



HUNTS FOR HEROES

Big game hunting in Arizona is allowed through a special “lottery” process overseen by the Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD). Both resident and non-resident hunters can apply for a “tag” to hunt various species several times each year. Naturally, the costs for those tags vary between resident and non-resident applicants. A few tags for certain species are limited to “once-in-a-lifetime” to successful applicants (big horn sheep, buffalo).

As so often happens in life, sometimes a successful tag winner is unable to hunt the species he or she applied for. AZGFD allows the transfer of those tags under certain rules to designated groups or individuals (see the AZGFD regulations for more details). When that happens, The Arizona Elk Society (AES) is one of the approved organizations to receive those tags and to redistribute them to Arizona veterans who have a certain degree of physical disability. This program is called “Hunts for Heroes”.

This past year, AES arranged hunting trips for over 100 Arizona veterans. AES arranges each trip to include an outfitter, camp, food, assistance in game retrieval

and much more. The veteran need only show up with his rifle, bow or shotgun along with his/her personal clothing and other needs.

The responses AES has received from these warriors, both successful and unsuccessful in their hunts, has been overwhelming. To a person, they have raved about how helpful the experience was for their mental health, their outlook on life and the wonderful camaraderie they felt with those assisting in the hunt. Our motto is “Healing Through Hunting”.

Additional information can be obtained by viewing the program video as well as accessing the tag donation and disabled veteran application forms at: <https://www.arizonaelksociety.org/hunts-for-heroes>

Tom Wagner (480-760-3868) is the coordinator of the program.

Joseph C. Masseur

An American Hero

Joseph C. Masseur joined the Arizona National Guard in 1993, performed several missions including a two year mission at Davis-Monthon AFB and two years at Ft. Irwin. He was deployed to Afghanistan as a 13F with Arizona National Guard Unit 1/158 INF. for 15 months and returned home in 2008. He volunteered for a second deployment to Afghanistan as a 11B with 221-CAV (Nevada) in June of 2009. After one month he was in a roll-over accident while returning from patrol which resulted in the amputation of his left leg below the knee, his calcaneus (heel) was shattered and he suffered a traumatic brain injury. He spent six weeks at the Brooks Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, where he had seven surgeries to control infection and repair the damage to both legs. He spent two years in rehabilitation and in December of 2011, he was medically retired from the Army.

The Arizona Elk Society selected Masseur to go on a hunting adventure (after retaining a returned tag from a hunter in Unit 16A) which resulted in the harvesting of the largest ram taken from Unit 16A this year. To read more about the hunt, go to <https://kdminer.com/news/2018/jan/02/american-heros-bighorn-sheep-hunt/>.