

ISSUE 1 · JAN 2023

TRAILS OF FREEDOM

Official Newsletter of Beyond the Battle

Embarking on a New Journey Together: Welcome to "Trails of Freedom"

BY JESS EDWARDS - CO-FOUNDER AND VICE PRESIDENT

We are thrilled to welcome you to the inaugural issue of "Trails of Freedom," the official newsletter of Beyond the Battle. As we embark on this exciting journey, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for standing alongside us in our mission to provide veterans with enriching outdoor experiences.

In the spirit of camaraderie and healing, "Trails of Freedom" aims to be more than just a newsletter. It's a bridge that connects our dedicated supporters, passionate volunteers, and the brave veterans we proudly serve. Within these pages, you'll find stories of resilience, triumphs forged in nature, and the profound impact of our outdoor adventures on those who have served our nation.

Our nonprofit is driven by the belief that the healing power of nature can provide solace and strength to those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom. Through fishing trips, hunting expeditions, and shared moments beneath the open sky, we are forging bonds and creating memories that last a lifetime.

In each issue, you can expect:

- Veteran Spotlights: Discover the inspiring stories of the men and women who have found healing and purpose in the great outdoors.
- Trail Tales: Explore the participant's adventures.
- Upcoming Expeditions: Stay informed about our upcoming events, and learn how you can get involved and make a difference.

Together, let's celebrate nature's transformative power and our veterans' resilience. Thank you for joining us on this journey—your support is the driving force behind every step we take.

With gratitude, Jess

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Veteran Spotlight

BY JEREMY EDWARDS, CO-FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

As president of Beyond the Battle, I have had the distinct pleasure of meeting some of America's bravest heroes in our quest to reach as many veterans as possible. One of the things I love is seeing the reaction our Family of Heroes have when they experience something new in the field. That first sunset, the sounds of ducks or geese buzzing decoys, and that bone-chilling feeling when a Canadian black bear steps out from the shadows. It's a feeling that is hard to explain and that I am grateful for every time it happens. I enjoyed spending the week with MSGT Joseph Rice as we spent five days together in the Canadian wilderness this past May in the New Brunswick black bear woods. Over the past year, Msgt Rice has gone from a veteran we work with to a dear friend and someone I would call a brother. In the next pages, you will read about his first-hand experience on his bear hunt adventure, so I won't steal his thunder. I will keep him honest as he omits some of the funny moments that can happen when faced with a predator that can climb the very tree you sit in, but that is a story for another day. I was honored to have Joe share his story with us in camp through this time. He was a true leader who dedicated his life to the Marine Corps and the servicemen and women enlisted in his care through some of the harshest battles in the Iraq war. I am happy to welcome MSGT Rice to our Family of Heroes and the Beyond the Battle team.

"In war, there
are no
unwounded
soldiers"

JOSE NAROSKY



MSGT Joe Rice

Trail Tails

2023 New Brunswick Bear Hunt

BY JOE RICE, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

On Christmas Day in 2022, I received a message from Jeremy and Jess wishing me a Merry Christmas and inviting me on a New Brunswick Black Bear hunt in the Spring of 2023. Of course, I said, "Yes!" as you can imagine, the excitement grew from there. I was given the opportunity to bring along a fellow Veteran on the hunt. After a few calls and text messages, I was able to lock in a close friend and fellow Marine, Heath Fernald. I don't think Heath and I realized it quite yet, but this trip would turn into an experience of a lifetime!

Heath and I planned on making the 8+ hour trip from Vermont to New Brunswick together. Prior to this trip, it had been over seven years since Heath and I last saw each other. When Heath pulled up to my house in Vermont, it was like we picked right back up where we left off years ago. This is common with many Veterans who previously served together. Bear camp was already established when Heath and I arrived. Bunks were picked, and they put the short guy on the top bunk! The Pro-Staff, Bunky, Tim, Jeremy, and Frank, had dinner ready and packages of gear set out for the Veterans on the hunt, including their first BTB swag! The camaraderie amongst the BTB Pro-Staff and Veteran hunters was instantaneous. Our guidance was to take the downtime in the camp to connect with each other and prepare for the days ahead in our tree stands hunting for Black Bear.

