



The Paw Print

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



Volume 3 Issue 12

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Special points of interest:

- Celebrating the Space Force.
- Looking at a unique point in Nemo's life.
- Join a new Soldier heading to his base in Vietnam.
- Check out a great story about a WWII K9.

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Finding Nemo: Seeking the Legacy of This Heroic Air Force Dog



A1C Robert A. Throneburg says goodbye to Nemo. The event that altered their lives began on Dec. 4, 1966. Nemo and his handler, A1C Robert A. Throneburg of Charlotte, N.C., were on patrol at Tan Son Nhut AB. The preceding day, Tan Son Nhut had been hit by a Viet Cong mortar attack. During the attack about 60 VC swept through an opening they made in the base perimeter's barbed wire fence. DoD Photo.

In the predawn hours of 4 December 1966, multiple sentry dog teams of Tan Son Nhut Air Base's 377th Air Police Squadron made near-simultaneous detections of a large force of Viet Cong (VC) commando raiders splintered into small attack groups.

The sentry dog teams' early warning enabled the 377th defensive forces to repulse the attack. Daylight sweeps

made without dogs failed to locate any stragglers.

The following evening, A1C Robert Thorneburg and his dog Nemo A534 were posted on the perimeter, and almost at the outset of their posting, Nemo alerted and was released to attack VC, who had evaded the daytime sweeps. Both handler and dog were wounded, but not before killing at least one VC. Follow-up sweeps

with dog teams located and killed another eight VC in hiding.

Subsequently, Nemo returned stateside as the first sentry dog officially retired from active sentry service to a kennel at the Sentry Dog School, Lackland AFB, TX.

Source: Vietnam Security Police Association; Excerpt from Air Force Manual 125-5, Volume II, dated April 28, 1972.

From the President's Desk



President, Albert Johnson



Happy Holidays!



I am over the moon to announce that the Paw Print Newsletter received this massive rosette award from the German Shepherd Dog Club of America. We are incredibly grateful that an organization rooted deeply in our military working dog history would bestow this honor on us. Our team works tirelessly to ensure we educate and entertain everyone who reads the newsletter and I want to recognize and honor their hard work.

We send a big Happy Birthday to the Space Force. With the Space Force taking over several Air Force bases and acquiring their own dog teams, you should expect to see more postings in the future about them.

I was fortunate enough to attend the dedication of a dog team monument in Herkimer, New York, in October, modeled after Adam

Cann and Bruno. You will read in this edition of the newsletter about the monument, the man behind the curtain who made it happen, the incredible artist Lena Torich, and the young men and women who helped make the monument unveiling a success.

This monument is stunning, right down to the fingernails. I was fortunate to have served at the base where Adam Cann and Bruno were stationed. I never met Adam, as he was killed in-action a few months before I checked into the unit, but the love that all his fellow handlers had for him was extraordinary. We had some big shoes to fill, and handlers who knew Adam ensured we got every ounce of training we could to keep alive the troops we were leading.

It was great for a few members of our organization to attend the ten-year rededication of the National Military Working Dog Teams Monument at Lackland AFB San Antonio, Texas, home of the current military working dog program. We want to recognize and thank Christopher Dion for his dedication to making this event fantastic.

We took the opportunity to meet three of our volunteers face to face for the first time; we enjoyed a tour around Lt. Col. Daniel Holland Working Dog Veterinary Hospital, and we visit-

ed the Puppy Program, where trainers brought out two dogs for the dog competition. My favorite part was watching these 16-week-old puppies having the drive to attack a decoy in a full-bite suit. These Puppy Program Trainers are doing incredible things with the next generation of working dogs.

The ceremony was incredibly touching. A few tears were shed while reading the Guardians of the Night poem. To say that Friday, which started at o'dark thirty was "everything dog" is an understatement. Even being out of the MWD program for 14 years, if they had told me to suit up and run some dogs, my broken body certainly would have tried!

As a head's up, in the story about Nemo, the Air Force hero dog, you will notice that the author wrote from a different perspective than most Nemo articles. This piece was crafted in the short time span after Nemo was shot, recovered, and briefly attempted sentry dog duty before being medically retired.

You will read these stories and more in this edition of the Paw Print newsletter. On behalf of the museum, I wish you all Happy Holidays, and remember,

K9 Leads the Way!

Albert Johnson

They Work The Night Beat

by SMSgt James A. George / Reprinted from The Airman - Oct. 67

Jim Condrey calls them "the guided muzzles." And Condrey, a staff sergeant with a large mustache and a Virginia drawl, knows sentry dogs just about as well as anyone in the Air Force. He received his first dog back in 1954 at Langley AFB, Va., and has been an Air Force security police/dog handler since.

Condrey knows the young men who work perimeter defense, too. He understands their moods and is acutely aware of what it costs these young policemen, psychologically, to patrol the darkness night after night. Condrey speaks slowly, evenly, his thoughts and words measured, his eyes and mind evaluating everything and everyone around him.

