

TASK FORCE GARRISON

UPLAND ACADEMY

Student & Staff Course Guide

Saturday, November 7, 2026

The Garrison Range | Pershing County, Nevada

Check-In: 0800 | Planned Completion: 1630

Presented by Task Force Garrison

Primary Instructional Support: Nevada Department of Wildlife Hunt Education Team

Field & Instructional Support: Chukar Chasers

COURSE OVERVIEW

The Task Force Garrison Upland Academy is a one-day upland hunting program designed for **both beginner and experienced hunters within the veteran community.**

If you have never carried a shotgun into the hills, this program is for you.

If you have hunted birds for twenty years and have knowledge worth passing along, this program is for you too.

The Academy combines education, mentorship, shotgun familiarization, clay shooting, hunting-dog instruction, and a mentored afternoon chukar hunt in the country surrounding the Garrison Range.

For new hunters, the objective is to remove the barriers that often prevent someone from getting started: lack of equipment, lack of knowledge, uncertainty about licensing, and simply not having someone experienced to show them how it's done.

For experienced hunters, the Academy is an opportunity to sharpen skills, learn from other bird hunters, work alongside experienced dogs and handlers, share knowledge, and introduce another veteran to something that may become a lifelong pursuit.

The program is intentionally limited to approximately **6–8 veteran students**, supported by an approximately equal or greater number of instructors and mentors.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife Hunt Education Team will provide the primary educational framework and essential resources. Experienced members of Chukar Chasers and additional volunteer instructors will provide practical upland knowledge, dog handling, shotgun instruction, and field mentorship.

This is both a learning and a bonding event.

Experience levels may be different, but everyone participating has something to learn, something to contribute, or both.

WHY WE DO THIS

There is more to upland hunting than putting birds in a vest.

Chukar hunting demands movement, patience, awareness, problem solving, persistence, and a willingness to keep climbing when the easy answer would be to turn around.

It gets you outside. It keeps you moving. It puts you alongside good people and good dogs in big country where phones, schedules, and the noise of everyday life become considerably less important.

For veterans in particular, that has value.

Chukar hunting can be an excellent activity to clear the mind, stay physically active, reconnect with other veterans, and cast some light on the shadows that may follow us long after service.

The Upland Academy is therefore intended to be more than instruction.

It is an opportunity to build relationships between new and experienced hunters, veterans and civilians, students and mentors. It gives experienced hunters a chance to pass along knowledge and gives newer hunters a community they can return to after the Academy is over.

Nobody needs to explain their story.

Nobody needs to arrive with experience.

You just need to be willing to put on your boots, walk some country, learn something, teach something if you can, and spend a day with people who understand the value of getting outside and doing something worthwhile together.

That is as important to the mission as the hunting itself.

IMPORTANT – HUNTING LICENSE REQUIREMENT

ALL STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE FIELD HUNT MUST HAVE A VALID HUNTING LICENSE OR BE PROCESSED FOR AN APPROPRIATE NEVADA APPRENTICE HUNTING LICENSE BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN THE HUNT.

IF YOU DO NOT CURRENTLY HAVE A VALID HUNTING LICENSE, PLEASE LET US KNOW BEFORE THE EVENT.

DO NOT LET THE LICENSE REQUIREMENT STOP YOU FROM ATTENDING. THE NDOW HUNT EDUCATION TEAM CAN ASSIST ELIGIBLE STUDENTS WITH GETTING PROCESSED FOR AN APPRENTICE HUNTING LICENSE FOR THE EVENT.

If you're new to hunting, that's exactly why this program exists. Let us know ahead of time so the necessary licensing requirements can be addressed before Hunt Teams depart the Garrison.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By completion of the Upland Academy, students should have a working understanding of:

Upland Hunting Fundamentals

- Hunter ethics and responsible hunting
- Basic Nevada upland hunting considerations
- Chukar biology and behavior
- Identifying productive chukar habitat
- Recognizing tracks, droppings, feathers, calls, and other bird sign
- Understanding covey behavior
- Reading terrain
- Locating likely feeding, watering, loafing, and escape areas
- Basic strategies for locating and approaching birds

Shotgun Fundamentals

Students will receive instruction and practical experience covering:

- Basic shotgun operation
- Safe loading and unloading
- Muzzle awareness
- Carry positions
- Shotgun mounting

- Target acquisition
- Shooting moving targets
- Safe shooting lanes
- Shot selection
- Understanding when **not** to shoot
- Safe firearm handling in steep and uneven terrain

Students will have an opportunity to apply these fundamentals during a clay-shooting session before entering the field.

