

Hunter Starts Program for Injured Military Personnel

As an avid outdoorsman, Ron Raboud has been hunting in the game-rich area of South-Central British Columbia for more than 20 years. "I never lose my desire to make several trips to this area every year," says Raboud, CEO of The Rabco Corp., which provides pre-engineered metal buildings for the self-storage industry. His early May trips always include a high-country mule deer hunt as well as a spring bear hunt.

About nine years ago, Raboud and Dave Wabnegger, owner of Otter Lake Guide Outfitters in Princeton, British Columbia, began donating one spot in their group's annual hunt to a "special" hunter, often a youth with a life-altering or terminal illness. In 2009, the hunters decided to include a military veteran who had been wounded in battle.



HONORING THOSE SACRIFICING FOR FREEDOM

U.S. Marine Blaine Scott was injured in 2006 when his light-armored vehicle was blown up by an improvised explosive device. He suffered severe burns and a shattered ankle, and endured 18 months of reconstructive surgeries and rehab. Despite his injuries, Scott joined Raboud's group for its spring bear hunt.

"Blaine displayed a tremendous attitude, infectious personality and tremendous work ethic," Raboud says.

A New Cause Is Born

The experience was so satisfying for Raboud, Scott and the group's other members that they decided to create the non-profit charitable organization, Wounded Warrior Outdoors Inc., to provide hunting opportunities to wounded U.S. and Canadian veterans.

"My motivation to found and pursue this organization is two-fold," Raboud says. "I want to honor our wounded military veterans as well as the memories of my parents. My dad was a wounded World War II veteran. I can't think of a more fitting way to honor them both."

Troy Bix, co-publisher of Flagstaff Business News, will serve on the group's board of directors. "My heart really goes out to this foundation because my son is in the U.S. Air Force and on his fifth deployment," Bix says. "Being involved personally with an organization that gives back to U.S. and Canadian soldiers is really important to me."

Choosing Participants

Raboud's first-year goal is to provide hunting opportunities for 18 veterans. He has secured dates for three hunts in May 2010, with six veterans and three guides attending each. Expenses to be covered for each veteran include airfare, ground transportation, a hunting license, a species tag and other fees, food, and lodging. Taxidermy services will also be available.

Raboud is actively seeking donations to cover the veterans' costs. Wounded Warrior Outdoors has a pending application for 501(C)(3) status that, once approved, will make all contributions tax-deductible.

To find the right candidates, Raboud is working with the patient-advocate representative at three U.S. military hospitals: Brooke Army Medical Center, Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Bethesda Naval Hospital. "We will also accept applications for consideration from any U.S. or Canadian military veteran wounded in the line of duty while serving either country in armed conflict of war," he adds.

Veterans must apply for consideration. Once service dates are verified, a committee comprised of professional and medical personnel will review the applications and make their selection.

Raboud hopes Wounded Warrior Outdoors Inc. will be able to sponsor hunts every year. "No matter how large our donations of time and money may be, they pale in comparison to the donations our veterans have made to preserve our freedom," he says. FBN

For more information, contact Raboud at 800-999-0220. To make a donation, please send checks to:

Wounded Warrior Outdoors Inc.

c/o First National Bank of Mt. Dora
P.O. Box 95
Mt. Dora, FL 32756-0095



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