



The Paw Print

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



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Special points of interest:

- Celebrating Navy K9.
- David Adams' Tales from the Perimeter continue.
- Our Halloween Haunting Story.

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Team Rota: MWD Tara Takes On Spain



MWD Tara in Rota, Spain.

Story by Courtney Pollock, Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Hannah Frye.

Tara is a military working dog (MWD) assigned to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Security Department. Her handler, Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Noelle Lutes, helped her out with the questions and provided Tara's "voice."

"My daily duties are searching for explosives at different areas around base for training purposes," said Tara. "Pretty much a game of hide and seek every day...and providing visual deterrent for security."

Tara went to the Department of Defense (DoD)

training facility at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. During her training there, she learned all the techniques required to be a MWD such as obedience and detecting explosives. Tara then reported to Bahrain before moving to NAVSTA Rota in 2018. She also completed a deployment to Djibouti in 2019-2020 with Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Mequila Murarik.

Tara's favorite thing about being stationed at Rota is, "getting to explore different areas of the base and interacting with a lot of people."

Outside of work, Tara trains daily with her handler MA3 Lutes. Lutes teaches her new ways to search and different commands/tricks to follow.

Tara prefers Spain to Bahrain because it's "not as hot and the people are nicer."

A self-described "crowd favorite" with the Rota community, Tara enjoys chasing butterflies, playing, trying to find cats, or practicing her favorite trick the "spin" in her free time.



Lane Hagerdorn
Vice President



From the Vice President's Desk

So many of us, whether we served or not, have members of our family who did. While I enlisted in the USAF, the Navy is where the family's service bloodlines were born, with both of my grandfathers wearing "Crackerjack" and "Blueberry" uniforms in their day.

One grandfather, a fellow history buff, shared with me at a young age that the phrase "mind your 'p's and q's" was a Navy term that originated to keep up with sailors' open bar tabs in town and at port. Barkeepers would make marks next to each sailor's name under "P" for a pint and "Q" for a quart. "Minding one's Ps and Qs" meant both settling your debts and staying somewhat sober to keep an accurate count of how many beverages a sailor enjoyed – and to behave as an upstanding member of the US Navy should. Now I wonder how many of our Navy Dog teams are "minding their P's and Q's!" Please join us as we raise a slow salute and a nod of reverence to the men, women, and of course, dogs who have served in the US Navy over its 248 years.

And, of course, we're bringing some incredible stories of Navy dog teams and their contributions and service around the world – check 'em out – those dogs are "Bravo-Zulu" all the way!

This month we attended The All-Veterans Reunion in Kokomo, Indiana. At this annual event, we set up a large spread of historic Military Working Dog artifacts, information, and educational takeaway items for those interested in the Museum's mission. We welcome all new Newsletter subscribers from the event – glad to have you onboard!

Albert and I would like to share a heartfelt "Thank You" to everyone who has donated to the Museum over the years. Your contributions in artifacts, stories, monies, and time are what make 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 come to life. We have come a long way because of you, and your continued support will help us blaze our path into a future of bigger and better

ways of sharing the rich history of working dogs in service to the country.

And, now for a shameless plug – while artifacts like uniforms, patches, equipment, and pictures are incredible treasures that tell the stories of dog events of the past, there is an archive that is more fragile and precious – your story. Stories, like the adage my grandfather shared about "Ps & Q's" are the history we most desperately want to collect and preserve, and it comes from you. And we seek all stories, from the most intense, funniest, routine, and basic, because they weave the tapestry of the history of dogs, dog teams, and their support systems that the world deserves to know about!

To connect with us and share your story, please check out the short article "The Heritage Discovery Committee Seeks Your Story" in this edition. From Albert and I, please enjoy the newsletter and never hesitate to contact us at info@mwldhm.org.

K9 Leads the Way!

Lane Hagerdorn

Navy K9: Team Rota

Story and photos by US Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Hannah Fry

They say a dog is man's best friend, but sometimes they can be so much more. They can become your family, your teammate, or your partner. For men and women assigned to security forces in the U.S. military, they can become all these things at once when assigned to work with Military Working Dogs (MWD).

