



The Paw Print

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



Volume 3 Issue 5

May 2023

Special points of interest:

- Honoring those who gave their last full measure
- First MWD Mortal Casualty of Vietnam
- A Memorial to All Vietnam K9 and Fallen Handlers

Inside this issue:

Duke 645F 1

From the President's Desk 2

Honoring KIA Handlers Memorial Day 3

USMC Reunion 6

Unbreakable Bond Memorial 7

Confessions of a Recovering MWD 9

Navy K9 Corps 10

Remembering the Fallen



Jerry Whitman takes rubbing of MWD Handler Donald Tabb's headstone at the Georgia National Cemetery. Tabb was Killed In Action in 2008 serving in Operation Enduring Freedom.
Photo by Dixie Whitman

Duke 645F First Mortal K9 Casualty of Vietnam

By John Risse

This article was first published in the Vietnam Dog Handler Association (VDHA) Newsletter Dog-Man November/December 1994 and is reshared here with the permission of VDHA.

The first 50 Air Force dog handlers to get permanent orders to Vietnam, of which I was one, received our orders in 1965. We

reported to Lackland AFB during the last week of September 1965 for indoctrination and training. After a week of extra training and classroom instruction, we were ready to go, or at least we thought we were. On October 10th, I kennelled my dog Duke, 645F, tranquilized him for the

Continued on page 4



Duke 645F
Photo provided by John Risse



Lane Hagerdorn
Vice President



From the President's Desk

The power of storytelling is undeniable. Humans have been telling stories for thousands of years, using narratives to pass down knowledge, entertain, and connect with one another. Stories have the power to evoke emotions, inspire action, and shape our understanding of the world around us. Through storytelling, we can empathize with characters and situations that are vastly different from our own experiences, leading to greater understanding and compassion. Moreover, stories can be used to convey complex ideas in a way that is relatable and engaging, making them an invaluable tool for education and communication. In short, the power of storytelling lies in its ability to connect people, give tribute to important events, convey important messages, and inspire change.

That's the power of your Newsletter. The team of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum volunteers that craft it monthly are passionate about sharing your tales of service with our four-legged heroes, and we appreciate all of their efforts!

This month, please enjoy a nod to fallen handlers and a heart-warming tribute to Duke 645F, the first K-9 mortal casualty of the Vi-

etnam War. Also, Vietnam K-9 handler, Tom King tells the story of the K9 Memorial at Mott's Military Museum that replicates the Vietnam Veterans Memorial bearing the names of all 4,244 dogs deployed to Vietnam and Thailand as well as the 297 handlers and three support personnel who died in Vietnam. As always, we continue to be proud to "Welcome Home" all who served during the Vietnam era.

The Museum has continued to be involved in events across the country. These events are often memorials and educational events, but this month Albert Johnson reports on the Marine K-9 Reunion held in Washington, D.C. last month. The reunion was a touching tribute to the history of Military Working Dogs in the Corps and was full of special moments for so many – please take a few moments and check them all out!

Finally, this month, you will enjoy the confession of an Air Force handler's conversion to a companion breed in civilian life.

As mentioned, the volunteers who craft, edit, and publish this Newsletter work tirelessly to bring you entertaining and important information related to our

common love for the service of the dogs and their handlers and support staff. They would love your contributions too!

Do you have a story you would like to share? Contact us at mwdheritagemuseum.org and connect via all the social media links. Speaking of social media, Facebook is our prominent presence, and you can find us at <https://www.facebook.com/mwdheritagemuseum>. We gladly accept messages through Facebook, or you can email us at info@mwdhm.org.

On behalf of Albert Johnson, President of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum, and the entire team supporting the mission to discover, curate, preserve, and exhibit world-class displays of America's military working dog history and ensure that the legacy and heritage of America's dog teams inspires future generations, thank you for your continued support in donations, volunteerism, story sharing, and love for the dogs and their handlers.

K9 Leads the Way!

K9 Leads the Way!

