

2011 HUNTING SEASON

PART 3

DEER

OPENS 11/05/11

SEASON OPENERS: DEER HUNT (ARCHERY SEASON) 9.17-12.31 GROUSE, GRAY PARTRIDGE 9.17.11-1.1.12 • FALL TURKEY SEASON 10.01-10.30

• FALL TURKEY SEASON 10.01-10.30 • PR AIRIE CHICKEN SEASON 10.22-10.26 • DEER HUNT(FIREARM SEASON) 11.05-11-27

Camaraderie best experience of trophy buck hunt

Bill Ryan meets fellow Vietnam veteran during hunt

By Michael Jacobson

Shooting an 11-point trophy buck was a thrill, but it wasn't the highlight of Bill Ryan's recent hunting trip. A Vietnam veteran and Purple Heart winner, Ryan found something more important in the Michigan woods.

Ryan was one of eight Purple Heart recipients – vets from Vietnam, Desert Storm, and Iraq – who participated in the Billy Ray Parnell Memorial Purple Heart Hunt at Legends Ranch near Bitely, Mich., on Sept. 1-2.

On the deck one morning, Ryan got to talking to a fellow Vietnam vet from Michigan. “He asked me where I was at in ‘Nam, and I said Cu Chi. He got a funny look on his face and said: Who were you with? First Battalion of the Eighth Artillery of the 28th Infantry Division. When? Christmas Eve of 1966. What gun battery? D Battery.”

“And he started to cry,” Ryan continued. “He said: Bill, we were together. We were in the same company and didn't know it...until now.”

Meeting someone who shared his Vietnam experience, who knew landmarks like the Mountain of the Black Virgin, was very emotional for Ryan. Better than hunting, he said, with tears in his eyes.

“I never got to know anybody in Vietnam. The first month I was there I was on a ten-ton howitzer. The second month I was there I was in fire direction control. And the third month I was the radio telephone forward observer. Then I got hurt,” said Ryan, who broke his back on March 10, 1967. A radio operator, 19-year-old Ryan was riding on the back of an armored personnel carrier when it struck a mine, launching him into the air; his “eyes even with the treetops.” He broke his back when he crashed back into the Vietnam soil.

“If it'd been a full tour of duty – 12 months –

BILL RYAN – see page 10B



After seeing nothing from his stand on the morning on Thursday, Sept. 1, Bill Ryan shot an 11-point buck, with full velvet antlers, that evening from 95 yards.

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