"This is a hard job," he said as he drove the two-seater pickup over ruts and winding roads around Tan Son Nhut Air Base. "It takes something out of a man, that's true. You don't move around out here night after night, listening to every little sound, wondering if this is it, without sacrificing a part of yourself each time. But on the other hand, this job gives a young man something he may never have gotten in any other way - the kind of slow-but-sure confidence that makes him a man who will stand and

be counted when a fight starts."

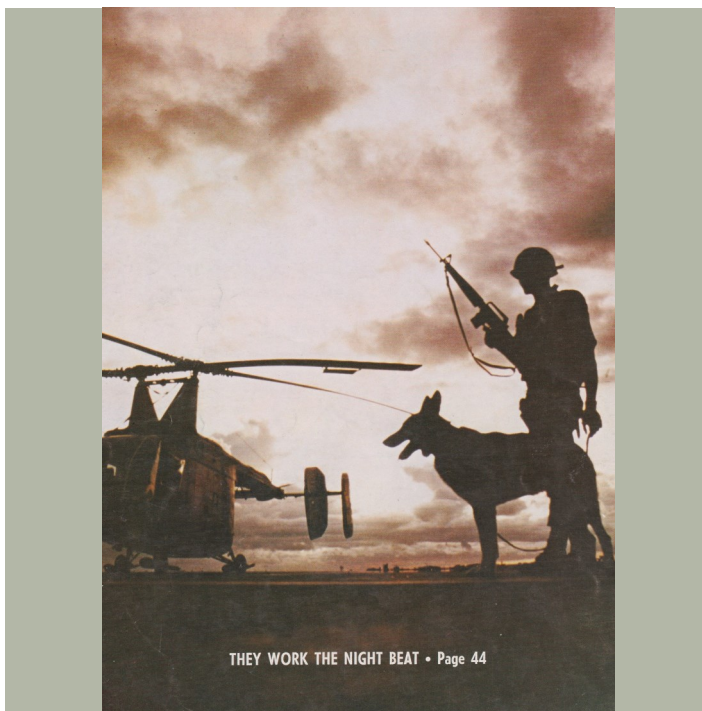
And the dogs?

"They get the best care and training money can buy," Condrey says around the pipe that never seems to get smoked out. Condrey's an experienced hunter, and dog owners in the Langley area used to seek his help in training their hounds for the hunt.

"The man and the dog are part of each other. Our dogs have taken some hits that were meant for their handlers. Snake bites, too. We've had a couple incidents where a dog took a lethal dose of venom from a snake that his human partner didn't even see."

We were working a section of the perimeter at Tan Son Nhut, dropping off the security police handlers and their dogs at intervals. They had been in the rear of our truck when we started out with Sergeant Condrey to post the night defenses. MSgt. Manual A. (Joe) Collaso, The Airman photographer, and I were riding up front with Condrey. There was very little sound in the back.

Earlier, at the kennels, the airmen who make up the base's first line of defense had talked, laughed, traded jibes, and shop talk like any



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**They patrol the perimeters.
They have four eyes and four ears.
They can smell the enemy.
That's why they work the night beat.
A dog team at Tan Son Nhut is silhouetted against a darkening sky. (Photo by MSgt. Manual A. Collaso.)**

other group of young men getting ready for a night of work. Except that there was an almost unnoticed nervousness. Not in their voices, but in the studied casualness which they seemed to have. Or maybe I was just nervous for them, anticipating the long night ahead for each.

Joe, who has shot pictures in tough places around the world for 26 years, was doing what he always does — getting close to his subjects. He stuck his cameras in hostile faces filled with

long, sharp teeth and ignored the barking and straining of heavy leashes as he looked for just the right angle.

"We should put him in a helmet and strap a dog to him," one of the men joked, "Yeah, he could blind 'Charlie' (the Viet Cong) with flash bulbs," another added.

The security policemen reported for duty about three hours before going on perimeter patrol. They looked after their dogs, checking a scratch here or a sore there, and conferred with

TSgt. Scotty Linney (NCOIC of the Kennels) about such items as collars, special diets, weapons, and so on, or otherwise passed the time as the sun headed west.

It was almost completely dark as we stopped to unload each man and his dog in the area which they would patrol that night. (The posting is done at varying times from day to day to prevent the enemy from taking advantage of an established pattern.) At each stop, Joe jumped out to get a few pictures. His flash bulbs were triggering radio queries from other perimeter defensive positions, which were manned around the clock on a shift basis. Sergeant Condrey used his radio to clear the way for us.

The Night Has a Thousand Eyes

We asked these men, point-blank, about any fears.

"No, I don't think I'm ever nervous or secretly afraid," a young airman told me. I stood on his other side — away from the dog, even though the man had not yet slipped the muzzle from his partner.