Lane Hagerdorn

We Remember: We Honor KIA Dog Handlers on Memorial Day



MCAS Cherry Point

USMC Marine Corps

photo by Cpl. Tylor Camfield

Aaron Joseph Blasjo Abraham Tarwoe Abron Earl Davis Adam Leigh Cann Alan Eunice Davis Alan MacDonald Sturdy Alden John Bullwinkel Alexander King Alfred Evarts Whitehead Andrew John Kieffhaber Anthony Edmond Kunz Anthony Lorin Camp Archie Burnette Jr Arnold Edward Johnson Benjamin Harrison Mason Jr. Bernard Francis Ford Billy Harrison Ratliff Billy Howard Best Billy Joe Parrish Billy Monroe Green Bobby Dean Crawford Bobby James Shelton Brandon Keith Steffey Carl Jacob Claus Carl Irving Johnson Carter Parker Jr. Charles Douglas Blair Charles Douglas Drysdale Charles H Sandberg Charles John Robinson Charles Paul Brown Christopher Zeno Czarnota Christopher Diaz Christopher Matthew Wrinkle Clarence Creaghead Claude Joseph Gaspard Jr. Clayton Dean Jenkins Clifford Wayne Marshall Colton Wesley Rusk Dale Robert Alcorn Jr. Dallas George Grundy Dan Victor Lindholm Daniel Edward Holland Daniel Eugene Spencer Jr. Danny Edward Ward Darrell Lee Colford Darrell Thomas Swanson Dave Russell Scott David Alan Nudenberg David Alfred Land David Brennan Schachner David Byron Magruder David James Ohm David James Ward David Lee Hatcher David Michael Sonka David Michael Freeman Dennis Arthur Beuke Dennis Karl Hoppough Dennis Robert Schossow Dennis W London Dick Alson Lee, Jr. Donald Lee Baker Donald Leroy Rydgig Donald Sherril Sullivan Donald Theronie Tabb Donald William McIntosh Douglas Michael Cain Dustin Jerome Lee Earl Duane Barkley Edward Charles McGrath Edward Cowart Hughes III Edward Erlin Cox Jr. Edward Gilbert Lee Edward Henry Topka Edward Lester Lawton Edward Monroe Simpson Eligah Lamar Davis Elmer Glenn Ireland Elmer Wain Mahurin Erik Bernard Wickenburg Erling Alton Anderson Ernest Melvin Plattner Eugene Thomas Fraley Faleagafulu Ilaoa Floyd Wayne Hartwick Jr. Freddie Lee Johnson Frederick Richard Levins Garson Franklin White Gary Allan Rathbun Gary Paul Baker Gary Evans Beesley Gary Gene Detrick Gary Leroy Fuller Gary Richard McFall Gary Kenneth Smith Gary Vaughn Lovellette Gary Wayne Fox George Douglas Deitrick George F Eubanks George Kenneth Koon George Michael Bevich Jr. George Tallman Gerald W Fritz Gilbert Gonzales Palacio Glenn Weldon McCarty Glynn Byron Holley Gordon Lee Crawford Gregory Allen Rodriguez Harlan Nathan Lockhart Harry Thomas Petersen Harry Walter Murray Herbert Burton Johnson Herbert Hoover Sweat Jr. Herschel Cyle Holt Hilburn McDowell Burdette Jr Howard David III Payne Howard Lee Webb Irving Geon Park Jack Lee Connors Jack William Conner James Albert Michael James Allen Johnson James Boyd James Bruce McLaughlin James C Tosh III James Cabarubio James Evert Blaauw James Harold Beaver James John Morrison James Maynard Berge James Michael Selix James Michael Sunday James Michael Triplett James Paul Markey Jr. James Ray Howard James Rivera James Roger Boyer James R. Ide V Jason Lynn Norton Jeffrey Alexander Freeman Jeffrey Robert Standfest Jeremiah Joseph Sullivan Jerry Guy Giberson Jimmy Rea Burk Joel Conrad Loftis John Alan Kuefner John Douangdara John Francis Doyle John Howard Roth John Leroy Truesdell John Michael Piasecki John Montague Mansfield John Oliver White John Paul Olmstead John Paul Southwick John William Kobelin II John Willie Bennett Jon Michael Young Jose Antonio Rosas Jose