides, David Segundo, and James Rissler.

As the summer months were coming to a close, our Heroes took part in ten world-class events across the United States. From bear hunting in the Northwoods of Wisconsin to fishing in the Louisiana bayou, our Heroes had plenty of amazing opportunities to come together, make connections, and enjoy themselves in the great outdoors. We also had many phenomenal fundraisers take place during August and September thanks to the remarkable efforts of so many selfless friends and supporters of the Foundation. We encourage to read all about our events, fundraisers, and more, and hope you'll share this newsletter with your friends, colleagues, and family. As always, we appreciate your tremendous support and thank you for helping us accomplish our mission of honoring and serving America's combat-wounded Purple Heart Heroes. 💜



EVENTS AND FUNDRAISERS

13th Annual Lake Erie Trophy Walleye Fishing

August 2-5 Ashtabula, OH



Nine of our Warriors arrived to a Hero's welcome, as the town of Ashtabula, Ohio greeted them with a police escort and a motorcycle convoy courtesy of the [American Legion Riders](#), as grateful members of the community thanked them for their service and sacrifice. Everyone drove to the local [American Legion Dewey Howlett Post #103](#), which had a fire engine with a huge American flag hanging from the extended ladder over the entrance as they arrived. It was quite a humbling sight and our Heroes truly appreciated the outpouring of love and support from the community. This was a great time of fellowship as members of the community were able to meet and greet our Heroes. A delicious steak dinner was served with a variety of sides and deserts. This was the perfect way to kick off an exceptional first day, and the evening ended with our Heroes hanging out around the campfire getting to

know each other a bit better.

Everyone woke early the next morning, ate breakfast and loaded the boats in anticipation of a great day on the lake. The fishing on Lake Erie is some of the best around and this year was no exception as lines were cast and catches were on the hooks all day long! Most boats caught their limits and our Heroes raved about what an amazing time on the water they all had. Boats returned to the marina in the afternoon, the fish were offloaded and everyone was taught how to clean them properly. An assembly line was started, so the tremendous number of fish could be prepared. As everyone headed back to clean up and prepare for their evening, they enjoyed a pre-dinner snack of fresh tuna shipped from Japan through the thoughtfulness of Captain Mark Kasula and family. The evening ended with an awesome fish fry at the Kister Marina, which featured live music and everyone sharing plenty of laughs and stories.

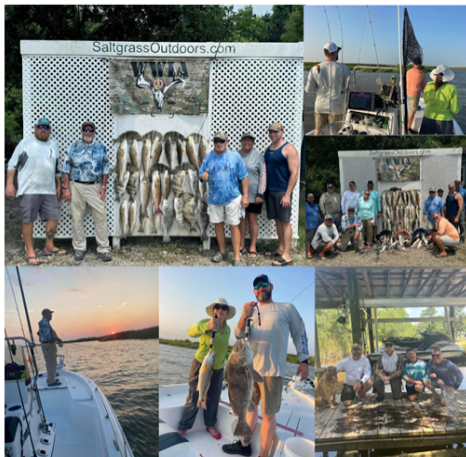
The following day, everyone got out early for another exciting day on the water. The weather had turned a bit, so the water was somewhat rough, but despite the conditions, our Heroes were amazed at the bounty of fish caught and the wonderful time they all had on Lake Erie. Later that evening, everyone gathered back at [Kister Campground](#) and Marina to enjoy a hearty and delicious BBQ cookout courtesy of Woody's BBQ.

There was a spectacular dinner and closing ceremony on the final evening for our Warriors, and each of them returned home with a cooler full of fish, but more importantly with new friendships and treasured memories of their time in Ohio. Our gratitude and appreciation to Hosts Bill and Diane Miller, Larry Fielder, Dave Conant, and to the incredible Team Erie, and all the tremendous volunteers, supporters, and local community for another spectacular event. The care and honor given toward our Heroes each year at this event is absolutely superb! Special thanks to WWIIA Guides Jon French and Eddie Hoffman for their tremendous support and leadership throughout this four-day event.

"Thank you, thank you. You don't just heal once. Being with my fellow wounded warriors heals with stories and some tears. The volunteers that give their time and resources always restore my faith in American pride. WWIIA is the most amazing program that pours their heart and soul into healing America's Warriors."

8th Annual Saltgrass Lodge Red Fishing

August 9-12 Buras, LA



Four of our Purple Heart recipients traveled to the Louisiana Bayou for a memorable and exciting time at the 8th Annual Saltgrass Lodge Red Fishing Event in Buras, LA. After getting settled into their accommodations, our Heroes were welcomed with a wonderful dinner, were introduced to their Hosts and guides, and received a briefing for the next day's itinerary. The remainder of the evening was spent relaxing and allowing everyone to get acquainted.

The following day, our Heroes had a quick yet delicious breakfast and were given a tutorial on catching redfish and a safety briefing. A short time later, they were all in their assigned boats before sunrise. Fishing in this area of Louisiana is simply exceptional, and there were plenty of fish caught early, including their limit of redfish, some black drum, flounder, and sheepshead. After an outstanding fishing excursion, everyone had a delicious dinner courtesy of Host, Raymond Schmitt, while reminiscing about a remarkable day on the water and a great start to their trip.

The next morning, our Heroes were back at it early and hauled in a plethora of assorted fish throughout the afternoon. Upon return, all catches were cleaned, bagged, and frozen. For dinner, everyone feasted on an incredible shrimp boil and finished it off with some homemade bread pudding for dessert. Our Heroes thoroughly enjoyed their time at [Saltgrass Lodge](#), as the food, accommodations, and fishing were first-class all the way. They returned home with lots of new memories, solid friendships, and coolers full of fish.

