



The Paw Print

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



Volume 4 Issue 1

January 2024

Watch this space for
event updates:

May 9–12, 2024
Florida Vietnam and All
Veterans Reunion
Wickham Park,
Melbourne, Florida

August 26–29, 2024
HITS K9 Training
Seminar
Hyatt Regency
New Orleans, Louisiana

Looking Into the Future with Military Working Dog Heritage Museum



Inside this issue:

From The Vice President's Desk 2

Do Stuff That Matters 3

Alex Marquissee and Gage 4

Up On Monkey Mountain 5

Ero: Part I 7

Favorite Articles and Photos of 2023 9

Recap of 2023 Events 11

Bus Trip 13

Gage, one of our favorite new friends from 2023, is celebrated on the front cover of our first 2024 issue. We're including a small profile on Gage and his handler inside this issue. One of our goals for 2024 is to gather more stories and photos of your dogs to enhance the digital museum.

As the museum moves into the new year, goal-setting is one of the pushes the team will make. Setting goals guides focus and informs decisions; it helps us sustain momentum. In the end, we can't manage what we don't measure, and we can't improve upon something that isn't adequately managed.

Goal setting invariably leads to improved success and performance. It

motivates us but can also enhance our personal and professional success. With that in mind, we wanted to share some of our goals for 2024 and ask for your help in achieving them:

We want to add 50 new interviews to our inventory. Several volunteers are working on this front, and we'd love to add your interview to our list. Ask us how at info@mwdhm.org.

We want to create a digital online memorial with a gravesite directory for KIA personnel.

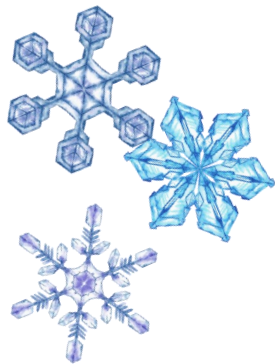
And we'll reach out to more organizations to get our voices heard. Our goal will be a 20% increase in presentations for 2024.

Won't you join us? Reach out to us at:

info@mwdhm.org to get started today.



Lane Hagerdorn
Vice President



From the Vice President's Desk

Happy New Year!

I've had the honor of writing the opening "Letter from the Desk of" for two consecutive years now, and it is with great pleasure that I get to share some exciting new enhancements to your newsletter this year. But before that, a Thank You.

On behalf of Albert Johnson, President, and the entire board, I'd like to thank you for an incredible 2023!

Whew – we did a lot! Our volunteers gave time, talent, and energy, our sponsors supported with donations in kind, and you, our audience, contributed with your comments, likes, and purchases at the Museum's Online Store at the Museum's website, mwdheritagemuseum.org. Check out some moments captured in both story and picture throughout this month's newsletter!

Everything we do at the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum is intentional, in honor of the dogs and teams who served, and weighed in by the Museum's board and often volunteers.

Take our new color scheme and look of your

newsletter. The previous olive drab was a nod to the uniforms many of us wore or were around in the years of service. However, as we considered the true service of our Military Working Dog teams, it became apparent that we needed to honor their service on land, in the air, and on the sea. The blue color scheme recognized that there is no boundary our dog teams won't overcome!

The mission of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum is "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 inspire future generations." We have set out to satisfy this mission by representing the Military Working Dog community at events, collecting stories from those who lived as dog handlers, trainers, or dog care/kennel staff, and the collecting of historical artifacts.

You will find some of those historical artifacts in the newsletter – like this month's example on page 14. We showcase several platoon tabs the

Museum came into possession of, and an image of them from the National Archives. History is fun – but living history is enthralling!

Snuck in the middle of the plans to satisfy the mission is the collection of stories. We spoke about our goal of 50 new interviews on the opening page. These interviews are the collection of your story, alive today and ready to be shared for generations to come. Please take advantage of your chance to give a voice to the memories already being handed down from generation to generation. When the interviews are all housed with the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum, they will weave a tapestry of infinite history for men and women to enjoy for years to come.

I began this letter with a Thank You for 2023, and I'd like to end it with a pre-emptive Thank You for 2024. With your support, contributions, advice, and stories, we are poised to share the world of Military Working Dog teams and their history with the largest audience yet!

K9 Leads the Way!

