

Section C

Thursday, December 9, 2004



Mark Henckel

MONTANA OUTDOORS

Soldier's loss is hunter's surprise goat

After 25 years of unsuccessfully putting in for a mountain goat hunting license, Mike Zwicker was pretty excited to get a nice billy high in the Beartooth Mountains this year. But, he was a little sad about it, too.

All in all, it was happy, sad — a very ambivalent situation. And even now, he isn't so sure exactly how he should feel.

Just as in all those other 25 years, Zwicker, of Billings, put his application in the 2004 hunting license drawings and got word back in midsummer that he wasn't drawn. So he hunted other places.

He hunted Alberta and got two black bears. He went to Labrador and got a black bear and went to Quebec and took two caribou.

"When I got back from the caribou hunt on Sept. 2, my son said I had gotten a phone call from Fish, Wildlife and Parks," Zwicker said. "I called back and they said I was in line for a mountain goat tag, and did I want it? The person who got the tag originally got called up for active duty in the military."

seeking a solution

At first, Zwicker didn't really know what to say.

"I asked FWP if they could hold the license for the soldier. They said they couldn't. Could they give him the license the next year? No, they couldn't do that either. And they said if I didn't take the license, they'd just call the next person on the list," he said. "So, I wound up taking the license."

Hank Worsech, license bureau chief for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in Helena, said the hunter who originally drew the license for HD 517 was from Bozeman.

"He was the only one who drew a goat, sheep or moose license and got activated after he did it," Worsech said. "The law doesn't allow for the license to be postponed. It's good for just one license year.

"Especially with a species like mountain goat, those tags are so biologically driven. You could have five one year in a district and you may not have any the next year," he said.

Making provisions

Worsech said the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission made provisions for situations like this in 2002 when U.S. soldiers first went to Afghanistan.

"The commission, sympathetic to those conditions, made a policy where the persons would get 100 percent refund of their license fee, allow them to keep their bonus points (for the drawings) and waive the seven-year waiting period before they could apply again," he said.

Worsech said that was pretty much all FWP could do for the Bozeman soldier.

"When I talked to his dad, we had a lot of discussion," Worsech said. "What the dad said is that he wanted the hunter (Zwicker) to call his son after the hunt and talk with him about how it went."

Zwicker should be able to do better than that for him. He should be able to actually show him the hunt.

Please see Goat, 2C

EXHIBIT 25
DATE 2/10/05
Goat 477

Continued from 1C

"We got the entire hunt on video," he said. "I shot a billy with horns just shy of 8 inches long on Oct. 5. We were hunting above Glacier Lake, and I shot the goat by Moon Lake (in the Beartooths). We were at 10,861 feet of elevation. When we got it on video, I was sucking wind pretty bad up there.

"We started hunting right at daylight that day. We were approximately six miles in as the crow flies, according to our GPS," Zwicker said. "We planned it just perfect. As we crested the mountain and came down, I was able to sneak up to within 25 yards of the goat. One shot from my .30-06 and 165-grain bullet, and it went down. We got back out with it just before dark."

Zwicker, who's a respiratory therapist, was hunting with Richard

Mickelson, a trauma coordinator nurse, who shot the video and helped him pack out the goat.

Zwicker plans to make a full-body mount of the goat, along with one of the bears and one of the caribou he shot this year. As the season progressed, he also shot an antelope and a mule deer and then a buffalo on a private ranch.

"With six different species, it was the dream season of my entire life," he said. "I'm an extremely fortunate person. But I still kind of feel bad about the mountain goat.

"If there was any way I could have gotten that tag back to that soldier somehow, I would have," Zwicker said. "I kind of feel bad about it. He had to lose his dream so that my dream came through."

Mark Henckel is the outdoor editor of The Billings Gazette. He can be contacted at 657-1395 or at henckel@billingsgazette.com.



Richard Mickelson photo
Mike Zwicker shot a nice billy near Moon Lake in the Beartooth Mountains.

OUTDOORS

Best wishes from Iraq on mountain goat hunt

Mike Zwicker felt pretty bad that he wound up with a mountain goat license this year, only because a soldier was forced to turn in the tag because he was headed for Iraq.

