



Buck o

By Phil Burkhouse

of a Lifetime

Fred Manginell called from Emporium soon after hunting hours closed on the second day of the 2018 firearms deer season.

“You’ve got to see the huge buck this elderly gentleman shot today. It has at least 18 points, a near 20-inch inside spread and lots of mass.”

That was a good enough pitch for me; I was on my way to Fred’s.

Fred and I headed to Camp 8-Point, northwest of Emporium, in upper Rich Valley, near the mouth of Elk Fork in Cameron County.

And there we met the lucky hunter, Ben Cypher, of Saxonburg, an 84-year-old disabled veteran who served in Korea with the 1st Marine Division in 1953 and 1954.

Ben’s father purchased the land for the camp in 1932, and the cabin was built in 1934, the year Ben was born.

“My family began hunting there in 1934 and have been shooting deer and paying taxes in Cameron County ever since,” Ben said.

Ben began hunting at the camp in 1946, but didn’t get his first buck until 1957. In all, he’s harvested 16 bucks, including his 2018 trophy, though he’d never killed a buck bigger than a 5-point until 2018.

Fred and I examined the four bucks

hanging on the camp’s meat pole. There were several nice ones, but Ben’s stood out.

Ben introduced us to his crew: sons, Don and Doug, grandson Jeremy and great nephew, Dan, then began to tell us the story of his buck.

Getting It Done

Ben broke both hips over the past two years and although he must navigate with a walker, he’s been able to keep hunting through a Game Commission-issued Disabled Person’s Permit that allows him to use his vehicle as a blind and permits other licensed hunters to assist him.

But when the 2018 deer season opened with heavy rain, Ben stayed in camp.

By the next morning, he was itching to get out. His eldest son Don, who shot a buck on opening day, accompanied him.

Father and son left camp around 9 o’clock Tuesday and drove to a clearcut on ground leased by the Indian Elk Hunt Club, of which both men are members.

They parked and turned the vehicle off, then began watching the edge of the clearcut. Around 2 o’clock, Ben spotted a deer feeding on a steep hillside in thick beech saplings, about 125 yards away.

Don glassed the deer and, while he

Cameron giant is disabled hunter’s best in 72 years

Ben Cypher will have his buck officially scored for inclusion into Pennsylvania's official Big Game Records. If you've taken a trophy that might qualify, contact Bob D'Angelo at 717-787-4250 ext. 3311 or email him at rdangelo@pa.gov for more details.

knew it was large, he couldn't see the head. The deer finally took several steps, and Don saw it was a buck.

"Get me the heck out of this truck!" Ben said.

While Ben's permit allows him to shoot from a vehicle, a prior injury to his right arm wouldn't allow him to angle the rifle toward the buck without getting out.

But doing so wouldn't be easy.

Don, 61, first got Ben's walker out of the truck, then Ben. Finally, he set up a tripod, and Ben loaded his Browning 7mm-08 rifle.

The buck continued feeding, oblivious to their presence. Ben scoped it, but at first could see only its back half. It soon would nudge ahead far enough for Ben to verify it had legal antlers.

He squeezed off a shot and the deer flinched, but moved only about 10 feet.

He fired again, his bullet apparently hitting a sapling. He fired a third time,

and the deer dropped.

Still, neither hunter had a clue how big the buck was.

Ben couldn't navigate the terrain, so Don made his way to the deer, across 5 inches of snow on a steep hillside.

Reaching the buck, Don saw its head buried in snow. He lifted it up and radioed his dad.

"You won't believe this buck," Don said. "It's a 14-, no wait, 16-, no an 18-point with two more points less than an inch."

Don field-dressed the deer, then realized he'd need help getting it out.

He was ready to call the younger camp members when an adjacent camp owner and friend, Bruce Brennan, suddenly appeared on an ATV.

Bruce is a big, powerful man and did most of the work getting the buck to the road and back to the truck, where Ben waited anxiously to look over the rack.

"Oh, my God, it looks like an elk," Ben said upon his first good look. "This makes my whole hunting season."

Getting this trophy buck is a wonderful thing to happen to an appreciative and deserving hunter. **GN**

Camp 8-Point gang, from left to right, Doug Cypher, Ben Cypher, Fred Manginell, Jake Walters and Don Cypher with Ben's 18-point – the buck of a lifetime.

