

3rd Annual Camp Grayling Disabled Veterans' Deer Hunt

By Larry Stafford

This year the disabled deer hunt started on November 3rd, when the four of us, Matt, Steve, John and Larry, strategically placed eleven ground blinds for the Veterans to use on November 11 and 12. On Friday, November 10, nine disabled Veterans showed up for orientation, a safety briefing and a special video sent from **Ted Nugent**, wishing them a Happy Veterans' Day and a safe and successful hunt. After the crossbow sight in, the Veterans went to their assigned blinds to get set up for the next morning hunt. Friday's dinner was supplied by **Spike's Keg 'O' Nails** of Grayling.

Coffee (supplied each day by **Starbucks**), donuts and fruit were enjoyed by everyone before the morning hunt started. **Jim Covey** and mentor, **Joe Landino** were the first to harvest a doe. **Renee Bickar** and her tracking dogs were called in to help find Jim's doe and an hour later the doe was found. The hunters came in to a warm and delicious morning brunch supplied by the **Grayling Restaurant**.

Before the afternoon hunt, **Colonel Scott Meyers, Camp Commander**, came to wish the Veterans a Happy Veterans Day and a successful hunt. The Veterans enjoyed a pasta dinner that night, cooked by **Traci Nelson, Deanna Johnston** and **Barb Stafford**.

The Sunday hunt was more successful for the men. Ten does and a buck walked off the parade field towards **Josh Bauman** and **Don Boudrie**. Josh connected in harvesting one of the ten does. But the real story was **Don Boudrie** who had his brother Dave sitting with him. Don was all set to shoot a doe, when his brother told him to hold up. Yup, the big guy was walking in – a big 8-point buck. Don put the scope on the horns to check him out, got set for the shot and pulled the trigger. That night we were trying to figure out if it was a bad range distance from his brother Dave or 'buck fever'. We'll let the brothers figure that one out! Again, another Veteran, **Geoffery Schultz**, was sitting on the parade field watching a 4-point buck chasing the does around. When the buck came into shooting distance, he took a shot, but unfortunately the shot was low. The morning brunch was prepared by **Traci Nelson** and **Barb Stafford**.

During the afternoon hunt, **Jim Covey** and **Joe Landino** were in their blind when a nice 6-point buck walked in. Joe ranged 30 yards, Jim shot. Humm! Again,

a bad range or another case of 'buck fever'. On the parade field with light running out, **Bill DiLaura** and mentor **Larry Stafford**, called a doe within 35 yards of the blind. Bill made a good broadside shot on the doe.

In all, three does were harvested and three bucks were missed. Sunday night's dinner was supplied by **Family Fare of Grayling**. The Veterans and helpers all enjoyed this dinner along with lots of talk about the hunt. Friendships were made and a good time was had by all.

A special thanks goes to **Matt Kleitch, Natural Resource Specialist, Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center** and his team, **Cullen Haesler, Sgt. James Piper** and **Jonathan Edgerly**; **Steve Nelson** (Beaver Creek Chapter NWTf) for all of the hunt preparations; **Morgan Register** and **Jen Davis** (NWTf); **Ralph Cagle** and **Larry Stafford** (SCI).

The Veteran hunters were: **Charles Covey, James Covey, Donald Boudrie III, Allen Watts** and **Geoffery Schultz** (Army); **Bill DiLaura** (Marines); **Manuel Gilliland** and **Paul Allen** (Navy); **Josh Bauman** (Coast Guard).

The mentors were: **Brian Brown, Ralph Cagle, Larry Stafford, 1st Sgt. Jeremie Mead, David Boudrie, Mark Carolyn, Joe Landino, Steve Nelson** and **Jen Davis**.

The volunteers were: **Renee Bickar, Doninic Edgerly, Todd Leslie, Roberta Robinson, Traci Nelson, Barb Stafford** and **Deanna Johnston**.

