



# The Paw Print

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



Volume 3 Issue 8

August 2023

## Special points of interest:

- Coast Guard K9.
- 25th Anniversary MWD Memorial Rededication.
- Vietnam-era Army stories.

## Celebrating the Coast Guard's 233rd Birthday!



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August 4, 1790

**Semper Paratus!**

One of two memorial panels at the US Coast Guard Jack Ayre K9 Memorial  
Alameda, California Coast Guard Station.

Photo courtesy of Michael Hurder

The Coast Guard mission has been front page news with the recent tragedy involving the Titanic submersible. Coast Guard members serve as America's Maritime Guardians, saving lives and preventing threatening events – from disrupting transnational crime and terrorism to preventing cyber threats to our ports to addressing the impact of human activity in

the polar regions as ice caps recede.

August is the birth month of the USCG, and we thought we'd take a few pages to share some of its amazing history.

2023 has been a banner year for the great men and women of the small but mighty Coast Guard K9. On K9 Veterans' Day, the Coast Guard Dedicated a

new memorial at its Alameda, California base – the Jack Ayre K9 Memorial. We wanted to learn more about this successful dog handler and the legacy he left for future generations.

And that's what our organization is about, gathering and conserving the stories and heritage of America's heroic K9 tribe. We welcome you to the pack.

## From the President's Desk



President, Albert Johnson



Hello everyone!

I hope you all had a safe and fun Independence Day. It is hard to believe the month of August has already arrived. I want to start with a big, Happy 233rd Birthday to the US Coast Guard. The Coast Guard K9's history is rooted in its involvement in WWII. Our top story for this month's edition is a look back at the life of Jack Ayre and his contributions to the Coast Guard K9 program.

I want to draw your attention to the second part of the story titled "Til the Last Dog Dies." This article is tough to read due to its nature. However, we must tell the unfiltered history of our K9 program: good and bad. These stories ensure we never see things like this happen again on our watch. Military working dogs would still be seen as equipment if not for the resolve of the Vietnam generation of K9 Handlers. With Robbie's law, the dogs' status changed from pieces of equipment, and we can now adopt these heroes out to former handlers, veterinarians, and the public.

This year continues to be busy here at the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum. Our schedule is brimming with more events this year than in previous years. These events help us further our mission of educating the public and honoring all dog teams. We look forward to seeing many of you at one or more of these events.

Our annual trip to Kokomo, Indiana, for the All-Veterans Reunion, promises to be a great time. John Homa, Andy Hauser, and I love meeting veteran dog handlers at this Hoosier homecoming. The highlight of the week there for me is getting all the K9 handlers together for a photo at the Garrison flag and monument on the healing grounds.

We will also set up an exhibit at the Great Smoky Mountain Cluster Dog Show in Knoxville, TN. What is better than four days of gorgeous dogs gaiting around the show ring or watching obedience champs retrieving over a high jump? Please see the last page of the newsletter for a full list of events on our calendar.

Let me draw your attention to page 5 of this newsletter: there is an introduction to our "Coins for a Cause" raffle." This raffle will kick-start fundraising for our Mobile Museum and offers donors tickets for a chance to win a collection of high-quality military, law enforcement, and K9-specific coins. We even have a second-place drawing, so it's like getting two chances in one! There's a quick link to our website page to grab all the tickets your heart desires. The final drawing will be on September 16, 2023, at Kokomo. Your support with a purchase of \$5, \$20, \$100 or more will go towards our innovative mission.

People often ask, "Where will the physical museum be located?" My answer thus far has been, "That's a great question, and as of now, we are still making determinations." As an organization, we need to conduct a lot of market research, frame business plans, and secure funding sources. These steps will ensure we can be centrally located, in a prominent area with plenty of potential visitors, so we can afford to keep the doors open. For the short term, we aim to bring awareness to the museum and educate the public. These goals require significant funding and planning, but this is a fantastic start!

The mobile museum will be a way to travel to locations like schools, military bases, events, and companies that wish to make sizable donations to further our mission.