Lane Hagerdorn

Life Is Short, Do Stuff That Matters: Volunteer

by Dixie Whitman

Want to have more meaning in your life? Do you want to do something satisfying and consequential for our K9 community? Then, become a Military Working Dog Heritage and Handler Center volunteer!

We seek volunteers from every era of service and every branch. And every K9 demographic: Malinois handlers, Shepherd handlers, Lab Handlers, and the outliers. Whether you handled for a short time or were a veterinarian, a vet tech, or a civilian supporter, we invite you to join us on our extraordinary journey to honor and share the history of America's military working dog teams.

Becoming a museum volunteer is like hanging out with a dynamic and motivated group of friends while you simultaneously and significantly impact future generations. Volunteering doesn't get much better than that.

The only qualification required is your desire to help us work towards our vision of a world-class museum. You don't need to know a secret handshake; you don't even need a background in dog training. All you need to do is raise your hand

(electronically) and say, "I'm interested." One of our Volunteer Management Members will get back to you as soon as possible to start you on your journey.

What opportunities are available? Everything is on the table. We do our best to match the volunteer to a mission-critical need that ignites their passion. For some people, that might be writing or editing the newsletter; it's artistic creation for others. For still others, it's deep-diving into the depths of our K9 history and reeling in new and exciting morsels to share with the community.

Every military branch has painted K9 history with its proud hues: green, blue, gold, scarlet, and Coast Guard red. And, of course, the dogs that served come in all shades, sizes, and ear sets: black and tan, chocolate, yellow, pointy-eared, down-eared, and all manner of variations in between. Our firm belief is that every dog, every handler, and every individual connected is a unique and vital fiber in the massive tapestry of American K9 history.



Volunteers are the lifeblood of any non-profit. Above: Here are some of our volunteers at a fundraising event in 2022: Albert Johnson, Michael Hurder, Chris Willingham, Owner of Semper Fi Bar and Grill, and John Homa.

Below: Team volunteers Chris Willingham, Albert Johnson, Lane Hagerdorn, and Viridiana Lavallo with active duty handlers at the Fort Benning event in 2022.



If you'd like to be part of our mighty museum movement, we'd love to have you connect with us for additional information.

You can reach one of our volunteer management team through several channels. Email Lauren Kish or Dixie Whitman at:

volunteer@mwdhm.org

As always, our President, Albert Johnson, is also available to talk with you regarding volunteer opportunities at: 865-507-8903 or via his email at:

President@mwdhm.org.

We look forward to talking with you soon.

Alex Marquissee and Gage: A Path of Purpose

by Dixie Whitman

Growing up in Wisconsin, Alex Marquissee frequently moved between the chill of the upper Midwest and the heat of Florida. His grandfathers both served in the USMC, influencing his decision to join the Marine Corps. Alex served as a dog handler, trainer, and kennelmaster.

After Marine Boot Camp at Parris Island, Alex attended Marine Combat School and then Fort Leonard Wood's School for Military Police. Next, he moved to Okinawa, Japan, for the entire duration of his first enlistment with 3MEF, and, with a personal history of owning dogs, he sought and accepted the opportunity for K9 school.

His hard work and talent led to the chance to go back to Lackland to pick up an SSD (Specialized Search Dog.) That SSD, a gregarious yellow Labrador named Gage, became Alex's partner for the next four-and-a-half years. Among their many missions, this team did two floats with the 31st MEU (Marine Expeditionary Unit.) MEUs serve as a rapid reaction force, ready to tackle any situation, whether it be disaster aid or a combat mission. "Have crisis? Will travel."

Gage struggled with basic obedience. His "heel" was almost non-existent. His excellent nose kept Alex safe -"as far as detection, "Gage was the man." Alex

says that when detecting odor, Gage was in the zone, but outside of intense work, he is the laziest dog ever. His "off switch" works well.

Working with amphibious assault training offered its unique set of challenges. Gage grew wary of the constant waves slapping him in the face before they hit the beaches. His job required the team to be the first on the seashore to search for dangers, so Alex carefully trained and desensitized Gage. Ultimately, when they served with Operation Talisman Sabre, a massive bilateral military exercise with Australia, Gage settled down and worked exceptionally well.

Leaving the military in 2022, Alex feels that what he's learned in his civilian K9 job could inform some of what the military does. He understands that getting stuck in the old ways of black or white is missing the large middle portion, where sometimes simple ways solve simple problems faster and easier.