Dogs supporting military forces can be traced far through history with some of the first circumstances being ancient Egyptians taking their dogs into battle with them. For the U.S. though, the program has much more recent roots. The U.S. Army was the first branch to train dogs to support soldiers and the mission when it opened its "K-9 Corps" program on March 13, 1942. In World War 1, more than 1 million dogs served by carrying messages through the trenches and bringing psychological support to soldiers.

During World War 2, the Quartermaster Corps of the U.S. Army (QMC) was given the task of training dogs for not only the Army, but the Navy, Marines and Coast Guard. They trained in four specialties: sentry, patrol, messenger, and mine detection.

When it comes to training, methods have improved, commands and expectations have changed, but those specialties still encompass most of what they

do. Here at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, the kennel has dogs that focus on explosive and drug detection and patrol missions.

NAVSTA Rota's kennel has been around for many years and continues to be one of the most important in the region. Apart from simply the size, Sailors assigned to work with these MWD's hold the important role of working through deployments to ensure the safety of dignitaries during diplomatic visits and offer training all around Europe and Africa.

Because of the mission's they support, Master-at-Arms 2nd Class (MA2) Charlise Maddox said they train regularly with the MWDs they are assigned as handlers.

"We train them daily," said Maddox. "We're required to train each dog for 10 to 15 hours per week. That can include utilization, our training minutes, and the patrol dogs doing bite work."

From Helen, Georgia, Maddox joined the Navy as an undesignated Sailor to find travel opportunities. When given the opportunity she selected to become a MA but didn't originally plan on being a dog handler.

She originally selected MA to be able to work in harbor but during her time in "A" school, an instructor pulled her aside to tell her she should try for K-9.



Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Edna Sototorres, a dog handler assigned to security forces at NAVSTA, works with her assigned Military Working Dog (MWD) Chippi in the obstacle course at the NAVSTA Rota Kennels.



Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Caitlyn Honeycutt, a dog handler assigned to security forces at NAVSTA trains with her assigned Military Working Dog (MWD) Gina in the obstacle course at the NAVSTA Rota Kennels.

"I already thought it was way too late," she said. "I had received orders to my next command at that point, but I went ahead and had some conversations with the K-9 MAs. Maybe a week later, I was at the K-9 'C' school."

Now assigned to work with MWD Rosco, a six-and-a-half year old Belgian Malinois, Maddox said the last minute switch was the best decision she could have made.

"Coming from a ship and being undes(ignated), this job is hands down the greatest thing that could have happened to me," said Maddox. "Having that perspective helps keep me motivated. A lot of people don't realize what they have when it comes to being a dog handler, or just being in Spain in general."

Handlers and K-9s have a unique relationship that borders on partner and pet. The dogs have distinct personalities that are often only seen by their handlers.

"I would describe my relationship with Rosco as me being the mature older sister and him being the annoying little brother who makes me angry, but I still love him," said Maddox.

MA2 Caitlyn Honeycutt, another dog handler at the NAVSTA Rota kennels, has a similar view of her K-9.

"We're supposed to look at them more like a work relationship," said Honeycutt,

"but most of us do get that emotional connection with our dogs. So, I look at my dog more as a pet, but we understand that when it's time to work, she's a work asset. It is difficult to change it up though because all you want to do is love them."

Honeycutt is currently certified on MWD Gina, a Belgian Malinois nearing retirement. She spends her days with the rest of the kennel, working and training, but will soon earn her place among the proud, highly trained K-9s that have completed their mission.

Although in the military these dogs are referred to as Military Working Dogs, a K-9 unit, or canine unit is simply a dog trained to support law enforcement. These K-9s are celebrated yearly on March 13, National K-9 Veteran Appreciation Day. This day is set aside to recognize the invaluable support these dogs offer the U.S. military members and police force.

"We couldn't do our job without them," said Maddox. "We've lost two of our K9s since I've been in Rota, MWD Blek and MWD Zico. At the end of the day, we keep each other alive. We couldn't do our jobs without each other. I think a dog serving life dedicated to our mission deserves to be recognized, just like a veteran would be. They are veterans. They deserve to be recognized for everything they do."



Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Nathaniel Smith, a dog handler assigned to security forces at NAVSTA, trains with his assigned Military Working Dog (MWD) in a warehouse.



Capt. Teague Suarez, commanding officer of NAVSTA, tests the skill of the Military Working Dogs. As the "Gateway to the Mediterranean," NAVSTA Rota provides U.S., NATO and allied forces a strategic hub for operations in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Story and photos courtesy DoD. "The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement."