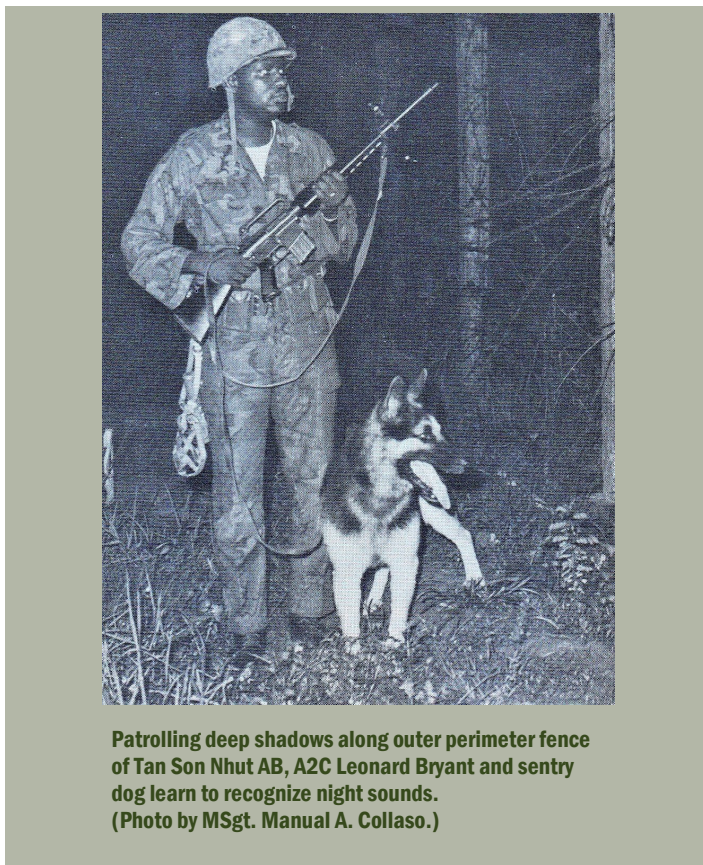
"I'm wide awake. Alert would be a better word, I guess. I get a few butterflies, sometimes. But if the day ever comes when I have to fight myself to walk

around out here, that's the day I'll ask for another job. I'd owe every man on this base that much."

"But to be honest about it, every one of the men I've worked with out here was ready for this job before he ever took it on. We've all had experience. Mostly at Stateside bases, yes. But you walk the night with a dog anywhere for a year or so, and you've got the feel for this duty."

His dog sat quietly, looking into the night. And the night was beautiful, starry. But deadly. We moved on in the truck, across an aircraft parking ramp where maintenance men worked on C-130s and C-123s, readying them for hundreds of missions. Past construction areas, where a new runway was planned. Past lone, dark men who sat silently in bunkers, patting their long weapons, sniffing the night, and counting the stars.

A1C Leon Senecal clambered over the tailgate, then lifted Nemo out of the truck. It was Nemo's first night back on duty after several weeks of convalescence. About a month before our visit to the kennels, Nemo had taken a Viet Cong rifle shot in the muzzle. The wound was healing under the expert care of veterinarian Dr. Ray Huston, who tends about 175



Patrolling deep shadows along outer perimeter fence of Tan Son Nhut AB, A2C Leonard Bryant and sentry dog learn to recognize night sounds.
(Photo by MSgt. Manual A. Collaso.)

dogs at several bases in South Vietnam.

Nemo had lost one eye to the VC bullet. His handler, A2C Robert A. Throneburg, had been medically evacuated to Japan to recover from wounds he had suffered in the same VC attack on the night of December 4, 1966.

Leon Senecal took his place. At first, he just talked to Nemo through the bars of his cage. And fed him his three pounds of ration each day, plus a little extra which Doc Houston prescribed to help the dog recoup the weight he had lost. Gradually, Nemo accepted Senecal,

who soon had him out and moving around on a leash, getting the strength and resiliency back in those canine muscles. Now they were going to work.

Their patrol area was in the boondocks. It was the same area where the Viet Cong had begun their December 4th infiltration to set up mortars. The elephant grass had been higher than a man's head then. Men of the 377th Security Police Squadron had since cut it down. Three of their members had died to stem the assault that night. Twelve other young men had been wounded. Three dogs had

given their lives, too. Three Silver Stars had been awarded, and 13 Bronze Stars with "V" device for valor. Twenty-eight Viet Cong were killed, and four captured.

One of the men we had dropped off earlier, A2C Leroy Marsh, and his dog, King, had been in the forefront of the VC attack. Marsh had turned in one of the early alarms to the Central Security Control (CSC). The alarms of Marsh and other perimeter guards had triggered instant action, for the man/dog teams are not alone, even though they are on the outermost limits of the base.

The Ready Reserves

The night security shift for Tan Son Nhut is a strong force of security policemen and sentry dogs. This force is backed up by alert teams armed with M-16 rifles, machine guns, mobile communications equipment, grenade launchers, flares, and other items. These teams are mobile and fast, and they can respond quickly to reinforce any sector.

Central Security Control is the hub of all security operations, and the night duty force at CSC includes the duty officer, a map plotter, and a communicator.

If a dog team is "alerted" by the dog's keen senses, the handler first uses his portable two-way radio set to

inform CSC, then moves in to investigate. The dog leads the way. If the handler makes a positive identification of a hostile unit, he informs CSC. The security alert teams are immediately called into action and sent into the sector to assist the handler and his dog.