His message to Gage is simple, "Thanks for always being by my side and being the light in the dark. Your positive energy kept me going on the bad days and made me better on the good days. You're the best dog I could have asked for, and I'm glad we can spend retirement together."



Marquissee and his SSD partner, Gage, pose for a photo.
Photo courtesy: Alex Marquissee



Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Alex Marquissee and his dog, Gage, fast-rope from an MV-22B Osprey onto an aircraft elevator aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard. Marquissee and Gage were attached to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.
Navy photo by Seaman Apprentice Jesse Marquez Magallanes

Up On Monkey Mountain

by Dixie Whitman

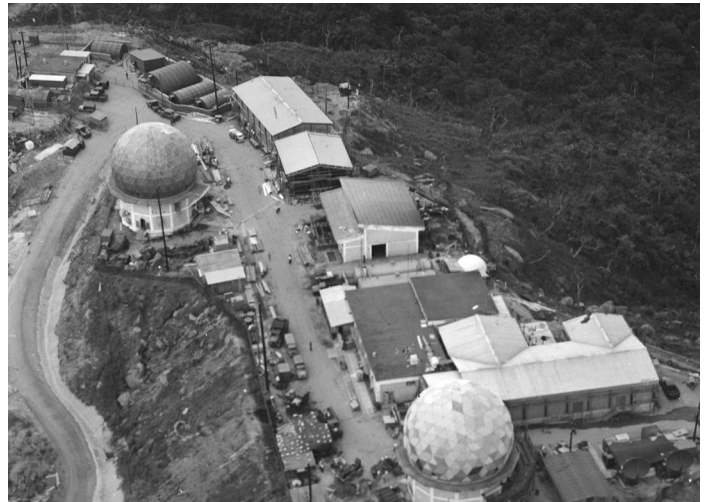
The Thousand-Year Banyan Tree, a tourist draw on Sơn Trà Peninsula, near Da Nang, stands tall above the pattering smoke from the tailpipes of cheap motorbikes and the joyful shrieks of children who visit the site. Years ago, it silently witnessed the history of the Vietnam War years when the American Military installed a USAF and Marine Base atop the peninsula's Sơn Trà mountain, nicknamed Monkey Mountain.

It gained the moniker "Monkey Mountain" due to the massive number of primates native to the area. These included the Rhesus Macaques, the Long-Tailed Macaques, and a species known as "The Queen of the Primates." And these 'queens' aren't just any monkeys. They are the critically endangered, Red-shanked douc langurs. These little furry fashionistas look like they've just swung out of the House of Dior with their colorful pigmentation, luxurious coats, and contrasting textures. Additionally, some GIs reported seeing Rock Apes on Monkey Mountain—think Big-foot— but as in other locations, he has yet to be discovered: perhaps he goes by another name—orangutan.

The Monkey Mountain Base had several missions: air control, radar station, signal site for communications, and signal intelligence (SIGNIT). Also, it became part of the Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) program, allowing licensed HAM radio operators to assist the military with communication. With this level of importance, the area received much attention from a security concern. Initially, the Air Force and Marines provided the security, but beginning in the late 1960s, the US Navy Sentry Dog Section beefed up the protection of Monkey Mountain. Due to the remote location, they traveled to the site for a week's rotation.

Our Board Member and US Navy Coordinator, Al Dodds, has talked about his time on Monkey Mountain on occasion, so we asked him to reach out to other Navy dog handlers for any recollections they might have of the time spent on top of this unique peak. Most K9 handlers reported that a week on Monkey Mountain felt almost like a week of R&R.

Due to the location, it maintained inherent security, and nightly K9 postings didn't happen. In most instances, the K9 team



The Monkey Mountain Facility atop the Sơn Trà Mountain overlooked DaNang Harbor and China Beach. (Image Source: US Air Force Photo.)



The Monkey Mountain Facility activities were protected by Naval and Marine Security and Dog Teams. (Photos above and below, part of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum Collection.)



only led a patrol outside the perimeter if suspicious activity occurred.

Having the opportunity to communicate with family in the States proved hugely popular with the handlers. Active-duty handlers now can't imagine the struggles to contact home during the Vietnam Era. A man could sign up on a list with the HAM radio operators on Monkey Mountain and connect with family and friends via a worldwide network of civilian radio operators. The small size of the detachment on Monkey Mountain allowed some informality—men stationed there found an open mess deck, so they fixed their own food. A small lounge area allowed informal gatherings as one handler remembers strum-

ming his banjo to the country vocals of a couple of other guys.

