
Guard families participate in youth duck hunt

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10/30/2012 - **ST. JOSEPH, Mo.** -- Donned in camouflage and dark colored clothing, a group of hunters-in-training quietly walk tents, they wait for their unsuspecting prey.

A girl who has never hunted before stands ready. Her instructor points to a duck in mid flight and signals for her to shoot. She sees her focus falter. She pulls the trigger...nothing happens. She forgot to turn the safety off.

"I'm not sure this is for me. I may be better at deer hunting," she says.

Recently, about a dozen Guard families from the 139th Airlift Wing were invited by the Missouri Department of Conservation to

The night before the hunt, the kids learned about gun safety and how to shoot clay pigeons.

"It's not as simple as going out and shooting a duck. There are a lot of rules. You can only hunt so many wood ducks and mallards. A readiness coordinator, whose daughter attended the clinic.

Jade Wright, a conservation agent for the state, says many of the clinics they host, the kids are avid hunters already. He was looking for a way to give back to the military.

"We wanted to give something back to the men and women who are sacrificing in so many ways," said Wright.

The clinic raised more than \$1,300 in private donations so the kids could learn to duck hunt.

"We originally planned to do it on public ground," said Wright. "But once we started asking local duck hunters for support, we were able to loan their blinds and equipment."

By the end of the hunt, the kids had collected six ducks and were eager to go again.

Wright named the event the Big Muddy Duck Hunt and plans on hosting it again next season.

"We plan to double the amount of participants next year," said Gabriel.