During a major attempt by the enemy to infiltrate the base defenses, CSC can commit the entire security police force. In addition, the US Army has standby forces committed to assist the 377th Security Police Squadron during a major attack on Tan Son Nhut Air Base. And since our visit, Tan Son Nhut Air Base has gained a hardened Joint Defense Operations Center, which is manned 24 hours a day to ensure coordination of all friendly defensive forces, US and Vietnamese, both on and off base.

Included in the night force are security policemen who patrol the flight line and occupy strategically located defensive bunkers. These, too, are lonely beats — jobs that call for a special kind of adaptability.

The Quiet Americans

The dog handler knows the backup forces, which are his, at a moment's notice if he should need them. But he also knows that for the force to be alerted, he must get word to them. For that reason, when the dog



Air Force security policemen and their sentry dogs pass in review during rare formation photographed at busy Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam.

(Photo by MSgt. Manual A. Collaso.)

alerts, he radios the CSC before moving into the night world to investigate. And if forced to release his dog, he knows that there's a very good chance his animal might be killed.

If his flares detect hostiles, the handler's first responsibility is to relay the important information — number and location of enemy forces — to the CSC. Then he grabs a piece of earth and starts slugging it out with his weapons, knowing that alert teams will be with him in a very short time. And if necessary, armed helicopters and AC-47s with miniguns and flares will be overhead within minutes. It's those minutes that can age a man who faces attack.

Tan Son Nhut security policemen successfully turned back two major assaults within an 11-month period. There are some young men

who breached the gap early in the fight until dawn's first light. Several others died buying time for backup defenders. The youngsters who fought through the night of December 4, 1966, were years older by the time the seven-hour battle ended.

These are the young old-timers who protect our airmen and aircraft throughout Vietnam at every base. By day, they dream young men's dreams and care for their animal partners, for without his dog, the man is only half a team.

These are the teams we have going for us at our Vietnam bases—young men who are experienced and well trained; and some of the most intelligent, superbly trained dogs in the history of warfare. They work the night beat. So other men can rest easy.

Somebody has to do it.

Guardians of Freedom Memorial Dedication

by David Adams

Chilly air and overcast skies did not deter 300 citizens of Herkimer County, NY, from gathering on October 14th to dedicate the Guardians of Freedom Memorial, a memorial to military and first responder working dogs and their handlers. This dedication culminated eight years of a passionate effort of Herkimer County Legislator John Brezinski.

Mr. Brezinski, an Army veteran with active service in the 107th MP Company from 1964 to 1967, needed to ensure that what he affectionately refers to as the "four-legged soldiers" and their two-legged partners were honored and never forgotten. He formed a committee and a 501c3 Not-For-Profit, Guardians of Freedom Memorial Inc. He became its chairman, and his untiring force for fundraising brought a sculpture of a military working dog and its handler from a desire to reality.

John searched for a photo of a dog and handler to be used as a model, looking through a stack of pictures. An image of a Marine in full combat gear and his MWD partner in Iraq caught John's eye. When he learned the pictured Sgt Adam Cann was the first MWD handler killed in action since Vietnam, he knew he had found the most appropriate K9 team for the memorial.

Sgt. Cann, a native of Davie, FL, was attached to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) during Operation Iraqi Freedom. With three months left on his deployment and just a few weeks from his 24th birthday, he and Bruno provided security at a police recruiting station in Ramadi, Iraq. Bruno, an explosive detection dog, alerted on an individual approaching the crowd. Tragically, the individual activated his explosive vest before security forces could neutralize him. Sgt Cann, realizing what was about to happen, threw himself between the bomber and his fellow troops. His actions saved many lives, as well as Bruno's, resulting in the posthumous awarding of the Bronze Star with Valor and Purple Heart for his selfless action.

John Brezinski and the Guardians of Freedom Memorial Committee spent eight years fundraising to bring Phase I, the placement of the bronze memorial at the Herkimer, NY, access point to the New York Thruway, to fruition. The citizens of Herkimer County raised \$90,000, and LF Power contributed an additional \$70,000, ensuring the memorial would become a reality. With sufficient funds raised, the committee commissioned Utah sculptor Lena Toritch to



bring the sculpture of Sgt Cann and Bruno to life.

Using the photo John liked so well, Ms. Toritch sculpted Adam and Bruno's life-size likeness with amazing detail. Right down to Adam's fingernails.

In keeping with the desire for the memorial's purpose, to ensure that future generations do not forget the contribution of MWDs, John Brezinski made sure youth were a vital part of the dedication. "It's by doing that youth learn and don't forget," he said. Ninety students of the Central Valley Academy's High School ROTC and Choir contributed actively to the dedication.

Adam Cann's parents, Leigh and Carol, flew up from Davie, FL, for the dedication and unveiled the monument and were presented with a scale model of the life-size sculpture.

Work on Phase II of the memorial is underway. The joint project of the residents of both Herkimer and Oneida Counties will place a black granite wall behind the statue of Adam and Bruno that will have the etched names of dogs on the east-facing side of the wall and pictures of MWDs etched on the west side. Dedication, depending on fundraising, is anticipated in 2024.

Raise the Woof

BUCKLEY SPACE FORCE BASE, Colo. – Teamwork is defined as the work and activity of many persons who individually contribute toward the efficiency of the whole, but teamwork isn't defined by the number of "persons," it's defined by the number of individuals: whether they be human or any other species.

