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Minnesota Vietnam Veteran Harvests Bull Elk

Minnesota Elk Breeders Association (MnEBA), November 7, 2019 – On November 1, 2019, the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association (MnEBA) was able to provide a special experience for a Vietnam veteran, something that he had never done before – hunting a majestic bull elk. SP.5 Darryl Vacura of Lake of the Woods was the 2019 recipient of the 13th Annual MnEBA Charitable Elk Hunt which took place at Tony's Trophy Elk Hunt Ranch near Baudette, MN.

A Minneapolis native, SP.5 Vacura entered the United States Army in March of 1968. He was trained as an Army medic then went on to serve in Vietnam from May 1969 through April 1970 as a combat medic in the 23rd Infantry Division working off Hawk Hill. SP.5 Vacura served longer than the usual six months in the field, serving nine months in total. He became a decorated serviceman receiving numerous decorations and badges including a Silver Star Combat Medic Badge. His unit also received the Presidential Unit Citation Award. SP.5 Vacura was honorably discharged in March of 1971.

Vacura continued in the medical field working with kidney patients for eight years. As time had gone on, his years in service caught up with him as he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Upon working through his PTSD issues at the VA hospital, he began also working there, helping other veterans with their health needs. After eight years of working in the VA system, he decided to seek woods and water and moved up to Lake of the Woods where he worked as a Charter Captain for 40 years, retiring only recently.

Being newly retired, when the opportunity to hunt a bull elk was presented to him, he took the chance and made plans to be a part of the upcoming hunt. In the meantime, tragedy struck as his grandson passed away suddenly. Vacura taught his grandson how to hunt and they hunted together often. He didn't know how he could go through with the hunt being so deep in grief, however, with the help of good friends, he was able to make the decision to move forward with the remarkable opportunity in front of him. After the hunt, he felt relief and was glad he did it. "It was very good, I sure appreciate it," said Vacura. He is now looking forward to filling his freezer with elk meat which should be back from the processor later this week.

MnEBA would like to thank everyone who generously supported this year's hunt including Tony's Trophy Elk Hunt Ranch, Lake Superior Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI), Splendor Ridge Elk Farm and Sunset Elk Ranch.

MnEBA offers our heartfelt thanks, support and gratitude to SP.5 Vacura and to all United States military men and women for their dedication and service to our country.



SP.5 Darryl Vacura