My hunting experience to this point was novice at best. I've hunted with family as a kid, but that consisted of driving logging roads in an old Chevy 4x4, hoping to see a big buck. As you can imagine, we were never lucky enough! Small game and migratory birds were where my experience level had been established. This would be my first real serious Big Game hunt. My firearm of choice for this hunt was the tried-and-true Marlin 30AS chambered in 30-30 Winchester.

"The soul
always knows
what to do to
heal itself. The
challenge is to
silence the
mind."

CAROLINE MYSS





Trail Tails 2023 New Brunswick Bear Hunt (Con't)

Over the next few days, Jeremy and I would sit in the tree stand 15-20 yards away from the bait. The woods of New Brunswick, Canada, sitting 16 feet high in a tree stand, is magical. Our mission was to sit quietly and wait for that “shooter” bear to walk within range for a good shot. As I waited in that tree stand, the forest came to life. I had a front-row seat to the day-to-day life of that forest. From the grey squirrels to the red fox and the mother bear and her mischievous cubs, the next few days in the stand proved to be a high point of the hunt all on its own.

Day 4 of 5 arrives for the Veteran hunters. Kevin and Heath have both taken their bears. Heath’s 300+ pound boar would be the biggest bear of the hunt. It was up to Matt and me to wrap up the 2023 Veteran Bear Hunt with 4 bears for 4 hunters by day 5. After a few days of viewing wildlife and missing an opportunity to take a bear (let’s say nerves took over), my chance arrives with a beautiful black bear sow cautiously closing in on the bait. This time I’m calm and collected. I observe the bear through my Vortex scope and wait for her to close in. At around 20 yards, she stops. Bunky told me “If the bear presents itself head-on, aim for the collarbone.” My crosshairs are still on the left shoulder of the bear. I whisper to Jeremy “Can I take it?”, hoping this is the right bear. Jeremy replies “If you have the shot...”. I squeezed the trigger and landed the shot right where I wanted. The bear dropped where it stood. There was silence for a few seconds, followed by whispering cheers for a good clean shot. This was the first big game animal I had taken as a hunter. No more than a few minutes after my shot, we hear a shot ring out in the distance. Matt had taken his bear within a short duration of mine. We went 4 for 4 on our Veteran’s hunt!

I remember and relive the experience in my mind well beyond the hunt. The time spent with this Family of Heroes, Rhys, and Shawn from Pehqey Outfitters and our BTB Pro-Staff, was an experience I believe I could have only received during my time as an active-duty Marine. This experience was far beyond the hunt. It was a chance to reconnect with fellow Marines, meet new Veterans, and forge new relationships with hunters and guides who share the same interests. This will be played over in my head as the sea stories I remember from my time in service.

“Awaken your senses by sitting in nature, the earth aligns the soul of those of sit.”