Loaner shotguns will be available through NDOW for students who need them.

HUNTING WITH DOGS

Many Upland Academy instructors will hunt with experienced upland dogs.

Students will receive dedicated instruction covering the role of the hunting dog and, most importantly, **how to safely hunt around one.**

Topics include:

- Understanding how dogs search terrain
- Quartering and bird location
- Recognizing changes in canine behavior when encountering scent
- Pointing and flushing behavior
- Handler commands
- Hunter positioning
- Maintaining safe shooting lanes
- Dog location and muzzle awareness
- Working around dogs during retrieves
- Proper interaction with another hunter's dog

An instructor volunteer will conduct a **short live dog demonstration** during Ground School to help students understand the relationship between the dog, handler, bird, and shooter.

The individual handler always retains authority over his or her dog.

THE DOG RULE

No bird is worth an unsafe shot over or near a dog.

Any instructor, handler, or member of a Hunt Team may call:

“NO SHOT.”

When you hear it, do not shoot.

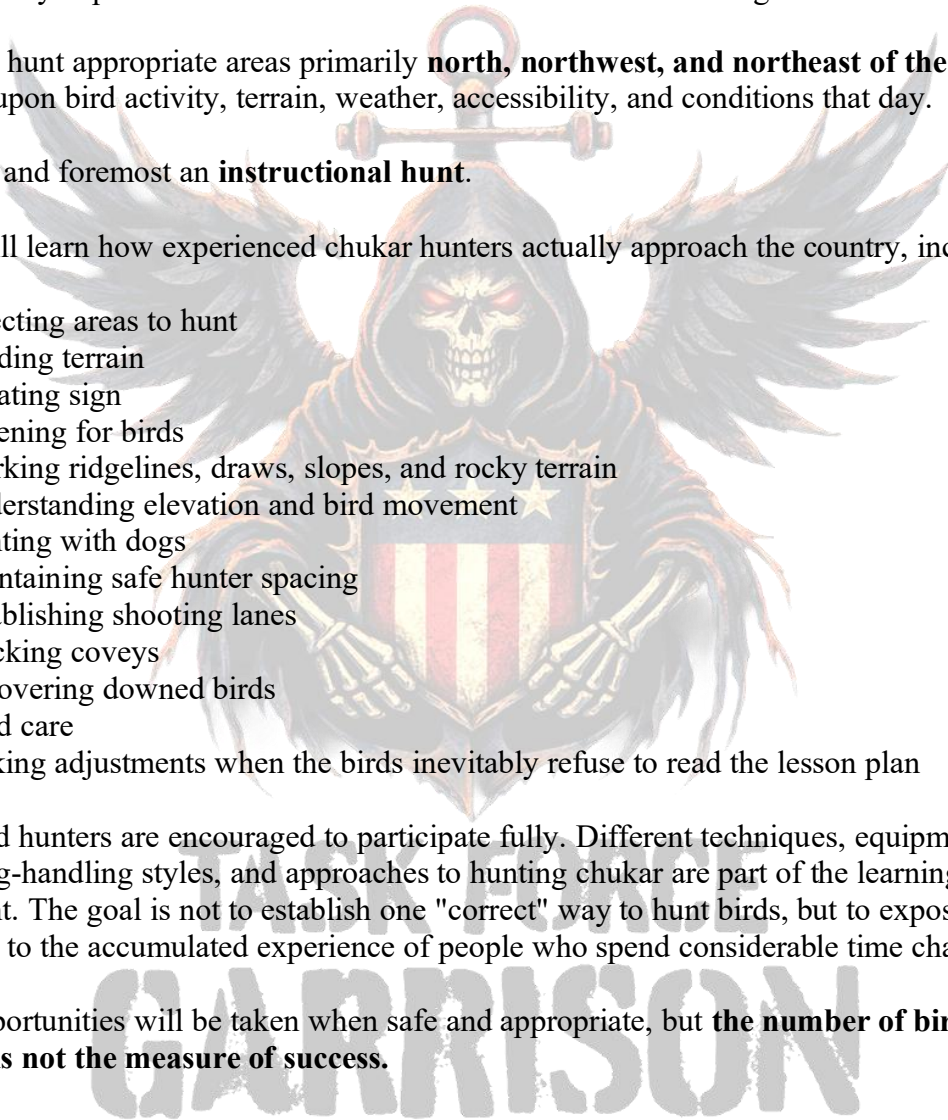
THE MENTORED HUNT

Following Ground School, shotgun familiarization, lunch, and Hunt Team assignments, students will accompany experienced instructors into chukar habitat surrounding the Garrison.

