



The Paw Print

The Voice of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum
& Handler Center



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Special points of interest:

- Join us inside for late-breaking news regarding the Coast Guard K9 Memorial.
- Take a journey back to the time after Vietnam but before the GWOT and learn a bit about the introduction of The Red Dog.

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USAF Academy K9s



SSgt. Colton Grimm practices carrying his K9 partner, Grizzly, after their training to detect explosive devices at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. (U.S. Air Force photo/Sarah Goldblum)

The Air Force Academy educates, trains, and motivates dedicated cadets to become inspirational officers in the United States Air Force (USAF) or the United States Space Force (USSF).

In establishing the Air Force in 1947, discussions of creating an aeronautical academy finally pushed their way to the forefront. A plan took shape to fashion a stunning academy at the foot of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The first class of graduates, 306 in total, were sworn in as 2nd Lieutenants in the Air Force in 1959. The current enrollment hovers at around 4,000 students.

Due to its timing, during the Cold War, as Air and Space Power shouldered their way to the front of the news, the Academy approved modern construction for its buildings. As a result, the Cadet Chapel features glass and aluminum spires piercing the sky heaven-ward and has been named one of the

most visited tourist places in Colorado Springs.

Because of the tourists and the educational mission of the Academy, we wondered how different the role of a K9 team might be at this unique Air Force kennel.

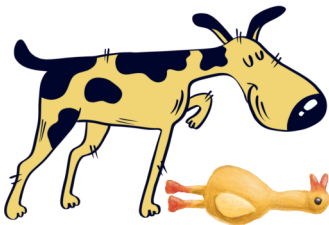
Join us inside for a quick visit to the Air Force Academy and see how their K9 teams support the development of future leaders.

Integrity First, Service before self, Excellence in all we do.

From the President's Desk



President, Albert Johnson



Hello everyone, As I sit here and write this letter to you, I have just checked into our hotel in Washington, DC. I eagerly await the arrival of many old K9 friends I haven't seen in over 15 years. There is so much catharsis in attending reunions and events related to honoring working dog teams. By the time you read this, the K9 community will have had several successful K9 Veterans Day events.

Most dog teams you likely will never hear about, nor have the handlers ever publicly told their stories. They quietly do their job, seeking no publicity. For every history we report, I bet there are nearly 50 that don't get told. Our mission is to give every American military working dog handler the opportunity to tell their stories, share their four-legged partners with us, and give us a glimpse into the bond they experienced, whether yesterday or over fifty years ago.

Please check out the story on the Air Force Academy's K9 mission. I found their unique chain of command interesting. Their post-9/11 history is very much their own. From the day-to-day routines to a particular dog, the Air Force Academy's kennels are in a league of their own.

We also have a story about Naval Air Station Patuxent River Maryland, or NAS Pax

River, to those who enjoy the jargon. Pax River kennel's mission never changed from a shared facility to a state-of-the-art facility, only an improved convenience with a new fresh smell. There is something special about getting new gear in the K9 world; I can only dream of what it was like for these handlers to get a new building. While at Camp Pendleton, we were on the list to get new kennels for over ten years until the funding dried up, and we were left to repair the aging kennels ourselves.

Michael Hurder can draw us into his stories and make us feel like trusted friends along for the ride. He provides two articles: one about the Coastie K9s and another about working his dog Prince beside Donny Lassiter and his dog Bodie. This story had me at the edge of my seat, hoping for the best but expecting the worst. While my generation of handlers has not had to deal with situations quite like those in Vietnam, the pucker factor is still there; the emotions run high, the dry mouth, and the anticipation of a good find and if'ing the scenarios that follow any alert.

A story from the archives on the 47th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon is next. Our museum has the honor of working with the 47th ISDP

to preserve their unit's historical data on its website. There is nothing more astounding than having your trusted K9 partner save your life and the lives of those around you. Read page 11's chilling story to find out the details.

Curtis Hendel looks at a new breed of dog used in the mid to late 80s. What an introduction, Curtis! Thank you for these vivid recollections of your time in the K9 program.

On July 14-15th, we will co-host an event—the 25th-anniversary rededication of the War Dog Monument at the University of Tennessee Knoxville campus. Make your plans to join us. We would love to meet and visit with you all. To secure your room, follow this link, select your dates, and reserve. [Holiday Inn Knoxville West—Cedar Bluff Rd.](https://www.holidayinnknoxville.com/) For any questions, check our website under Events or send an email to John Homa, our Events Coordinator, at:

events@mwldhm.org

We hope you took the time on K9 Veterans Day to honor the dogs that gave us the best job title in the military.

Goodbye for now, and as always,

K9 Leads the Way!

