This was the first time I had the opportunity to hunt these mountains. I was invited to participate on a hunt by a co-worker who had the same passion for deer hunting as myself.

A long time ago, we discussed hunting over our brown bag lunches, and decided to hunt together. He lived near Canton Park and had hunted this area since childhood. I introduced him to my hunting buddy, and we agreed to open the season together.

We began scouting the mountain behind his residence about three weeks before the opening day of rifle season. After a warming cup of coffee at his home before daylight, we headed for the woods.

I mentioned that he just wanted to show us a few of the best spots that day. We crossed an open pasture and entered the forest at daybreak. We walked off a ridge into a deep hollow and climbed the opposite side to the top of the ridge. This scouting continued until we neared the top of the mountain where we were able to rest for a minute. Since we had traveled about two miles through the thickest brush I had ever encountered, I was glad for the stop.

My co-worker said this was a good place to set up and wait for the big bucks to head back to those thick beds to bed down for the day. Thought to the fact that these thick woods would not reach this area from the fields until well after dark, even at a dead run, we were far back in the woods. Then we cut across the last ridge and he said he wanted to show us just one more of his favorite spots.

We were almost running through the brush when he announced this was called Bear Hollow. Not so dense they could not be seen impenetrable as we walked into the head of the hollow. Soon we were at an opening about 20 yards in any direction. He said he had traveled this route and occasionally, a buck would magically appear right in front of us, not a few feet ahead. I knew I could envision an arrow leaving a hulking frame of a buck at yards three without first being seen.

We saw several deer that morning, and decided we would hunt this opening day.

My hunting buddy decided to go to the far mountains with my co-worker, and I discovered a place I had been looking to call Spike Ridge. We each saw good bucks during that first year on the mountain, and deeply enjoyed the hunt.

There is something indescribably beautiful about walking through the treestops or settling back down into the trees at dusk. The hours always seem to be more than hunting, for me, than the taking of a few of the animals.

We were hunting companions for years and many good times together choosing the clearest dover that still frame these mountains.

Merry Christmas to all, and I hope we are able to buy the woods a few more times this season.

Fresh territory

Outdoors