Bonds are formed when two or more individuals are working side by side, every day to accomplish a goal. These bonds can last a lifetime and the goals for Senior Airman Josue GonzalezRubio, a Military Working Dog handler from the 460th Security Forces Squadron, and Military Working Dog Sego, can go far beyond the mission.

"The process of getting assigned an MWD is looking and matching personalities that will bind perfectly with both dog and handler," said GonzalezRubio.

With any new relationship, there could be a rocky start. There is a long process that comes with starting a new working relationship. The more challenges and struggles the pair faced head-on,

the more unbreakable their bond became.

"As a new handler, I was faced with the challenge of adapting to a new dog, getting used to his work pace, and getting to know the MWD all around," said GonzalezRubio. "I had a difficult time at first, but with a lot of training and time management dedicated to Sego, we overcame and eliminated our issues and became validated and certified together."

One of the main challenges that a dog handler faces is getting to know the personality behind the dog and learning to adapt to that to perform their duties. There's a long learning period for both the dog and the handler, where they both have to trust and rely on each other to showcase their compatibilities. This is crucial to protecting the Department of Defense and its assets.

"The training scenarios we go through include explosive detection training, intruder detection training, and controlled aggression training," GonzalezRubio explained.

MWD are extremely hard workers, and Sego is no exception to that. He

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Andrew Garavito



Senior Airman Josue GonzalezRubio, 460th Security Forces Squadron Military Working Dog handler and MWD Sego, prepare to begin their routine confidence building training on Buckley Space Force Base. The process of getting assigned an MWD is looking and matching personalities that will bind perfectly with both dog and handler.



460th Security Forces Squadron Military Working Dog, awaits commands from his MWD handler before leaving the kennels. Military Working Dogs and their handlers are trained at the 341st Training Squadron, Joint Base San Antonio, Texas.

works hard to please his handler and GonzalezRubio works hard to please him. GonzalezRubio explained how Sego is a sweetheart but can switch up instantly to perform his duties.

They continue to work together every day, whether it's performing obedience obstacle courses, grooming, or arming up and performing simulated training situations.

GonzalezRubio said he always wanted to be a dog handler, and thanks to his and Sego's effort, hard work, and determination, that dream will continue to flourish.

"The relationship between MWD Sego and myself is something best friends share," said GonzalezRubio. "He is family."



Senior Airman Josue GonzalezRubio and MWD Sego, run through the kennel's tunnel at the obstacle course. The dogs are immediately rewarded with their toys after completing a task correctly.

Great Balls of Year-End-Fire

As the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum grows, we are the go-to place to discover, curate, preserve, and exhibit world-class displays of America's military working dog history now and into the future.

Our goals for 2024 include funding a mobile military K9 museum to take the show on the road – stopping by bases, local fairs, and places of business and worship to share America's K9 story. We can only achieve this with your financial help.

With the holiday season upon us, we know you're juggling a lot of balls in the air right now. Please take a moment between now and the end of the year to stop by our website and make a tax-deductible donation.

You can follow the QR code in the image or jump over to our website at <https://mwdheritagemuseum.org/donate/> to donate today and get one thing off your busy "to-do list".

Thank you for your time and your support.

Open Donation

Does year-end have you juggling lots of balls in the air?

A stylized illustration of a dog in a purple silhouette juggling three balls. The dog is standing on its hind legs, reaching up with its front paws. The balls are also in purple silhouette.A square QR code with a small dog silhouette in the center, set against a circular purple background.

Consider making your annual year-end donation early to enjoy tax benefits for 2023.

mwdheritagemuseum.org/donate/

A small circular logo in the bottom right corner featuring a silhouette of a dog and the text "MWD HERITAGE MUSEUM".

First Trip to LZ Sally

By John Carter

One of my most memorable recollections of Vietnam occurred on that first trip up north. The Army scheduled our flight from Bien Hoa, a US Air Force base northeast of Saigon, for late afternoon - around 4 or 5 PM. The Air Force provided a C-130 cargo plane to fly us to Phu Bai, a civilian and military airport serving Hue, a city 10 miles north of the airfield. We received word of our flight's delay. With our equipment and dogs on the ramp ready to load onto the aircraft, we had to wait by the plane while they fixed the problem. I remember we sought refuge from the blistering hot sun under the shadow of the plane's wing.

Eventually, the pilot came over to our group and, in an apologetic tone, informed us that, in addition to our unit, he would be transporting the body of a young Vietnamese soldier to Hue for burial. We loaded our equipment and the dogs on board and went to the front of the aircraft to prepare for departure.

A C-130 is a four-engine turboprop aircraft that served as a cargo workhorse in Vietnam. The drop-down canvas benches on either side of the plane's fuselage provided seating. When we got to the front, we found the soldier's coffin centered between us - so we sat on the canvas benches looking at this coffin for our entire flight to Phu Bai. An attractive young Vietnamese woman,

perhaps the deceased soldier's widow, accompanied the body. She looked to be about our age. We had become the reluctant guests at a wake, a grim omen on our first trip up to the scene of the action!

