




FACES OF  
FREEDOM

WOUNDED VETERANS' HUNT
09.28.11 DELTA MARSH MANITOBA

PRESENTED BY:



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news release

FACES OF FREEDOM - WOUNDED VETERANS' HUNT GIVES NEW HOPE

The explosion changed Darrell Rostek's life in an instant. The Improvised Explosive Device (IED) abruptly ended the Master Corporal's tour in Afghanistan. He returned to Canada suffering from severe injuries to his head, back and knees. His battle now became personal. He had to find a way to recover, build strength and make a healthy return to society. It wasn't easy.

"When I first came back, I was in total denial," says Rostek. "It took a whole year to come out of my shell. The toughest thing was telling myself, 'Go get some help; you're not a sissy'.

The long road back for Winnipeg-based Rostek includes participating in the Faces of Freedom - Wounded Veterans' Hunt September 28 to October 1, 2011. Three Canadian and three American veterans will attend the four-day waterfowl hunt near Minnedosa, Manitoba. The event is hosted by the Manitoba Wildlife Federation (MWF), Delta Waterfowl Foundation and Cabela's.

Chris Heald, MWF Vice President, says the goal of the hunt is to express gratitude and respect for our soldiers and let them know they are not forgotten. "Bringing Canadian and American veterans together to share in the joy of the outdoors provides an opportunity for friendship, healing and adjustment to civilian life," says Heald.

MCpl. Rostek, a life-long outdoors enthusiast, says time spent in the outdoors, away from the distractions of the city, is one of the best environments for healing. “There’s something about sitting with other wounded vets, fishing or just enjoying the outdoors. You start talking about what’s so wrong and how to get over it. Many people don’t understand what we go through.”

The Canadian and American veterans will be introduced to waterfowl hunting in Manitoba’s renowned ‘pot hole’ country. It’s a rare opportunity for soldiers from two countries, who fought in the same conflict, to help each other deal with personal challenges back home.

Rob Olson, President of Delta Waterfowl, will be one of several volunteers helping with the hunt. “I can’t imagine a better thing I’ll do all year,” says Olson. “This is about people making a sacrifice that I can’t even comprehend. I couldn’t have more respect for these guys.”

Rostek is considering a new career in social work, aimed at helping wounded veterans make the difficult transition back into society. “Afghanistan is winding up,” says Rostek. “But for us it never ends.”

The Faces of Freedom - Wounded Veterans’ Hunt itinerary includes four days of hunting, September 28 - October 1; a fundraising dinner hosted by Winnipeg Blue Bombers stars Buck Pierce and Glenn January in Portage la Prairie - September 28; and a pre-game salute to the veterans at the Winnipeg Blue Bombers home game Vs. the Montreal Alouettes, September 30.

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Photo caption:

Faces Of Freedom - Wounded Veterans’ Hunt: *Honouring those who fight for freedom.*

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Faces of Freedom - Wounded Veterans' Hunt: Canadian Participants

Master Corporal Darrell Rostek is a 17-year Canadian forces veteran currently assigned to the Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry. Rostek served three tours of duty in Bosnia before being assigned to Afghanistan as a LAV gunner. Rostek was born in The Pas, Manitoba and currently calls Winnipeg home.

Corporal Steven Stoesz arrived in Kandahar in 2008 with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. In a three month period, Stoesz was injured in three separate IED incidents, the last being the most serious with severe injuries to his back, neck, shoulder, knee and hip. Stoesz was born in Winnipeg and is an avid outdoors enthusiast.

(third Canadian vet. participant to be named)

Faces of Freedom - Wounded Veterans' Hunt: American Participants

Staff Sergeant David Beck joined the U.S. Army in 2003. As a member of 2nd Ranger Battalion, he served as a rifleman and squad automatic weapon gunner on three combat deployments. As a member of 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, SSG Beck has made three additional combat deployments serving as a radiotelephone operator (RTO), Team Leader, Squad Leader, and Platoon Sergeant.

Sergeant Justin Feagin served in Iraq in 2007-2008 and was deployed to Afghanistan in February 2010 as assistant weapons squad leader. He was injured 17 July 2010 when conducting dismounted operations, an engagement that killed his roommate, injured one of his soldiers, and amputated his leg. Sgt. Feagin has spent the past year in the rehabilitation center in San Antonio, Texas.

Sergeant Chris Thrasher entered the Army in 2002. While assigned to the 1st Infantry Division in 2004-2005, he deployed to Iraq where he received a gunshot wound to the hand. He deployed to Afghanistan with the 3d Brigade (Rakkasans), 101st Airborne Division in 2009-2010 where he was injured by shrapnel from a rocket propelled grenade.

Colonel Michael Steele served in the US Army for 27 years, with numerous combat and operational deployments. In 2009, he founded, The Faces of Freedom, a support organization that assists veterans who have been wounded in combat operations, as well as educates citizens and elected officials on the challenges wounded veterans face when returning home. Col. Steele retired from the U.S. Army in October 2010.