NIKKI ROWE



2023 Year in Review

Name	Branch	Outfitter	Hunt Type
Joseph R.	USMC	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Shane B.	USARMY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Craig T.	USMC	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Frankie C.	USNAVY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Jake M.	USMC	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Tim L.	USMC	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Tim J.	USMC	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
David S.	USNAVY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Eugene W.	USMC	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Daniel W.	USMC	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Larry C.	USAF	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Armand T.	USARMY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Ed B.	USNAVY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Walt Z.	USAF	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Terry S.	USARMY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Christine T.	USARMY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Rachael B.	USARMY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Marlena G.	USARMY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Justyn C.	USMC	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Kenny L.	USARMY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Curtis M.	USARMY	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Kevin Q.	USCG	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Noah L.	USMC	Mark Over Game Preserve	Pheasant
Kevin Q.	USMC	Tioga Game Preserve	Wild Boar
Tim J.	USMC	Tioga Game Preserve	Wild Boar
Remi J.	USMC	Tioga Game Preserve	Wild Boar
Justyn C.	USMC	RI Local Hunt	Turkey
Daniel W.	USMC	RI Local Hunt	Turkey
Heath F.	USMC	Pehqey Outfitters	Bear
Matthew K.	USMC	Pehqey Outfitters	Bear
Kevin R.	USARMY	Pehqey Outfitters	Bear
Joseph R.	USMC	Pehqey Outfitters	Bear
Zeb F.	USARMY	Sea Hoocker Charters	Saltwater Fishing
Steve R.	USARMY	Sea Hoocker Charters	Saltwater Fishing
Robbie L.	USARMY	Sea Hoocker Charters	Saltwater Fishing
Craig T.	USMC	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Tim J.	USMC	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Tim L.	USMC	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Dominic W.	OHIO Army National Guard	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Cory A.	OHIO Army National Guard	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Aaron G.	OHIO Army National Guard	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Adam L.	USAF	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Kevin Q.	USCG	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Mike B.	USARMY	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Bob H.	USARMY	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Joe S.	USARMY	Finger Lake Snows	Goose Hunt
Michael H.	USARMY	BU Outfitters	Duck Hunt
Christopher H.	USCG	BU Outfitters	Duck Hunt
Rachael G.	USAF	Local Donation	German Shepard
Michael R.	USARMY/National Guard	Local Donation	Black Lab Puppy

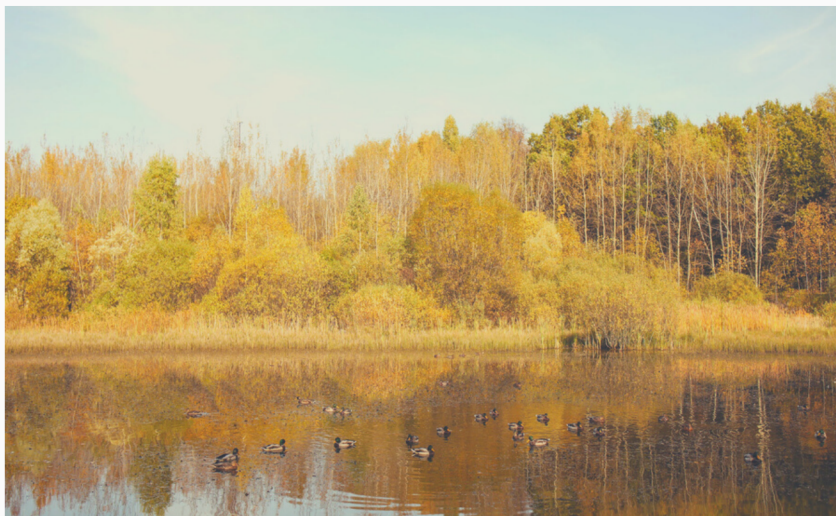




Upcoming Expeditions

As we embark on the promising journey of 2024, the anticipation for upcoming events, fundraising endeavors, and veteran excursions fills our hearts with boundless excitement. The year ahead holds the promise of meaningful gatherings that not only celebrate our shared values but also contribute to noble causes. From engaging community events that bring people together to raise funds for impactful initiatives, to meticulously planned excursions that honor and support our veterans, the calendar is brimming with opportunities to make a positive impact. The prospect of coming together as a community, rallying for important causes, and extending our gratitude to those who have served our nation fuels our enthusiasm for the vibrant and purposeful experiences that await us in the coming months. Let the spirit of camaraderie and generosity guide us as we look forward to a year filled with meaningful connections and purposeful contributions. We look forward to seeing you all!

Warmest Wishes,
Jeremy, Jess, Brian, Tim & Joe



Planned Fundraising Events

- FEBRUARY - GAME DINNER
- APRIL - 401 GIVES CAMPAIGN
- SEPTEMBER - GOLF TOURNAMENT