Albert Johnson

USAF Academy

by Dixie Whitman

Spreading across the eastern quarter of Colorado, the waves of undulating wheat quivered by a near-constant breeze rush towards the massive front of the Rocky Mountains. Coniferous pine forests swathing the high-plains sierra beckon the vast halcyon skies. One can visualize Colorado Springs as the inspiration for the song, America the Beautiful. And, so, in this pristine and peaceful place, the youngest military academy also took root.

Because the mission of educating America's finest college-aged men and women didn't require conventional Air Force Base security, it wasn't until post-9/11 that the Academy established a K9 kennel. While most dog team interactions follow the same tasks a handler might find on a traditional Air Force base, approximately a quarter of the missions include interactions with the public. Dog teams connect with the broader community during events like Falcon football games, Parent's Night, or the tourists who come to explore the novel campus.

Another difference with the Air Force Academy kennel is that it reports directly to the Pentagon instead of the standard Chain of Command.

To create the kennels, an inspired leader, a sort of dog whisperer, Chris Jakubin, arrived with a special girl, Ginger, a German Short-haired Pointer (GSP). Ginger's easy-going demeanor and charm while sniffing around the football stadium made her and the K9 program welcome on campus. The community loved Ginger so much that they longed to have another German Short-haired Pointer. And so, a Denver-based American Legion post donated a second GSP, Haus.

Haus, however, had not been to dog school, so the team at USAFA got special permission to train Haus in-house. Todge Smith took on this extra challenge and presented a Haus who DoD-certified and became a valued member of the USAFA kennels, even deploying several times.

With Chris Jakubin in charge and a dedicated team of handlers supporting him, the atmosphere at the USAFA kennels pulsed electric. Handlers not only gave 100% while on duty, their off-duty time included skill-sharpening, too. As a result, training took on a dynamic pace with a community including 50 dog men all along the front range from Peterson-Schriever AFB, Fort Carson, Buckley AFB, and F E War-



Haus is shown here on one of his deployments with his handler Staff Sgt. Zerrick Shanks. Photo: Courtesy 380th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs.



The mission of the 10th Security Forces Squadron K9 is a little different than the traditional AFB. It includes thousands of college-aged kids, athletic competitions, and patrolling a massive campus that happens to be one of the greatest tourist draws in the area. Photo: USAFA.

ren AFB to ATF and ICE partners. As they shared their strategies and ideas, it allowed for massive growth in all agencies, men, women, and dogs.

The centuries-long discipline system shared by all military academies requires cadets to adhere to the strictest of honor codes: We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does.

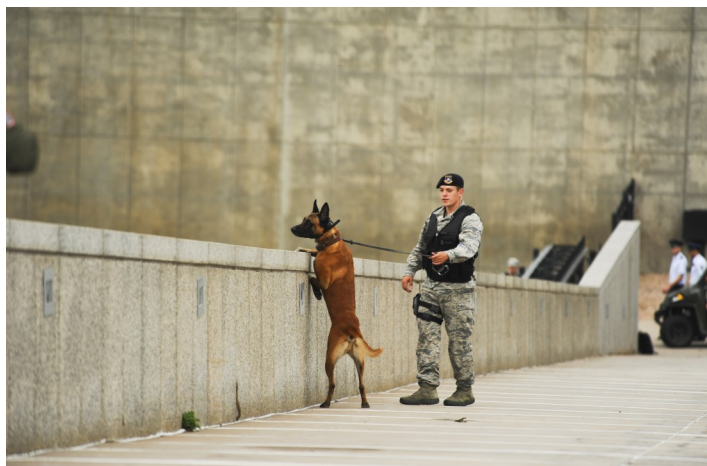
It's not surprising, therefore, that most of the 10th Security Forces Squadron interactions at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) are not with cadets but with the general public or contractors on base.

For example, whenever new contractors arrive on base, there is a month to six weeks lag for an in-depth dive into all contract employees. Of course, they haven't had an infraction of the law on record or wouldn't be allowed on base, but in-depth vetting takes some time. During that initial period, it's not unusual for the dogs to find employees bringing drugs onto the base. Once this initial transition period completes, things settle until the following new contractor arrives, and the cycle starts again.

A 6.9-mile section of the Santa Fe Trail meanders through the eastern section of the USAFA, and hikers are welcome to use it as long as they don't wander off the beaten path. The gravel trail allows panoramic views of the Air Force Academy grounds and is a fantastic activity for locals; however, those who stray off-piste could easily create an encounter with K9 teams.

At night, the chugging of the Burlington Northern railway reverberates through the western parts of the Academy grounds. From time to time, vagrants riding the rails decide to exit the trains on the Academy grounds. The 10th Security Forces Squadron quickly scoops up these unwelcome drifters with the dogs creating quick compliance.