If you have the ability and desire to help our organization grow as a volunteer or donor or have a story to share with us, please reach out to us at [info@mwdhm.org](mailto:info@mwdhm.org) or our mailing address at: MWDHM PO BOX 54 Newport TN 37822. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Until next month, enjoy the reading, and as always,

**K9 Leads the Way!**

*Albert Johnson*



## A Shining Legacy: The Life and Gifts of Jack K. Ayre

By Dixie Whitman

Jack K. Ayre was born in Pittsburgh in July of 1921 to devoted parents who encouraged his inquisitive mind and varied interests. His father, a railroad employee, managed freight shipments steaming to major cities throughout the Northeast. Jack's mother, a teacher, passionately supported programs that helped visually impaired children learn and thrive. As an only child, Jack found delight in the company of dogs, and his love for these animals only grew stronger as he joined the Coast Guard during WWII and became a dog handler.

Two years into his journalism studies at the University of Michigan, Japan bombed America's Pacific Fleet docked at Pearl Harbor, and suddenly Americans were at war. Jack answered Uncle Sam's call and, in August of 1942, found himself at the United States Coast Guard Training Station - Curtis Bay, Maryland, where he learned the basics of being a member of the Coast Guard.

After Basic Training, Jack headed to dog school, where he partnered with a beautiful black and grey German shepherd named Mal. A critical need to

keep the shorelines safe meant that "sand pounders" up and down America's coast began patrolling as quickly as possible after Pearl Harbor to prevent incursions on our soil. Coastguardsmen with horses and dogs buttressed a gossamer line of defense by keeping watch over miles of isolated coastline. Their footfalls crunching in the sand served as the demarcation line. Mal's job as a force multiplier meant the military pulled fewer men from the front lines. He could see, hear, and smell evil in the night.

Together, Jack and Mal kept an eye on the beaches in Delaware and formed an unbreakable bond as they scoured the breaking waves for any signs of espionage or intrusion. Earlier in the year, the USS Roper sunk a German U-Boat. When the crew of the Roper examined the bodies from the slain submarine, they discovered several men were wearing civilian clothes, with their pockets crammed full of American currency, identification, and other documents needed for living in the United States. The Axis attempts at espionage kept coming, and



Above: Coast Guard Handler Jack K. Ayre poses with his partner, Mal, in a Coast Guard lifeboat on the Delaware shore. Jack and Mal patrolled the sands near Lewes Coast Guard Station. This isolated stretch of beach was near Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, and across Delaware Bay from Cape May, New Jersey.

Courtesy photo: Coast Guard.



Above: A parade of Coast Guard Handlers which marches down a major thoroughfare in New York City includes Jack Ayre. This photo is dated October 1942. Original photo: Associated Press.

Uncle Sam needed every dog team he could ready.

Jack served almost four years in the Coast Guard he grew to love, but that represents just a tiny portion of his extraordinary life. Separating from the Coast Guard in the spring of 1946, Jack once again pursued his journalism degree at Michigan and graduated in 1948.

His love of writing catapulted him to success. He published his literary contributions in the Ellis Island Coast Guard's "Weekly Log" in both the "Informal Log" and the "Sports" sections. He also wrote poetry, drew, and dabbled in playwriting with his best friend and cousin, Frank Lee. He later wrote and published a book titled "Electro Buyer's Guide," a sort of 'Yellow Pages' for electronic geeks. The book he championed over 20 years later gave him his first million dollars when he sold the publishing rights.

Jack busied himself with all facets of life, balancing his intellectual, physical, and social forays with the ease of pounding a square peg in a square hole. He participated in a variety of

sports: baseball, football, skiing, and tennis among them. He also played Bridge at the Masters Championship level. And he enjoyed dating the ladies whose information he recorded meticulously in his "serious black book."

He loved to travel, and his airline Public Relations manager job allowed him to roam the world while writing enlightening pieces for their growing newspapers. He also taught himself how to buy, sell, and trade stocks, becoming his own very successful stockbroker. Life for Jack raced fast and easily.

Ultimately, Jack created three non-profits to support his favorite causes: community theater, education for blind people, and the Coast Guard K9. Community theaters nationwide count on grants from one fund to support local productions. The fund for blind people, named after himself and his mother, offers financial assistance to organizations that promote success for the visually impaired community. His most cherished cause, carrying his name alone, is the Jack K. Ayre Foundation for the United States Coast Guard. Its purpose is to support and

sustain Coast Guard K9 teams, and a grant from this fund helped launch a successful drive for the new Coast Guard K9 Memorial.

