

TURKEY SHOOTING

Me and Paul

– LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #109 –



This picture was taken just as a permanent reminder that three shots were fired.

This was a fairly routine turkey hunt, until the shooting started. My dear friend Paul had come from Portland, Oregon to hunt turkeys. Having known him for many years, I volunteered to be his guide and even loan him a shotgun.

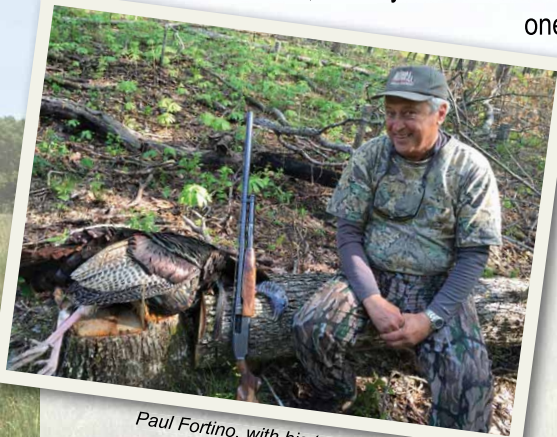
We heard lots of gobbles, beginning at first light, but nothing came in until 9:00 a.m. Paul was sitting on the right side of the blind, and I on the left, when a tom appeared on a logging trail 120 yards off my side of the blind. He began to amble our way, without strutting or gobbling, and soon another tom joined him. There was a ‘blind spot’ that the toms would have to pass, on their way to our single hen decoy. The plan was to wait until they were clear, at about 20 yards, then Paul would shoot.

Now both turkeys disappeared into the ‘blind spot’; I thought the game was over and began calling furiously, thinking it couldn’t hurt. Leaning backward, then forward, I looked on the left and on the right of the trees, but saw nothing. Thirty seconds or so later, as I was still calling, one of them gobbled.

Wow, they were still right there! Then, I saw a head, through a small opening in the trees. Paul looked and looked and finally said, “yes I can see it, but I don’t think I can hit him, shooting through that brush.” I insisted; “if you can see his head, you can kill him – shoot!” Bang! I’ve never had a turkey stay in range long enough to fire three shots — until this one.

"...the turkey jumped five feet into the air..."

However, as they cleared the blind spot, it was one head behind the other and shooting would have killed both birds – and they were now in strut. They separated, but Paul was in a twisted-up position and by the time he was



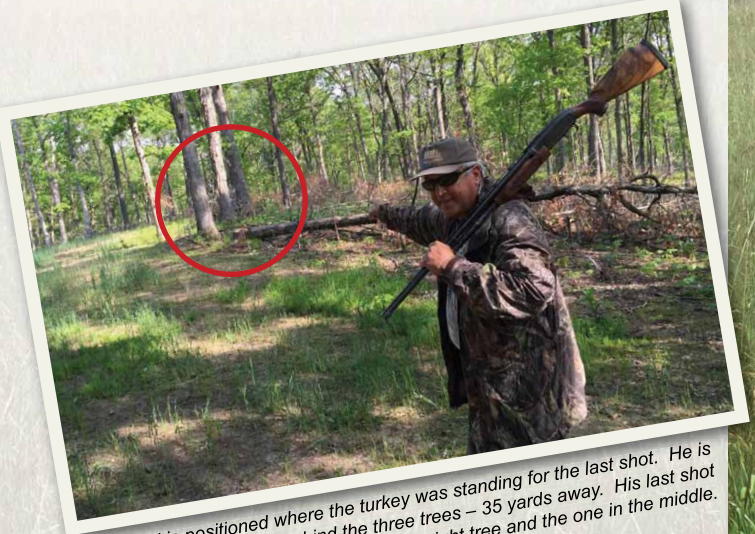
Paul Fortino, with his turkey. That's my backup Model 12 turkey gun.

lined up, they were together again. The second time they separated, Paul fired.

There’s nothing much worse for a guide than to have his hunter miss – but so it was. Incredibly, the turkey jumped five feet into the air, landed and began prancing around trying to figure out what was going on. I whispered “shoot him again.” The seconds ticked by as Paul tried to get lined up on the bird, then he fired again. I saw the leaf disturbance above his head and told Paul he had shot over him.



Larry Potterfield
Central Food Plot
Hunter’s Creek Farm
Harrisburg, Missouri
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Paul is positioned where the turkey was standing for the last shot. He is pointing at the blind, behind the three trees – 35 yards away. His last shot was between the far right tree and the one in the middle.