Coast Guard Sentry Dogs Preventing Sabotage

by Dixie Whitman

Many among us can remember the moments when we first heard of the 9/11 tragedies, replayed like a tape on our minds' recorders. Inherent in the weeks, months, and years to follow, a shared disquiet about what might happen next gripped America in a vise of anxiety.

After Pearl Harbor, Americans, on December 7, 1941, felt uneasy and were plagued by the same questions. Where and when would the enemy strike next? Small bands of enemy agents made forays onto our shores and drove deep into the heart of America. Two teams of four Germans arrived at Long Island, NY, and Ponte Verde Beach, FL. Their arrests caused a chill to zip through America's backbone. How many more were here?

The most effective method to keep our shores safe involved a patrol of Coastguardsmen to monitor activities along the beaches and near critical infrastructure and war factories. But for each man who stood sentinel, one less man could be deployed to European and the Pacific wars. With

that thought in mind, Dogs for Defense started to produce War Dogs to augment the manpower required for such monumental tasks.

Most of the first dogs produced became sentry dogs and stood guard at munitions plants and oil refineries. Others patrolled against incursions along the beaches and docks. Two instances highlight their vigilance: a Dalmatian on the West Coast and a Boxer on the East Coast. The Dalmatian alerted his handler to a Japanese man secreted under a pier in a boat filled to the brim with oil-soaked rags, intending to destroy the dock. The Boxer thwarted a man at a war plant carrying plans for the factory he intended to disable.

Perhaps the most valuable benefit these dogs provided to their handlers involved the buttressing of the handlers' courage and backbone, knowing their K9 partners provided a real and present amplification of force.

Forever faithful and always ready.

Semper paratus.



Someone coming down to the dock at this time of night? A Coast Guard sentry and his German Shepherd Dog watch with alert interest the approach of the automobile whose headlights reveal their presence. (Source: NARA)



Alert for saboteurs trying to retard America's war effort, two other Coast Guard sentries silently make their rounds in the lonely night. Source: (NARA)

Tales From the Perimeter—Korat: Part II

Story and photos by David Adams

This month, we present the second half of David Adams' story about the Korat Perimeter.

Following a 5-week medical leave, I returned to duty with A Flight on January 12th, with Rex ready to get out of his run. We started with some much-needed exercise through the obstacle course and then grooming. As I pulled my fingers backward through his coat, I realized he needed more work than brushing. He'd missed his monthly swim through the malathion dip tank to help kill parasites. I couldn't believe the ticks he had acquired. It would have to be a between-shifts job.

At 0130 hours, with 30 minutes to go on my first shift back, I was dragging and couldn't wait for the posting truck to pick us up. Then, a message came over the radio. Sappers had hit Ubon Air Base. All bases were on full alert. No one on the perimeter was going to see their beds until day-break.

Due to the 8th Security Police Squadron's stellar job defending Ubon, none of the targeted AC-130 gunships received damage. The defenders killed five of the sappers but, at the cost of Sentry Dog King A642, killed in action. Sentry Dog Jody 89X1 and her handler, Sgt. Thomas Cartwright, sustained wounds but survived. This incident would

lead to significant perimeter changes on all Thailand air bases and profoundly impact those who guarded them.

A few months after the Ubon attack, the Munitions Storage Area became my constant assignment. I had been posted there every night for about a week. Then, I returned to the north side base perimeter to find something strange. All the mangrove trees and thick undergrowth were either dead or dying. There was a smell of petroleum distillates hanging in the air. I asked one of my fellow handlers what had happened and learned about a spraying program with something about a week earlier. Whatever it was, it was killing everything off in record time. After the January attack on Ubon, a defoliation project commenced on all Thai air base perimeters. When you are a young, 20-something Airman, you don't worry about what an application of stuff that would kill trees in a tropical climate so fast would do to you.

Heavy equipment removed the dead trees and foliage about a week or two later. There was nothing but flat, open ground from the perimeter fence to the flight line. The flightline lights now silhouetted us. Even "Hell Post," Kilo 21A/B that Rex and I patrolled our first night together, had been bared to a wide-open cleared area.



Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base - 388 SPS Kennels.