Munoz Jose Soto Concepcion Joseph A Carinci Joseph Price Lipton Joseph Allen Marasco Joseph Mark Mazzone Joseph Alvin Teresinski Joseph Anthony Nurzynski Joshua Ryan Ashley Joshua Abraham Atkins III Juan Patricio Martinez Keaton Grant Coffey Keith Charles Buckingham Kenneth George Burlock Jr. Kenneth John Dell Kenneth Martin Kory Duane Weins Larry David Hicks Larry Lee Johnson Larry Jonathan Waddell Lawrence Alan Esterly Lawrence James Merschel Lawrence Wayne Yochum Leo Roland Meyer Leon Lovell Poland Jr. Leon Maurice Ashton, Jr. Leroy Floyd Schysca Lindsay David Baldoni Livingston Glenn Lloyd Martin Kuehn Lonnie Joseph Ducote Jr. Luis Hilerio-Padilla Mark Duane Marshall Mark Randall Taylor Mark Thomas Howard Mark Wayne Bell Marshall Colin Farley Martin Earl Brophy Martin M Mugavin Marvin Robert Pearce Max Ray Spangler Max William Donahue Melvin Carrillo Merle Keith Carter Michael Brodsky Michael A Grieve Michael Anthony Vancosky Michael Francis Smith Michael I Thibodeaux Michael James Bost Michael James Drobeno Michael James Randolph Michael Joseph Yeager Michael Lee Conklin Michael R Munch Michael Thomas Rowe Mycal Lee Prince Oscar Wayne Pierce Patrick Lee Henshaw Paul Edward Mattson Paul LaFontaine Marchant Paul Plambeck Jr Paul Roy Severson Pete Sprule Segundo Peter Claus Behrens Peter James Clore Peter Joseph Nicolini Peter Pulaski Jr. Phillip Randall Duff Ralph Wilson Connors Jr. Randy Eugene Dillinder Raphael Anton Futrell Raymon Draper Hales Raymond Andrew Shepard Raymond I. Rosinski Raymond Steptoe Rex Alan Vogelpohl Richard Albert Doria Richard Arthur Lane Richard Beauregard Richard Charles Porter Richard Ford Richard Kenneth Joecken Richard Michael Amick Richard Michael Banaszynski Richard Michael Hilt Richard Michael Schwab Richard Myers Richard Winningham Robert Anthony Schmid Robert Clokes Robert Dale Armstrong Robert David Rhodes Robert Eugene Whitten Robert Gene Smoot Robert Helm Wood Robert James Jenks Robert Joseph Taranto Robert Larry Oaks Robert Norman Norris Robert Normand Lebrun Robert Paul Ahern Robert Paul Payne Robert Preston Robert Walter May Robert Willard Hartsock (Medal of Honor) Robert William Brede Robert William Elliott Robert Winslow Belcher Rodney Elmer Marrufo Jr. Rodney Kenneth Mills Roger Thomas Lagodzinski Ronald Aaron Grider Ronald Dean Karau Ronald Eugene Sheppard Ronald James Matel Ronald Lee Chisholm Ronald Lee Evans Russell Leonard Castle Russell Martin Erickson Sean Edward Brazas Stanley Carl Fuller Stephen Faust Stephen Edward Jesko Stephen Jay W Smith Stephen Lee Lindsay Stephen Wesley Bowman Steven Edward Collier Steven Lee Jenkins Terrence Daniel Beck Terry John Payne Theodore A Sweatt Theodore Louis Gyulveszi Thomas Drum Thomas Pretter Thomas Wayne Quinn Thomas William Fisher Tim Edwin Newell Timmy Larry Miller Vernon E Whetham Victor A. Brice Victor Reyes Hernandez Virgil Jessie Roberts Walter Levon Clark Walter D Browne Walter Lawrence Maurer Wayne Bizzle Holland Wilhelm S Hurksman Jr. William Allison Anderson William Andrew Montano William Charles Sheldon William Clayton Ray William Donald Griffin II William E Groves William George Fraser William H. Crouse, IV William Jess Sims William Joseph Van Gorder William Ladd Campbell William M Huberty William Martin Dunning William Roger Goudelock William Thomas Cumbie William Wayne Lumsden Willie Bozier Jr Winfred Lee Smith Zainah Caye Creamer