We extend our sincere gratitude and thanks to Host Raymond Schmitt and Co-Host Audie Murphy for their outstanding efforts in providing this unique and well-loved event for our Heroes over the past eight years. Special recognition and thanks to the skillful boat guides, Capt. Raymond Schmitt, Capt. Ike Schmitt, Capt. Michael "Chief" Duke, Capt. Ryan Arceneaux, and to Pamela Fields and the wonderful and accommodating staff at Saltgrass Lodge for their hospitality and care. Additional thanks to Joan Murphy, Terry Taylor, LTC Audie Murphy II, Joe Liddell, Phillip Wright, and Larry Smith for their event support, and to everyone who made this event possible through their generosity and patriotism. Our appreciation and gratitude to WWIIA Guide Chris Ritchie for his exemplary support and coordination throughout this excursion.

"My local VA put out an email and they highlighted WWIIA. Their mission intrigued me so I decided to apply, and was on my way here in less than two months. I am not a fisherman at all. I am a city boy and the closest I've got to fishing is a simple lake with a cheap rod. With the guides and the captains it was like I was a regular on the water. To hear everyone's stories of their service gave me a sense of family. This is one of the greatest experiences and I could never say anything that would explain how this has helped me."

5th Annual Wisconsin Heroes Northland Experience Black Bear Hunt

September 4-8 Iron River, WI



The 5th Annual Wisconsin Heroes Northland Black Bear Hunt welcomed three of our Heroes to Iron River, WI for five days of outstanding hunting and camaraderie in the Northwoods. The delicious home-cooked meals, top-notch accommodations, and the relaxed atmosphere made it easy for our Heroes to get away and enjoy themselves. The excitement and anticipation of the hunt were palpable and it didn't take long for our Heroes to get on the board as there was plenty of bear activity and Hero, Shawn was able to harvest the first bear of the event the afternoon of day one. Another bear was taken on day two by Hero, David, and there was also some time spent trout fishing for Shawn as he already filled his bear tag. The bear was dropped off for processing and everyone enjoyed a wonderful dinner as they shared stories and laughs and expressed their appreciation for the experiences had over the past two days.

Day three was an exciting day on Lake Superior for two of our Heroes as they hit the water and caught some nice white fish and trout while, Hero Corbin hit the woods in hopes of filling his bear tag. He would not be disappointed, as he able to harvest a nice black bear later that afternoon. There was tremendous gratitude by all three Heroes for the opportunity to harvest a bear, and their time in the field was second-to-none. As exciting as their hunts and harvests were, the bonds and camaraderie formed at this event were easily the highlight of the trip. Our Heroes not only enjoyed getting to know one another, but the opportunity to connect with the Hosts and the local community was truly appreciated.

A great example of the community appreciation and involvement was having our Heroes honored at the local [Iron River VFW #10197](#) for a delicious steak dinner. This was highly appreciated by our Heroes and a great time of fellowship and fun for everyone involved. This event checked all the boxes for relaxing, restoring, and connecting with like-minded people who have now become friends. None of this would be possible without our amazing longtime WWIA supporters and event Hosts, Dan and Nancy Bourassa. Our gratitude and thanks to them for proudly hosting our Heroes and for continuing to raise the bar year after year. This stellar event was also made possible as a result of the generosity and hard work of so many tremendous donors and supporters. We salute David Flynn, John Bronikowski, and John Birno for obtaining and donating bear tags for our Heroes. Special thanks to Jim Totka, Shawn Monroe, [Guidefinder](#), [Grizzly Coolers](#), [Hush Meats](#), [Hornady Ammunition](#), and John Adams of [Natural Gear](#). Additional recognition and thanks to WWIA Guide Corbin McClanahan for his outstanding support and care throughout the event.

"Your love and passion for the outdoors and veterans is contagious. Seeing how you welcomed us and made us feel like family was amazing! I will definitely be going on another event in the future. This hunt has helped me break out of my shell and get more comfortable going out of my comfort zone. Thank you for your continued dedication to us."

6th Annual Camp Hackett Black Bear Hunt

September 4-8 Phillips, WI



It was another exceptional time in the Northwoods as three of our Purple Heart Heroes gathered at WWIA's Northern Healing Center, Camp Hackett in Phillips, Wisconsin to take part in five days of world-class hunting, camaraderie, and fun at the 6th Annual Camp Hackett Black Bear Event. Camp Hackett offers remarkable opportunities for hunting a variety of game animals spread across 410 bountiful acres of private land. Once everyone was settled in, they were given a safety briefing by Event Leader, Colonel (Retired) Arthur Kandarian that also covered information about the property and the upcoming bear hunt. They spent time zeroing their rifles, headed to their stands, and not in a quick evening hunt. Camp Hackett is prime habitat for

...bears, were given a special evening meal. Group's members to provide resources for black bear and the Heroes learned that firsthand as Hero Daniel harvested a nice bear on the first evening.

After a trip into the town of Phillips for some supplies, our Heroes went out again from noon until dark in search of more black bears. Although everyone was full of anticipation, the bears did not cooperate and no bears were taken on day two. Nonetheless, everyone enjoyed a nice dinner and time relaxing into the night with stories, laughs and great conversation.

Our Heroes arose early on day three, as they were changing up the routine and heading out for some goose hunting. It was a remarkable hunt as they hit their seven man limit by 7:30am! Everyone pitched in to help skin the geese, and then were taught how to prepare goose and extract the meat properly. Two of the Heroes went back to the woods in search of bear, but none were seen. Soon after, it was back to camp to get cleaned up and enjoy a nice meal courtesy of Mike Reed and [A&W Restaurant](#). The remainder of the evening was spent around a campfire, relaxing and sharing more stories and laughs.