Night patrols also net some inebriated drivers who, traveling I-25, are funneled into the southern Academy entrance. But, even stranger are the sober folks traveling on I-25 outside the Academy fence who decide that "tonight's the night" to go and visit the Air Force Cadet Chapel. K9 has responded to all of these types of encounters, along with their more routine tasks.



A Military Working Dog team with the 10th Security Forces Squadron patrols the grounds during the Parents' Weekend Parade Sept. 1, 2017, at Air Force Academy, Colo. Parents' Weekend showcases the Academy's facilities and the cadet life here. (US Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Julius Delos)



At the US Air Force Academy an unidentified K9 and Handler sit in front of K9 Aghbar's gravestone with its unique epitaph. "You were the devil." (US Air Force photo/Trevor Cokley)

Of course, every rule has an exception, such as when the first-ever German shepherd member of the USAFA pack, Aghbar, reportedly bit a cadet on the butt.

Aghbar, for example, arrived in 2002 with an attitude. He became one of the most successful dogs at the USAFA, patrolling and working Secret Service missions. When he became ill, and the veterinarian put the last needle in his veins,

a group of about 40 folks gathered at a clearing in the scrub pine forest to remember the grumpy old man. The vital part of life between the birth and death dates caused the team to write this epitaph. "You were the devil- thank you for starting the program. You will be missed."

Another Academy dog with a reputation for being ill-tempered and a bit misunderstood, Taint, served as the Academy's first drug dog. While some called him mean and jumpy, he consistently produced, although guided with extreme care by all the handlers on the end of his leash.

It's difficult to escape an environment, and in the west, a few inches of rain and snowfall, plus or minus, can make a massive difference in the forest fires for the year. For example, in late June 2012, a forest fire erupted a few miles northwest of Colorado Springs and began to build in intensity.

The firefighters created a firebreak along one of Pike National Forest's service roads. Unfortunately, a deer jumped across the space while on fire, and the conflagration took off in the forests to the east, aided by high temperatures and winds that hit 65 m.p.h.

This blaze, the Waldo Canyon Fire, ultimately became one of the most destructive and expensive fires in Colorado's history. Soon it became clear that portions of the Air Force Academy Grounds were in peril, and evacuations would be required. The USAFA kennels and dogs were among those in the evacuation zone.

Eight dogs were taken north to Buckley AFB for their safety, including the beloved GSP, Haus. The fire now forged the inter-kennel relationships cemented earlier in the crucible of shared training.

Firefighters fought for every acre of the Academy, even bringing in hot shots from the Vandenberg AFB team. As a result, the dog teams could return to the Air Force Academy a few weeks later.

At the Air Force Academy, we find talented dogs and passionate handlers driven to ensure the cadets, staff, and guests on these hallowed grounds remain safe and secure. The K9 teams of the USAFA play a crucial role not only on the Academy but in the thriving K9 community along the front range.

Well done to the dogs and handlers of the 10th Security Forces Squadron.



Haus, a military working dog from the 10th Security Forces Squadron, waits in his kennel June 27, 2012. Haus was one of eight military working dogs evacuated from the U.S. Air Force Academy due to the Waldo Canyon Fire. (US Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Phillip Houk)



Staff Sgt. Colton Grimm and MWD Nick at the US Air Force Academy. (US Air Force photo/Trevor Cokley)

"As I wrote this piece, I'd specifically like to thank Todge Smith for sharing his insight and knowledge about the K9 teams of the United States Air Force Academy." ~ ~ Dixie Whitman

Coast Guard's Jack Ayre K9 Memorial Dedication

by Michael Hurder

The Coast Guard has a unique role within the more commonly referenced military branches. In short, every day holds a potential crisis. From daring rescues to safeguarding our coasts, harbors, VIPs, and international security concerns, The Coast Guard never steps off their war footing. Semper Paratus! Always Ready!

Not the least of this force, the Coast Guard K9 Corps serves as a professionally trained, highly-skilled, ferociously-protective group of force multipliers.

Good fortune allowed me to attend the Jack Ayre K9

Memorial ribbon-cutting ceremony at US Coast Guard Station Alameda – Coast Guard Island. (Thank you, Dixie Whitman and Tony Ross, for getting me in.) I met many remarkable, dedicated men and women and a kennel full of friendly red dogs. I wasn't aware, but all Coast Guard K9s are Explosive Detection Dogs. This skill makes sense, of course. I was surprised that every dog I met allowed me to pet them. I even caressed some. All were sweethearts and used up more energy in a minute than I expend in a month.