Military Working Dog Heritage Museum and Handler Center

Continued from page 1

long trip ahead, and boarded a C-130 at Kelly AFB.

After layovers in Hawaii and Guam, we finally arrived at Tan Son Nhut AFB, South Vietnam, on October 17th. When the doors on the plane opened, the smell and heat literally threw us back a few feet. Once we could get off the plane, we began unloading the dogs and our gear. Funny thing is, we were told that they had no idea what to do with us. No one was expecting us! I came to learn that was SOP in Vietnam.

We took our dogs out and walked and watered them. The extreme heat made it difficult to cool the dogs down. Two of our fifty dogs died the first day in-country of heat stroke. I knew right then, and there this was not going to be too glorious a routine.

We were transported to Bien Hoa, where we stayed for the next week providing K9 security for the air base. Then on October 29th, twenty-five of us received orders for Pleiku. That afternoon we packed our gear, boarded a C-130, and headed north. Again, upon our arrival, we were told we were unexpected. We just laughed

it off and took our dogs off the plane, staking them out between the runway and the rice paddies. The only buildings, in the distance, near the foothills were those of the 25th Inf. Div. We soon discovered we were to share those quarters with them for the next month.

There wasn't a place for our dogs to stay, so the first day we began by making temporary kennels for them. We put the shipping crates in two lines and staked the dogs between them. Within a couple of days, we had our dogs settled in, and we began guard duty at the ammo dump, the fuel storage area, and the perimeter of the base between the runway and the rice paddies.

We lived in tents and worked 12-hour shifts from 6 pm to 6 am every day, although once in a while, we got a day "off post" when we spent our time building a permanent type of kennel for our dogs. In 1966, the base started to build up quickly after the first of year. Contractors came in March to build wood barracks and an office building. They built bunkers for us on the perimeter of the base with M-60s mounted on top. In case of attack, we were to use them until the Air Police could back us up. However, during practice on the firing range, we discovered the M-60s were shipped

without firing pins! Thank God for practice.

While pulling kennel master duty, I told the Vietnamese workers to stay away from the staked-out dogs, but of course, with our language barrier, I only could hope they understood me. As I was sitting in the tent watching them work, I noticed a man attempting to walk between the staked-out dogs. The dogs were watching him as well. I yelled for him to stop, but it was too late.

One of the dogs jumped out at him, and as the worker tried to get away, he jumped closer to another dog on the other side. The dog bit him on the arm, throwing him to the ground. I ran out to the kennel area and tried to separate the dog from the man. The man was hitting the dog with a hand saw, trying to free himself from the dog's

jaws. I grabbed both the dog and man and pulled them apart. The dog was none too happy about it, either. The villager made it out OK. The bite only left small puncture wounds on his arm. He was a very lucky man, and he knew it. The dog was satisfied with himself. I saw him smiling and "saying" to me, "See, I can do what you taught me!" "Good boy," I said, also with a smile.

Duke and I were hit by our first mortar attack while patrolling the 500-lb bomb dump. The sound was such that, even though I had never been in a mortar attack before, I knew exactly what it was. It's something I'll never forget. The sensation and fear that immediately went through my mind were unlike anything I had experienced before, but I worked my way through it and did my job, just like a



Early Pleiku Kennels Photo provided by John Risse

million other guys.

Once I recovered from my initial shock, I looked toward the runway, and all I could see was flames and smoke billowing up, turning the sky bright red. It seemed to last for hours, but in reality, it was but a few minutes. The next morning I found mortar shells that hadn't gone off sticking out of the sand not more than 30-feet from the 500 LB. bombs! I looked at Duke, and he looked up at me. I am sure he knew we could have been blown to pieces that night! We called in, and the munitions team came out to defuse them. They just kept looking at me, shaking their heads.

The day I'll never forget is April 22, 1966. It was another mortar attack. I was "off post" that night, and Duke was at the kennel. Just after 2:00am, the first mortar hit. I jumped up and ran to the bunker outside the tent. This time I knew what it was and what could happen. I waited out the attack in the bunker, feeling relatively safe and sound, but I was also wondering how Duke was taking this attack without me. After the attack, I was told to get to the kennel right away. Duke was loose, and no one could get him under con-

trol. I ran as fast as I could, hoping he would be OK and someone wouldn't get trigger-happy and shoot him.

When I got to the kennel, Duke was up on the posting truck like he was waiting to go to post. I walked up to the truck calling his name. He was growling and barking at me. This was trouble because he had already put me in the hospital once and bit me three other times.

He was a good dog but very aggressive and a little neurotic at times. Slowly I kept moving closer to him. Eventually, I was able to get my leash around his neck and get him under control. The veterinarian was right behind me, and he was able to tranquilize him. It was only then that we were able to see that he was badly injured. He had ripped down the kennel's chain link fence trying to get out during the attack, and his back legs were totally torn up. He had lost a lot of blood and was in very bad shape. The vet told me he had to be transported to the 9th Med. Center in Saigon to get the proper care, but I was also told I could not go with him. They packed him up into a jeep and took him to a transport headed south. That was the last time I saw Duke.