Twice (1965 and 1968), fighter jets crashed into the side of the mountain. In the first crash, four American military members were KIA. In the second instance, the pilot successfully ejected.

As the Vietnam War ended, the site began closing in 1971, with the USAF SIGINT moving operations to Thailand in March of that year.

Nobody remembers any real security issues arising on Monkey Mountain, except one handler who clearly remembers Monkey Mountain as a slippery slope surrounded by Rock Apes who would throw stones into the compound.

Right: Two Marine Sentries— Cpl. John Hackett and Sarge look down on the sunset over Da Nang, in the Republic of Vietnam. Sarge and Hackett are stationed atop Monkey Mountain near Da Nang, where they guard the perimeter of Marine Aircraft Control Squadron 4. They were attached to the 3rd Military Police Battalion, Force Logistic Command.

Photo: National Archives

USMC photo by Cpl Nick Myers. Via National Archives.



Above: Marine Sergeant R. J. Quellos keeps a tight grasp on his sentry dog as he and Duke run a perimeter check along the rocky terrain atop Monkey Mountain. The pair are members of the Marine Corps' Scout and Sentry Dog Platoon from the 3rd Military Police Battalion near Da Nang. USMC photo by Sgt. Ken Barth. Via National Archives.



Thank you, Rob Schnell, for your generous donation

In Honor of Lucca K458, SSD

K9 Leads the Way!

Ero: Part I

By Curtis Hendel

This article begins a three-part series about Ero, one of Curtis Hendel's partners in South Korea. Part II in February.

I hadn't been in the military for a year yet, and less than nine months since the beginning of my entrance into the world of Military Working Dogs. I've introduced each of my three dogs in previous articles. Still, they fit into this odd educational puzzle I had been experiencing. Not even a year in, I would meet my fourth, four-legged partner and third dog at Osan in less than six months.

Back at Lackland, I took the leash with Valley, a sweet soul who would teach me kindness in a job that could be violent and softness in a world that could be hard. She was my grade school teacher. Old Rex was like a high school teacher, getting me to step up my game when everything we did genuinely mattered to the safety and security of a United States military installation on foreign soil. Rex, with his aged frame, taught me to respect every dog, even the "old dawg" that was past his prime but still had the heart of a lion.

Then there was Thor the Wonder Dog. He was my lifetime leisure coach. He taught me that no matter

how hard I worked and trained or how many days off I spent with him, I couldn't control every aspect of the job. He taught me patience; when you worked that hard and put everything you had into it and saw almost zero results with your squad mates jeering at you, it would be easy for your temper to show its' ugly face. There was no room for that in the program. Thor tested me to my wits' end, but I passed.

When I arrived at Osan in February of 1986, it was to be a perimeter rat. We were the handlers standing the line every night with a dog and a weapon to ensure no intruders could enter the base. We worked with almost all German Shepherds.

The summer of '86 would change that ratio seriously. A shipment of over twenty shiny new from Lackland dogs arrived to freshen up the kennels. My first two partners were a good example of dogs set to 'retire.' Unfortunately, they had done their time and faced a dishonorable fate when removed from active duty. There was no retirement program then, just a disheartening walk to the vet.

I wasn't in the kennels the day the new dogs came in; perimeter rats worked in the dark. I paid little atten-

tion when the young replacements took their places, staked out in the "birdhouses" in the quarantine area. Looking back, I had a mixed batch of emotions. There was the excitement of having a shiny new, young dog and the endless potential that came with it. On the other hand, was the sadness of realizing the coming fate of my first two partners at Osan. There was no retirement ceremony or adoption process. They were "out-processed" with little fanfare and less respect. This practice did not reflect the K9 personnel or the veterinary detachment souls. Instead, it reflected the bean counters in DC that made decisions so far removed that they couldn't possibly empathize with young Military Working Dog Handlers in any way, shape, or form.