Above: The culmination of tireless work by the Coast Guard Foundation and a hard-working core group of Coast Guard K9 Handlers brought about the dedication ceremony for the Jack Ayre K9 Memorial. This event at USCG Base Alameda, on an island sheltered in the Brooklyn Basin of the San Francisco Bay area, occurred on March 13, 2023—K9 Veterans Day. Due to inclement weather, the ceremony and speeches took place indoors. Photo: DoD



Above: Coast Guard K9 Senior Chief Sonya and her “plus one,” MEC James Grant, from USCG MSRT West attended the dedication speeches and festivities. Sonya’s joyful personality shines through in this photo. She booped our photographer’s camera lens with her cute little sniffer and left a “nose print” on the next several hundred shots.

Photo: DoD



Above: Coast Guard Alameda personnel hosted a group of supporters, Coast Guard K9 Handlers, and Military Working Dog enthusiasts who made their way to the monument outdoors for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Our photographer, Michael Hurder, captured the moment the ribbon fell away and the memorial officially opened.

Photo: Michael Hurder

Being ex-Army caused my gut to rumble with concerns about feeling out of place. Instead, the Coast Guard pulled out the welcome mat and made me feel at home. There is, perhaps, no other community that naturally fits together as does K9. Dog people are, well, different – in a beautiful way. Maybe we’ve learned from our furry partners over the years to recognize a pack member with just our senses, with no words necessary to break the ice. We recognized each other’s connection to the K9 universe with deep and mutual respect.

Named for Seaman First Class Jack Ayre, who served during WWII guarding our eastern coast with his MWD Mal, this new memorial provides a place for Coast Guard Handlers to honor their K9 partners.

From the pamphlet:

“The center panel depicts SFC Jack Ayre and his MWD Mal. The center monument is flanked by two memorial walls that can be personalized by each Coast Guard Handler to honor their service canine.”

I am comforted still that K9 also leads the way in the Coast Guard.



Above: Current and former Coast Guard K9 handlers flank the central memorial in honor and remembrance of all US Coast Guard K9 Teams. The memorial features an image of World War II K9 handler Seaman First Class Jack Ayre and his partner, Mal. That team worked out of Rehoboth Beach Lifeboat Station in Delaware, securing the beaches from Axis Powers’ infiltrators and saboteurs.

Photo: Michael Hurder



Above: Lining the pathway to the main monument, two memorial walls pay homage to the service, loyalty, and dedication of Post 9/11 Coast Guard K9s who have crossed the “Rainbow Bridge.” Space remains to include additional names. To support the finishing touches on this memorial, please connect with [The Coast Guard Foundation](#) and be sure to note your donation is for the K9 Memorial. Semper Paratus!

Photo: Michael Hurder



Above: Former Coast Guard handler Anthony Ross proved to be instrumental in pulling the assets together to create this memorial. His service-dog-in-training, Jake, accompanied him. Anthony’s former Coast Guard partner, Chiquita, retired as a Senior Chief Petty Officer in July 2015.

Photo: Michael Hurder

Pax River Security Opens Military Working Dog Kennel on Base

by Chief Petty Officer Patrick Gordon

In May 2022, NAS Patuxent River Security cut the ribbon on its new Military Working Dog (MWD) Kennel as part of its commitment to greater base security. The opening culminated nearly two years of work between NAS Patuxent River, Naval District Washington, and various security entities among the US Navy and the US Army.

Prior to the kennel's opening at Pax River, the Pax River kennels housed their dogs at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling. Master-at-Arms 1st Class Trevor Houseknecht and Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Kaila Gentry sought to improve the existing kennel into a DoD-compliant facility to house their MWDs for enhanced security operations.

The team began working on the project in late 2020 and linked up with a regional expert in MDW kennel operations, Army Capt. William Ciancarelli, to create a kennel that was up to code. Ciancarelli, the chief veterinarian of Joint Base Andrews' Veterinary Branch under the Public Health Activity at Fort Belvoir, proved to be an invaluable resource for the project.

"My role in the kennel project was to provide subject matter expertise requested by the previous kennel master to assess the build of the Patuxent River kennel based on my knowledge of

kennel design and its impact on animal welfare and safety," said Ciancarelli. "Together, from July 2020 to March 2022, we were able to get the addition of an isolation kennel, graded floors, larger drains, and removal of several trees that posed an imminent danger of falling on the kennel. Spending a total of 960 hours in planning and execution of the project."

By reinstating an MWD kennel at Pax River, the installation security team improved its overall readiness and cut logistical costs associated with housing and transporting the dogs off-site. The increased boarding allows four additional MWD teams to support regional security operations.

"The NAS Pax River kennel covers the South Potomac Region, and having the Pax River kennel operational with the additional four MWD teams greatly enhances our response time and security posture," said Houseknecht.