I will never forget Duke. He

was a great dog, and sometimes I wonder what would have happened if we had been together that night so long ago.

Editor's Note: Marine Scout Dog Kaiser 1A63 was KIA on 7/6/66 and listed as the first K9 killed in action in Vietnam. However, Duke 645F was wounded in action three months earlier, on 4/22/66, and euthanized on 10/5/66; therefore, he was the first K9 casualty of Vietnam. After Duke was medevacked to Saigon,

Handler John Risse was never informed what happened to his dog. He assumed he died from wounds. It wasn't until attending a Vietnam Security Police reunion in 2006, forty years later, that John learned from fellow Air Force handler Bill Cummings that Duke had been euthanized five months after he was wounded in the mortar attack. Cummings said he would never forget the look on John's face when he told him.



John Risse and Duke 645F

Photo provided by John Risse

US Marine Corps K9 Reunion



Marine MSgt Chris Willingham (ret) opens USMC K9 Reunion .

From March 9th through the 12th, I had the pleasure of attending the Marine Corps K9 Reunion organized by none other than retired MSgt. Chris Willingham and the US War Dogs organization. Having the ability to connect with so many handlers from my generation was great. Friends reminisced with stories made fuzzy by time, and I got to reconnect with people I hadn't seen in



Alex Schnell with Bass. Bass received the Dicken Medal.

over 15 years. The crazy part is we picked up right where we had left off.

Being around these titans of the Marine Corps K9 program reminds me of the importance of the bond that is to be a K9 handler in the military. These dogs brought us into a group or, for lack of another word, a family that knows the sacrifice, duty, and honor of having the best job in the world, K9 handler. On the third day of the reunion, we celebrated K9 Veterans' Day, a fantastic celebration honoring our four-legged partners that kept us safe.

Alex Schnell's multi-purpose canine Bass received a huge honor that day. Bass is the second US K9 and the 75th overall recipient to earn the PDSA Dickin Medal, a British award introduced in WWII to honor brave animals who served in combat.

Krystal Tronboll and the Ddamien Project also collected accolades at the event. The Ddamien Project is a non-profit dedicated to adopting and saving the lives of retired Military Working Dogs, Contract Working Dogs, and Law enforcement dogs that are traditionally unable to find a home once their service is complete. US War Dogs presented her with a plaque to celebrate Ddamien, the K9 that is the

Story By Albert Johnson. Photos by Rob Schnell



Chis Willingham and Chuck Rotenberry present Krystal Tronboll, President of the Ddamien Project, with a \$25,000 check.

project's namesake. They also awarded the project a check for \$25,000 to help with the medical expenses associated with caring for so many retired MWDs.

Nic Fontaine, a retired Army K9 handler, was the Keynote Speaker. I was thrilled to see him as he was one of my instructors at the Specialized Search Dog (SSD) school at Lackland Air Force Base in 2005. I spoke with the Marine Corps K9 head honcho at the Pentagon, a handler I served with at Camp Pendleton, AJ Nieto. We discussed where the program is heading. He told us that if anyone made him aware of historically relevant artifacts, he would ensure we would know about them.

We also enjoyed running into a few of our supporters and Vietnam dog handlers. Joseph Gajewski,

Vincent, and Judy Murante ensured that we knew they were there and would be coming to the rededication of the University of Tennessee war dog monument in July. We love running into our supporters and fellow dog handlers at events. Building a community that supports our mission and helps spread the word is vital to our growth. It will help tremendously in our endeavor to build a museum to preserve and share military working dog team history with the world.



Retired Marine canine Bass, resting on his partners' feet.

Then Unbreakable Bond Memorial

Story and photos by Tom King

In late summer 2015, I visited the Motts Military Museum in Groveport, Ohio. During that visit, I met volunteer Ed Reeves (Scout dog handler, Vietnam). Being a sentry dog handler in Vietnam myself, we had a lot to talk about. As a result of that visit, I bought a family membership to the museum. On my next visit, I donated items that I had brought home from Vietnam along with a copy of "War Dogs, America's forgotten heroes."

The following spring, I received my copy of "From The Trenches." This is the quarterly newsletter from the museum. In that issue was an announcement that Museum Deputy Director Lori Motts Byrd and Ed Reeves were starting a project to design and build a memorial to honor the war dogs and fallen handlers of the Vietnam War. With a basic idea of what they wanted on this memorial and getting the approximate cost, they went about setting up a fundraiser. Informational packets were printed and distributed throughout the community and made available to visitors at the museum. A running tally was posted on the museum's Facebook

page.

