



Soldier Hunt Safe, Successful

Mills County Landowners Host Over 40 Soldiers for Special Deer Hunt

By Steven Bridges
Goldthwaite Eagle

Mills County Landowners hosted over 40 soldiers during the 2016 Mills County Soldier Hunt held January 9th.

Despite the howling north wind that brought windchill temperatures down into the single digits, the soldiers hosted during this year's hunt averaged well over one deer apiece.

The soldiers bagged more than 60 Mills County deer during the one day event. While a few hunters didn't harvest a deer during the hunt, many bagged multiple deer.

The deer hunt was held on the first Saturday afternoon of the special doe and spike season in Mills County. Taking excess deer out of the population is important for managing the deer herd in Mills County. And, taking soldiers that might not have other hunting opportunities is a way for local landowners to support our troops.

Since the inception of the Soldier hunt in 2009, soldiers have harvested over 500 excess deer from the Mills County deer population.

Over that time more than seven tons of pure venison has gone to feed the families of the soldiers. And, many more deer have also been donated to the Mills County Ministerial Association venison donation program as a result of the soldier hunt.

I sincerely thank all the many landowners and guides who took wounded soldiers hunting this weekend.

Of course, I thank all the soldiers for their service to the United States of America.

This hunt is just one small way the citizens of Mills County show our thanks to these fine men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

This year's hunt was helped greatly by Chris Dunshie and Kevin Wylie of Oath, Inc. They and their organization coordi-

nated providing the soldiers for this year's hunt. Neither Chris nor Kevin are compensated for the work they do through Oath, Inc.

"I feel I was put on this earth to bring smiles to wounded servicemen and women," said Wylie during the meal at the Goldthwaite Airport Terminal Saturday night. "Helping these fine men and women find hunting opportunities with local landowners is a great way to bring those smiles out. I never get tired of it."

"I am proud everything went so smooth this year," said Dunshie. "I hope to make the hunt better for the soldiers and landowners each year here in Mills County."

Chris attended the 2014 Mills County Hunt and has since been practically adopted by Buddy and Ella Ruth Morgan of Goldthwaite.

"I come to Mills County a lot now. Buddy and Ella Ruth are like parents to me here in Mills County. I want to make them proud. Helping with this hunt is one way I can do that."

About Oath, Inc.

Outdoor Association for Texas Heroes, Incorporated, or OATH, Inc., is a faith based Nonprofit Organization that utilizes various outdoors activities centered around Faith, Family, and Community to improve the quality of life of our resident Texas Veterans who have been wounded or disabled as a result of direct combat action in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Vietnam. To get involved with Oath, go to www.oathinc.org.

The Kickstarter BBQ Team cooked and served the evening meal for all the soldiers, guides and their families free of charge. The team cooked BBQ sandwiches, Cajun gumbo and all the fixings for the entire crowd. No one went away hungry for food or fellowship.



Landowners Buddy and Ella Ruth Morgan are pictured above with their soldiers Glenn and Lisa Hunter and event organizer Chris Dunshie of Oath, Inc. Glenn and Lisa bagged five deer for their freezer from the Morgan Ranch during the 2016 Mills County Soldier Hunt.



Sergeant Major Roger Heinze shows off the Mills County white-tail he harvested at a distance of around 100 yards on the XTC Ranch with his .243 rifle during the 2016 Mills County Soldier Deer Hunt Saturday, January 9th.