The specifications of the facilities necessary to house the MWDs denote the highly specialized nature of their training and handling. The MWDs and their handlers work diligently in the detection of explosives, narcotics, and intruders.



Above: NAS PATUXENT RIVER, Maryland - The Military Working Dog (MWD) handlers of NAS Patuxent River pose with their dogs outside the new Pax River military working dog (MWD) kennel. The kennel improves Security operations at Pax by negating MWD transport from the D.C. area.

Below: Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Kaila Gentry stands outside the newly opened Pax River military working dog (MWD) kennel with her MWD Roki.

DoD photos.



What's That Smell?

By Michael Hurder

There are things about my tour I still don't have a clear picture of in my head. The head knocks took their toll. To this day, things happen that trigger a memory. The February 2023 issue of the Paw Print was one such thing.

March 1972 on Bien Hoa Air Base at the Ammo Dump, oh-dark-thirty:

The 6x6 dropped us about 100 meters from the Air Force Ammo Dump on the north side of the airstrips.

Donnie suggested we do another sweep to the fence, as he always did since that incident with the sappers at the end of February. They almost got us that time. He was determined to prevent that from ever happening.

In his mellow Southern-drawn cadence, Donnie responded, "Peggy's a waitin' fer me ta come home. I don't dayah disappoint her."

I agreed. Donnie's fieldcraft surpassed mine, and I learned never to argue with him.

Donnie Lassiter, his partner Bodie, my partner Prince, and I continued east toward the wire beyond the end of the north

runway. As we passed the dump, the guards in a nearby tower signaled us by radio to stop. We took a knee.

Donnie whispered, "Uh-oh. Heah we go agin."

That familiar chill ran up my spine, mingling with the sweat on my back.

The tower guards snapped on the spotlight and shone it on an expanse about 50 meters ahead. They probably had their starlight scope running across the area and found the irregularity. The trampled tall grass was easy to see with the light on it. We didn't even think about it. We both cut the dogs loose.

The tower guards cut the light.

"Seek, seek, seek," I said.

Once Prince headed out, Bodie followed.

Neither dog bounded frantically off as if they had an immediate target, but I felt better letting them go out ahead of us.

We both had much better control of our partners by this time, so we weren't worried about them taking off.



Photo of Donnie Lassiter (left) and Michael Hurder (right) in May, 2021.
Courtesy photo.

Both made a beeline for the trampled grass. Prince sat.

Bodie kept circling with his nose to the ground, then sat about 20 feet from Prince.

Donnie and I advanced slowly, putting distance between each other. I got to Prince first, and he was pointing to a ground stake. The kind Charlie used to mark the safe way through a minefield, prop up some wire, or use in rigging a trip wire if there was no nearby tree or brush. I fisted Donnie to hold and got on my belly feeling around for a

wire, a mound of dirt, anything that didn't belong. I found nothing but the stake. I praised Prince and downed him beside me. Then showed Donnie the stake and waved him on.

He got down on his belly and slowly crawled toward Bodie, who started to softly whine as soon as Donnie began moving. Donnie stopped, changed direction, and crawled behind me, approaching Bodie from what he hoped was a safer direction. Bodie didn't gripe, so Donnie kept going. Bodie then lay down with

his paws on either side of a length of wire Donnie found by feeling around. It was lying loose on the ground, so it wasn't attached to a trap, thank God.

Like the stake, Charlie just dropped it and ran. We guessed he saw or heard us coming and did the hell out of there. Charlie was getting accustomed to the 34th's prowess. They didn't hang around waiting to see if we'd find them. They knew our partners absolutely would.

Donnie slowly worked Bodie back and forth across the area beyond where we had taken to ground.

Bodie had something, but since he didn't sit again, we figured it wasn't a trap, but more likely, he was tracking.

Prince and I moved about 25 meters west and scouted toward the wire ourselves. About 50 paces along, Prince stopped dead and started snuffing the ground.

I got panicky and called him back.

He didn't want to come, but he did when I hissed at him. I leashed him and

worked the same terrain deliberately.

He didn't alert, per se, but stopped again, sniffing about the same place. I wasn't sure what to do. Donnie was moving ahead deliberately. I brought Prince to a heel with a tap on my right hip. I downed and stayed him there while crawling forward and softly stabbing the ground with my kbar and squinting in the dark, trying to see what had Prince so spooked. I thought about all those Army movies where guys would be stabbing their way through a minefield. *'how hard would you have to stab one of those things before it triggered?'*

What a time to think of that. I would have laughed, but for the terror rolling off me like sweat.

After ten minutes of no joy, I stood up and softly whistled for Prince to me. He stopped at about the same place, sniffing like a raw steak was lying there.