While funds were coming in, they refined the project. Extensive hours were spent finding the names and tattoo numbers of all dogs of record as well as finding the names of all fallen handlers. In the midst of this, they met with well-known sculptor Alan Cottrill to create the sculptures of a handler and his dog. Lori and Ed had also met with Columbus Art Memorial to design what they wanted on the memorial and to set up an order for the stone to build that surrounding wall.

Once enough funds had been raised, contracts were signed with both vendors, and things were under way. Many visits were made to Zanesville, Ohio, to see the progress on the statues while waiting for the stone panels to arrive in Columbus from India. By late summer 2019, the statues and all seven panels were completed. Ground was broken, and the foundation work was underway. In mid-September work was finally started on erecting the memorial, with completion being done just two days before the dedication took place on Saturday, September 28, 2019.

About 400 guests, including 10 handlers and the sister of one of the fallen



The Unbreakable Bond Memorial

handlers, were joined by the Columbus Dispatch newspaper and one of the local TV stations to cover the dedication for the evening news. There were several speakers, and in the midst of the ceremony a Huey was flown in. That sound and the sight took all of us handlers back to a different time and place for a brief moment when we were little more than kids. That day was one of the best days ever. Since the dedication, we have had the honor of meeting quite a few dog handlers sharing a lot of stories. Most of which are true, I'm sure.

"The Unbreakable Bond" memorial is both beautiful and functional as well. The stone is from the same quarry in India as the stone used in the "Wall" in D.C. It has the

names and tattoo numbers of 4244 dogs arranged alphabetically etched on six panels. The taller center panel with the heading "The Unbreakable Bond" bears the names of the 297 handlers and three support personnel who gave their lives for our country. The statues of the handler and his dog are full size and arranged so that the dog is intently looking up at his handler.

Just as with the wall in D.C., we encourage rubbings. In the summer of 2021, the memorial brick garden was expanded to include the war dog memorial. It was decided that the area in front of the memorial would be reserved for anyone who would wish to honor a military handler and their dog from any time would be reserved for anyone

who would wish to honor a military handler or a handler and their dog from any time period. There has also been a park bench located in front of the memorial to allow people to sit, rest and reflect. This is a truly unique memorial and being set in a world-class museum gives us the opportunity to educate our guests about the history and value of our military working dogs. The Motts Military Museum is located at 5075 S Hamilton Rd Groveport, OH 43125.



The Unbreakable Bond development team on dedication day September 28, 2019.

Share Your Story

Everyone has a memory. A story! Most are not about combat Some provide insights to our history. Some are humorous. But each one is a part of the Military Working Dog History. Sharing them builds on the growing archived history for future generations.

We Want to Hear Yours!

Contact us at

Newsletter@MWDHM.org

Shop the Museum Store



Handler T-Shirt



Challenge Coin



Rock, Paper, Scissors T-Shirt



Velcro Patch

AND MORE!

Shop at

<https://mwdheritagemuseum.org/store/>

Free Shipping On All Items



Stainless Steel Tumbler

Confessions Of A Recovering MWD Handler

By Curtis Hendel

Albert - Hello, everyone; Curtis wants to speak to the Chapter.

Recovery Chapter - Hi Curtis (with murmurs of, "Oh great, it's that guy!")

Curtis As a member of this esteemed group, I have a confession to make.

[The entire community erupts in giggles, laughs, and chatter]

Albert - C'mon, everybody, it's 2023, for gosh sake! Give the guy a break!

Curtis - Yep, it may have been inevitable, but I swore it would never happen. A Beagle or a Basset Hound, certainly, but a companion breed? Me?

I admit that I was a bundle of testosterone in my early days. I was pure ego. My first yard was Osan, and I was a proud Perimeter Rat. Our few detector handlers were missing out on being real dog handlers. Walking the fence line. That was K9!

The bomb and drug handlers had vehicles, and we had, um, boots. On cold nights, they warmed by the cars' heaters; we lit a can of Sterno if we were lucky. They could sit in their squad car in the rain, and we got soaked. And let's not even discuss the restroom facilities on any

of the posts. Still, my ego told me we were the ones doing the real K9 mission.

My pride volunteered me to stay at Osan on the perimeter for an extra 13 months (of course, I signed for 13 when the minimum was 12, why would I be normal?)

