

Local men experience African safari

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CROGHAN — Recently a village resident had an opportunity of a lifetime — to hunt big game in South Africa.

Bruce Cardinal was critically wounded in a 1981 incident on a rifle range of a South Korea Army base which resulted in the tragic loss of four American soldiers.

Earlier this year, Mr. Cardinal's cousin Robert Beck, told fellow members of the Adirondack Catskill chapter of Safari Club International of the incident. The safari club has a program through which they donate funds toward hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities for the wounded warriors. Mr. Cardinal was chosen to travel to South Africa for a hunting excursion.

According to Mr. Beck, Stef Swanepoel, owner of Numzaan Safaris in South Africa, also heard of Cardinal's story and added to the trip with a hunt of a lifetime. Cardinal became the recipient of a seven day, all-expense paid hunting experience at one of the many camps operated by Swanepoel.

Mr. Cardinal, a Lowville native, entered the Army in 1975 and retired in 1996 having served with the Fort Drum 10th Mountain Division. He then worked for the Lewis County Highway Department for 20 years.

Although he has hunted his entire life, he said he had never thought of going on an African safari but when the opportunity arose, he couldn't pass it up.

"It was pretty good," he said of the experience. "We stalked the animal through some rough ground. It was different — a good experience."

During the trip, Mr. Cardinal harvested an impala, a wildebeest and a warthog.

The wild game meat totaling about 3000 harvested by Mr. Cardinal, along with members of Safari Club International and Mr. Swanepoel was donated along with school supplies to a South African orphanage.

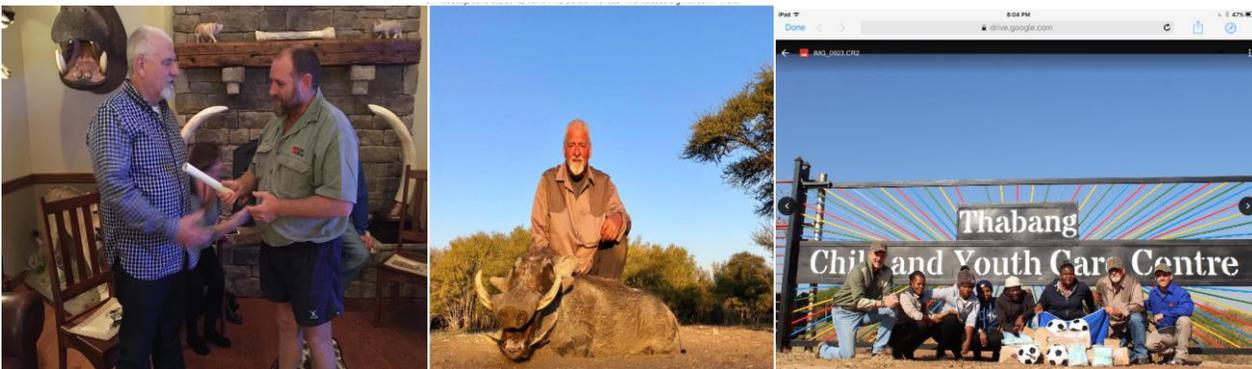
Although he could not bring home the meat, Mr. Cardinal does have trophies of his safari — a wildebeest hide, impala full head mount and an European mount for the warthog.

Mr. Beck accompanied his cousin on the African trip.

"It was so rewarding to see the joy he got from the trip," said Mr. Beck.

Since he had been on safari previously, he tried to explain to his cousin what to expect but Mr. Beck said it's hard to explain — you have to experience it.

"The animals are amazing," said Mr. Beck. "There are several species of antelope. The countryside is beautiful. It is sad that there is so much poverty — it's a different world."



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

[left] Stef Swanepoel, right, awarded Bruce Cardinal a certificate for a seven-day all-expense paid excursion to South Africa.

[Center] Bruce Cardinal with his trophy warthog harvested in South Africa.

[Right] Meat harvested on the hunt along with sports equipment and school supplies were donated to an African orphanage. Picture with the orphanage staff, Robert Beck, left, and on the right, Bruce Cardinal and Gerald Niehaus the group's professional hunter.