Day four had our Heroes hit the water in search of the elusive muskie. Although there were some good opportunities, none were taken. Everyone had a great time though and appreciated the opportunity to get in some quality fishing. It was a quick lunch at A&W, then two of the Heroes were taken to new areas in hopes of harvesting a bear. That afternoon, Hero Matt was able to connect on a beautiful black bear.

As remarkable as the hunting was, our Heroes thoroughly enjoyed their time in Wisconsin as it provided them with some well-deserved time away from the stresses of everyday life and helped them build rapport with one another over meals and shared experiences. The people and businesses of Phillips and the Northwoods are phenomenal and have truly embraced WWIA throughout the years, partnering with us in our mission to serve, honor, and change the lives of our Heroes. We are grateful and humbled by their patriotism and support.

Our sincere thanks to Arthur Kandarian for his leadership, outstanding coordination, and care of our Heroes. This event would not be possible without the stellar support of the following: Dave Hintz and his amazing [Hides for Heroes](#) team, [Battle Born Batteries](#), [Dragonfly Energy](#), [The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation](#), and to Mike and Joan Reed for their tremendous support and dedication over the years. Additional thanks to [Tomahawk VFW Post 2687](#), Jeff and Casey Williams and the staff of Knock 'Em Stiff Outfitters, Kate Schanes and Mark Mahoney of the [Soo Lake Bar and Grill](#), Scott Prescher, Troy Dunbar of [Bonnie's Diner](#), John Kieczewski, Jake Nelson, John Bogdanovic, Jeff and DeDee Schillinger, Bob and Pat Bolz, Bernie Luedtke of [Seed N Feed Store](#), and Don, Joyce, and Isaac Angelo. Special recognition and appreciation to Katie Hermes, Todd Schaller, James Schwochert, and Scott Wahl for donating bear tags to our Heroes, and to Bob Bolz for helping secure the bear tags. Our appreciation to everyone involved for their combined efforts in making this event so successful and memorable for our combat-wounded veterans. High praise to WWIA Guide Matt Brannon for his exceptional support and contributions throughout this stellar event.

"I am so deeply grateful to you all for an amazing once in a lifetime trip to northern Wisconsin! My bear is beautiful and will provide food and warmth to my family. It was amazing to know that my successful hunt was the result of weeks and months of effort to bait the sites and so much more. My wife and I have been blessed for so many years by so many organizations. This one is one of the very best. Great people, great food, and a super time."

6th Annual New Hampshire Bear & Bass Combo

September 6-9 Grafton, NH



Three of our combat-wounded Heroes recently traveled to Grafton, New Hampshire for the 6th Annual New Hampshire Bear and Bass Event. They arrived and quickly found that the fall weather gave a perfect backdrop to match their excitement for the coming days. Everyone loaded up and headed over to the local Bass Pro Shop to obtain the hunting and fishing licenses, as well as some supplies, then made their way to the hunting lodge to get settled into their accommodations. They were given a safety briefing and spent some time on the shooting range zeroing their rifles in preparation for the coming days.

Our Heroes enjoyed their hunts over the following days in the pristine wilderness of New Hampshire. To say that their time in the New Hampshire woods was a success would be an understatement. It was phenomenal! Through the expert guidance and skill of the event Host (Roy) and his friends, all three of our Heroes were able to harvest black bears over the first two days! On the third day, they got in some quality time on the water fishing for bass, pickerel, and trout. This was equally enjoyable as they were able to bring in some wonderful catches while enjoying great camaraderie, conversation, and laughs. They were even able to spend some time with the local game warden talking about their harvests and catches and sharing stories. This event truly epitomized the meaning of "getting away" from the hustle of everyday life and allowed these combat-wounded veterans the space and time they needed to connect, recharge, and form bonds with their brothers.

Let's not forget the food! The food throughout the event was wonderful and plentiful, as they feasted on culinary delights such as the steak, lobster, lasagna, strawberry jelly cake, and more, all expertly prepared courtesy of camp chef John Nugent.

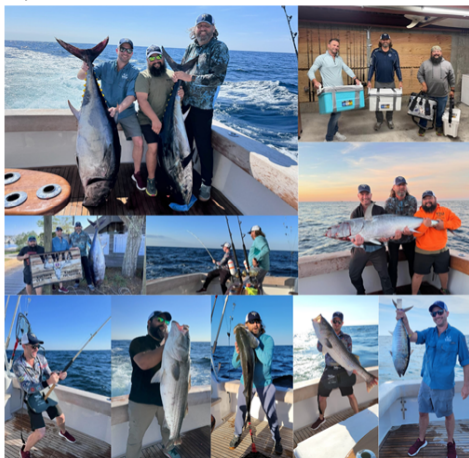
Each Hero left New Hampshire with tremendous gratitude, new friendships, and a lifetime of memories. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Host Roy Holland and his phenomenal friends and supporters for making this already amazing event even better. Special thanks to the Jack and Dorottv

Byrne Foundation, the [New Hampshire Veterans Association](#), [Sturm, Ruger Co.](#), Carl Pellerin, John Nugent, [Enfield Fire Fighters Association](#), Russell Poltras, Russell Larry, Daniel Bowlan, and Tim Howlett. High gratitude and appreciation to WWIA Guide Derek Duplisea for his assistance and attention to our Heroes during their stay.

"I had an amazing experience. I don't get out enough to open up to guys around a fire that actually know what either I went through or am still going through. You and the guys made me feel at home the whole time I was there. I think we all know harvesting an animal is just a bonus on top of meeting and laughing with new friends. I wouldn't change anything you guys did there. Thanks a lot!"

