Fieldon hunter nabs unlikely kill

By BOB CROSSEN
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Richard "Dick" Niemeyer was not seeing double – a complication from a 2009 stroke – when he lodged a crossbow bolt into the lungs of a button buck.

He does not remember much of the rehabilitation experience, but his wife, Rose Niemeyer, recalled the first time doctors brought Dick to his feet following a serious hemorrhagic stroke he suffered in May 2009.

"Basically, when they released him from Barnes, they weren't even going to send him to a rehab facility. They wanted to send him to a nursing home because they did not give out any hope," Rose said.

The stroke left Dick in a coma, bleeding from his brain so badly doctors had to drain his head twice to relieve the pressure. He suffered from blood clots, and became so unresponsive doctors initiated a last-ditch procedure to recover the man's life.

But before he was put on the table, he flinched in a pain test. One week later, he was out of the ICU.

"It was truly a miracle," Scott Niemeyer, Dick's son, wrote in a submission to bowhunter.com. "I still remember one of his doctors telling him that his body and brain never read any of the books on how to act, and without missing a beat, he quipped back, 'Yeah, but they never wrote a book on a country boy.'"

Health officials did not believe Dick would make a full recovery. In fact, they did not even think he would make it out of the nursing and rehabilitation facility. Rose said doctors encouraged the family to leave Dick in a nursing home.

But his indomitable will and determination pushed him through months of recovery – he even worked so hard he had a heart attack in rehabilitation – and he finally made it home on Sept. 11, 2009.

Dick was bound to a wheelchair, despite his efforts to part ways with it, and Scott proudly brought back his kills from each deer season to show his father.

As a retired Superintendent of Pere Marquette State Park, Dick feels most alive in nature. He'll sit in a blind to watch and listen as the world plods by. These days, he maneuvers around with the help of a cane, despite complications moving with

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Niemeyer

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the right side of his body and double vision.

He is an adamant bow hunter – although he's used some guns since his stroke – and finally took a crossbow into the woods in 2013.

And earlier this year, he killed his first buck with a bow in around nine or 10 years.

"It was unbelievable," Dick said. "I went through a whole lot more than the stroke – had a heart attack – and to go ahead and take a deer after all that is just unbelievable."

He went out to the blind as Scott headed to work on a 12-hour shift. A button buck made toward him and Dick released the bolt, whispering through the air before it plunged into the flesh of the mammal.

The moment his father called him reminded Scott of a childhood memory in which he shot his first deer without the help of his father, and skipped school to do so. Dick was less enraged about missing class than he was ecstatic about his 14-year-old son's first solo kill.

"It instantly brought me back to that moment 13 years ago when I was just a kid, sneaking out when I wasn't supposed to, and thinking how the roles have reversed and how much life has changed over the years," Scott wrote in his article for bowhunter.com.

Scott said the kill is one of his family's crowning achievements. It is a testament to perseverance and will; a story he will tell his children before they sneak off to hunt when they are not supposed to.

The two continue to hunt with each other, and hope Dick's most recent buck will not be his last. In fact, they took to the blind Nov. 13, watching the world go by and reliving Dick's story in the moment.