Jack K. Ayre could have been considered a modern Renaissance Man, someone with a broad knowledge of the fine arts and sciences with a curious and intelligent mind. But as so often happens, those whose candles burn brightest often have their light dimmed.

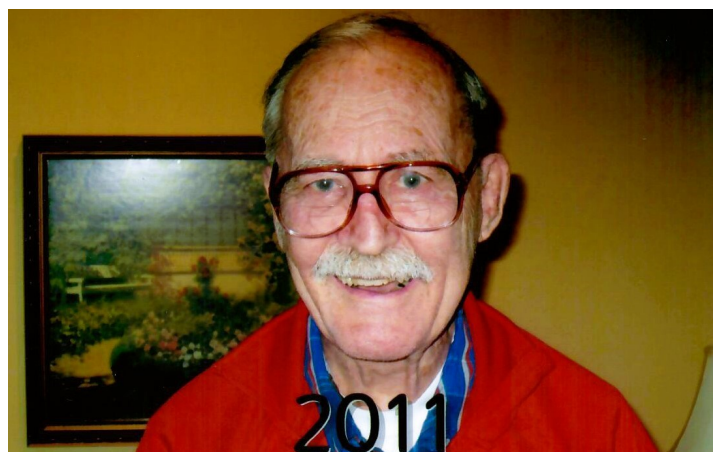
Later in life, due to age and medical issues, Jack's memory receded into a place reserved for the elderly. He forgot details of his travels, his writing, and his investments.



**Jack Ayre poses with a pup. This image is on the Coast Guard Memorial created in his name.**

**Courtesy photo: Coast Guard**

And, still, as his mind faded, he never forgot the moonlight outlining the iron back of his best partner and lifelong love, a powerful, loyal German shepherd dog named Mal.



**Jack Ayre enjoyed a huge birthday party just months before he passed in December of 2011. The party featured a Barbershop Quartet. Not one to shy away from the spotlight, Jack jumped up to belt out his part, making it a Barbershop Quintet.**

**Courtesy photo: Coast Guard**



## Support Our Coins for a Cause Fundraiser




# Two Collections



**The Dog Group**



**The Handler Group**

Look at all of the fabulous coins in this group:  
the Dog Group.

And the stunning coins in this grouping:  
the Handler Group

### More info:

<https://mwdheritagemuseum.org/event/coins-for-a-cause-mobile-museum-challenge-coin-fundraiser/>

Support the “Coins for a Cause” Mobile Museum Challenge Coin Fundraiser organized by the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum (MWDHM) today!

Your contribution will provide vital support for the MWDHM’s latest initiative: creating a Mobile Museum dedicated to Military Working Dog Teams. This inno-

vative project aims to visit schools, organizations, and events, spreading awareness about MWDs and promoting the mission of the MWDHM.

By participating in the donation raffle, you can win one of two prizes: a collection of high-quality challenge coins for the first and second-place winners. The

first name drawn selects their choice of coin collections and the second name drawn will get the other set.

We’ve gathered some stunning Challenge Coins from across the spectrum, but definitely with an MWD focus. Tickets are now available: a \$5 donation per ticket or a \$20 donation for five tickets. We will draw the

winning ticket at our Kokomo, Ind. raffle on September 16th at the All Veterans Reunion.

Stop by our website to view photos and get more details. Join in the fun today!

Ctrl + Click here to go to our events page.

[Coins For A Cause](#)

## Dogs Out-Wit Charlie: Soldiers' Fifth Sense

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.

We are delighted to include this story of a 47th IPSD handler in Vietnam.

The German Shepherd scout dog growled ever so softly. He pricked up his ears at a sound audible only to him. His handler motioned to the men behind him to be ready.

Almost immediately, an NVA four-man food-

carrying party trooped into view, rounding a bend in the thick triple canopy jungle. Their backpacks were loaded down with rice taken from the Vietnamese farmers around Hue.

After the ensuing firefight, the rice was returned.

The 47th Scout Dog Pltn. has been earning a reputation as a valuable addition to the 101st Abn. Div's (Airmobile). 2d Bde. Working with separate units within the brigade, the dogs provide ultra-sensitive noses and ears that can

mean so much in a war of elusive shadow tactics.

"I was walking down a trail in the jungle northwest of Hue with C. Co. 2d Bn. (Abn), 501st Inf (Airmobile)," said dog-handler Sp4 Thomas Corsello, Chicago," when one of the men up front spotted a pair of NVA-type rubber sandals.