The flight to Phu Bai took about an hour and forty-five minutes. We sat in stunned silence, staring at the coffin and glancing at the stoic face of this young lady. Would this be the precursor of our fates? We could not effectively communicate with her, but her bewildered expression and eyes red-rimmed with tears translated the universal language of grief. After the plane took off, we helped her light a small votive candle and place a vase containing burning incense sticks, customary at Buddhist funerals, on the coffin for the remainder of the flight.

We were all relieved to land at Phu Bai. It was dusk when we arrived, and we quickly began unloading the aircraft for our trip to LZ Sally (Landing Zone Sally.) We had everything offloaded by 7 or 8 PM and were eager to go. However, the military police informed us that a curfew remained in effect, prohibiting vehicular travel at night. We had to wait until the following morning to continue our journey. The Army had set up an area not far from the aircraft ramp as an overnight holding area for new replacements in



Photo of John Carter at LZ Sally.
Courtesy of John Carter.

transit. It was a small camp set up with open-sided tents and cots where we could spend the night. I remember it as a sweltering and humid evening with plenty of biting mosquitoes to make our stay all the more uncomfortable.

I was having a hard time sleeping, and at some point during the night, I got up and walked over to the aircraft ramp. I then noticed the flicker of a flame not too far from where we unloaded the plane. It was the votive candle on top of the Vietnamese soldier's coffin. Someone had unloaded the casket and put it on sawhorses for the night. The young widow, seated in a lawn chair beside the coffin, kept a solitary vigil for the entire night. I just stared at that scene for a few moments and then went back to the tent to try and get some sleep before the first light of the new day. The

next morning, when I had a chance to look again, the young lady and the coffin were gone.

After breakfast of C-rations, we were ready to continue our trip northward. During the night, the operations center arranged to have us join an armed convoy going to LZ Sally in the morning. With our platoon's deuce-and-a-half fueled, we quickly loaded the scout dogs and combat equipment onto the truck and headed toward Hue and on to Sally.

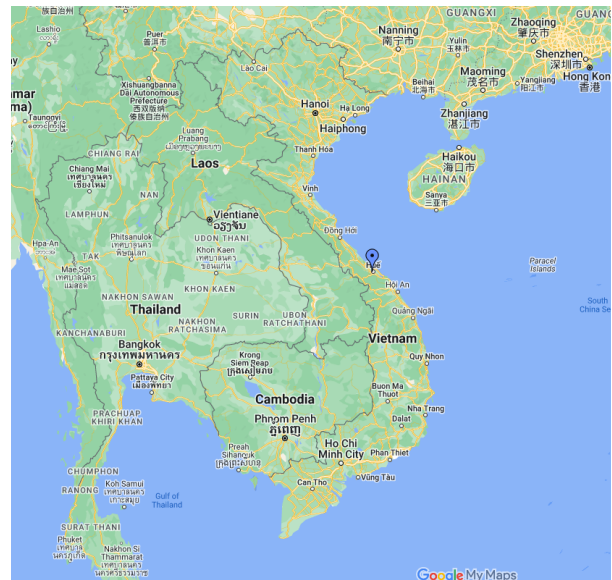
LZ Sally was the headquarters for the Second Brigade, 101st Airborne Division combat operations. This base camp served as the launch pad for all Air-mobile (i.e., helicopter assault) operations in the region. Their primary missions were to guard the northern entry point into the city of Hue and

interdict the North Vietnamese supply routes (known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail) along the Laotian border and in the nearby A Shau Valley. I was curious to see the city of Hue, the scene of heavy fighting just three months earlier during the Tet Offensive of February 1968. While training at Fort Benning, I remembered watching the TV footage of the fierce fighting between the Marines and the North Vietnamese in the city and the battle for the Citadel - the ancient imperial fortress along the riverbank.

As we drove into the city, I had a sense of déjà vu as I recognized many of the sites I had seen on television. The town received heavy damage during the Tet Offensive, and little cleanup or repair occurred between February and June 1968. The only way to cross the Perfume River (the river ran through the city's center, dividing the town into a northern and southern district) was by a pontoon bridge that the

Army engineers constructed after the retreating North Vietnamese troops had blown up the city's main bridge. After we crossed the river, we drove past the battle-scarred Citadel and pressed onward to our destination.

North of the city, the main road narrowed to a two-lane wide dirt path. The potholes caused a bumpy journey, and you couldn't drive more than 20 mph most of the way. (Eventually, the Seabees widened and paved the road, making travel between LZ Sally, the city of Hue, and the airfield at Phu Bai an easier trip). Small villages of raised huts made with scrap wood, cardboard, and tin roofing dotted both sides of the road. The village's children ran to the side of the road as our convoy passed, curious to see our boisterous German shepherds. The parents were nearby, busily tending to the rice paddies with their water buffalos.



The city of Hue in South Vietnam was located in I Corps and is marked on this map by a blue pin.
Map by Google Maps.