Inaugural Montauk NY Inshore/Offshore Fishing

September 9-12 Montauk, NY



Three of our Heroes were warmly welcomed to Montauk, New York to participate in the Inaugural Montauk Inshore/Offshore Fishing Event. Once everyone was settled into their rooms and introductions were made, they gathered for a tour of the world-famous [Montauk Point Lighthouse](#). This historic lighthouse was commissioned by President George Washington in 1792. Aside from its historic significance, it also offers unforgettable 360° views over the Block Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. Later, they headed to [Montauk Lake Club and Marina](#) for a delicious dinner and a quick tour of the boat they would be fishing on in the coming days. The remainder of the evening, everyone relaxed, watched some football, talked about the fish they were going to target, and spent time getting to know one another.

The next morning, our Heroes arose ready to grab some breakfast and hit the water early in search of striped bass. They quickly met with success, pulling in some nice bass, each weighing roughly 40 pounds! Later in the afternoon, they moved in closer to shore where they had the opportunity to catch some black bass, blue fish, fluke, and porgies. After a wonderful day of fishing, they got cleaned up and made their way to a local restaurant where some of their catches were used to make some scrumptious fish tacos. The remainder of the evening was spent watching more football and relaxing in anticipation of another great day on the water.

An early 4:30am wakeup and back to the boat in pursuit of the coveted bluefin tuna. After an offshore trek of 30 to 40 miles, the Heroes arrived at prime tuna fishing grounds and after a short time, they got a big hit! 30 minutes of reeling and fighting, and a beautiful 140lb tuna was landed, measuring 64 inches long. The boat captain changed locations and they began trolling for tuna, mahi-mahi, sailfish, and marlin. Some smaller tuna were landed and there were a plethora of dolphin seen throughout the day. After heading back to shore with their bounty and getting clean-up, everyone enjoyed a nice dinner at a local favorite, the [Shagwong Tavern](#). This was a rich time of talking, sharing stories, and reminiscing over the past few days spent in Montauk. The Heroes were incredibly grateful for their time in New York, and as great as the fishing was, the camaraderie and friendships borne out of this event were better than any of the catches they made.

This event would not have been possible without the remarkable support of Mr. Anthony McCann. Additional thanks to Host Scott Patternoster for his coordination and tremendous efforts in ensuring this new event felt like a well-seasoned one from start to finish. Additional thanks to WWIA Guide Gabe Fierros for his outstanding support and professionalism throughout this four day event.

"I want to take a moment to thank you for the incredible event that you allowed me to participate in over the past few days. Our Host, Scott, is an incredible human and served the warriors who had the privilege of attending with honor and extreme love for our sacrifices and service to our country. He made us feel welcomed and like we were a part of his extended family. It was heartwarming to see that there are members of our community that go above and beyond in serving us. I am truly humbled by being selected and allowed to participate in such an epic event. I have never experienced catching such big fish and numerous species to boot. I can't thank you and everyone involved with WWIA for the energy and dedication you put into making this happen. I also want to tell you that the WWIA guide Gabe was incredible. He was selfless and helped me feel comfortable from the very start. He communicated well before, during, and after the event. He is something special. I just am so thankful and humbled by this entire trip. It came at the right time in my life for me. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

11th Annual Central Pennsylvania Cast & Blast

September 12-16 Rebersburg, PA





Ten of our Heroes gathered in Rebersburg, Pennsylvania for an exciting and memorable time at the 11th Annual Central PA Cast & Blast. This longstanding and stellar event provided exceptional opportunities for our Heroes to take in some amazing bird shooting and spectacular trout fishing while connecting with fellow Purple Heart recipients over five days. After everyone arrived and got settled, they enjoyed an evening of food and fellowship as they were treated to delicious pizzas courtesy of [Penwood](#), while enjoying live music from [Matt Miskie](#). Sitting around the campfire sharing stories and laughs was the perfect way to begin the trip.

The next morning began with a delicious breakfast spread of pancakes, eggs, bacon, sticky-bun French toast, and sausage. Then, it was time for weapons familiarization, some trap shooting, and an amazing historical military weapons overview. The Heroes loved learning about the history of different weapons and had the opportunity to live fire some of them, such as an AK-47, an M-1 Garand, a .300 blackout suppressed, and a Mauser among others. After a hearty lunch, they spent time getting fly casting lessons and then were treated to an outstanding private wildlife tour at [Penn's Cave](#) as they learned about and observed a variety of animals, including elk, bison, bears, whitetail deer, coyotes, wolves, mountain lions and more. Special thanks to the Schleiden Family for honoring our Heroes with this unique tour. After returning to camp everyone enjoyed a wonderful dinner and relaxed while listening to an outstanding music performance courtesy of [Big Red Acoustics](#).

The following day, our Heroes hit the fields early to get in some amazing pheasant and chukar hunting. Everyone had a tremendous time with lots of birds flushed and harvested. After an exceptional morning of hunting, our Heroes had a wonderful lunch and then were shown everyone was shown how to properly clean their harvested birds so they could be prepared for later that evening. They returned to Penn's Cave for some exceptional fly-fishing. There were plenty of smiles amongst the Heroes as they caught plenty of massive trout. Dinner that evening was a charcuterie board, pheasant poppers with bourbon whiskey sauce, mushroom soup, BBQ brisket, and a low country boil, accompanied by more live musical entertainment by [Sgt. Bob](#). Everyone raved about the dinner, then relaxed while watching college football, sitting around the campfire, enjoying cigars, sharing stories and laughs, and reminiscing about the day's events.

The last day of the event, our Heroes were able to hit the fields again, harvesting another 50 birds before venturing back out to Penn's Cave to catch some more monster trout. There were so many trout caught that they couldn't keep count. It was unlike anything the Heroes had ever experienced. The final evening was filled with great conversation over another fantastic dinner.