Teams may hunt appropriate areas primarily **north, northwest, and northeast of the Garrison**, depending upon bird activity, terrain, weather, accessibility, and conditions that day.

This is first and foremost an **instructional hunt**.

Students will learn how experienced chukar hunters actually approach the country, including:

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- Selecting areas to hunt
 - Reading terrain
 - Locating sign
 - Listening for birds
 - Working ridgelines, draws, slopes, and rocky terrain
 - Understanding elevation and bird movement
 - Hunting with dogs
 - Maintaining safe hunter spacing
 - Establishing shooting lanes
 - Tracking coveys
 - Recovering downed birds
 - Field care
 - Making adjustments when the birds inevitably refuse to read the lesson plan

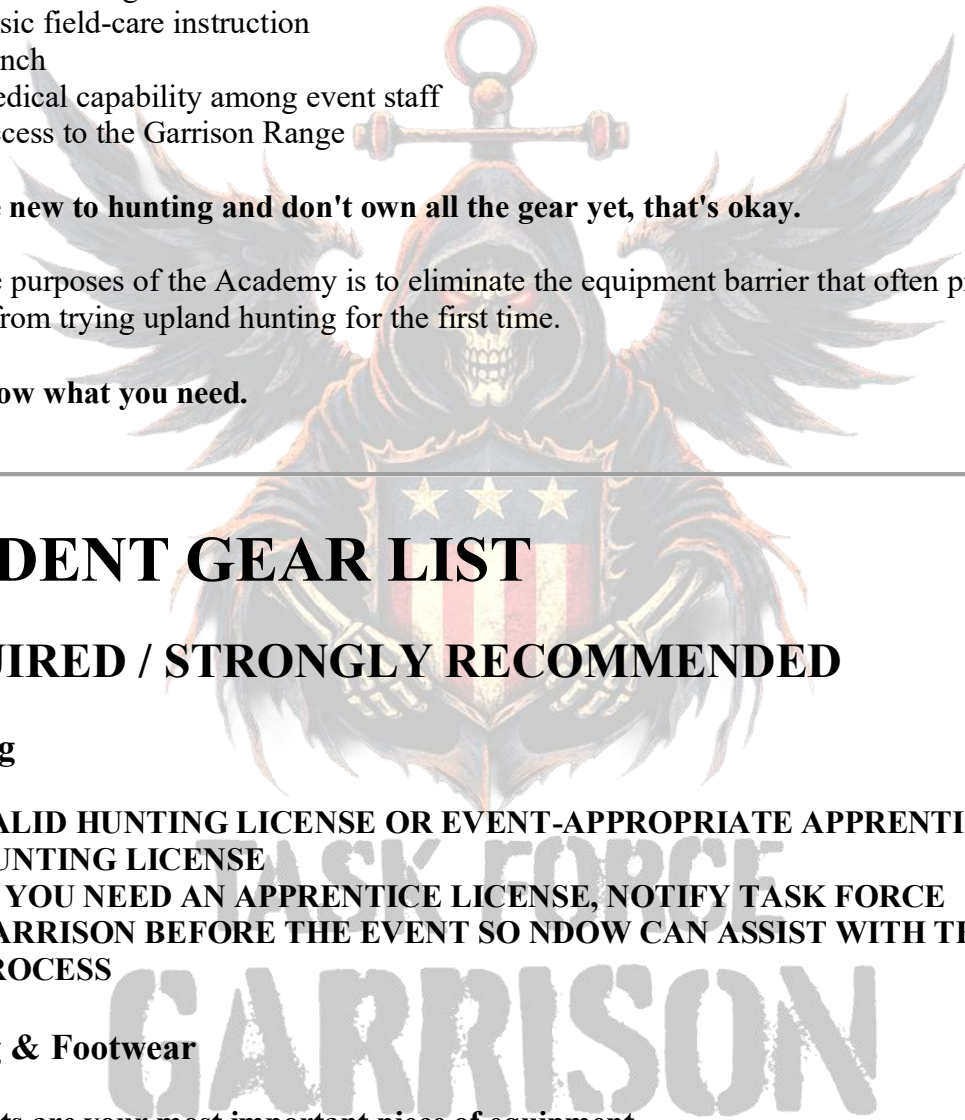
Experienced hunters are encouraged to participate fully. Different techniques, equipment choices, dog-handling styles, and approaches to hunting chukar are part of the learning environment. The goal is not to establish one "correct" way to hunt birds, but to expose participants to the accumulated experience of people who spend considerable time chasing them.