I remember the morning as crystal clear, with a blistering sun shining in a cloudless sky. I was intrigued by the passing scenery and noticed a big red cloud rising in the distance. I asked our guide, who sat beside me, "What is that large cloud?" He responded, "Welcome to LZ Sally." As we drove up the dirt path to

a security gate - I could easily see the reason for this mysterious cloud. Sally was one giant red clay sand pit in the middle of nowhere. The coming and going of Huey helicopters combined with the aviation maintenance units' hovering choppers created one huge dust bowl.

This article provided by a guest author. What's 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. Sharing is exactly how we received this piece from John Carter.

We Want to Hear Yours!

Contact us at: newsletter@mwdhm.org

US Military Working Dog Teams Monument Commemoration

by Christopher Dion

On Friday, October 27, the K9 community came together for the 10-year celebration and re-dedication of the one-of-a-kind National Monument. Leading up to this event, Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) and all of Texas had experienced one of the harshest and longest-lasting droughts in years. After hitting a record 74 days of continuous triple-digit temperatures and little to no rain, there was little worry of foul weather for this historic alfresco event and venue.

Then, during the week of October 23rd, the skies opened up, and the weather forecast continued with rain through Friday's ceremonies. With a lot of faith, the event committee, which consisted of members of the 502 ABW, 37 TRW, US Army Veterinary Corps, 341 TRS, 343 TRS, USAF SF Center, 802 SFS, and the TSA Canine Training Center, led by the Airmen Heritage Foundation, pressed forward with outdoor plans to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of this national treasure.

Thankfully, their faith and commitment paid off as the rains held off and the sun blessed this special day when handlers, both old and new, descended on JBSA-Lackland along with numerous canine organizations. They came to reunite, to share stories, to make new friends and new connections. Most of all, they came to celebrate their monument, a masterpiece

in bronze, dedicated to the dogs, handlers, and veterinarians who make up or support the DoD Military Working Dog Program.

This dream began with handlers as far back as WWII. It took the author of a 2001 Parade Magazine article to bring this aspiration to the right man who would commit to making it a reality. MSG John Burnam, US Army Retired, a highly-decorated Vietnam Veteran and 44th IPSD Scout Dog Handler was the warrior to take up the fight.

John assembled a team of fellow combatants and former handlers over the twelve years it took to secure Congressional support, raise private funds, and secure the most appropriate space possible. Over these years, his team consisted of Jim Frost, US Army Vietnam Commander of 981st MP Company Sentry Dog Platoon, Larry Chilcoat and Richard Deggans, USAF Vietnam Veteran Sentry Dog Handlers, and Kristie Dober, US Army MWD Handler. This team raised the \$2.1 million necessary to bring the dream to reality.

However, it would take an extraordinary artist to take the committee's vision and turn it into a 10-foot warrior flanked by four faithful historic dog breeds. A lone metal handler sitting in the corner takes a treasured break from war to bond with his furry battle buddy. The artist hand-selected by the



A multi service color guard posts the colors at the U.S. Military Working Dog Teams Monument 10th Anniversary Commemoration, Oct. 27, 2023, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.
(US Air Force photo by Thomas Coney)

committee to do this was Ms. Paula Slater, along with Ahern Construction.

On Friday, October 28, 2013, the dream was unveiled in a spectacular event as this National Treasure was gifted to the Commander of JBSA, Brigadier Robert LaBruta; he accepted it on behalf of the Department of Defense, the USAF, every handler, K9, and Veterinarian past, present, and future, and the American people.

For the last ten years, this vigilant, chiseled handler has watched over every graduation conducted on the main parade field, witnessed numerous retirements, reenlistments, memorials, and ceremonies, impressed and inspired distinguished visitors and VIPs, while welcomed K9 classmates who have come to him for a final photo before beginning the sacred calling

of "handler." People who otherwise would never know about this unique K9 family are introduced to it by this solid bronze ambassador, and few go away without wanting to learn more.

If you have yet to stop by and visit, we encourage you to do so. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the Airman Heritage Foundation, which has the sole responsibility for the care, maintenance, and promotion of the monument. You can find them at <https://myairmanmuseum.org/> or [click here](#) for more information.

Congratulations to everyone involved in creating and bringing this special celebration to the K9 community. Military Working Dog Heritage Museum and Handler Center would like to honor and recognize a fantastic former handler and volunteer, Christopher Dion, for his dedication and hard work ensuring this event was a brilliant success.

Rusty of South San Francisco And The San Carlos K9 Camp

by Dixie Whitman

Rusty stood studying the other inmates who paced in their nearby cells in the same formidable block-house. The echoes of the frequent footsteps mixed with the continuous clanking of chains robbed him of his serenity. In addition to the constant cacophony of noise, he felt trapped in the confined space. Droplets of saliva fell from his tightly drawn mouth as he paced back and forth; he remained in constant motion, continuously worried about his tribe back home until something inside him snapped. His mission to love and protect his family took over all his being— he had to get out—an impromptu jailbreak.

The road to freedom is paved with courage and determination. Rusty had both. He squirmed through the jaws of the prison gate, careful to avoid being caught by shackling chains or the eyes of the guards. He darted into the inky dark San Francisco Bay night.