When I did return to the States and hit Dog Training Section, I stubbornly determined to stay in Patrol. After the first year and a half, another trainer suggested I go to the drug or bomb section. He told me I would get myself hurt; he was the only fortune-telling Marine in Texas. As for me, I wanted nothing to do with tedious detector work, even though it would have made me a much better handler and trainer. Pure ego.

Now I am over thirty years removed from my time in uniform, and I haven't had a dog in over twenty years. I consistently worked two or more jobs until about five years ago, and there was no time in my life for a dog; it wouldn't have been fair to the critter.

Almost three years ago, that status changed. Without going into this long, drawn-out story that



Indie- Attack Dog in Training . Photo by Curtis Hendel.

works for us but would bore you to tears, I will just say that my bride and eldest devised a plan. They would get this puppy. My wife was working from home with the pandemic thing, and she would have the puppy during the workday. The puppy would stay with us every other week and alternate with my son.

This supposed puppy wouldn't be a GSD, Mal, or any other 'real' dog' breed. Nope, they had their hearts set on a Boston Terrier. Carrying the name 'Indie,' this little bundle of joy was tiny and only moderately cool initially. What the heck could this little thing bring to our lives? And was she so cute she was homely, or so homely she was cute?

My first time in public with such a small pup, I wore a great friend's business shirt with K9 in large letters on the back. I stopped in Sioux Falls, SD, to give Indie a break before heading home, unaware of the picture I presented to the public. As I talked to the young pup, a rough-looking feller approached on foot with an odd facial expression. Situational awareness kicked in, and I looked for the best way to engage or move away from this dude while protecting Indie.

"Can I help you?" I asked when he was about twenty-five feet away from us.

"Um, I just gotta ask..." he trailed off, gesturing as though judging everything about me.

"Oh, Boston Terrier, just got her; she's my bride's," as though I was not cool with the little black and white pup just yet.

"Uh, no," he scratched his head, "No offense, but you are a pretty big dude, kind of imposing, and you are wearing a shirt that looks like a police shirt with K9 on the back." He hesitated.

"Oh, it's my buddy's business out in Pennsylvania."

"The tiny puppy and the pink leash caught my attention the most. I thought of an NFL linebacker wearing pigtails and a pink tiara." With that statement, I realized that the guy finally felt comfortable enough to rib me about the picture I presented to him openly. I also realized how absolutely crazy I must have appeared to him.

I laughed with him, explained my military experience, and scooped up Indie, holding her close and recognizing that everything I knew of dogs in the past would change. This new K9 normal may just be good for me. As beasts from the past flashed through my mind, I looked into this puppy's eyes and felt a strange connection. She was taking over.

As Indie grew with our family, I fully expected to create the most disci-

plined, obedient, intelligent Boston Terrier the world had ever seen. I tried, in vain, to pass on training techniques to my bride and son. The little pup's sweet face overrode every potential command or correction. Indie was training my humans before my eyes, and I could do nothing to stop her!

Here is the understatement of the century. Boston Terriers are not German Shepherds. They are fiercely independent wrecking balls. Indie only chewed one piece of furniture and one roll of toilet paper ever. But she still has a huge personality. Indie does things on her terms and will walk away from homemade food until she is darned good and ready to eat. Snuggle time? She will let you know when it is time. She plays nicely with my grandchildren, moderately with my bride, and rough with me. She has drawn many bloody marks on my hands and wrists.

Boston Terriers were rat dogs back in the day, and when Indie tears apart a toy intended for a large breed dog, that heritage is unmistakable. I have referred to her as either a Boston Terrorist or, more commonly, a Boston Malinois. But wait, there's more.

This little black and white

Boston Terrier created a new role in our family. About eight months after she came to be with us, my bride contracted Covid. She did more than get sick; she became a long-haul victim and still suffers today. During this process, she was out of work for six months. Indie became more than a pet. She provided a soothing presence. She learned when my wife struggled and behaved like a finely tuned service dog.

As time progressed, my wife moved to a home-based work situation. The Boston Terrorist spends weekdays at our home, ever vigilant of Caroline's stress level. She whines every noon until the pair sit in a chair together to rest for an hour. This eighteen-pound loving, ornery, caring, sometimes ill-tempered, snuggly, obstinate, face-licking, hand-nipping ball of contradictions has earned her most important nickname from me. I call her Atenolol, which is a blood pressure medication.

