



# MINNESOTA ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

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## **MnEBA Announces 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Charitable Elk Hunt**

**Minnesota Elk Breeders Association (MnEBA), November 2, 2011** – Through the generosity of Tony's Trophy Elk Hunt Ranch, Prairie Hills Elk, the Lake Superior Chapter of SCI, Midwest Outdoors Unlimited and Oak Point Elk Farm, MnEBA is proud to announce the sponsorship of the 5th Annual MnEBA Charitable Elk Hunt. This special anniversary hunt will offer a very deserving wounded veteran the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to harvest a beautiful bull elk, one of nature's most majestic animals!

Mike McElhiney is a retired Master Sergeant and 21 year veteran of the United States Army. Mike has been stationed in Germany, Fort Bragg North Carolina, Fort Campbell Tennessee, and Rochester, Minnesota. Over his illustrious 21 year career, he has either served or been in 24 different countries.

MSG (retired) McElhiney joined the United States Army in 1989, shortly after his high school graduation. Mike is part of a family with a rich military history and made the decision to join the army for "the adventure and college". Through the first twelve years of his military history, he rapidly rose through several ranks of the military and eventually became the Senior Weapons Sergeant for Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 574.

Just weeks after the attacks on "9-11", Mike's ODA along with a small number of other Special Operations Forces and Other Government Agencies deployed and infiltrated into Afghanistan at the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). ODA 574 was the first team to penetrate into southern Afghanistan bringing with them the current president of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, leading the insurgency into the southern provinces of Afghanistan. On the morning of December 5, 2001, Mike and all of his team members were either killed in action or nearly fatally wounded in a battle north of Kandahar.

Upon healing from wounds sustained in OEF, Mike remained assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne), having duty in Rochester, Minnesota for the last six years of his military service. Mike has received numerous military awards including a Bronze Star with Valor Device and a Purple Heart. He now resides in Independence, Minnesota, is married to Dr. Judith McElhiney and has two children Maria and Michael. Mike holds a B.S. degree in Political Science from Austin Peay State University and currently works for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs as the Legislative Director where he actively continues to support Veterans.

There are many individuals and organizations involved in making this opportunity possible. They all want veterans such as MSG (retired) McElhiney to know they are deeply respected and appreciated. Morrie and Daphne Evenson of Prairie Hills Elk donated the bull for this special hunt and shared these thoughts, "We have been fortunate to raise elk and to be members of the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association for 16 years. In donating our bull, we are expressing our appreciation to Mike for his service and sacrifice and to the Minnesota Elk Breeders for the quality of life we experience". The Lake Superior Chapter of SCI is also pleased to play a part in this hunt by helping to pay for expenses. "It's always a pleasure and an honor to give back to our wounded veterans who have given so much to our country," said President Dale Bruder. "Without them, we wouldn't have the freedom to have the hunting and fishing we do."

Tony Beckel of Tony's Trophy Elk Hunt Ranch has been an active participant in MnEBA Charitable Elk Hunts for the past five years by offering not only a beautiful 900 acre hunting facility for the hunt, but also his guide services for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hunt a Minnesota elk. Tony's father was a WWII war veteran.

Midwest Outdoors Unlimited has been instrumental in helping to organize all the details along with securing lodging for the hunt. Oak Point Elk Farm will assist in transporting the bull to Baudette where the hunt will take place.

MnEBA wishes Mike the best of luck in his upcoming elk hunt. We also offer our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Mike and all United States military men and women for their service to our country.