Harvest opportunities will be taken when safe and appropriate, but **the number of birds harvested is not the measure of success**.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

Task Force Garrison, NDOW, Chukar Chasers, and supporting instructors will provide or coordinate:

- Professional and experienced instruction

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- NDOW Hunt Education support
 - Apprentice hunting-license assistance for eligible students when needed
 - Loaner shotguns as available
 - Clay-shooting equipment
 - Ground School materials
 - Hunting-dog demonstration
 - Experienced field mentors
 - Hunt Team organization
 - Bird-cleaning tables
 - Basic field-care instruction
 - Lunch
 - Medical capability among event staff
 - Access to the Garrison Range

If you are new to hunting and don't own all the gear yet, that's okay.

One of the purposes of the Academy is to eliminate the equipment barrier that often prevents someone from trying upland hunting for the first time.

Let us know what you need.

STUDENT GEAR LIST

REQUIRED / STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

Licensing

- **VALID HUNTING LICENSE OR EVENT-APPROPRIATE APPRENTICE HUNTING LICENSE**
- **IF YOU NEED AN APPRENTICE LICENSE, NOTIFY TASK FORCE GARRISON BEFORE THE EVENT SO NDOW CAN ASSIST WITH THE PROCESS**

Clothing & Footwear

Good boots are your most important piece of equipment.

Chukar live in steep, rocky, unforgiving country. Students should bring:

- Sturdy hunting or hiking boots with good traction
- Comfortable hiking socks
- Durable field pants
- Layered upper-body clothing
- Warm outer layer

- Weather-resistant jacket or shell
- Hat or cap
- Gloves
- Blaze orange hat, vest, or other appropriate visibility garment

November conditions in Northern Nevada can change rapidly. Dress in layers.

Do not show up dressed only for the weather at 0800. Prepare for the entire day.

Field Equipment

Bring:

- Small hunting/day pack
- Water bottle or hydration system
- Personal snacks
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Any personally required medications
- Cell phone
- Portable battery pack if available
- Eye protection
- Hearing protection

Firearms & Hunting Equipment

Students who already own appropriate equipment are encouraged to bring:

- Appropriate upland shotgun
- Shotgun case
- Appropriate ammunition
- Hunting vest or upland vest
- Blaze orange equipment
- Game bag
- Binoculars if desired

Do not purchase a shotgun or specialized equipment solely to attend the Academy.

NDOW will have loaner shotguns available for students requiring them.

Additional ammunition requirements and recommendations will be communicated prior to the event.

OPTIONAL BUT USEFUL

Students may also consider bringing:

- Trekking poles
- Gaiters
- Lightweight gloves
- Compact binoculars
- GPS/navigation device
- Small first-aid kit
- Extra socks
- Additional water
- Camera
- Cooler for harvested birds

You do not need to arrive looking like you were dropped into the mountains for a three-week expedition.

Comfortable boots, weather-appropriate clothing, water, and a willingness to learn will get you surprisingly far.

