



## NEWS RELEASE: Tuesday November 28, 2023

**Contact:** Brenda Hartkopf, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association, 320-543-2686

### Minnesota Military Veteran Harvests Bull Elk

**Minnesota Elk Breeders Association (MnEBA), November 28, 2023** – Hunting was something Chad Sheridan could no longer take pleasure in after 16 years in the military, even though he enjoyed hunting when he was younger. But a suggestion from a friend at the American Legion turned into an incredible experience for Chad, one that he still can't believe happened. The opportunity for a military veteran to harvest a bull elk courtesy of the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association and Tony's Trophy Elk Hunt Ranch was just something he had to look in to.

Chad Sheridan grew up in Cannon Falls, Minnesota. As a young adult, he served in the U.S. Army and National Guard for a combined 16 years. The first few years were relatively quiet while he served in the 54B Chemical, 11B Infantry and 88M operations as a truck driver. Then 9-11 happened and he went into three years of combat. Chad was stationed in Iraq as a convoy gunner when in 2005, an IED hit his hummer causing blunt force trauma to his head, neck, shoulders, elbows and hands along with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Chad officially retired from the military in 2011 after multiple surgeries and six years of rehabilitation.

After taking his friend's advice to consider applying for the elk hunt opportunity, Chad visited Fredrickson Elk Farm in Welch, Minnesota to see if this was something he would be interested in doing given he had lost interest in hunting. It did not take long for him to know that yes, he absolutely wanted to apply for this hunt. Once he made the decision to apply for the elk hunt, his interest in hunting slowly returned. While waiting to be chosen for the elk hunt, he was motivated to go hunting again and successfully harvested grouse, a whitetail deer and a bear; precursors for perhaps one of the biggest hunts of his life.

On the week of November 19<sup>th</sup>, Chad made the trip with his girlfriend Amanda to Tony's Trophy Elk Hunt Ranch near Baudette, Minnesota. While he was excited to go on the hunt, he was completely unprepared for the size of the bull and the incredible emotions afterwards. Chad had chosen to take this hunt alone. After some time in the stand, he heard the bull coming, but it was not yet visible. Once he could see it, his first thought was that he couldn't believe it was that big. That is when the nerves really set in. It was also coming towards him straight on. He could see this would not be the broadside shot he was used to but knew from experience how he would take the bull down. One shot later, the bull fell, stumbled forward about five yards and dropped. Chad knew he should wait awhile to make sure the bull was dead, but just couldn't stop shaking and had to move. He slowly approached the bull, and the closer he got, the bigger the bull looked! When Chad knelt down next to the bull, he was still "shaking so bad".

Looking back a week later, Chad shares that he still can't believe the hunt was real. "When I showed my family and friends pictures, they told me I never need to go elk hunting again because I'll never find another elk as big as this one was," Chad says. The meat has already been processed and while he originally did not plan to have the bull mounted, "The elk was so large and beautiful, I just had to do it." Chad is beyond grateful and says, "I am so excited and so appreciative to everyone who made this possible."

MnEBA would like to thank everyone who generously supported this year's hunt including Tony's Trophy Elk Hunt Ranch, Mark & Michelle Lucas who donated the bull, Klint Wylie who transported the bull to the hunt facility, and Lance & Brenda Hartkopf who helped to cover the cost of lodging, meals and processing. MnEBA offers our heartfelt thanks, support and gratitude to Chad Sheridan and to all United States military men and women for their dedication and service to our country.



*Chad Sheridan*