Patrolling along the north perimeter, I noticed a small concrete structure protruding from the ground where thick growth had once been and checked it out. 'What on earth could this have been?' Its dimensions were about 6ft long, 4 ft wide, and about four to five feet deep, with about a foot above the ground and narrow slots in the concrete. Then it hit me. A machine-gun pillbox built by the Japanese during WWII. The Japanese Army built the base using slave labor, and now here I was, guarding a post with my dog that my father's enemy had once protected. I found irony in it and wondered if this war stuff would ever stop.

Unlike air bases at Ubon, Udorn, and Nakhon Phanom, which sat on the Thai/Laotian border, and U-

Tapao near Cambodia, Korat was about 165 miles inland from Cambodia, making it a more difficult target. But that did not eliminate the threat. Not all Thai citizenry, particularly Communist sympathizers, accepted a foreign military operating from their neighborhood. Rex and I were on the first shift, posted on Kilo 8A along the runway, which happened to have one of the base's two 81mm mortar bunkers in the middle. Rex never liked the guys manning the mortar, but then, Rex really didn't like anyone. It was getting close to the end of our shift when an excited voice hollering, "**Shots fired!**" came over the radio. Sgt Ron Rutledge with Major X138 and Sgt Mike Balash with Lobo 17M4 were patrolling Kilo

20 A and B off the east end of the runway at the beginning of the approach lights when they suddenly drew gunfire. Someone from the other side of the fence fired three quick rounds. As Rutledge and Balash hit the ground, one round passed through the night scope bunker at the end of the runway, narrowly missing the two Security Police manning the scope and M60 machine gun.

The two 81 mm mortar bunkers began launching illumination rounds. Positioned next to the runway, Kilo 8A was a flat post void of vegetation; our post was bathed in a yellowish glow of light as the illumination round drifted slowly to the ground under its parachute. I took Rex down to the ground with me to avoid being standing targets. As each illumination round started to burn out, the mortar team launched another with a loud boom. Rex and I could feel the ground shock of each firing, which did nothing to endear the mortar team to him. Keeping him under control and hugging the ground proved challenging because he wanted to get into that bunker and rip into that two-man team. Once again, it would be daybreak before we saw the kennels.

Moving into the second half of my tour, the jungle around the base and MSA was wilting and seemingly dying off; everything needed

water. Then, the monsoon season arrived. On my first night in monsoon rain, I could hear it coming through the jungle and marveled at the sound. Then I realized I better get the poncho on. I reached into the plastic dog food bucket we used to carry gear in. Too late. I was getting soaked. I got it on, sat on the bucket, and felt the water rising around my boots. I stuck my head inside the poncho to see if I could tell how deep it was getting, and I smelled it. There is no more recognizable smell than that of a wet dog. Without my noticing, Rex crawled under the protection of the poncho. I thought back to my winter at Fairchild AFB; "Well, this is better than deep snow and -20°."

The jungle began to explode overnight as it came alive again, except for the areas inside the perimeter that had been sprayed and the cleared zone ringing MSA. Nothing was coming back there. The jungle was again looking like it did when I arrived.

Arriving for my 2nd shift posting on MSA 8B right after a monsoon cloud burst, I couldn't believe how vines were taking over the fence. Rex and I walked up to check the fence, and when we got within ten yards. I realized it wasn't all vines. A mass of deadly Bamboo Pit Vipers used the fence to escape the rising



MSA K9 Post 8A

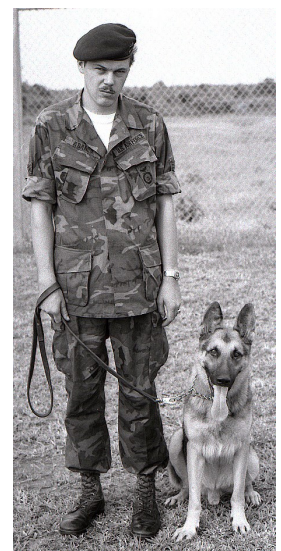
water from the cloud burst and twined their way into the openings. The cycle of seasons had nearly completed its full circle, and my tour was nearing completion.

I had received orders for Otis AFB, a small Air Defense Command base on Cape Cod. With a small kennel of six dogs, it would be boring compared to my time at Korat. What I experienced at Korat was why I signed up for K9 and what I had trained for. I would miss the duty and, most of all, Rex, but I was excited to go home to my bride-to-be and start our life journey together.