INSTRUCTOR / STAFF GEAR

Instructors should arrive prepared to operate independently while supporting one or more students.

Recommended staff equipment includes:

- Personal shotgun
- Appropriate ammunition
- Eye and hearing protection
- Blaze orange
- Hunting vest/game bag
- Individual water supply
- Day pack
- Appropriate field clothing
- Navigation capability
- Charged cell phone
- Portable battery pack
- Basic first-aid equipment as appropriate
- Bird-cleaning equipment if available
- Student-support equipment as appropriate

Dog handlers should additionally bring everything necessary to safely sustain their dogs throughout the event, including:

- Water for dogs

- Collapsible bowl
- Leads/leashes
- Dog first-aid supplies
- Tracking/GPS equipment if normally utilized
- Appropriate transportation/crate system
- Food or field energy supplements as required
- Any additional dog-specific safety equipment

Handlers retain complete authority and responsibility for their dogs.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

0800 | CHECK-IN – GARRISON RANGE

Student and instructor accountability, introductions, equipment assessment, apprentice-license requirements, loaner equipment coordination, medical considerations, and course overview.

0815 | SAFETY & COURSE BRIEF

Review of range procedures, firearm safety, medical considerations, communications, day's objectives, and field-hunt expectations.

0830 | UPLAND GROUND SCHOOL

NDOW and supporting instructors cover hunter ethics, chukar biology, habitat, bird behavior, equipment, terrain, hunting techniques, firearm considerations, field care, and practical lessons for new and experienced upland hunters.

0930 | DOG SAFETY & WORKING-DOG DEMONSTRATION

Mandatory dog-safety instruction followed by a short practical demonstration with an instructor and experienced upland dog.

Students will learn how dogs work birds, how handlers communicate with dogs, where hunters should position themselves, and how to safely shoot around working dogs.

1000 | SHOTGUN FAMILIARIZATION & CLAY SHOOTING

Hands-on shotgun instruction and clay shooting at the Garrison Range.

Focus will be on safety, confidence, moving targets, mounting, shooting lanes, and practical upland shooting fundamentals.

1100 | LUNCH AT THE GARRISON

Task Force Garrison will provide a grilled protein-based lunch.

Eat. Hydrate. Ask questions. Prepare to walk uphill.

1130 | HUNT TEAM ASSIGNMENTS & FIELD BRIEF

Students will be paired with instructors and organized into small Hunt Teams.

Teams will review:

- General hunting area
- Team Lead
- Student/instructor assignments
- Dog handlers
- Communications
- Firearms
- Equipment
- Medical considerations
- Safety
- Return time

1200 | HUNT TEAMS DEPART

Teams move into surrounding chukar habitat for the mentored field hunt.

1200–1600 | MENTORED CHUKAR HUNT

Practical field instruction involving habitat identification, terrain reading, locating sign, dog work, hunter positioning, safe firearm handling, shot opportunities, bird recovery, and fieldcraft.

1600–1630 | RETURN TO GARRISON

All Hunt Teams return.

Final accountability, firearms made safe, equipment recovery, hydration, and harvested-bird organization.

All teams should be back at the Garrison by 1630 unless the schedule is modified by Task Force Garrison leadership.

APPROX. 1630 | MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY CAKE CEREMONY