Corsello moved up to the point position. A few hundred meters further down the trail, his dog "alerted" with a soft growl and pointed to the right of the trail, just where it opened into a

Story reprinted from the Army Times



Tom Corsello

wide clear spot. A perfect ambush site.

"We checked it out and found a spider-hole in direct line with the clearing," added Corsello. "Fresh footprints and scuff marks testified that someone had just left seconds before.

## The 41st Annual Kokomo All Veterans Reunion & Our Fundraiser Drawing



Several members of our Board of Directors will be staffing a booth at the 2023 Kokomo Reunion. It will be the 41st Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion, one of the premier veteran events in the county.

Mark your calendars to come and visit this fabulous gathering of all things patriotic. Many vendors will be present, and we'll display some great historical K9 items from our archives for the public to enjoy.

John Homa will run raffles for our fundraising, and

we'll offer some great swag for you to snag up in person-all to support our mission.

This opportunity will allow attendees to grab some last-minute tickets for the Challenge Coin fundraiser, where the lucky winner will receive a pile of amazing Challenge Coins donated from handlers across the country. These tickets are on sale now and also available online at:

<https://mwdheritagemuseum.org/product-category/raffle/>



## Til The Last Dog Dies

As told by Steve Conner, the Last Vet Tech To Serve With a Scout Dog Platoon in Vietnam

### Part II, A Vet Tech's Diary

*Vet Tech, Steve Conner, continues his story from last month with his diary of notable events from his tour in Vietnam.*

#### **May '72, someplace in War Zone D, the 1st Cav's area of responsibility around Biên Hòa:**

Fred Gazaway, a Scout Dog Handler from TX, partnered with the handsome Chico, an experienced scout dog that had been in-country for at least four years. Chico had the reputation that all his handlers got seriously wounded while he escaped with only a notch in his right ear. Fred was no exception on this, his last mission.

One evening at dusk, the 34th got a call that Fred had been hit badly and medevacked. His shotgun, or backup man, whose job was to watch Fred's back, was killed. We received word that Chico was at the Biên Hòa Air Base, and we needed to pick him up. That called for driving through Biên Hòa Ville in the dark on a winding road, not something we were excited to do, especially without using headlights. Biên Hòa Ville was well known for hiding VC, who would harass the air base at night. Often, we watched nighttime firefights, seeing the green and red tracers going back and forth.

The 34th had a 3/4-ton truck that the guys had "souped up" and was fast for a 3/4 ton. We had an E7 driver, a shotgun, me, and three handlers (including one of Chico's old handlers) in the back, all fully armed. The CO had arranged for two 1st Cav gun jeeps to escort us to and from the air base. The jeeps met us at the Army side, Biên Hòa gate, and we took off at a high rate of speed without lights. Our guys, me included, were locked, loaded and ready. As we entered the Ville, the lead jeep's gunner started shooting above the huts to let the locals know we were there and meant business. The tail jeep did the same as we passed through. Luckily Chico had lived up to his reputation and had no scratch on him. Then we drove back in the pitch dark, but the Jeep gunners got us home safe.

A few days later, Fred got dropped off at the 34<sup>th</sup>. No one could believe it, as he had been hit 27 times in the back and legs. He said he hated the hospital and knew Doc was good at patching dogs, so he figured I could patch him up. Patching him up was changing his bandages twice a day and cleaning the wounds, which luckily were shallow grazes, no penetrating wounds. But he was sliced up pretty bad nonetheless with lots of stitches, and as I dressed



34th ISDP Vet Clinic Signage . Photo provided by Steve Conner.



Scout Dog Handler Mark Handy. Photo provided by Steve Conner.

his injuries, he would pull on a bottle of Jack while telling the story.

#### **Late June '72, Fire Base Bear Cat:**

Bear Cat, 15 or so miles from Bien Hoa, had been a big firebase, but in '72, with things winding down, they kenneled only a few sentry dogs. They were part of the 720th MP, but

we cared for them regardless. One night a sentry dog handler and his dog were on patrol when the dog alerted. It seemed Charlie was everywhere, and the handler broke his leg, getting to safety. The next day we had to get the dog, a nasty sentry who was not injured but very agitated and confused because

his boss was gone and because of the excitement of the firefight. People don't realize that dogs get frightened too, and because of that, we took one of our most experienced handlers, nicknamed *Six Pack*, who was familiar with the dog. Sgt. Parker drove, our CO was in the shotgun seat, and Six Pack and I sat in the back.