Baffled, I picked up the leash and followed after Donnie. Bodie brought us right to the place the sapper traveled under the



Photo of Donnie Lassiter with his partner, Bodie.
Courtesy photo: Donnie Lassiter

wire. Another stake held the bottom strand of the concertina up high enough for the little bastard to get by. We radioed it in and headed back towards the dump and the rest of our watch.

The guys in the tower wanted to know what we found. I walked near enough to it to give them a sitrep. They said they saw the trampled grass, then what they thought was grass moving, and headed toward the wire. They were about to open up when we showed. I respectfully requested that they go ahead and blow the hell out of whatever it was next time.

We never did figure out what Prince was sniffing at that night, and every time I walked him past that area over the next month, he stopped for a sniff. A mystery until reading the Paw Print.

The Paw Print article I referred to was about the defense of Bien Hoa during Tet of '68. The story tells about digging a trench in the aftermath and burying all the dead NVA and VC in it, right at the eastern end of the runways. Prince's favorite sniff spot. Was Prince sniffing at that? I'll never know for sure, but I bet he was.

Good boy, buddy!

47th Platoon's Noses Sniff Out Enemy Boobytraps

Article reprinted from *The Screaming Eagle*, March 15 1971

Military Working Dog Heritage Museum is now the caretaker of the 47th IPSD's website. For years this website, faithfully and thoughtfully updated by Jonathan Wahl, shared the history of the Army's 47th Infantry Platoon Scout Dogs and Handlers.

Firebase Arsenal— It started out as a normal everyday mission for SP4 Edward Reeves, Grove City, Ohio, of the 47th Inf. Plat. (Scout Dog), but would end in the Bronze Star Medal with "V" for SP4 Reeves and PFC James F. Kuezek, Irvington, NJ, a mine dog handler. Their dogs discovered boobytraps and prevented possible death or injury to a platoon of infantrymen.

On this morning, SP4 Reeves received orders to report to Co. D, 1st Bn. (Ambl.) 502nd Inf. His dog, Prince, was to be used as an early silent warning of enemy in the area.

As the "First Strike" patrol advanced up a trail with Prince leading the way, they discovered four enemy boobytraps. "We had passed three of the boobytraps before I came to a log," said the dog handler. "As I began to step over the log, Prince came up underneath, preventing me from taking the step. Just on the other

side of the log was a LRRP bag covering a 60 mm mortar round. I bent down and carefully removed the bag. I told everyone to freeze and to look around for more boobytraps. Near the trail were three more boobytraps.

After blowing the boobytraps, the infantrymen set up a patrol base. "We went to a nearby LZ to make sure it was safe for our resupply the next day," continued Reeves. As they reached the LZ, Prince alerted them that danger was near. They found four more enemy boobytraps buried around the edge of the LZ under thick brush. Three of them were 60 mm mortar rounds, and the other a white phosphorous canister.

The specialist and his dog left on the resupply helicopter, and another dog team replaced them. This time it was a mine dog trained especially to detect enemy boobytraps and mines. The team consisted of PFC Kuezek and his dog, Fat Albert.

With Fat Albert's nose close to the ground smelling for explosives, the patrol carefully moved out from the LZ.

Right: Photo of Ed Reeves and Prince 986A.

No photo available of either PFC Kuezek or Mine/Tunnel Dog, Fat Albert 7K10.



PFC Kuezek was walking behind Albert when the dog advanced at a rapid pace and began running in circles. "I couldn't understand what he was doing, so I went to see what was wrong."

As I took my first step, Albert made a bee-line to me and stopped me from moving. I thought he was playing, so I tried to walk around him, and he still moved in front of me. Then I realized that Albert wasn't playing, and danger was near."

The German shepherd had found a 60mm mortar round buried under the hard-packed dirt of the trail. A search of the area revealed three more 60mm rounds within a 20-yard area.

An explosive charge was placed on the first boobytrap, and the platoon moved back down the trail to a safe distance.

The explosive sounded like a 1000-pound bomb going off," recalls PFC Kuezek. "it was much louder than it should have been." When the "First Strike" troopers and Kuezek investigated, they found four holes instead of one. The boobytraps had been rigged for simultaneous explosion.

For their actions in finding the boobytraps and preventing death or serious injury to the Screaming Eagles, Reeves and Kuezek received the Bronze Star with "V."

What The Heck Is A Red Dog?

by Curtis Hendel

I attended Military Working Dog training about a month on either side of the 1986 New Year. The training kennel at Lackland had a mix of dogs, mainly German shepherds but also scattered with the occasional Rottweiler, giant schnauzer, or these things called "Red Dogs." These loud, obnoxious, high-strung creatures mainly inhabited the Dog Training Section area. The main question we pondered was, what the heck was a Red Dog?