That tale was related in the Billings Gazette Outdoors section on Dec. 9.

But Zwicker really shouldn't have felt bad. It's just fine with Jerad Werning, of Edgar. And Werner should know. He's the soldier.

In an e-mail from Iraq, Werner wrote this:

Hello Mark,

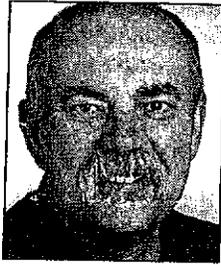
A friend of mine sent me an e-mail about the article regarding the soldier who had to give up the mountain goat permit. Well, this is the thing. I'm that soldier. I was very excited to get that permit. Then, I found out I was coming over here to Iraq.

I was very disappointed to find out that I wouldn't be able to get the permit back in an upcoming year or hold it. My dad, Jim, told me that he got the name of the guy who did get the license and he said he would call him for me. I'm glad that he got his goat along with all his other trophies. What he did is also a dream of mine, and once I return home after my year here, I plan on doing so.

I wish this gentleman wouldn't feel bad for getting the tag. He deserves it after 25 years of being unsuccessful. I am 24 and I've only applied for that tag three times. I've got a lot of time in front of me to go goat hunting if drawn in the future. I'm glad someone had the opportunity to harvest the goat. Also, I am excited to see the video of the hunt.

Spc. Jerad Werning

All we can do is wish Jerad luck in the drawings for next year and beyond. He retained his bonus points for the goat license, which should help his chances. And if anyone deserves luck in the drawings, this soldier does.



Mark Henckel

MONTANA OUTDOORS

HB 477
February 8, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

We, as Montanans, need to show our support and recognize our troops from the past, present and future. We need to repay the favor that they have done for us, in one way or another by discount coupons, jobs, top of the list priorities, or in other ways.

My son, Jerad Werning, signed up for the Montana National Guard Reserves in year 2000 so he could do his civic duty as a young man and serve his country and state of Montana. He is an avid sportsman (fishing and hunting) and was currently taking classes at MSU Bozeman for wildlife management. Last summer, June 28, 2004, he, along with 700 other Montana Guardsmen, were called up for active duty in "Operation Iraqi Freedom". He is presently in Iraq serving his country and state.

The issue here is that last spring, he applied for a goat tag near Red Lodge, MT, and to his surprise, was luckily drawn for the "2004" season. Also, his papers for "called for active duty" arrived for June 28, 2004. Here his chance of a life time goat tag was drawn and also his call for active duty all came at the same time. He discussed his goat tag with family, friends and the Fish & Game Dept. He decided that as a good sportsman, he would return his goat tag, so another sportsman could get his chance at a life time dream of a goat. Fish & Game has refunded his money and kept his bonus point system in effect.

My concern, along with other sportsmen that I know, is that he and other men and women are serving our country to protect our freedom, and this, in itself, is being a good sportsman. Service men and women should be recognized and put on the top of the list, when they return, for special drawings with Fish & Game and with other opportunities with the State of Montana.

Special permits, goat, sheep, moose, are very hard tags to draw and may take a life time to draw, even with the bonus points. With points, there's still many sportsmen going up the same ladder with their points and it could take many years to be lucky to draw a special tag. Service men and women, who are serving our county, should all be considered good sportsmen and be given the opportunity to be put on the top of the list for special drawings with Fish & Game and with other chances on discounts, jobs, ect. with the State of Montana. Let's show our concern and support our troops (past and present) and let us all be good sportsmen and be proud of our heritage that we have young women and men serving our country and state. Let's be proud and put them all at the Top of the List.

Thank you for your concern, prayers and support of our troops.

Sincerely,



Jim Werning

P O Box 111, Edgar, MT 59026 (Phone: 406-962-3460)

Jamie Lowery
98 Weschenfelder Road
Park City, Montana 59063
Phone (406) 633-2634
Diamond@hotmail.com

February 9, 2005

Dear Joan Anderson,

My name is Jamie Lowery and I am writing in regards to my brother Spc. Jerad Werning.