Our Heroes time in Pennsylvania was special, and everyone went home with treasured memories, new friendships, a cooler full of pheasant meat, and some [grilled stickies](#) to boot! This is truly a community event and combat-wounded Warriors were honored and revered throughout their stay for their tremendous service and sacrifice to our country. This event would not have been possible were it not for the patriotic support of the businesses and donors of the Centre Region. Recognition and thanks to [U.S. Representative Glenn "GT" Thompson](#) for graciously honoring our Heroes with certificates of appreciation for their service accompanied by commemorative flags that were previously flown over the U.S. Capitol. Our gratitude to following supporters for their contributions and continued dedication: Trina, Gary, Bill, Greg, Kurt, and Courtney for sharing their culinary expertise, to [Millheim Small Engine](#) and Henry Beiler, to Ed Nollfor and [Noll's Gun Shop and Gunsmithing](#), [Klaue Construction](#), Shawn Shaible, Sam Derugen Sr., Trail2Creek Bike Shop, [Burkholder's County Market](#), Diane Klena, and Buddy and Beth Cowher of the Millheim Hotel. High praise and appreciation to Gravel Spring Lodge, the [American Legion Post 779](#), [Sons of the American Legion Post 779](#), and [Smith-Sweetwood Post VFW Post 9575](#) for their generosity and support. Special thanks to Host Sandy Deveney and his remarkable team for another spectacular event and for serving and honoring our Heroes throughout the past eleven years. High praise to WWIIA Guides David Segundo and James Rissler for their hard work and expertise from touchdown to takeoff.

"This trip was beyond amazing. It is really hard to explain what this trip meant to me. From the camaraderie to the weapon shooting, to trap shooting, pheasant and chukar hunting and the trout fishing, each event brought us closer together in ways that only wounded warriors can understand. The food was always wonderful and the ladies taking care to make sure that we weren't hungry. The atmosphere was perfect. The weather and the camaraderie and the hospitality were second to none and one trip experience I will never forget, ever."

2nd Annual Rocky Point Recreation Area SD Archery Antelope Hunt

September 18-23 Belle Fourche, SD



Four of our Purple Heart Heroes converged on Belle Fourche, South Dakota to enjoy six exciting days at the 2nd Annual SD Rocky Point Recreation Area Antelope Hunt. Upon arriving at the airport, our Heroes were greeted by their hosts and were then escorted back to camp by a local military motorcycle.

Hosts and were their courtesy gala to camp by a local Vietnam Chal-Lunge group. After getting settled, they enjoyed an awesome dinner courtesy of Leigh Kamstra and were given a thorough breakdown of the coming week's schedule of events, as well as a safety briefing. The rest of the evening was spent relaxing and getting further acquainted.

The next morning, everyone enjoyed a quick breakfast and departed with their assigned guides and with plenty of anticipation to get the hunting started. 2 of the Heroes proceeded to hunt from blinds and two Heroes hunted with horses. The climate was extremely windy, and although there were plenty of encounters, no antelope were harvested. After a full day in the field, everyone welcomed a relaxing evening featuring a fantastic fish fry dinner thanks to the generosity of [High Plains Anglers](#).

Day two presented another opportunity for our Heroes to hunt antelope, as the weather was hot and pleasant and ideal for a great day in the field. This day was a massive success with 3 out of 4 antelope tags being filled! The harvests were brought for processing, then the group returned to camp to clean up and enjoy a heart dinner of steak, corn, and sides graciously provided by [Center of the Nation's Sportsman's Club](#), as well as a taco bar provided by [4H Shooting Sports](#). Everyone spent the rest of the night relaxing and reflecting on an exceptional day of hunting, fellowship, and great food.

The following morning the group split up to do a combination of fishing and hunting. There was a split of grouse hunting, some some mule deer stalking, and plenty of downtime to relax. Later that day, the final tag was filled, so all four Heroes had found success in South Dakota! The final day allowed the Heroes to get in some additional walleye fishing and grouse hunting, and then have a delicious BBQ dinner in honor of the Heroes by Bunky's. The evening consisted of Heroes thanking their Hosts and volunteers, and talking about what a wonderful adventure they experienced in South Dakota over the past week. They left Belle Fourche with new friendships, some amazing memories, and renewed spirits.

This unique and stellar event would not have been possible without the support of the local community along with the incredible efforts and coordination from Hosts Brad Nelson and Crystal Masek. BIG thanks to [Three Arrows Outfitters](#) for their expert guidance and to WWIA Guide Jeremy Smith for his assistance and support throughout the entire event.

"Thank you! This event was an opportunity of a lifetime. Every day I had to ask if this was real life. I had to pinch myself because I could not believe it wasn't a dream. I shot an antelope with a bow, caught walleye and bass before sunrise and shot our limit of grouse, all in three days. It was epic! All of those precious memories were only possible because of the selfless, professional and caring community of volunteers. Brad, Parker, Crystal, Jeremy and Jay, along with all the landowners and meal preppers made this one of the most fulfilling four days of my life. These trips are the best therapy in the world, and I'm forever in debt to WWIA. Someday, someday, I will figure out how to pay it back. Best regards."

10th Annual Eagle River Muskie Chal-Lunge

September 26-29 Eagle River, WI



Six of our Heroes traveled to Wisconsin to enjoy four days of relaxation, fun, and fellowship at the 10th Annual Eagle River Muskie Chal-Lunge. Our Heroes were welcomed with open arms by the incredible community of Eagle River and spent the first evening getting to know the hosts, fishing guides, community members, event sponsors, and their fishing guides over a wonderful buffet style dinner. They were also presented with an assortment of fishing gear, a custom rod, lures, tackle, fishing reels and rain gear provided by local sponsors. It was a humbling and gracious welcome and our Heroes were incredibly moved by the kind gestures and patriotism of the local community.