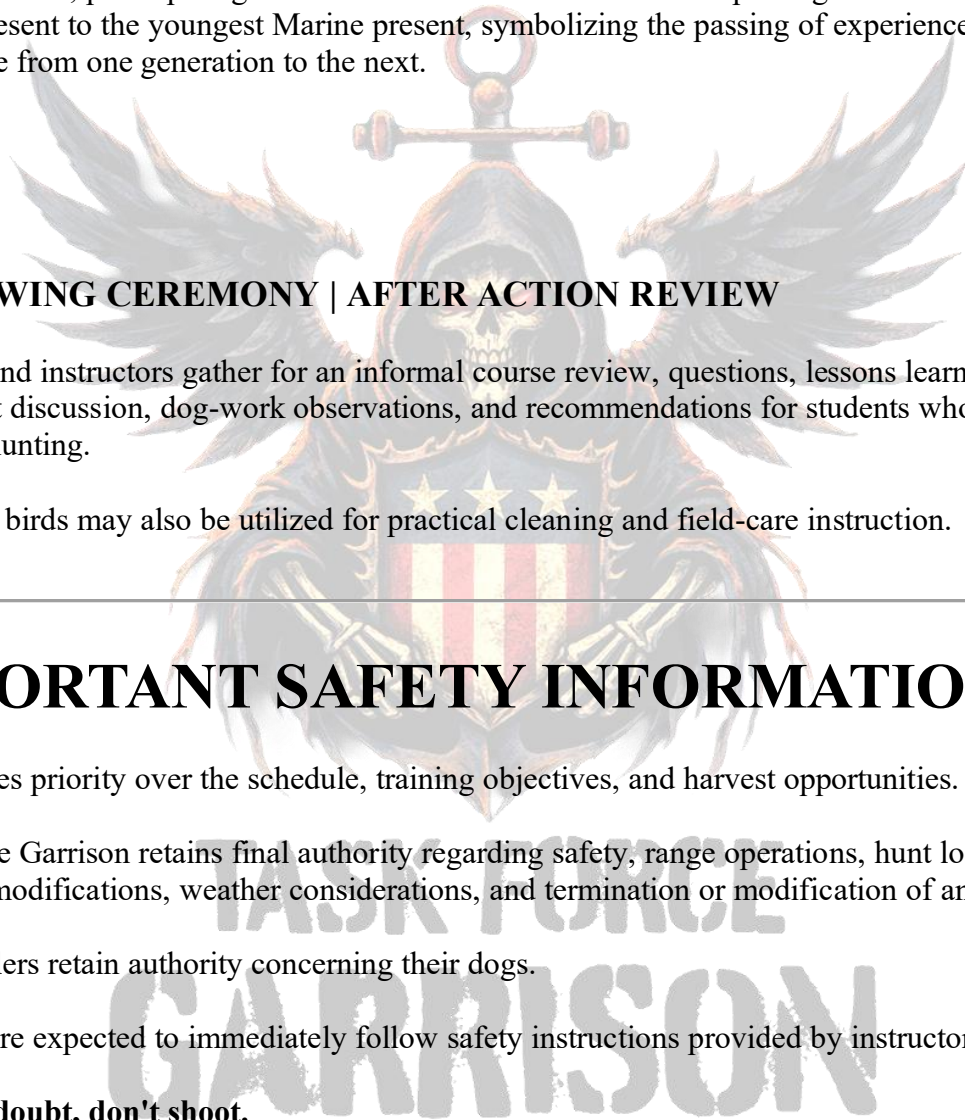
Following accountability, we will gather for the ceremonial cutting of the **251st United States Marine Corps Birthday Cake**.

The Marine Corps Birthday officially falls on November 10, but we will take advantage of having veterans, instructors, partners, and friends assembled at the Garrison to recognize this unequivocal Marine Corps tradition together.

Marine veterans will provide the swords for the ceremonial cake cutting.

All attendees are welcome to participate, regardless of branch of service or veteran status.

Where practical, participating Marines will observe the tradition of passing cake from the oldest Marine present to the youngest Marine present, symbolizing the passing of experience and knowledge from one generation to the next.



FOLLOWING CEREMONY | AFTER ACTION REVIEW

Students and instructors gather for an informal course review, questions, lessons learned, equipment discussion, dog-work observations, and recommendations for students who want to continue hunting.

Harvested birds may also be utilized for practical cleaning and field-care instruction.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Safety takes priority over the schedule, training objectives, and harvest opportunities.

Task Force Garrison retains final authority regarding safety, range operations, hunt locations, schedule modifications, weather considerations, and termination or modification of any activity.

Dog handlers retain authority concerning their dogs.

Students are expected to immediately follow safety instructions provided by instructors.

When in doubt, don't shoot.

There will always be another bird.

