



Brad Armstrong (left) and Colt Carpenter pose with the pronghorn Armstrong killed in the Juniper Unit.

# A PRONGHORN HUNT 17 YEARS IN THE MAKING

## BRAD ARMSTRONG TAGS JUNIPER UNIT ANTELOPE

BY RYLAN BOGGS

Brad Armstrong ventured out into the Juniper Unit, south of Burns and north of the Hart Mountain Wildlife Refuge, the morning of Aug. 18 with his .338 Lapua and a long-awaited antelope tag.

Accompanied by his cousin, Ben Holiday, and their good friend, Colt Carpenter, they spotted a herd of antelope with the buck Armstrong knew he wanted near a watering hole.

However, a herd of cattle was also at the hole, and Armstrong knew there were too many eyes on him to move in and line up a shot.

The antelope left the hole abruptly and vanished over the open hills. After some time, they were able to spot the herd again but could only get within 800 yards. Thinking this might be the best they would get, the trio set up the shot.

Carpenter manned the range finder while Holiday peered through the spotting scope. It was nearly noon, and the heat waves coming off the ground made it difficult to see through the optics on Armstrong's scope.

Armstrong got the shot lined up at 811 yards, took a breath and squeezed the trigger.

The antelope dropped.

The three had to hurry to keep the meat from spoiling in the heat of the day and were able to have the animal completely field dressed with the meat on ice and the cape removed in two hours.

"It was a great trip with lifetime memories made," Armstrong said.

The trip was over 17 years in the making. Armstrong had put in for an antelope tag for nearly two decades and was finally successful.

A hunter his whole life, Armstrong drew one of the 84 antelope tags available in the Juniper Unit, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

There were 2,091 applicants for these tags, but Armstrong was confident he would get it. Through the ODFW's preference points system, Armstrong had accrued 17 points

towards a pronghorn tag.

"With 17 you're pretty much guaranteed to get it," he said.

He knows of at least four others in the area who got the same tag.

Armstrong spent the weekend of Aug. 6 scouting with his wife, Mary, in the Juniper Unit, putting as much as 80 miles on his Ranger in just one day. Armstrong says most of the preparation for the hunt is scouting.

"Finding the one you want and tracking it, seeing where he goes, finding the watering holes," he said. "It's a lot of scope time and patience."

The lack of trees in the high desert unit — 1.8 million acres of sagebrush, Armstrong said — coupled with the pronghorn's excellent vision and incredible speed, made for a challenging hunt.

Though Armstrong doesn't describe himself as a trophy hunter, he said this tag was an exception.

"You're not just shooting anything," Armstrong said.