Eagle River is known for its world-class muskie fishing and our Heroes were primed and ready as they hit the water over the next few days in search of the elusive and hard-fighting muskie. They would not be disappointed as they were blessed with some exceptional catches. They were also privileged to spend time fishing with National Freshwater Fishing Hall Of Fame Legendary Angler, Joe Bucher. Joe graciously spent time with each Hero giving them personal instruction and tips for successful musky fishing. The food, camaraderie, and friendships throughout this excursion were second-to-none. On the final night of the event, our Heroes were also honored with an incredible banquet in their honor at the local [Veterans Resource Center](#) in Eagle River, where they enjoyed a delicious dinner. They were also presented with beautiful commemorative plaques, gorgeous handmade quilts by the [Northwoods Quilters](#), and were able to acknowledge and thank the outstanding community members, volunteers, and sponsors who worked hard to make this event possible. High praise and appreciation to the extraordinary fishing guides that skillfully led our Heroes: Joe Bucher, Bill Jacobs, Bob Jacobs, Andy Hendrickson, Lou Dreger, Jay Hollnagel, Chas Martin, Justin Reynolds, and Jason Jacobs. Special recognition and thanks to all the incredible Hosts and sponsors for their faithful support. Our gratitude to WWIA Guide Jordan Bondurant and WWIA Guide Jason Gaudette for their coordination and care throughout this event.

"Being a Vietnam Veteran, I have for 55 years been reluctant to join or participate in any type of organization. WWIA is the first one that after all those years a person I met convinced me to engage in. Although I was nervous about going to your Eagle River, WI event, from the moment I arrived and was greeted I knew this was a special organization. I felt comfortable with the other veterans knowing we all had something in common even though we were from different eras."

Inaugural North Dakota Pot Hole Duck Hunt

September 27 - October 1 LaMoure, ND



Two of our combat-wounded Warriors arrived in LaMoure, North Dakota to kick off a brand new event at the Inaugural North Dakota Pot Hole Duck Hunt. Our Heroes arrived at camp and got the lay of the land from their Host, then reviewed some maps as they discussed the upcoming hunts and agenda. Later, they headed over to The Outpost Shotgun and Archery Range to get in some trap shooting and then were treated to a spectacular fish fry dinner at the local [American Legion Post #19](#). It was a great time filled with lively conversation and fellowship with local community members. Upon return to camp, everyone loaded up decoys and discussed final details for the next morning's hunt before heading to bed.

Early to rise the next morning, our Heroes grabbed a quick breakfast and proceeded to their hunting spot. The action was good early and they were able to harvest some ducks and a beautiful teal. The ducks had slowed by mid-morning and the weather began to warm significantly, so it was decided to try their luck at walleye fishing. Unfortunately, with the temperature hitting 90 degrees and with the mosquitos biting fervently, the fishing was short-lived. The Heroes headed back to camp, got cleaned up and had a relaxing evening, talking over a wonderful dinner prepared by Sharon Harkins.

The remaining two days found our Heroes trying new hunting spots and finding success early in the mornings with more ducks and a few more teals. They also got in some additional time on the water fishing and pulled in a nice carp, but the coveted walleye were elusive this time around. Both Heroes raved about the opportunity to hunt waterfowl in North Dakota and appreciated the chance to get away from the hectic pace of life and slow down for a few idyllic days.

Our gratitude and thanks to Hosts Pat and Sharon Harkins for their tremendous generosity and hospitality. Additional thanks to the James River Sportsman's Club, Bob Flath, Tim Erlandson, Bob Rodine and family, Dwaine Wagner, Bruce Skefke, Jesse and Kathy Peterson, Justin and Megan Domine, Ron Aberle, and Art Hagebock. Special thanks to WWIA Guide Jeremy Smith for his leadership and support in helping make this new event so successful.

"I had a great time. I was able to relax and had a great time talking to everyone and learning about North Dakota. Hunting even with the crazy weather we were still able to put the smack down on some ducks. I am very thankful for this. I don't get to get away much, so it was great to be able to relieve some stress. Pat and his wife Sharon were great. I made new friends for life, thank you."

Stuff Squeak's Jeep Fundraiser

August 10 Geneva-on-the-Lake, OH



Our gratitude and thanks to everyone who came out and participated in the 5th Annual [Stuff Squeak's Jeep](#) Fundraising event, held August 10th at Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio. This annual event is two-fold, as attendees are encouraged to "Stuff" Squeak's Jeep with as much non-perishable food/cans as possible to be donated to the Geneva Food Pantry. It also features a raffle basket auction and a 50/50 with those proceeds being generously donated to WWIA.

This event is held annually to honor the memory of James "Squeak" Thompson, a 6-year Marine Corp Vietnam Veteran and Purple Heart Recipient who had a tremendous heart for helping his fellow veterans. We are humbled

and grateful to share that a total of \$1,729 was raised from this special event and will go toward the local WWIA Lake Erie Trophy Walleye Event! Special recognition and thanks to the 50/50 Winner, Lee Randolph, who graciously donated back the winnings to WWIA! Incredible! THANK YOU, LEE! WWIA's own Steve Fielder of Team Erie was on hand to enjoy the festivities and accept this thoughtful and generous donation.

Additional appreciation and thanks to House Man and Steff Thompson for your coordination and efforts, and a HUGE SHOUT OUT to all the local businesses and sponsors that graciously donated to this event: [Sportsterz Bar & Grille](#), [Geneva-on-the-Lake](#), [All Extremes](#), [Mallick Motorsports](#), [Lake County Bigfoot](#), Murphy's Pub & Ale House, [Footprints Center for Autism](#), Offroad Charm, JCR Precision, Ashtabula County Off Road! We salute all of the event participants for your generosity and support! oiiiiiiiio 🍷 🍷 🍷

WWIA 2nd Charity Poker Tournament

August 24 St. Petersburg, FL



♠️♥️♦️♣️ The 2nd WWIA Charity Poker Tournament took place this past Saturday, August 24th at the [Win Derby](#) in St. Petersburg, Florida, and it was AWESOME! 31 participants battled it out for a \$1,000 First Prize, \$750 Second Prize, and \$250 Third Prize. This tournament was chock full of fun, and featured a 50/50 Raffle, as well as discounts on food and beverages, all in support of WWIA's mission to bring Honor, Connection, and Healing to America's combat-wounded veterans.