The new, four-legged recruits would spend a couple of weeks in quarantine. I still maintained no interest in this yapping group of young dogs. The group's high percentage of Red Dogs helped to lessen my intrigue. I had only been in the field for about five months, but I had become opinionated and, dare I say, a tad bit cocky. Shortly after the new dogs completed their quarantine period, the Kennel Master called me into his office. "Airman Hendel, you have



Courtesy photo from Curtis Hendel showing himself with Ero in the early stages of training—noting Ero's lack of aggression.

worked with two old dogs pretty hard. Tell you what, I am going to give you the first pick of all those new dogs out there. There are some push-button Red Dogs out there that will ensure that you never have to work an extra day for the rest of your tour. Go take a look; I will let you know the good ones." He mentioned several of the new crew of dogs that would need very little work to keep them up to our qualification standards. A Rex, a Laika, and some other yappy little red dogs were there.

When I stepped out of the main building and headed to the quarantine area, I was surprisingly not that enthused when I should have had visions of a great dog in my head. Instead, I thought of my previous dogs and what was to be-

come of them. I was, surprisingly, on autopilot.

As I walked to select my new partner, I had my leash in hand. I realized that I may have been overthinking the coming decision. Of my first three dogs, I had never selected the dog for me; others selected the dog for me. I struggled to figure out what my selection process would look like. I wasn't even looking ahead of my strides to the barking warriors trying to garner my attention. I knew that most were Malinois, the up-and-coming Red Dogs. But I had worked with three German Shepherds and thought a lot of that breed and the individual dogs. Being a lover of the obscure, I noticed no Rottweilers, Bouviers, or Giant Schnauzers. Something along those lines caught my attention.

A bit of swagger entered my gait the closer I got to the new, furry recruits. This was my decision. I had earned it. All those days working on my days off to improve my partners were about to pay off. I got the pick of a litter of brand-spankin' new Patrol Dogs, and there were over twenty of them.

The best-laid plans go to waste; this event would be another excellent example of that thought process. I wouldn't be picking a dog this day; it seemed as

though a dog was in the process of selecting me. When I finally looked toward the quarantine area and the awaiting pups, one caught my attention immediately. In the center of the first row of dog houses was a Military Working Dog in distress. The pooch I refer to had, somehow, gotten his stake-out chain wrapped around his back leg and couldn't get free. (Or had he done this intentionally?)

I immediately went to this dog's aid, not wanting it to be injured by the precarious situation. I didn't even stop to check if the dog was aggressive; I just reassured this large German Shepherd and told him it would all be ok. He stepped free from the chain, shook it off, and then made his selection known. (Who was really in control here?)

To seal the deal, this big goof moved to emotional terrorism and manipulation. He looked up at me, directly in the eyes, as if to say 'thank you.' (Or was he saying, 'That's a good boy!') My great gift of 'pick of the litter' had been wrenched from me without my knowledge.

The dog known as Ero 245J claimed me for his own. (I know he intentionally wrapped that chain around his leg!)

There was absolutely no way that I could have ever



Courtesy photo from Curtis Hendel showing Ero's goofy side.

walked away from him. At that point, the single rationally operating brain cell screamed at me to take my time and look at all the other dogs.

All the other brain cells (maybe around 114 or so by that point) submitted to the desire for Ero and fell immediately in love.

I strode back to the Kennel Master's office and could guess his reaction to my selection. When I poked my head in the door, he looked surprised that this big decision had happened so quickly.

"Well, Airman Hendel? Which red dog did you pick?"

"Front row, middle, huge German Shepherd. Ero 245Juliet."

"Airman Hendel," his tone was changing slightly, "I gave you pick of over twenty

new dogs, told you the push button ones, and you picked the worst.

That dog will take a lot of work, and I can guarantee he won't be a warrior out there on the perimeter for a very long time. What the hell were you thinking?" "That's my dog; he picked me, I guess."

"Have fun working every day for the rest of your year here; I look forward to seeing what you come up with on that one."

In my head and heart, I knew he wasn't mad at me and was maybe even a touch proud that I hadn't taken the easy way out. I never regretted that decision. A push-button dog seemed like the boring way out.

To Be Continued in the February Issue

In Case You Missed Them: Our Newsletter Staff's Favorite Articles and Photos of 2023

Once again, our newsletter team recalls their favorite articles and photos from last year's issues.

David Adams, our Air Force Coordinator, is honored to share his favorite photo and story, an Air Force Vietnam story from 2023. Our subscribers will remember this article and image from last month, the December issue. In the picture, dog handler Robert Throneburg says goodbye to his partner, Nemo A534.