As the C130 Hercules carried me away from Korat, I thought about Rex and our first night on Kilo 21A/B. I looked at the scars on my forearm left by his canines in our early days together and smiled. I wondered who would be partnered with Rex. "Good luck," I thought with a chuckle.

The 12 months had gone quickly, but with the memo-

ries of incidents on the perimeter and comradery with my fellow handlers, those twelve short months might as well have been my entire four-year enlistment. I thought about how much the perimeter had changed in my time there. I had never heard of Agent Orange, and when I did, I never made the connection to the defoliation project until 34 years later when reconnecting with fellow handlers.



David Adams & Rex 7A98

A Snake with No Name

Story and photo courtesy of DoD

A reprint from the Vietnam Era.

What do most people do when they see a snake, especially here in Vietnam? Why, they move away from it as quickly as possible. If you are Spec. 4 Richard L. Teegarden of the 764th Medical Detachment—Veterinary, the direct support unit of the 981st Military Police Co. (Sentry Dog) at Cam Ranh Bay, you casually reach down and pick it up.

Teegarden is a snake handler and has been interested in reptiles since the age of six. He was employed as a reptile keeper by the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens before joining the Army. His last assignment before coming to Vietnam was with the US Army Medical Research Laboratory, Biochemistry

Division, in its Venom Research Lab at Fort Knox, Ky. During that time, he gained a great deal of practical experience by working primarily with poisonous snakes.

A laboratory technician with the veterinary detachment, he has started his own private reptile garden here in Vietnam. At the present time, he has two snakes—a nine-foot python and a bamboo viper. The python, given to him by a friend who caught it at Su Chin, across the bay from the Cam Ranh Army Depot, is kept in a shipping crate behind the Sentry Dog Kennel. He keeps the bamboo viper, which caught himself near Tiger Lake at Cam Ranh Bay, in a closed file box in the administration office of the Veterinary Hospital.



"NoName," a nine-foot python owned by Spec. 4 Richard Teegarden, a lab technician with the 764th Medical Detachment, makes friends with Rip, a Sentry Dog handled by Spec. 4 James A. Daniels of the 981st MP Co.

If circumstances and time permit, he plans to expand his collection in the near future. The reactions of his friends and fellow workers range from disbelief to astonishment to controlled fear. But the comment of another lab technician, PFC Elmer Anglin, best sums up the other men's feelings: "It doesn't bother me. He is just doing his own thing."

Teegarden has never been bitten by a poisonous snake but has received several bites from non-poisonous species. "When handling poisonous snakes, I take a little more time and care to make sure that I don't get bitten," said Teegarden. "Most people are very ignorant when it comes to snakes, and this is the reason for many bites."

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

Detraining WWII Dogs: Bringing Heroes Home

by Dixie Whitman

Military service can include moments of violence bookended by hypervigilance and tedium. The body's physical reactions play havoc with a Soldier's psyche. Like others before and after, many returning WWII veterans had difficulty readjusting to civilian life. Their combat experiences changed them, and wartime also shifted their home front. Following WWII, 4 million veterans returned to a country transitioned by years of sacrifice and social changes. In addition, 3,000 fighting war dogs returned with many of the same problems. The task of forging these fierce K9 combatants back into dogs suitable for family home life fell to the Quartermaster Corps.

The public donated their dogs to their country's service for various reasons. Young, hormonal males of about two years old made up a large percentage of the dogs received due to behavior issues. Still, other donors felt the desire to do anything to stop Hitler and the Japanese from threatening the free world and, with tears in their eyes, sent their family pet to the front lines. When the dogs returned, many of these families wanted their dogs back, while others did not, and still, many

families allowed their dog's wartime partners to adopt them.

As excess dogs returned to Dog Reception Centers, such as Fort Robinson, it fell to dog handlers to conceive individual plans to rehabilitate their charges. To complete this work, creative handlers had to work with a large number of dogs, and the dogs had to accept interactions with an increasingly larger circle of people. For some dogs, trainers played various games and then handed the dog off to another individual for play and grooming, widening the circle of acceptable people. Trainers coaxed other high-strung dogs to relax, speaking in soft voices and handling with patience and gentleness until they began to accept their situation.