Congratulations to our winners and our sincere thanks to everyone who came out to participate and play poker for a great cause. We raised just over \$1,800 from this event and truly appreciate everyone's generosity and support! 🍷

Additional thanks to Win Derby for helping us host this event, and special thanks to WWIA Executive Assistant, Nichole Veasert, and to WWIA Event Coordinator, Mr. Charlie Bunton, for their outstanding coordination and efforts in helping make this 2nd iteration of our Poker Tournament so successful. We have our next Poker Tournament coming up in October, so stay tuned for more details. We look forward to seeing you again soon! ♠️♥️♦️♣️

Soo Lake Bar & Grill WWIA Fundraiser

September 1 Phillips, WI



Please join us in recognizing and thanking the [Soo Lake Bar & Grill](#) for hosting an amazing Labor Day Fundraiser that benefitted WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes. It was tons of fun in the Northwoods of Wisconsin, as this 2nd annual event featured a silent auction, a gun raffle, a scavenger hunt, a poker run, lots of great food (pizza & hot turkey sandwiches), drinks, and awesome music throughout the evening courtesy of [The Freezers Rock!](#)

Thanks to the generosity of the local patrons, the Soo Lake Bar and Grill WWIA Fundraiser donated \$8,700.00 to help WWIA continue its mission to bring Honor, Connection, and Healing to our combat-wounded veterans. WOW! This stellar donation will go toward the 18th Annual Camp Hackett Event in Phillips, Wisconsin, which will take place this October.

This fundraising event was a tremendous success and would not have been possible without the exceptional efforts of the following individuals: Mark and Kara Mahoney (owners of Soo Lake Bar & Grill), Scott Prescher, Bob Bolz, Jeff & Cindy Conger, Dan Gruenke, Randy Holler, Mike Holler, Dick Heitkemper, and Pat Schultz. Additional thanks to [Wings Over Wisconsin](#) (Coulee Region), and to Jim Tamm and Jason Delling for donating guns for the raffle.

and to Jim, more and Jason, looking for donating guns for the range.

THANK YOU ALL for your planning, hard work, and ingenuity in making this fundraiser so successful and fun! We are humbled and incredibly grateful for your outstanding support! Last, but certainly not least, a HUGE debt of gratitude to everyone who came out to support the event: the generous sponsors, the wonderful patrons, the awesome vendors, the gracious volunteers, and the hardworking staff. This is a testament to the generosity and patriotism of the local Northwoods community! See you again next year!

10th Annual WWIA Wisconsin Golf Tournament

August 31st Botten's Green Acres-Lake Nebagamon, WI



Please join us in recognizing and thanking Dan and Nancy Bourassa, and their incredible team of friends and supporters for hosting a remarkable fundraising event at their 10th Annual Wisconsin Golf Tournament, held at [Botten's Green Acres Golf Course](#) in Lake Nebagamon, WI. This day of fun and sun on the golf course brought together some incredible people for a great cause. Over \$18,600.00 was raised in support of America's combat-wounded veterans and will go toward Dan & Nancy's stellar WWIA event, the 5th Annual Wisconsin Heroes Northland Experience Black Bear Hunt, which just took place last weekend, and was a phenomenal time for all!

Please take time to read Nancy's post below as she aptly thanks so many wonderful and generous people who were integral in making this event so successful. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who participated and gave of their time, talents, efforts, and money in support of our mission to bring healing to our Heroes.

A HUGE salute to Dan and Nancy Bourassa and the entire Bourassa family, as well as their top-notch team of supporters for a decade of coordinating and managing this golf tournament. It's no easy feat, and somehow you all make it look effortless! Additional thanks to [Botten's Green Acres Golf Course](#) for their generosity and support, to all the volunteers, sponsors, and participants of the golf tournament. We remain humbled and amazed at what people can accomplish when they come together in support of an important and worthy cause. Great job, everyone! 🥳🙌

2024 WWIAF Southern Vermont Chapter Fundraiser

September 21st Bennington, VT



🌟🌟🌟 Please join us in recognizing, congratulating, and thanking the [WWIA Southern Vermont Chapter](#) and their amazing community members and businesses who came together for their annual fundraising banquet dinner this past weekend at the Bennington Elks Lodge in Bennington, Vermont! Through the generosity and support of this outstanding community, they raised drumroll\$80,139.00 for our Purple Heart Heroes! UNBELIEVABLE!

We are humbled and incredibly grateful for this remarkable effort! This is a record-setting amount for the Southern Vermont Chapter, who continue to raise the bar year after year through the generosity and dedication of so many Patriotic and selfless people.