On the way to Bear Cat, we passed a rubber plantation and saw the Marines cleaning up from the night before, stacking dead VC on the roadside like cordwood—a scene I had never experienced nor ever want to again.

We got to Bear Cat and picked up the dog, but due to the mid-day heat did not muzzle him. Six Pack sat with him near the cab with me near the tailgate. At the gate, as we were leaving, an MP told us due to the action the night before, we could not leave for Biền Hòa until they had enough trucks and jeeps for a convoy. The CO, a West Point grad, told the MP, *bleep* you, dog handlers don't wait for convoys, and we proceeded down the dirt road to the main road.

We had only driven a few hundred meters when I saw a hard-core NVA, low crawling through no

man's land toward Bear Cat carrying an AK 47. The CO told me: "Shoot the bastard." Six Pack threw a hasty muzzle on the dog so he would not bite him or me in the excitement. Just as I was aiming, Six Pack told me to hold off. An APC was coming down the road. We stopped the APC and pointed out the NVA, who had stopped crawling and hunkered down. The guys in the APC went out, and from the number of rounds fired, I'm sure he didn't crawl again.

As we passed the rubber plantation again, the Marines were still stacking bodies. All the combined 34th/62nd guys were very excited that Doc had almost gotten his "cherry busted," something I'm glad I didn't get.

#### **All the time:**

As the vet tech, my hooch was next to the vet tech shack and feed shack, where we stored the dog food. We fed them a combination of canned horse meat and Gaines-Burgers. Regardless of how clean we kept the area or the number of poison traps we set, the place was always rat infested. It was not unusual for me to open my hooch door and see four or five giant rats scurry through their hole. Even though I patched the holes, they found ways to get back in, and though I didn't

keep food in my hooch, there was something that smelled good that they wanted to get at, possibly me.

The rat situation came to a head on a sweltering night when I was sleeping nude, uncovered on my bed under the mosquito netting. I remember thinking I must be dreaming because I felt something walking across my chest and stomach from right to left. As I woke, something crawled down my left thigh and ran down the side of my left leg when I flinched and yelled. It was at least a three-pound rat that had probably been sniffing around my head for I have no idea how long and then walked across my body, probably also sniffing at my breath as I snored.

At that point, I started baiting large rat traps in my room, averaging five dead rats a night for a few days. I had become a light sleeper at this point, and when I heard a trap snap, I would stand on my bunk and then the chair until I could reach the light switch. I would take the trap with the dead rat and throw it out the door for one of the 34th's mascot dogs to find and eat. This protocol continued for nearly a week until I could get a dog to sleep in my room with me, but I never slept well after that.

#### ***Until the last dog dies:***

What happens to excess inventory when a conflict winds down?

Of the nearly 5,000 military dogs to serve in Vietnam from the summer of 1965, when the Air Force brought in the first sentry dogs and paraded them in Saigon, to the last 57 to serve in 1972, only 204 came home. Nearly 500 had been KIA, and 600 more died from illness or injury. So what happened to the rest? They were either euthanized by the Army veterinarians and vet techs or put in transport kennels and given to the ARVN. The ARVN had a nearly nonexistent dog program. Most Vietnamese were afraid of the dogs for a good reason. The dogs weighed as much, if not more, than they did. Most MWDs transported to an ARVN compound did not leave the transport kennels alive. The Vietnamese people eat dogs.

The US veterinarians euthanized the dogs humanely with a powerful barbiturate narcotic so potent that 1cc could kill a horse or cow when injected. After the vet staff completed the necropsy, we secured tissue samples to send to the Veterinary Pathology group at Walter Reed, where they were unsuccessfully looking for a cure for TCP (Tropical



canine pancytopenia). The bodies were bagged and placed in the dump fire. The bodies had to be burned and not buried because the locals would dig them up for food. The dump fire had to be ringed with armed MPs to prevent the locals from pulling them out.