Yep, as Indie was training the humans around me, she also subjugated me, the guy that loved bite work and hard-nosed dogs. After decades without a dog, I had received surreptitious training to be

Indie's human, and I am not afraid to admit it.

When our service ends and we put down the leash for the last time, we rarely lose the love and scars the Military Working Dog Program put on our bodies, hearts, and souls. I have worked with other dogs since, but I have gone more than two decades without my own four-legged friend. I had sealed off the part of my soul I had given to my working dogs, convincing myself I would never feel that bond again.

The little Boston Malinois changed my mind on that. My bride laughs when I scoop up this little furry thing and give her that special scratch she loves. The other night she even commented that Ero was sitting nearby. Yeah, back in the day, I was a head-case. It was all ego and testosterone. Now I snuggle an ankle biter when she is darned good and ready to snuggle, not before! But Indie is my little ankle-biter. Without any planning or forethought, a sliver of that part of my soul I had given to my working dogs has come to life again.

So, as a member of this esteemed Chapter, I have a confession to make; I am in a relationship with a member of a non-working breed.

Navy's K9 Corps

Few at Da Nang would argue against a dog being man's best friend, for canines of the K9 Corps and their Navy handlers act as buffers against the Viet Cong.

From sunset to sunrise, the 75-pound German Shepherds and their handlers patrol the perimeter of Da Nang's Naval Support Activity, guarding against sabotage by nocturnal intruders.

Much depends on the man-dog team. The men are drawn from applicants who are particularly adept at handling dogs. Those selected attend an eight-week Sentry Dog Handler Course after completing four weeks of Internal Security Forces at the Naval Amphibious School.

Little, if anything, can be seen in the darkness which lies outside the barbed wire, so it is the dog's sens-

es upon which the sentry depends. A growl tells the handler something is amiss.

After withdrawing a few yards, the handler contacts his command post by radio to report a contact, and the command post probes the patrol area with a starlight scope that sees in the dark.

If the source of the dog's agitation turns out to be nothing more serious than a rabbit, there are no hard feelings. If, however, it turns out to be a Viet Cong, he is fired upon.

The dogs are particularly valuable when used to detect saboteurs who might easily slip by undiscovered by a human sentry patrolling the perimeter alone. With a K9 on the job, however, the intruder's chances are considerably diminished, for the dog's nose knows.

Story by PH1 Rus Elder, USN, Photos courtesy Al Dodds



Dog handlers gather at the end of their shift near the South China Sea.



Sentry dogs show aggression to anyone in an area where they should not be. Our own Al Dodds is in the center with his partner, Happy

Please Join Us In Tennessee In July!



This year is the 25th anniversary of the memorial on site at University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM). This event is hosted by: University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine and The Military Working Dog Heritage Museum and Handler Center, (MWDHM).

The Memorial is a replica of the Marine Memorial on

Guam designed by Susan Bahary.

Stop by our website's event page for updated details: mwdheritagemuseum.org/events

Join us for all of the activities. For questions, email our events coordinator, John Homa :

events@mwdhm.org

We 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

We're on Facebook:

Military Working Dog Heritage Museum



Recycle, please.

Share your story.

Share your vision.

Share your voice.

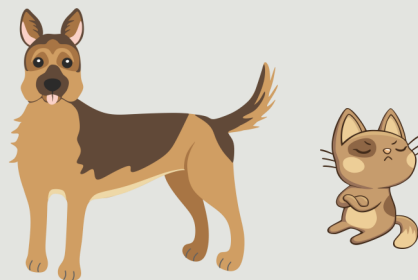
Share your copy of
our newsletter.

Important dates with Trooper and Scout

July 14-15, 2023 – 25th Rededication of the War Dog Memorial at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville (see Museum Events Page for more details <https://mwdheritagemuseum.org/events/>)

**Sept 10-16, 2023 – 41st Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion
Howard County Healing Field
8313 East 400, South Greentown, IN**

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



Historic Pooch Pic of the Month



1st Marine Dog Platoon of the 3rd Marine Division on Bougainville.

On 1 November 1943 the 3rd US Marine Division landed an invasion force of 14,321 troops, which included the 1st Marine Dog Platoon with their 24 Dobermans and German Shepherds, on Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. It became a fierce and bloody battle with Japanese forces before the U.S prevailed.

<https://www.usmcu.edu/Research/Marine-Corps-History-Division/Brief-Histories/Marines-in-World-War-II/The-Battle-of-Bougainville/>