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Smith gets choked up thinking back on the stories soldiers have shared with him. One presented Smith with a difficult combat situation he had faced and asked him what he would have done.

"They face stuff they'll never talk about...they're carrying a big load. So I guess in the big spectrum of it, if we can step them away from being in that world...we've given them some hope, some light, some sunshine, some joy, something that takes away from that day what they're carrying around."

If you're a landowner interested in hosting hunts for the men and women who serve in our military, you can call Rickie or Janice Smith to make contact with the liaison at Fort Gates. Rickie's number is (325) 451-0176, and Janice's is 451-3500.

"I hope this county just adopts Fort Hood," Smith said.



New Texas Migratory Bird Seasons

South Texas dove hunters will see increased opportunity this year thanks to a season framework adjustment expanding the early September 4-day Special White-winged Dove Area hunting season to the entire South Zone boundary. The change is part of the 2017-18 migratory game bird seasons adopted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

"For the second straight year, Texas will be taking advantage of a 90-day dove season and the expansion of early white-winged dove hunting during the first two weekends in September, in effect, create early September hunting opportunities statewide for the first time ever," said Dave Morrison, TPWD Wildlife Division deputy director.

Other notable changes for the 2017-18 migratory bird hunting seasons include a reduction to the daily bag limit on pintail to just one, a shift in season opening date for sandhill cranes in Zone B, and a modification increasing the youth age restriction for waterfowl hunting to 16 years of age. Federal duck stamp requirements are unchanged.

Following is the season calendar and framework for 2017-18:

Dove: North Zone: Sept. 1 – Nov. 12 and Dec. 15-31. Central Zone: Sept. 1 – Nov. 5 and Dec. 15 – Jan. 7, 2018. Special White-winged Dove Days (entire South Zone): Sept. 2-3, 9-10. South Zone: Sept. 22 – Nov. 8 and Dec. 15 – Jan. 21, 2018.

The daily bag limit for doves statewide is 15 and the possession limit 45.

During the early two weekends in the Special White-winged Dove Days, hunting is allowed only from noon to sunset and the daily bag limit is 15 birds, to include not more than two mourning doves and two white-tipped doves. During the general season in the special area, the aggregate bag limit is 15 with no more than two white-tipped doves.

Ducks/Geese: Early Season - Statewide Teal — Sept. 9-24 with a daily bag limit of six birds. East Zone Canada Geese – Sept. 9-24 with a daily bag limit of five birds.

General Duck: High Plains Mallard Management Unit: Youth: Oct. 21-22; Regular: Oct. 28-29 — Nov. 3— Jan. 28, 2018. North Zone: Youth: Nov. 4-5; Regular: Nov. 11-26 and Dec. 2—Jan. 28, 2018. South Zone: Youth: Oct. 28-29; Regular: Nov. 4-26 and Dec. 9 — Jan. 28, 2018.

Bag Limit: 6/day in the aggregate to include no more than 5 mallards, of which only 2 may be hens, 3 wood ducks, 3 scaup, 2 redheads, 2 canvasback, 1 pintail, 1 "dusky duck" (mottled, black or Mexican-like) may only



be taken after the first 5 days of the season in the respective zones. Mergansers: 5/day with no more than 2 hooded merganser. Coots: 15/day. Possession limit is 3 times the daily bag limit for all migratory game birds except snow geese which have no possession limit.

Geese: East Zone: Nov. 4 – Jan.28, 2018; conservation order Jan. 29 — Mar. 18, 2018. Bag Limit after the Early Canada Goose: 5 dark geese, to include no more than 2 white-fronted geese, 20 light geese (no possession limit on light geese). West Zone: Nov. 4 – Feb. 4, 2018; conservation order Feb. 5 — Mar. 18, 2018.

Bag Limit: 5 dark geese, to include no more than 2 white-fronted geese, 20 light geese (no possession limit on light geese).Sandhill Crane: Zone A: Oct. 28 – Jan. 28, 2018.Bag Limit: 3, possession limit 9. Zone B: Nov. 24 — Jan. 28, 2018. Bag Limit: 3, possession limit 9. Zone C: Dec. 16 — Jan. 21, 2018. Bag Limit: 2-possession limit 6.

Snipe: Oct. 28 — Feb. 11, 2018 with a daily bag of 8 and possession limit of 24

Woodcock: Dec. 18 – Jan. 31, 2018 with a daily bag limit of 3 and possession limit of 9.

Falconry: Statewide: dove Nov. 18-Dec. 4; ducks Jan. 29-Feb. 12, 2018.