During de-militarization, the dogs retained their basic commands but received more freedom to explore, such as at the end of a 30-foot lead. Men in civilian clothing began handling the dogs to introduce a more civilian look to their surroundings. Bicyclists and cars drove past them, blowing horns, or gunfire might be heard, first at a distance and then closer to the training area. At each step of the rehab process, trainers



In this image, an Army handler works with the transition of three different German shepherds. Dogs faced some of the same challenges in coming home as other returning military members.

Image source: DoD photograph.

noted the dog's records until they deemed the K9 ready for discharge.

While the government could not guarantee the future behavior of the dogs, letters received by the Quartermaster Corps from reunited families tell the tale.

From Queenie's family: "Queenie seems to be exceedingly happy to be home. She certainly shows the effects of wonderful care and splendid training and proudly exhibits her show-off traits. Our son, in the submarine service, is very proud of Queenie having been in the service."¹

From Smarty's family: "Smarty is a perfect example of health and alertness, and she was so eager to show us her obedi-

ence commands that we understood them even before the instructions arrived two days late. It was a genuine sacrifice for Herbie to donate his dog to the Armed Forces, but now he is receiving his reward by receiving a dog more beautiful and better trained than he ever thought possible."²

And from Dannie's family: "At 6:45 PM on October [15], 1955, our German shepherd, Dannie, passed away due to old age. Dannie served in the K9 Corps from June 1943 until April 1945, when he was honorably discharged. We could write a story about the faithful, loving service Dannie has given our home and children since he came home to us. It is almost like losing a child. He was bright and on



Dogs never forget a friend, and those reunited with their former families were excited to be home again in familiar surroundings. Reunions such as this one were common among returning K9s.

Image source: DoD photograph.

guard until the very last. Although partially paralyzed for some time, he lay watching my daughter's bedroom window as he went into his last sleep, humming as though to comfort us. His master, Captain Carl Johnson [our son], Air Force, is now stationed in Arizona. My three sons are all officers. Carl and Dannie enlisted about the same time because Dannie was lonesome for

his master. We can't thank the K9 Corps enough for their good care of Dannie and the valuable training they gave him."³

1. Waller, Anna M., Dogs for Defense. (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, Quartermaster General, 1968) P.49.
2. Ibid. p.49
3. Ibid. p. 49

CALLING ALL HANDLERS FROM HOMESTEAD AFB OR THE NIKE MISSILE SITE IN THE EVERGLADES.

HELLO,

I AM ELIZABETH PEREZ, WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING ON HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE IN FLORIDA. WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING INTO THE HISTORY OF OUR K9 CEMETERY (IN USE FROM 1956 TO 1992) TO SUBMIT TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. BUT I NEED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DOGS BURIED HERE OR THEIR SERVICE RECORDS. WE WERE LOOKING FOR ANY INFORMATION ABOUT HANDLERS ON HOMESTEAD AFB WHEN IT WAS AN ACTIVE INSTALLATION OR THE NEARBY NIKE MISSILE SITE IN EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK. ADDITIONALLY, HANDLERS KNOW THE NAMES AND SERVICE NUMBERS OF ANY DOGS THEY SERVED WITH ON BASE OR THAT THEY KNOW ARE BURIED HERE; WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANY HELP GETTING THESE DOGS THE RECOGNITION THEY DESERVE.

THANK YOU,
ELIZABETH PEREZ
CSU CEMML
HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE
HOMESTEAD, FL 33031

CONTACT INFO:
EXP506@COLOSTATE.EDU

Gumby and the Haunted CIA Building

By Elgin Shaw

Over my 12-year Air Force K9 career, I witnessed and saw many weird things. We K9 handlers were a wild bunch who loved to screw with our own—one of these times occurred while I was stationed at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan. Anyone who paid attention in high school knows the history of Okinawa and its horrible experience during the battle in the Pacific during World War II. Kadena held a lot of history from that time. All of this made for some really good, scary tales.

Within Kadena Air Base, there is a large Ammunition Area that, during the Vietnam War, held both nuclear and conventional weapons. The nukes were long gone when I arrived on the Rock via the cattle car, aka “The Flying Tigers 747,” in January 1984. The Ammo Area was almost the same size as the main base. Still, it contained conventional weapons, all of which the Air Force stored in hardened concrete bunkers. The bunkers were spread throughout the Ammo Area, comprising 90% jungle, 5% buildings, and 5% paved surface (roads).