An image I'll never forget is the horror of seeing dog handlers saying goodbye to the dog who saved their lives numerous times and the lives of countless GIs or secured depots, saving billions of dollars of supplies, munitions, and fuels of all kinds. Imagine seeing guys you would never want to encounter in a dark alley uncontrollably crying while saying goodbye to their best friend, knowing what would happen to him. Many asked us to euthanize their dog rather than give him to the ARVNs.

One of our Patrol Dog handlers was injured several times over two weeks and was in bad enough condition to send home. His partner, Prince (16X5), would never see another handler. It was determined that Prince had to be put down. It was a task I hated, and I was glad Shorty wasn't there to witness it. It was quick, though. Prince never suffered.

Our CO, LT. John Senor knew having the duty to euthanize these incredible animals I had gotten so close to would be too traumatic for me. He transferred me to the Vet Clinic in Long Binh for my last six weeks in-country. Two other Vet Techs, brought in from the States, handled that terrible job with the only Veterinarian left in Vietnam.

These events occurred almost daily during the spring and summer of



Vet Tech Assistant Gary Cook. Photo provided by Steve Conner.

1972 until we'd disposed of all the excess inventory.

When the last dog was dead, we went home. I shall never forget it.

Steve (Doc) Connor, the last Vet Tech in Nam. 34<sup>th</sup> IPSD, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bde., 1<sup>st</sup> Cav

*Footnote from Mike Hurder: From the heart of a Dog Handler, I want Steve and our Vet Techs to know just how grateful we*

*all are. The Veterinary Corps in the Military is an exemplary, leading-edge effort. The Vets and Vet Techs who make up this service deserve to be honored for what they all did and what they all endured to ensure the best possible care for our partners. It was a comfort to know you guys were there.*

**"Thanks, Doc!"** – from all of us to all of you.

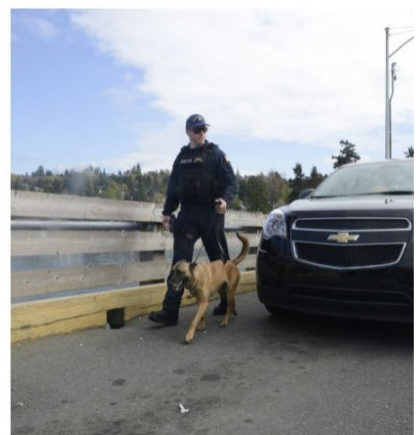
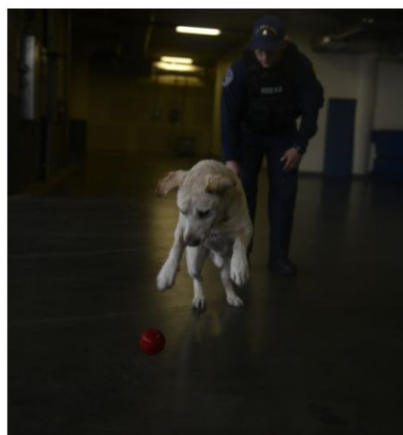
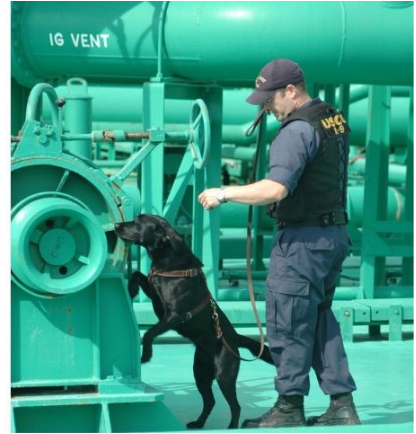
### Share Your Story

**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](mailto:Newsletter@MWDHM.org)**





## 25th Anniversary of Always Faithful

Concerns about the rainy forecast did not dampen our enthusiasm, and excitement sparked electric as volunteers arrived at our host hotel, the Holiday Inn, on Friday, July 14th. Our dynamic volunteers filled the room with complimentary snacks and drinks to welcome our guests. As people began to filter in, a shared K9 zeal flooded the room through introductions, hilarious stories, and solemn remembrances of those handlers who had passed. The museum offered a Pizza Fundraiser and some great raffle items. All in attendance had a great time, especially Chase Paustian's crew, who continued to purchase raffle tickets every few minutes to make sure Albert NEVER finished counting tickets or money. Thank you, Chase!