Not to worry, I trained with a German shepherd named Valley and, as a decoy, caught many a German shepherd. We recognized a civilian dog named Ace as the king of annihilation. Ace hit like a Mack truck on steroids. Like an NFL tackler sacking a sluggish Sunday quarterback, he destroyed the knees of many a decoy,

With a dog hitting that hard, what could be more impressive?

By early February 1986, I hit Osan Air Base in South Korea. We had a couple of "off breeds," including a hard-nosed Rottweiler named Ero, a bouncing Bouvier des Flanders named Kazan, and a couple of these things they just called 'Red Dogs.'

My introduction to the Red Dog included the tandem team of Rudy and Mentor. The bob-tailed boy, Rudy, had a destructive habit of scratching his feet till they bled when the temperature got too cold. We didn't fear Rudy; he proved primarily embarrassing as he was mostly known for polishing certain private areas of his body every time someone important walked into C Kennel. But Mentor, the other Red Dog, seemed to come from another world.

My introduction to Mentor came on my first night on the perimeter. He looked non-threatening, all the world like a Baby Huey, but behind that facade, he held the temperament of Hannibal Lecter. While driving me around the posts, my squad leader and I stopped by my immediate supervisor's post, Kilo 2. "Squad Leader" tells "Supervisor" to give his post briefing for his new troop. Coincidentally, Mentor decided, more like demanded, he wanted a petting at that exact moment. While sitting in the "heel/sit" position on his handler's left side, Mentor started to nuzzle my new supervisor's hand. When his handler instead attempted to continue the post briefing, Mentor had a



vehement difference of opinion with him and bit and held his handler *through* his left hand.

It took an act of Congress to get Mentor to release my supervisor. While we were transporting the injured to the hospital, upon reflection on the intensity of the bite, I realized these Red Dogs were not to be taken lightly.

In my early months at Osan, I was close friends with some guys who had just come from serving in the Dog Training Section (DTS). I also had a Kennel Master that had arrived from Lackland. These guys knew exactly what Red Dogs were, and they fed my quest to learn about them.

School came to me at the five-month point in my first tour. Osan had roughly 65

dogs when I was there, with the main force of them posted on the perimeter for resource protection. That summer, we received a shipment of fresh, new from Lackland, and an overwhelming number of them were Red Dogs.

I was among the first to pick a new dog out of this bunch. As I looked over the barking canines staked out to the quarantine kennels, I saw an incredible mixture of four-legged partners seeking a human with whom to work. I chose a large-framed German shepherd, not even interested in the different-looking Red Dogs, and most were not all that red. Their coats reflected a reddish brown, orange-brown, rust-colored, and some almost black, but none actually red. There were also a lot of size options,

with a couple of the males struggling to make 65 pounds soaking wet. I liked the idea of a big, intimidating partner, not one of these little Red Dogs.

As we trained in new handlers and new dogs, it became readily apparent that these new dogs were something else. They ran fast, hit like freight trains, and loved to bite. Their aggression level was impressive, and their drive to work was even more remarkable. Admittedly, Red Dogs could, on average, outperform most other breeds we were using at the time. However, I still didn't want one; my thick

skull would rarely admit that any dog breed could outwork my German shepherd.

The future had been shipped into us during my first tour at Osan. The Red Dogs had come and conquered, and it was obvious that they were there to stay. Gone were the Rottweilers, giant schnauzers, and bouviers. German shepherds would continue to enter the program but in significantly decreased numbers.

After back-to-back tours at Osan, I returned to Lackland and was assigned to Dog Training Section, Patrol. As I returned to the

States, the term "Red Dogs" had also been, for the most part, retired. My first dog in DTS was a nasty German shepherd, but a galaxy of the new Belgian malinois stars would follow. There was even this little 67-pound Dutch shepherd named Carlo. The smallest to come to our team was a female mal that couldn't even eat enough to make minimum weight but was kept in training when we realized she was like shooting a crossbow bolt at the decoy because she was so fast.

The German shepherds' era had ended, and the vaunted Red Dog had tak-

en over. As much as I love German shepherds, it was cool to be in the program when this transition occurred. However, I have to wonder how many handlers who came in after my time even knew the term "Red Dog."



The Volunteer State Beckons MWDHM Volunteers and Guests

The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine and Military Working Dog Heritage Museum will co-host a 25th Anniversary Rededication of Susan Bahary's masterpiece, "Always Faithful."

The original of this piece is located in the K9 Cemetery on Guam's Naval Base and honors the 25 Marine dogs who died liberating that island. Spearheaded by the late Dr. William Putney and funded by the United

Doberman Club, the Guam-based piece was dedicated in 1994.