Many old buildings had been closed, and the jungle tentacles reclaimed the ground and the buildings over time. One such building was known as The Old CIA Building, a two-story solid concrete building. However, with its glass windows and furniture long gone, one room on the second level maintained padded (insulated) walls and ceiling. Per the stories passed down, the CIA utilized the padded room during the Vietnam War to interrogate prisoners. The CIA building stood approximately 100 yards into the jungle. To get to it, one had to hike a very narrow jungle trail, and as you crested a small hill, the building would appear. On a full moon night, the CIA building would glow.

We K9 guys were always looking for new training areas and new training to keep us both sharp and occupied, which also helped to keep us from landing in Chief Master Sergeants Barnes’s office and getting our arses chewed on. Did I mention that K9 handlers tended to get into trouble at times? In 1986, a new handler arrived on Kadena. He was 19 years old,



Gumby was acutely aware of the legend of the haunted CIA Building.

about 5’10, stocky build, and had bright red hair. His nickname, Gumby, was one he had picked out all by himself and not one he had earned via us Puppy-Pushers. Gumby looked more like the “Heat Miser” from the Christmas cartoon Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer.

Two other handlers and I started a story about the haunted CIA building. The tale, as told, involved a young, distraught Japanese girl who climbed the base perimeter fence after losing the love of her life, hiked through the jungle to the CIA building,

and ultimately hung herself.

The girl’s ghost forever haunted the building, and rooms would light up for no reason. There was no power to the old building. The story also detailed how, on two separate dates, our military working dogs had utterly refused to enter the CIA building; the dogs would pull back as hard as they could to keep from entering the building.

All of this happened after an aggressive foot chase of a training decoy through the jungle trail to the building.

On one full moon night, two other handlers (both will go unnamed in the event they are now in a position of true responsibility) and I decided it was time to have fun with Airman 1st Class Gumby. Four K9 teams in two trucks were assigned to the Ammo Area that night. We called for Gumby's K9 unit to rendezvous with us at an old parking apron near the CIA building jungle trailhead. Once Gumby and his fearless K9 partner arrived, we told him we had a training scenario

all set up. It involved a foot pursuit to the CIA Building. Gumby was still new to the unit and had heard all the haunted CIA building stories but had never observed the building with his own eyes. Big mistake on his part, bad Gumby!

Gumby immediately got scared and flat-out refused to comply with the K9 training. We told Gumby he had no choice; the training was required, and he still needed one more building search and scout training scenario

for his dog's training records for the month. Gumby refused and stated, "You can court-martial me and lock me up; I don't care!" "There's no way in hell I'm going in there!!!" We tried but could not maintain our composure and about lost our bodily functions from laughter. Gumby was so embarrassed that he returned to his patrol truck and refused to talk with us for the rest of the night.

I never did hear if Airman 1st Class Gumby ever

wised up to the story and ventured through the jungle path to the Old CIA Building after that fateful night. Gumby, should you ever read this, remember WE K9 handlers are and forever will be true brothers, no matter how much crap we pulled on one another!!!



The Heritage Discovery Committee Seeks Your Story



The mission of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum and Handler Center inspires us to gather individual histories. We know that thousands of men, women, and dogs have selflessly served throughout the generations and in all military branches.

Today we ask that you consider sharing your personal history through a recorded conversation. As we look at gathering history for the museum archives, we want to learn how your experiences impacted you, whether you served (or are serving) as

a dog handler, a veterinarian, a vet tech, or in some other role.

Each dog or person has acquired a unique K9 history, and we would be honored to have you share some of your stories with us. We understand and appreciate any reluctance to speak and do our utmost to make the conversation comfortable. Please consider this opportunity as one way to honor the dogs who cannot speak for themselves.

Contact:
info@mwdhm.org



Honor

NAVY K9

"The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement."



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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

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

**October 27, 2023— A commemoration of the
10th Anniversary of the Military Working Dog
Teams National Monument—
Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.
Access available with a DoD-approved identifica-
tion.**



Historic Pooch Pic of the Month



Left: At DaNang, Vietnam. Navy handlers and their K9 partners move to and from their posts in the back of an International Harvester truck.

Courtesy photo: DoD