Saturday, the weekend's focus moved to the University of Tennessee, College of Veterinary Medicine, home to the second casting of the Marine Corps K9 Memorial called "*Always Faithful*." The hallway inside the Veterinary College began humming with activity at 8 AM as everyone arrived to set up their display tables. At 9:15 AM, a group of Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan veterans participated in the walkthrough of events for the outdoor portion of the memorial cere-

mony before heading back inside to check out all the display tables.

Andy and Drew Hauser manned our tables, letting folks know about our historic display pieces while ensuring they signed up for the monthly Paw Print newsletter and shopped our available store items. Promptly at 10 AM, everyone filed into the learning center for the inside portion of the program, consisting of a lineup of fantastic presenters.

Dean Thompson of UT's College of Veterinary Medicine began with a welcome speech, followed by Dr. Chris Magra, who spoke about WWII, specifically Guam, and the role of war dogs. Dr. DJ Krahwinkel talked about the monument's history in Guam and how a copy ended up at the University of Tennessee. Our very own John Homa stood at the podium next, giving us an emotional look at the life of a Vietnam war dog. John then handed the microphone to me so I could give a brief overview of the Iraq and Afghanistan generation of war dogs and the different specialties within the dog program that occurred during this time. Four minutes was barely enough time to skim the surface of these programs. I then introduced Marilyn Childress, President of the Veterans Heritage Site Foundation,

Story by Albert Johnson, Photos by Phil Snow, UT VM



**Always Faithful Monument at the University of Tennessee. Unless otherwise indicated, all photos in this article used with permission of Phil Snow, Photographer for the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.**



**Veteran Dog Handler stood to offer a hand salute. A 21-gun salute and the playing Taps concluded the ceremony.**

who spoke about Robbie's law and new bills introduced to support working dogs after they retire. The Dean then retook the stage to invite everyone outside to the "*Always Faithful*" monument.

Once everyone assembled outside, Dean Thompson

introduced Susan Bahary, the sculptress of the stunning monument, who recalled her interactions with William Putney. Capt Putney served as the WWII Marine commander of the 3rd War Dog Platoon during the invasion of Guam. She spoke of Dr. Putney's desire to ensure

a legacy of remembrance with a memorial and through his book [Always Faithful](#).

My incredible wife and former Marine Corps dog handler, Dr. Kate Stanford, then took the podium to eloquently explain the bond between handler and their four-legged partners for the public. As she finished reading the poem [Guardians of the Night](#), there was barely a dry eye in the area. With General Freeman's help, she read the names of the 25 dogs remembered on the monument, each followed by the ringing of a bell.

It was my honor to lay the red-white-and-blue memorial wreath at the base of the statue with the help of former Army Ranger dog han-

dler SSG Julian McDonald. All dog handlers joined us for a hand salute behind the monument. Local veterans fired a 21-gun salute, and a bugler blew Taps on a shiny brass trumpet, the haunting notes echoing across the Tennessee River.

Dean Thompson then closed out the ceremony by sharing the pride that the University carried having this prestigious monument on campus and how much the sacrifices of these incredible dogs meant to himself and the University. A surprise helicopter flyover by the Knox County Sheriff's Office created a perfect dramatic finale for the ceremony.

We moved back inside for light refreshments and

mingling. Everyone remarked that it was a superb event they would long remember.

Thanks to Miss Kristie of the University's Event Planning Department for making this K9 25th Anniversary Celebration incredible. The last thing she did before we all left was ensure that all handlers in attendance knew how much the college appreciated their service and honored each with a small token of their appreciation, a beautiful challenge coin honoring the day's events.

Thank you to all who attended and our volunteers that ensured the event was the best it could be. I salute you. Andy and Drew Hauser, John Homa, Kate Stanford, Johnny Mayo, and Dixie Whitman.



At the original dedication, the museum's inspiration, Perry Money, posed with Dr. Maurice Acree, the charismatic fellow behind this monument at UT. Photo courtesy of the Perry Money family.



Handlers Julian McDonald and Albert Johnson laid the wreath at the foot of the monument.

## Come and Meet Us At the Great Smoky Mountain Cluster



Join a few of our fantastic Board of Directors members at the Smoky Mountain Cluster, a multi-day AKC show from Sept 28-Oct 1, 2023. Each day, a dog show will be held at the Jacob Building—3301 E. Magnolia, Knoxville, TN. Interested parties can find updated information on the [Tennessee Valley Kennel Club website](#).