David also highlighted the lengthy article, "They Work the Night Beat" by SMSgt. James A. George that focuses on a tiny sliver of unique history, that short moment in time between when Nemo received his injury until he was medically retired and returned to San Antonio.

Albert Johnson, our President and former USMC handler, has a special spot for the history of the 39th IPSD in Vietnam. His favorite photo is of our Army Coordinator, Johnny Mayo, who served with the 39th, and his chosen story, "If I Could Only Talk," was authored by Pete Peters, also of the 39th. The piece, written in the voice of Buddha, tells the heartbreaking tale of one of the astonishing 39th dogs who served for six long years in the Vietnam War. Readers can find these in our June 2023 issue.

Dixie Whitman loved the January 2023 article "Pit and the Poop" by guest au-

thor Rick Fulton. "I laughed so hard at this story - its improbable nature and the clear image in my head of the comedy and tragedy Rick endured that day make it to the top of my list. If you missed it, it's definitely worth a read."

Dixie's best-loved photo comes from the April 2023 issue. It's a simple photo of a handler and dog, Donnie Lassiter and Bodie. It's clear from the image that a strong bond has formed between the two. Often, we tend to hear about the same dogs and handlers when, in reality, the lesser-known handlers, those unsung heroes who always do the right thing, remain unknown to most. So, this is a shout-out to all K9 handlers who have held the end of the leash; thank you.

Curtis Hendel, a former AF handler and talented writer for the newsletter, shared that his favorite photo and article both can be found in the May 2023 issue. The photo shows Jerry Whitman creating a rubbing from the headstone of SSG Donald Tabb, United States Army, KIA in 2008 while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. Honoring and remembering all of our fallen brothers and sisters from all wars, including the four-legged ones, is vital to keeping them alive in our memories. Taking the time to remember is the moral obligation of all citizens. Curtis felt



David Adams scanned through all of last year's images and proclaimed this one as his favorite. A1C Robert A. Throneburg saying 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. DoD Photo.



Albert Johnson easily identified this photo of our Army Coordinator, Johnny Mayo, and his pal, Buck, on their way to a dog handler event in the early 2000s. Johnny and Buck wrote a children's book entitled "Buck's Heroes" that received national attention. Photo: Johnny Mayo.

that the article on Duke 645F, the first K9 casualty of the Vietnam War, written by Duke's handler John Risse, pushed its way to the top of the list. The article brings the pain of losing a four-legged partner to the reader in a way that helps others to feel just an ounce of that massive void. Duke was the first of many absolute heroic K9s that saved countless lives in Vietnam.

Michael Hurder enjoys learning about the accomplishments and leadership of the individual. His favorite article from our June issue, entitled "Dedicated Dogman Takes Point," reflects on the drive and dedication of just one dogman, Johnny Mayo, to honor and celebrate military working dogs. "Great men act. Leading from the front is never a problem for Dogmen."

Michael also named the photograph of another great dogman, Jesse Mendez, on his famous jump over Fort Benning, as his favorite photo. To read more about Jesse's life, check out the rest of the article and photos in our February, 2023 issue.

Our newsletter team is proud to bring you our favorite stories and photos from 2023 with a special notice that many of the stories selected this year were crafted by guest authors. If you have a story to tell, please consider sharing it with us. We'll happily work with you on the editing so your story truly shines.

Thanks again to the newsletter team for another great year of America's K9 history.



This iconic image of Jesse Mendez and his dog, Pal, airborne over Fort Benning, from our February bio article took first place photo in Michael Hurder's eyes. Photo courtesy: The Mendez family.



Dixie Whitman felt that this photo of an Army handler from Vietnam, Donnie Lassiter, and his partner, Bodie, honors all the unsung and unknown handlers who have done it the right way. Photo: Donnie Lassiter.



Curtis Hendel felt this photo of Jerry Whitman completing a rubbing from the headstone of Donald T. Tabb showcased the responsibility that all citizens have to remember those who paid the ultimate price.

Photo: Dixie Whitman.

Highlights from 2023—An Amazing Year for the Museum

Thinking on the past year, our team realizes, with gratitude, all the fantastic events we've attended and all that we've accomplished together as a team. But also alongside you, our supporters, who recognize the importance of collecting and showcasing America's Military Working Dog history.

