



## 'Hunters Helping Heroes' gives veterans easier hunting experience



The non-profit organization, "Hunters Helping Heroes" treated New Jersey service members to a complimentary hunting trip recently at the Indian Creek Shooting Preserve in nearby Sussex County, New Jersey. Courtesy photo.

BY MAJ VINCE MORRIS  
PEO Soldier

As part of a program designed to express gratitude to service members, three active-duty Soldiers stationed at Picatinny Arsenal participated in a day-long, guided pheasant and chukar hunting trip.

The outing was donated to veterans of all military branches in the New York and New Jersey area.

The hunt took place Dec. 17, 2011 at Indian Creek Shooting Preserve located in Sussex County, N.J.

The non-profit organization "Hunters Helping Heroes" partnered with a local inspection and certification company, SGS, to present the event.

Central Jersey-based Hunters Helping Heroes was created by sportsmen who have a passion

for the outdoors.

The group focuses on extending gratitude to all of our country's heroes by organizing hunting excursions for service members, firefighters, police officers and Wounded Warriors as a small thank you for their service.

Ryan Miller, who served on active duty with the Air Force and now serves as a reservist at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, founded Hunters Helping Heroes in 2010.

His current projects include a deer hunt in Ohio, a sea duck hunt in Atlantic City, and goose hunts in Maryland and New Jersey. Miller was one of the coordinators for the December event.

"We try to partner landowners, outfitters and fellow hunters across America with qualifying heroes and let them enjoy the

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**"Rocky" Points the Way** – Veteran service member Chris Fazio (right) and dog handler Bob Vitro (center) look on as Rocky points towards their quarry.

## Hunters Helping

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great outdoors," said Miller. "We understand the commitment and work these heroes do and know that it leaves very little time for hunting opportunities. It is just a little way for our organization to say thank you for everything our veterans do every day."

Tony Perkins, a Marine Corps veteran and event coordinator who works as a manager for the certification company SGS, used his contacts to bring together financial support and volunteers for the program.

"Part of SGS's community policy is to support local non-profits that help improve the lives of people in the communities where we live," said Perkins. "I was amazed at the overwhelming support we received for this event."

Maj. Vince Morris was among the three Picatinny Arsenal Soldiers who participated in the event.

"I have served three tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan and no one has ever done anything like

that for me," said Morris. "I hope that one day I can get into a position to provide a similar experience to other veterans."

Ten post-9/11 veterans participated in the hunting event. All participants could hunt half the day with pointing dogs and guides, and the other half with flushing dogs and guides in a different habitat during each hunting session.

"The hunting dogs were amazing," said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Johnston of Picatinny Arsenal. "It is just unbelievable that so many people in the local area would be willing to give up their time to make this event so special."

Picatinny Arsenal's Maj. Ken Bernier added, "In a time when our service men and women are asked to do so much for our country, it is refreshing to see organizations that appreciate the efforts of our service members and are prepared to show their appreciation by organizing such special events."

To learn more about Hunters Helping Heroes, visit <http://huntershelpingheroes.org>.

