

Howard "Shane" Briel  
Olympia WA  
18 August 2017

Jerry Dunlap  
Make A Difference (MAD) Outdoors Clovis CA

Dear Sponsors, Supporters and Staff of MAD Outdoors:

The purpose of my correspondence today is to personally thank all those who sponsored, supported or in any way touched the MAD Outdoors Event held 4-7 Aug 2017 in Salmon, ID. Your efforts made my hunting experience a tremendous success and I'm truly grateful for your extreme generosity and overall good nature.

Who am I? I am a retired Sergeant Major from the United States Army. I retired after 25 years and 3 days of service. I served two combat tours (Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom III) and received a variety of medals which include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart just to name a few. I sustained injuries on 21 December 2004 when a suicide bomber detonated himself in the Mess Hall located on Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq. I sustained multiple life threatening injuries and would spend over a year and a half in the hospital and an additional three years of physical therapy. During my time in the hospital I underwent approximately 30 plus surgeries, the bulk of which were for my left hip and my stomach which was blown open. Ultimately I would receive a prosthetic hip joint. My leg (which remained disconnected for over six months) would end up with a very limited range of motion and a leg length difference of almost two inches. My journey was long and I was fortunate to have a wonderful and supportive family, not mention wonderful and supportive friends.

This was my second opportunity to hunt with MAD Outdoors and I really enjoyed the opportunity to foster relationships developed during my first hunt on the Tejon Ranch in CA. Unfortunately, I still haven't harvested an animal but that wasn't the intent of my attending this event. It's the people I was excited to see. While it would have been rewarding to harvest a nice alfalfa fed cow elk (smile), it was equally rewarding to visit with Jerry Dunlap and his wonderful family. My excitement also came from the prospect of meeting Ms. Samantha Tucker, an amputee who participated in the Para-Olympics for archery. Her story inspires me to do better and not let my physical disabilities hold me back. If she can learn to shoot archery with one arm, why should I let a leg injury hold me back from doing the things I'd like to do? Unfortunately she had prior obligations and we weren't able to connect but the hunting community is small and I'm sure I'll meet her sometime in the future. The reason I mention Samantha brings to light a point that further highlights another outstanding quality of this organization...the fact that it brings people together. The wonderful people I've met continually amaze me. Their dedication to a cause so much bigger than themselves continues to be humbling and awe inspiring. I would, once again, like to say "thank you". I want those who supported this event to understand the kind of people organizations like MAD Outdoors supports. If it weren't for this organizations success, I would not have been presented with this very memorable cow elk hunt. I stand humbled by everyone's generosity. The people I met were inspirational, caring, kind and full of good American values. MAD Outdoors cares enough to reach out to Veterans enabling us to share our unique stories in a safe and welcoming environment. The people I met will always share a special place in my heart.

If you donated time, money, land, equipment, your ranch, food or any other items which made this event possible, thank you. Words alone do not adequately express my sincere gratitude. I wish I could personally shake everyone's hand and look you in the eye as I say those words. I hope this letter adequately conveys my sincerity and gratitude. The volunteers associated with this event should be proud of MAD Outdoors and all they accomplished. God Bless and thank you.

Sincerely,



Howard "Shane" Briel  
Sergeant Major (Retired)