

Bend man bags bull elk on Divide Camp memorial hunt

By **Bill Bradshaw**

Wallowa County Chieftain

Army veteran Josh Spano, of Bend, brought down his first elk Friday, bagging a 6-7-point bull elk on a ranch off Swamp Creek northeast of Enterprise.

The hunter was participating in a memorial hunt hosted by Divide Camp, a nonprofit organization created to help post-9/11 disabled veterans. Friday's hunt was in memory of Doug Bridges, a friend of Spano's and fellow soldier killed in action in Iraq in 2006.

Spano said he brought the bull down with two shots from his 6.5mm Creedmore rifle at approximately 130 yards at about 9:30 a.m. on the Rock 'N' J Ranch, owned by Rocky Dixon, managed by Chris Cunningham.

"We spotted him and glassed him for awhile and we didn't want to get busted, so we low-crawled for about 40 minutes and set up behind some sagebrush," he said.

When he fired the first shot, the bull buckled down, got up and Spano fired again.

"He died about 30 yards away," he said.

The group brought in a side-by-side off-road vehicle, loaded the elk and took it to the farm of Jesse Miller off Repplinger Road.

He said Miller often helps with Divide Camp.

"He helps us and lets us use his equipment," Marcum said.

He estimated the bull would provide approximately 300 pounds of meat, in addition to a quality trophy to mount.

Spano said he was drawn to Wallowa County because this is where Divide Camp hosted the premium tag bull hunt.

"It's my favorite place to go hunting," he said.

Marcum, who is the noxious weed specialist for Wallowa County, also has his own outfitting operation.

Corps from 2006 to 2011. He served in Afghanistan from 2010 to 2011 and is 100% disabled.

"A lot of guys we take out don't have amputations or such, but a lot have brain injuries," such as from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), he said. "There's a lot of things veterans are hit with that aren't noticeable."

Divide Camp's efforts aren't just a benefit to disabled veterans. They also help landowners. "We work with a couple of landowners who allow us access to their land and we run their depredation program," Marcum said, noting that this is the third year the camp has done it at Rock 'N' J.

Removing several elk from the offending herd helps to deter them from eating crops.

"If you get several hundred elk getting into an alfalfa field, they can eat it up pretty quick," he said.



Hunter Josh Spano, of Bend, right, poses with the just-shot bull elk he bagged Friday northwest of Enterprise. The 6-7-point bull was Spano's first elk. It was taken during a memorial hunt for Doug Bridges, a fellow veteran, who was killed in action in Iraq in 2006. At left, is Andy Marcum, who led the hunt for Divide Camp.

Courtesy of Andy Marcum

“We try to get two veterans out each weekend from mid-August through about mid-October,” he said.
“This weekend, we had four veterans.”

Marcum, too, is a veteran, having served in the Marine