Things haven't always been easy, but great things seldom are a straight out-of-the-park homerun. Instead, enduring success comes with hard work by a core group of dedicated volunteers making team decisions to improve and move us closer to our goal of creating a world-class museum.

Throughout this year, we've attended many events to bring our story to dog handlers and the general public. We wanted to share a look back at some of the more significant events of 2023.

In March, several volunteers attended the meticulously coordinated events in Washington DC to honor and celebrate K9 Veterans Day, led by the US War Dog Association, Inc. Handlers, including many Marines, gathered both at Quantico and then again at the US Navy Memorial Plaza to venerate and honor their K9 partners.

In mid-May, our volunteers attended a K9 Reunion on the slopes of the Brushy Mountains of western North Carolina. The event, hosted

by the Money family, gathers handlers and supporters to share histories with those who understand and to break bread, sharing a fantastic meal crafted by Perry Money's family and neighbors. It is a tribute to an inspiring man that so many continue to make that annual trek. During this event, the Money family donated panels of the original "Moving Wall" to the museum.

In July, the University of Tennessee hosted a magnificent event on the banks of the Tennessee River to honor the 25th Anniversary Rededication of the War Dog Memorial. Our President, Albert Johnson, and his wife, Dr. Kate Stanford, took a leading role in guiding and crafting this event at the University of Tennessee's College of Veterinary Medicine, where Dr. Stanford still studies. Both were featured speakers, along with our volunteer, John Homa, while many volunteers also attended the rededication.

Two events took place in September, ushering in a hectic fall for team members. John Homa went above and beyond as a solo act to represent our museum at the huge Kokomo Reunion event. John juggled fundraising raffles and educational displays while selling our museum swag on the side.



The Few, The Proud. - The United States Marine Corps. A few of our volunteers attended the events in greater Washington D.C. and Quantico for K9 Veterans' Day in March 2023.

Courtesy photo.



In mid-May, Dogmen and veterans gathered at the Money Cabin in the Brushy Mountains of North Carolina for a Dog Handler reunion. Three of our Board Members are in the front row, at left: John Homa, Johnny Mayo, and Albert Johnson.

Photo: Dixie Whitman



Our team members attended and helped coordinate the rededication of the University of Tennessee War Dog Memorial in Knoxville, TN, in July. Handlers attending the event offered a slow salute.

Photo: Dixie Whitman.

Our incredibly devoted volunteers, Andy and Drew Hauser, along with our captain, Albert Johnson, enjoyed four days of Dog Shows at the venerated Smoky Mountain Cluster. Partnering with the Tennessee Valley Kennel Club, they set up a massive historical display for all four days of the events. They met a lot of great folks along the way, told our story, and enjoyed one of the best views at the dog show. It doesn't get much better than that.

Two volunteers attended the October 14, 2023, dedication of the newest K9 memorial to Marine dog handler Adam Cann in Herkimer, New York. The reports from those attending are that the event was emotional and extremely well coordinated.

The last two events that our volunteers attended took place simultaneously at the

US Military Working Dog Teams National Monument at JBSA-Lackland and at Johnny Mayo's Mountain Retreat. Our team enjoys being together and working to capture and conserve America's Military K9 history.

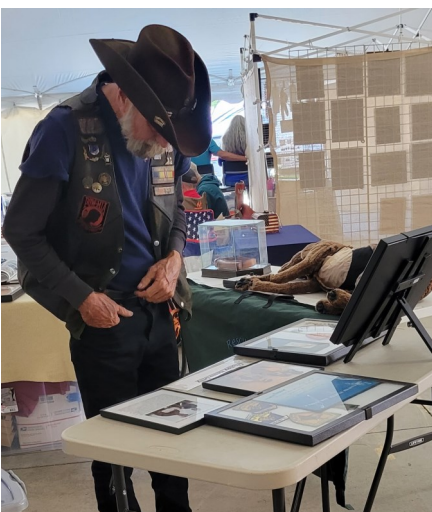
The team at Johnny's enjoyed the last summer sunshine filtering through the hardwood canopy while discussing Vietnam era K9 history. Dixie returned home with an entire notebook to scan.

What better way to finish out the year than enjoying each others' company and celebrating the K9 Community at Lackland AFB. The events at Lackland included a massive dog demonstration, a rededication ceremony, a catered meal, and camaraderie — a perfect dog day! Volunteer with us to see where your next adventure could take you.