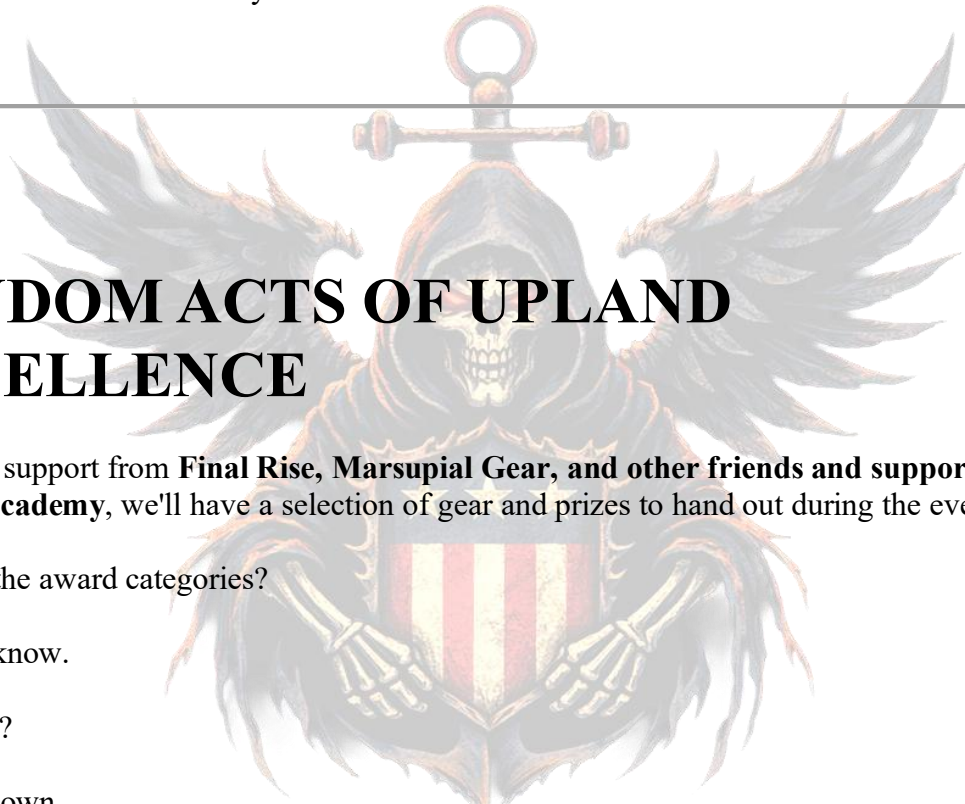
COMMUNICATIONS & MEDICAL

Cellular service is available throughout the general training and hunting area and will serve as the primary means of communication.

Hunt Team Leads and instructors will exchange contact information prior to departure.

Medical capability will be present among event staff.

Any injury, lost participant, firearm-related incident, dog emergency, or other significant safety concern should be immediately communicated to the Hunt Team Lead and Task Force Garrison staff.



RANDOM ACTS OF UPLAND EXCELLENCE

Thanks to support from **Final Rise, Marsupial Gear, and other friends and supporters of the Upland Academy**, we'll have a selection of gear and prizes to hand out during the event.

What are the award categories?

We don't know.

Who wins?

Also unknown.

Maybe it's the first bird. Maybe it's the best shot. Maybe it's the worst shot. Maybe it's the student who climbs the hardest, listens the best, helps another hunter, gets completely worked by a chukar, or demonstrates a previously undiscovered level of boomer/fudd energy.

Who gets what will largely be determined by what the hell happens in the hills.

Show up. Participate. Help each other. Be safe. Have fun.

We'll figure out the rest.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You do **not** need to be a beginner to benefit from the Upland Academy.

You do **not** need to kill a chukar to successfully complete it.

At the end of the day, we want participants to understand or improve upon:

Where chukar live.

Why they're there.

How to find them.

How to safely hunt them.

How hunting dogs work.

How to handle a shotgun around hunters and dogs.

What equipment actually matters.

How to care for a harvested bird.

How to share that knowledge with another veteran.

And what you need to do to get back into the hills again.

For some, this will be their first chukar hunt.

For others, it may be their hundredth.

Both belong here.

If you leave tired, smarter, connected to a few more good people, interested in doing it again, and wondering why a six-ounce bird required you to climb half of Nevada to find it, the Academy has done its job.

Learn the country. Learn the birds. Hunt safely. Pass it on.

**TASK FORCE
GARRISON**