

Better Lucky THAN GOOD

By Milt Burris

After returning home from attending a New Orleans Hornets game in February 2010, I saw the blinking light of our answering machine. I knew it had to be one of those telemarketers telling me what a deal they had for me.

My wife pushed play and the voice said, "This is Garth Carter with *The Huntin' Fool* magazine and you are the winner of the Alberta Whitetail hunt." I immediately told my wife, "Do not delete that message." I called Garth back the next day and he explained I had won a hunting trip through their Membership Drive I entered. Garth told me the hunt would take place November 13-20, 2010 with Chris McKinnon, owner of McKinnon & Company Outfitters in Calling Lake, Alberta, Canada. McKinnon & Company Outfitters offer hunts for Whitetail deer and Black bear on their 3,000 square mile (1,920,000 acres) Alberta concession.

My trip started with a flight from Jackson, Mississippi to Houston, Texas and on to Edmonton, Alberta. With an overnight stay at a hotel near the Edmonton airport, Chris and his dad, Jack McKinnon, arrived to pick up the other hunters and myself. We got acquainted on the drive to camp which was a little over 2 hours.

There were a total of 16 hunters in camp that week including myself. All the hunters in camp were from the United States, hailing from North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Georgia, Michigan, Texas, and California. As the week went on I

enjoyed the company and learned a great deal from this great group of guys.

We arrived in camp at a large log home nested on the banks of Calling Lake. The two story hunting lodge was breathtaking, with a stone fireplace as a center piece. The lodge is a museum for the trophy animals Chris and Sharron McKinnon have taken over the years. The walls of the lodge were adorned with trophy class Whitetail deer, elk, moose, Mountain goat, Stone sheep, Bison, wolf, cougar, Grizzly bear, Black bear, and African game. The bedrooms were situated upstairs and the dining room, kitchen, and den were downstairs. The kitchen was a large commercial style kitchen equipped with all the necessary appliances.

After we had a bite to eat and unpacked our gear, the next order of business was to check our rifles. We headed to a nearby dirt pit where Chris had set up a shooting bench for a 100 yard shot. I was the first to draw blood - my own, from a scope cut! The only thing it hurt was my pride. A great way to start a hunt I thought, as the other hunters ragged me about my accomplishment. That evening before supper Chris explained the camp rules and introduced our guides for the next week. Each guide was paired with two hunters. My guide for the week was a Yukon native, Carl Thomas. Chris showed pictures of a buck taken the week before that scored 204 B&C as well as several trail cam pictures of huge bucks that night. We went to sleep with high hopes of bagging a huge Canadian buck.



With the temperature falling and snow on the forecast, I could hardly sleep that night anticipating the next day's hunt; we awoke to a perfectly cooked breakfast. After breakfast we left with our guide for a 45-minute ride in the truck and a 25-minute ride on a four wheeler.

Carl placed me in a tower stand (Air Wolf Tower Stands) located on a pipeline right of way. The pipeline right of way cut through a dense dark boreal forest. That day I saw a total of 24 deer from my stand. Most of the bucks I saw would score around the 130-150 B&C range with two bucks scoring around 165 B&C. Around 2 o'clock a very large buck crossed the pipeline chasing a doe during a heavy snow storm but I could not get a good shot.

The next day I decided to return to the same stand hoping to get a shot at the buck I saw the previous day. I saw 17 deer that day. It was around 4 o'clock, when I saw a large body deer enter the pipeline near a leaning tree I had previously ranged at 400 yards. As I placed the crosshairs of my Millett scope on the deer his drop tine caught my eye. The buck walked 25 yards toward me with his head down leaving me with no shot. The buck stopped and turned his head to look behind him, giving me the shot I was looking for. The Thompson Center Pro Hunter, chambered in 7mm magnum and shooting Federal Ammunition 160 grain Barnes Triple Shock bullets, found its mark at 375 yards causing the buck to fall in his tracks.

Huntin' Fool
Membership Drive Winner





As I walked toward the antlers and placed my hands on them, there was no ground shrinkage. The buck had 16 scoreable points with a main frame that measured 172" and drop tines totaling 17". The buck scored 189 7/8 B&C gross.

I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to hunt a lot of great locations across the United States but this was the best hunt I have been on for the number of trophy animals seen and harvested. McKinnon & Company Outfitters consistently produce 200" deer year after year. Chris and his guides take great strides to control the wolf population to ensure great deer hunting for years to come.

Chris and Sharron run a first rate hunting operation. The food, accommodations, and quality of animals are all over the top. The McKinnon's go above and beyond to make your hunt as successful and your stay as enjoyable as possible. Chris also has a concession in the Yukon by the name of Bonnet Plume Outfitters. He offers moose, sheep, caribou, and Grizzly hunts in the Yukon. The Bonnet Plume concession consists of 7,200 square miles (4,608,000 acres) of land. I would highly recommend the McKinnon's for a hunting trip of a lifetime. Also, buy a ticket to enter *The Huntin' Fool* Membership Drive where you could have a chance to win a hunt of a lifetime as well!