We are delighted to partner with the Tennessee Valley Kennel Club and the Oak Ridge Kennel Club to bring our educational display to their cluster of four show days. Earlier in the year,

three of our Board Members did a presentation about military K9s at one of their events and were excited to receive an invitation to join them for this outstanding AKC dog show produced by two of the greatest dog clubs around.

If you've never attended an AKC dog show, you're in for a real treat as you watch the best specimens of all breeds gaiting around various rings until judges eliminate all but one. That last dog standing takes home the hugely prestigious Best in Show title and a massive trophy.



## The Nebraska Navy: WWII Coast Guard Handlers

by Dixie Whitman

Most Americans envisage Cornhusker football or Warren Buffet when they think of Nebraska. Its enticing history includes the Oregon Trail and the Pony Express. Yet, Nebraska holds a few tantalizing, lesser-known slices of history, including the “Nebraska Navy,” moored briefly on Fort Robinson’s rolling range.

Established in 1874, where the sandhills swat at the buttes of the southernmost Black Hills geography, Fort Robinson protected the Red Cloud Indian Agency. Its cavalymen battled with the Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne tribes of the wind-swept northern plains. As the fort’s missions changed, in 1919, it transitioned to the Quartermaster Corps, the Army division in charge of supplies, equipment, and animals. By the early 1940s, troopers oversaw nearly 11,500 Army horses: undulating pastures filled with tall, athletic bay thoroughbreds grazing peacefully.

In the fall of 1942, Fort Robinson tackled a new challenge as the Quartermaster Corps opened its largest dog training center on 50 acres of the eastern side of the post. Kennels sprung up as if planted in the empty hillsides. The K9 shelters measured 4’ by 4’ and were staked forcibly into the ground, with each K9 inhabitant chained to his abode. At one time during WWII, close to 1,900

dogs were housed here. (A brief pause as you contemplate kennel care for 1,900 dogs.)

Early during WWII, German submarines hunted our ships just miles off the eastern coastline, and a couple of times, saboteurs made their way ashore. The military’s priority required protecting our homeland. Coast Guardsmen patrolled over 3,700 miles of coastline. Sentry dogs would be force multipliers. With that early objective, it’s understandable that the Coast Guard sent handlers to train at Fort Robinson in numbers far exceeding Army handlers.

Young handlers cruised through the base and hit the dance floor in nearby Crawford, NE in their Coast Guard uniforms, nearly identical to the US Navy. US Coast Guardsmen proudly wore the same iconic “Dixie Cup” hat.

The citizens of Nebraska welcomed the Coast Guardsmen and their unique dress. At first, the oddity of sailors’ uniforms mixing in at the historic Army calvary fort drew stares, but the handlers soon faded into the everyday vista. Yet, this new breed of Coastie handler sometimes referred to themselves as the Nebraska Navy during their time spent at old Fort Robinson. We honor that legacy.

Semper Paratus!



Coast Guard dog teams form a “V” for victory in the dog training area of Fort Robinson in circa 1944.

This photo from the Nebraska State Historical Society Photo Collections. Collection: RG2731. Photo #18036.



The sandhills sweep up the pine ridges and buttes of northwest Nebraska at Fort Robinson. This photo by Thomas Fields on Unsplash.

Reference: Buecker, Thomas R., (2004) Fort Robinson and the American Century 1900-1948. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. pp: 90-106.



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From the Team at MWDHM...

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## Important dates with Trooper and Scout

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

**Sept 28– Oct 1, 2023 Great Smoky Mountain Cluster Dog Show**  
**Jacob Building—3301 E. Magnolia, Knoxville, TN**

**October 4-8, 2023 Vietnam Security Police Assoc. 28th Reunion**  
**Joint Base Charleston, SC [VSPA 2023 Reunion](#)**

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



## Historic Pooch Pic of the Month



### Dogs In the Coast Guard

Heading back to the kennels after training, Coastguardsmen and their dogs trained diligently to guard America's shores and coastline against attempts of enemy spies and saboteurs. Any enemies who would violate our shorelines to prowl around would meet these tense, fearless dogs. The Coast Guard Patrols along lonely beaches and outposts were ready for action.

Photo source: National Archives photos:  
026-g-027-032-001.