The Southern Vermont Chapter is a WWIA Medal of Honor Decorated Patron and with this year's remarkable fundraising result, they have now raised over \$559,000 collectively for WWIA since 2013! WOW!! What an astounding accomplishment in support of bringing Honor, Connection, and Healing to America's combat-wounded Veterans! That equates to having provided real services (valuable outdoor therapeutic recreation) to approximately 250 combat-wounded veterans across a thirteen year period. That is exceptionall

A HUGE THANK YOU to Mike and Debbie Davenport for their tremendous efforts, hard work, coordination, and leadership in making these annual fundraisers exceed all expectations. In addition, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to all of this year's sponsors, donors, attendees, and volunteers for continuing to go above and beyond to support WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes! 🍷 🍷 🍷



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:

Jeff and JoAnn Carter Fund \$7,000
Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Holt \$1,000
Joseph Torriere \$1,000
Thomas E Harting American Legion Post #1977 \$1,000

Donations toward 12th Annual SW OH Waterfowl and Deer Hunt

Degree Lawn & Landscape \$1,000

Donations toward Inaugural River Road Hunt Club Whitetail Deer Hunt

Whitetails Unlimited Stonybrook \$1,000

Donations toward 13th Annual Lake Erie Trophy Walleye Fishing Event

American Legion Dewey-Howlett Post #103 \$5,000
Builders Association of Eastern Ohio & Western Penn. \$1,500
Syntec LLC \$1,500
Diversident Management, INC \$1,500
For Vets Sake \$1,000
Boak & Sons Inc. Roofing & Insulation \$1,000
DeSalvo Construction Co Inc \$1,000
Leetonia Steel Erectors LLC \$1,000
Millwood Incorporated \$1,000
Prout Boiler Heating & Welding Inc \$1,000
Morgan and Lemke D.D.S. MS. Inc \$1,000

Donations toward 10th Eagle River Muskie Chal-Lunge

James & Shawn Stemper \$2,500
Immaculate Conception Church \$2,000
Louis Mirek \$2,000
Veterans Resource Center \$1,600
Walkabout Paddle & Apparel \$1,334.11
Eye on Entrepreneurs Network \$1,000
Karl's Transport, Inc. \$1,000
Three Lakes Cheese Haus, LLC \$1,000

Donations toward 6th Naples VFW Big Buck Hunt

James R Moore Memorial VFW #8726 \$4,500

Donations toward 3rd Annual Alabama Turkey Hunt

Kabco Builders Inc \$1,500

Donations toward 5th Annual WI Heroes Northland Experience Black Bear Hunt

Liquor in the Woods \$1,600

University of Wisconsin Badger Battalion Army ROTC Hall of Fame

September 7 Madison, WI





Our congratulations to WWIA's Founder and CEO, John McDaniel, as he was inducted in the University of Wisconsin Badger Battalion Army ROTC Hall of Fame. A wonderful and well-deserved honor. 🇺🇸

Purple Heart Day

August 7th



August 8th of each year is Purple Heart Day. On this day, we recognize and honor all combat-wounded Purple Heart Heroes who have served and sacrificed on behalf of our country. The Purple Heart award is America's oldest military decoration, established by General George Washington as the Badge of Military Merit.

We, and our remarkable community of supporters and friends are humbled and grateful to have met so many incredible Purple Heart Patriots throughout the past 18 years. It is truly our honor and privilege to serve them. Please join us in offering gratitude and thanks to America's incredible Purple Heart Heroes! 💜

Learn more about this special day and the history of the Purple Heart [here](#).

Congratulations to our Partner and Friends at Ammo.com on Earning Silver Star Patron Status!



Please join us in recognizing and thanking our friends and partners at [Ammo.com](#) for their recent donation of \$5,594.95 to WWIA. [Ammo.com](#) has been a remarkable supporter of WWIA and our combat-wounded veterans since 2019. Through their Freedom Fighter program, they have recently earned WWIA's Silver Star Designated Patron Award for having donated over \$100,000 to WWIA. To date, they have donated a impressive total of \$112,531.95. INCREDIBLE!

When it comes time to order your ammunition, please consider ordering from [Ammo.com](#). Whenever you purchase your ammo from them, they will graciously donate 1% of your entire purchase back to WWIA. All you 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 [HERE](#) to get started and find out more information.

Our sincere thanks to [Ammo.com](#) for their tremendous support and to everyone who chose WWIA as their "Freedom Fighter" designation when ordering. We are honored by your generosity and partnership, and we applaud your outstanding patriotism! Congratulations on your Silver Star Designated Patron Award!

Donate your Used Vehicle, Boat, RV, or Motorcycle to Help Support WWIA & Our Heroes.

All good things don't have to come to an end.

Give your used vehicle, boat, RV, or motorcycle to WWIA.



Did you know that you can help support WWIA and our Heroes by donating your car, truck, van, SUV, boat, motorcycle, ATV, RV, trailer or airplane? Working or not, free towing, tax benefits, and helping support our combat-wounded veterans are just a few of the benefits of using the CARS vehicle donation program. 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! 🙏

🎧 Check out the WWIA Podcast! 🎧



Have you checked out the WWIA Podcast yet? If you haven't given it a listen yet, what are you waiting for? It's a great way to stay connected, go behind the scenes, and get to know more about the incredible people who are a part of our WWIA family. We have over 45 incredible episodes available for you, covering a myriad of interesting topics and special guests. You can listen and download current and past episodes on our website by clicking [here](#). You can also find the WWIA Podcast on your favorite podcast service, such as iTunes, Google Podcasts, Spotify, etc. New episodes drop every two weeks. Be sure to share this with your friends, family, and those in your network! Do us a favor and please leave a review wherever you listen to the podcast. We've got lots of great episodes and guests coming your way, so tune in, subscribe, and enjoy! 🎧

How Can You Help Support WWIA and Our Heroes?



Did you know that there are lots of different ways to help support WWIA and our Heroes? You can donate online, via mail, via PayPal, through vehicle donations, through shopping with our friends and partners, through workplace giving, through donor advised funds, legacy giving, on Giving Tuesday, and so much more! Click [here](#) to learn more about the many ways you can give and partner with WWIA in our mission to bring healing and restoration to our phenomenal combat-wounded Heroes. Thank you! 💜

Want to Learn More About WWIA? Visit Us Online!



Our website is full of information about who we are, how we serve our combat-wounded veterans, and how you can be involved. Visit us today! Click [HERE!](#)

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW UPCOMING EVENTS](#)



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