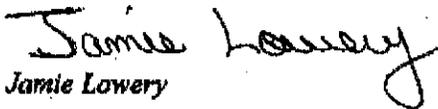
As long as I could remember Jerad has been the first person awake on opening day of hunting season, whether it be duck, elk, or antelope season. When he drew his tag for his goat he was ecstatic.

Shortly thereafter though he got his notice that he was being called to active duty with the National Guard to go to Iraq. He was upset, but being the good sportsman that Jerad is he returned his tag to let someone else experience the joy of getting a goat.

I just want everyone to realize that our soldiers are doing a great thing overseas and the sacrifices they have to make whether it is missing goat season (as little as that may seem to some people) or being away from their families. It would be nice to show them that we care for them.

My husband, Levi, was activated with Jerad and he is an active hunter also. It would mean a lot to them and my whole family if you could consider supporting our soldiers in every sacrifice that they had to make.

Sincerely,


Jamie Lowery

February 9, 2005

Dear Joan Andersen,

My name is Mike Zwicker and I am writing to you to ask for your support for HB 477. I believe we should do everything possible for the men and women who serve our country on a daily basis.

This past hunting season I was fortunate enough to receive a mountain goat tag, something I have been applying for over 25 years. The unfortunate thing was that a soldier named Jerad Werning received this mountain goat tag first and returned it to the Montana Fish and Game because he was activated to serve his country over seas. To this day, I still do not feel right about receiving HIS mountain goat tag.

As our state representative, I am urging you to do all you can to help HB 477 pass and become law. It is the least we can do for our service men and women.

Sincerely,



Mike Zwicker
Billings, MT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: Please deliver this letter to Rep. Joan Anderson by 3:00 p.m. today.

I understand that Joan Anderson is sponsoring a bill to ask for special privileges for the veterans in Montana which includes them retaining certain hunting privileges.

This letter is in support of all the privileges that Joan is sponsoring.

Jerad Werning is one of our close friends who is currently serving in Iraq. Jerad is a foot soldier in Bagdad who has also been trained as a gunner on a Bradley tank. He has been in college three years to obtain a degree in forestry and wildlife biology while training to be a soldier. He drew a goat permit this year for the Red Lodge area. This is a special permit maybe a once-in-a-lifetime hunt that was taken from him because he had to go to war and serve our country. This just doesn't seem right to me, so I ask you to support Joan's request

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Randy and Debby Elton

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is a letter of support to a bill Joan Anderson is presenting for veterans.

My best friend, Jerad Werning, drew a Mountain goat permit for the Red Lodge area for 2004 hunting season. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and he was very excited. A couple months later he found out he was called to duty in Iraq serving for National Guard and would not be here for hunting season. He talked to a wildlife representative and was told the only thing he could do was give the permit to someone else and get a full refund, so that's what he did.

For someone to fight for our country and our rights he should get this permit back when he returns from duty, as should anyone. I am in support of this 100% and this is the right thing to do.

Jayne Elton

23



NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION
555 CAPITOL MALL, SUITE 625
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814
(916) 446-2455 voice • (916) 448-7469 fax
www.nraia.org

STATE & LOCAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
CAROLYN HERBERTSON, MONTANA STATE LIAISON

February 8, 2005

Representative George Golie
Montana House Fish Parks and Wildlife Committee
Montana State Capitol
Helena, Montana 59620
Sent Via E-Mail

Dear Representative Golie:

On behalf of the National Rifle Association members in the state of Montana, we would like to voice our support for House Bill 477 and commend Representative Anderson for her commitment to the armed service men and women who so willingly defend this nation's freedoms.

Hunting is a time-honored tradition in Montana and should be enjoyed by all who are eager and eligible. This measure will ensure that those who serve this country will not be denied the opportunity should they have to forfeit their license.

Thank you for your time, and we urge your "aye" vote for House Bill 477.

Sincerely,

Carolyn L. Herbertson
Montana State Liaison
National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action
State and Local Affairs Division