Above: Whenever two or more volunteers gather together, museum magic happens. Johnny Mayo's mountain retreat. Photo: Dixie Whitman

Below: Volunteers attended the re-dedication ceremony for the US Military Working Dog Teams National Monument at Lackland AFB. U.S. Air Force photo by Thomas Coney



In September, we participated in the Howard County All Veterans Reunion in Kokomo, Indiana. Board Member and Vietnam Era Dog Handler John Homa set up and manned our educational display. Veterans stopped by for a peek at our collections. Photo: John Homa



In September, Andy Hauser met a sweet little Malinois named Aerith, who does IGP work, at the Smoky Mountain Cluster Dog Shows in Knoxville, TN. Photo: Albert Johnson



In mid-October, Albert Johnson and David Adams attended the dedication of this beautiful sculpture in Herkimer, NY. Courtesy Photo: David Adams

A Bus Trip to Leptus Magna

by Rick Fulton Former 7272nd AP Squadron Dog Handler

Ahhhh, Libya and life in the barracks!

Our dog flight was on break, and none of us had any money—not even the quarter necessary to buy a movie ticket.

It was a Saturday. We lived two blocks from the Mediterranean but had spent month after month going to the beach. We were tired of shooting pool with broom handles and playing hand after hand of penny ante poker. There had to be something to do.

Somebody spoke up. The base service club (a place we all religiously avoided for some unknown reason) had a bus trip set up to go to Leptus Magna, the ruins of an ancient Roman city located roughly 130 km (81 mi) east of Tripoli. We decided to go.

We packed snacks and drinks for the bus trip and collected our water bottles canteens.

"I do have a new kind of pop," Troy said. "I bought it on payday but have yet to try it. I will stick it in my camera bag." It sounded promising.

So off we all trooped to the service club, boarded the primitive and shaky GI bus (think "old school bus"), and set off for the hour-and-a-half trip to Magnus. A bunch of us were making this 1963 trip—Ted Baldwin, Russ Clark, Terry Seats, Ken Ward, Troy Lyons, and myself.

We drank our canteens dry, then discovered there was no water supply on the bus, nor was there water available at the site. We trooped through the city, walked

the old tile roads, explored the Colosseum, and checked out all the eight-foot-tall headless statues vandalized over the ages.

Stripped to our undies, we went for a swim, trying to see what lay under the water. It was a neat day, except we had no water to drink. Most of us had seen this city before, in *The Legend of the Lost*, a 1950s movie with John Wayne and Sophia Loren.

We took many photos, then trooped off to the bus to start the long ride home, back to Wheelus Air Base. The wheels hummed as we headed west on the Homs Road.

"Troy," someone said, "Break out that pop. We will share. We are thirsty." So our non-drinking friend graciously dove into his



His friends threw empty cans at Troy.
Firefly by Adobe Illustration

reserve and generously threw cans to all of his friends.

He had bought a six-pack—of bitter quinine water for making gin and tonics. The trip home proved long and thirsty; Troy couldn't understand why we threw the empty cans at him.



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. This story submitted by a former dog handler, Rick Fulton.

We Want to Hear Yours!

Contact us at: newsletter@mwdhm.org



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From the Team at MWDHM...

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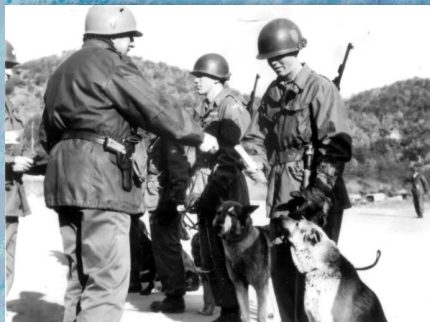
Share your story.

Share your vision.

Share your voice.

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our newsletter.

Artifacts of the Month



National Archives Image



These four platoon tabs are from the 26th Scout Dog Platoon—the only Scout Dog platoon in combat during the Korean War. See the shoulder of the second handler in line. The 26th trained at Fort Riley, KS, moved to Fort Carson, Co., and eventually moved to Fort Benning, GA, where the Scout Dog teams trained for Vietnam.

Historic Pooch Pic of the Month



VSPA Reunion at
Moody AFB.
AF Handlers –
Active duty and
Veterans.

October 2005.

Photo courtesy
Dixie Whitman