This prison wasn't Alcatraz, and this wasn't Rusty's first dash toward freedom, but it would become his final bid for salvation. Rusty, a shepherd-type dog donated to Dogs for Defense, raced back to his South San Francisco home and the family he loved for the fourth time in four nights. Rusty's story is unusual; this is how we imagine it happened because nobody documented his Houdini-like escapades.

With the homing instinct of a spawning salmon, Rusty could have been a fantastic messenger dog. Still, the following day, his previous owner called the San Carlos War Dog Training Center commanding officer, Col. F. W. Koester, and stated the obvious, "I don't think Rusty wants to be in the Army." The Colonel agreed, and Rusty received his official discharge papers and moved back to his family in South San Francisco, about an hour's full-on dog-run north of the camp.

About half of the 4,500 dogs coming through the War Dog Center in San Carlos, the US Army Quartermaster Corps' western-most dog training center, completed their training and went on to serve alongside their military partners, many of whom were sand pounders, Coastguardsmen patrolling the isolated beaches at night. The other half, the drop-outs, were returned home by the Army, but only tenacious Rusty made the trek himself.

The San Francisco area hummed with life during WWII. On average, San Francisco Bay shipping companies fabricated one warship per day. Shipyards berthed firmly on the waters' edge near Sausalito as more and more workers arrived. The new laborers reshaped San Francisco Bay's socio-economic, political, and physical landscape.



Rusty on his way home to his family in South San Francisco.
Illustration by Adobe Firefly.

Other changes included the creation of a new Army Remount Center and Depot. The San Carlos War Dog Training Center took root on the 177+ acre H & H Ranch, a couple of miles further into the hills from downtown San Carlos. One of five War Dog Training Camps run by the Quartermaster Corps during WWII, the construction finished at San Carlos in December 1942. However, the need for trained dogs proved so urgent that training started in October of that year with handlers temporarily housed in a nearby fire station.

The dog training center at San Carlos taught War Dog skills in the following categories: guards, scouts, sentries, messengers, mine detection, and sled and pack dogs. Depending on

the specialty, the training classes required between eight to eleven weeks, first basic training and then moving on to the specialized activities. Training grounds included land that belonged to utility companies, local ranches, and the camp. San Carlos could support 550 military members and up to 1,200 dogs simultaneously. The military also used it as a staging area for dogs before they shipped off to the Pacific theaters of operation.

Because of its location north of Hollywood, among the dogs receiving training here were the dogs of famous movie stars. In his article "Some Famous Dogs Get Training at San Carlos," UPI staff correspondent Nick Bourne made note of the following:

"Greer Garson's poodle, "Cliquot," which they had to weigh wet so he would be heavy enough to pass his physical, was getting used to gunfire and becoming a real soldiering dog today.

"Mary Pickford's Belgian shepherd, "Silver," has already learned to keep his eyes straight ahead when passing a military post, and Rudy Vallee's Doberman, "King," never starts looking for a red-haired female dog when the trainer calls "Time for chow!"¹

As WWII came to a close, the facility yielded to outside pressures and closed opera-

tions in October 1944. Over the following years, it was reborn as a suburban landscape.

After the WWII hostilities ended, the repatriated San Carlos war dogs received detraining to return to their families. Some of this unique training likely took place at the Fort Robinson, Nebraska training center, closing a pivotal chapter in the history of America's military working dogs.

¹"Some Famous Dogs Get Training at San Carlos," UPI staff correspondent, Nick Bourne.



As a part of the specialized War Dog training program given by the Remount Service of the Quartermaster Corps, United States Army, men and dogs were taught to creep and crawl together so as to take full advantage of cover and concealment under enemy fire or observation. War Dog Reception and Training Center, San Carlos, California. Photo: Courtesy of NARA



At its peak there were 550 troops, 15 civilian contractors and up to 1,200 dogs at the center. By the end of the war 4,500 dogs and 2,500 men were trained at San Carlos, California. Photo: Courtesy NARA



The War Dog is constantly with his master in the field, eating the same food, sleeping with him at night, and traveling with him wherever he goes. This welds a surer bond of affection, mutual understanding and trust, which is highly necessary in a successful and efficient War Dog handler team. War Dog Reception and Training Center, San Carlos, California. Photo: NARA

Thank you, Joseph Gajewski, for your generous donation

In Memory of Michael Giannini

A good friend KIA in Vietnam.



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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

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Recycle, please.

Share your story.

Share your vision.

Share your voice.

Share your copy of
our newsletter.

Memorial Hunt with Trooper and Scout



This new sculpture, dedicated
in Herkimer, NY on October
14, 2023, honors Marine
Handler Adam Cann and his
partner, Bruno.

To view a video of the dedica-
tion, Courtesy of Herkimer
College and Vito Valenzi, Pro-
ducer, follow this link:

[Herkimer College Video.](#)



Historic Pooch Pic of the Month



CANINE HERO RETURNS TO STATES

Nemo, a 95-pound Air Force sentry dog who served in Vietnam, is held by A2C Melvin W. Bryant of Port St. Joe, Fla., who is accompanying the dog back to the United States. The 5-year-old K9 is returning to Lackland AFB, Tex., for retirement. (Air Force Photo)