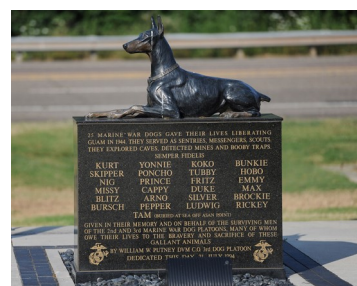
A friend of Dr. Putney, Dr. Maurice Acree, donated a second casting of the monument to the University of Tennessee. The sculpture took up residence on the campus on July 17, 1998.

Join us for the celebration on July 15, 2023 (note the change in the date from previous newsletters). The event begins at 10:00 AM with speakers, a wreath ceremony,

21-gun salute, and a presence by local law enforcement K9 teams.

Military Working Dog Heritage Museum has secured a block of rooms for Friday and Saturday nights at the Holiday Inn Knoxville West/Cedar Bluff. Friday evening we'll host a pizza fundraiser at the hotel's hospitality room and have many items available for sale.

Please plan to join us and wear your favorite K9 gear to the events.



Click [here to reserve your room](#). Change the calendar to your correct dates and select the type of room you'd like. \$119 per room. Breakfast included.

Come for a welcome as southern and warm as biscuits and gravy. Hope to see you there!



*Military Working Dog
Heritage Museum &
Handler Center
P.O. Box 54
Newport, TN 37822
Phone: 865-507-8903*

From the Team at MWDHM...

We invite you to join the museum's journey
by signing up for a free *Paw Print* subscription.
Email: info@mwdhm.org

**Military Working Dog Heritage:
Always on Point**

We're on the Web: mwdhm.org

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Recycle, please.

Share your story.

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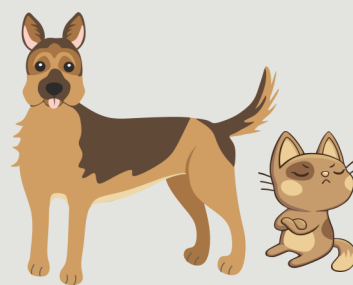
Share your copy of
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Important dates with Trooper and Scout

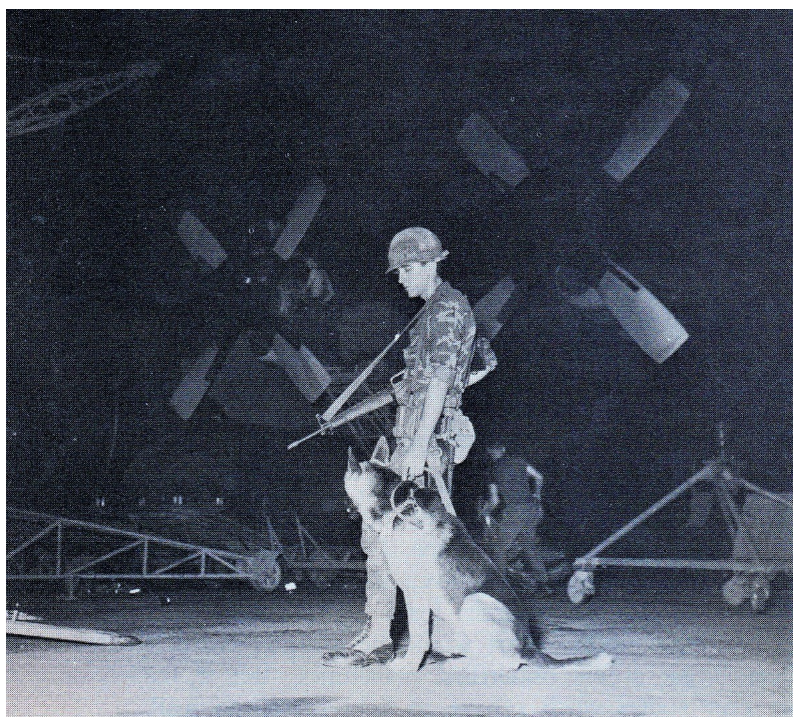
July 15, 2023 — 25th Anniversary Re-Dedication of the War Dog Memorial at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN.

September 11-16, 2023 — Howard County All Veterans Reunion, 8313 County Rd E 400 S. Greentown, IN 46936

October 27, 2023— A commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Military Working Dog Teams National Monument— Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.



Historic Pooch Pic of the Month



Left: Handler and dog on the job at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in 1967. Each night dog teams were taken out and walked post to protect the aircraft and Airmen on this huge base. (C130s in the background.)

At the time, Tan Son Nhut's airport was among the world's busiest.

(Photo by MSgt. Manual A. Collaso.)