



# *The Paw Print*

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



## Event updates:

April 9-11, 2024  
Hold The Line K9  
Conference  
Myrtle Beach, SC

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

May 11-12, 2024  
Army MWD Symposium  
Alpena, Michigan

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## The Bite And Hold!



Military working dogs Zeus (left) and Dar (right), bite and hold Officer Christopher Le Febvre, a K9 handler with the Provost Marshal's Office, during a military working dog demonstration. The dogs are demonstrating controlled aggression while subduing a suspect. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Kristen Wong)

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Bite and Hold first came into the war lexicon during WWI, when the British, French, and Germans faced off in Belgium. An army seized a small bit of territory (the bite) and then 'held' it. This tactic allowed them to take another "bite" and move through one modest bit of ground at a time.

The same concept happens when a military working dog encounters a "bad guy" and

needs to maintain control until his handler arrives. The dog can bite onto some "territory" and hold the perpetrator.

The pressure per square inch of various working breeds' bites measures between 195-230 psi, which, when pushed into the unprotected skin of a suspect, can do a great deal of damage. However, the attitude and activity of

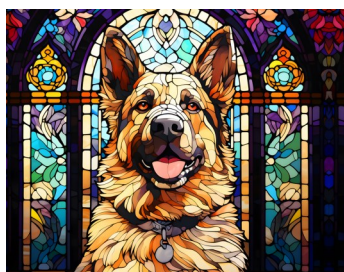
the dogs holding their prey impact the severity of the bite. Some dogs aggressively tug and pull, while others clamp down, hold, and watch their targets.

So whatever you call it, the pursuit and attack, the running attack, or the bite and hold, let's look at this phase of aggression more closely in this issue.

## From the President's Desk



President, Albert Johnson



Hello to our faithful readers,

Thank you all for continuing to follow our journey as an organization. With your support, our progress is possible. Your feedback, your stories, your artifacts, and your financial contributions keep us going, growing, and thriving. The last few months have been very busy with the organization. Two essential volunteers have been working diligently to produce documents to guide our decisions, ensure we stay true to our mission, and inform our museum goals. I'd like to publicly thank Maryalice Larson and Lane Hagerdorn for their vision and dedication to this project.

Thanks to our crafty volunteer, Linda Booker, we will be adding new items to our online store in the next few months. And I'll be making more of a presence on our Social Media platforms to share our artifacts.

Our event calendar for the year is filling up fast, thanks to our intrepid Events Coordinator, John Homa. Seriously, this man is so dedicated to our mission. We are on track to nearly double the functions we will attend this year over previous years. I hope to see some of you on one or more of these occasions. Some of the

events that we'll be attending this spring are the Hold The Line Conference in Myrtle Beach in April, and in May, we plan to be at the All-Veterans Reunion in Melbourne, Florida, and the Army Training Symposium in Alpena, Michigan. Look at our Events space on the front of every newsletter.

Ok, that's enough discussion about where we are headed. Let's talk about what you'll find in this edition of the newsletter, shall we? Michael Hurder explains the "bite and hold," using some of his personal experience to kick us off. Michael sure has a way of drawing readers in, doesn't he?

Next up, we have a unique look at missing prisoner exercises. My experiences at Camp Pendleton drove home this type of mission for me. There are few things more hair-raising than being on a manhunt for a wanted individual. Using the dogs' abilities to track, scout, control, and ultimately apprehend the fugitives takes much training and trust in that dog team, from the unit trusting the dog team, the dog trusting the handler, and the handler trusting their dog. It's a real-life example of a cat-and-mouse chase.

I'm excited to introduce a new writing volunteer to our team. His name is

Greg Dunlap; he was an Air Force K9 handler in Vietnam. Greg brings us a look at his first days in Vietnam. We are searching for more stories and writers to share their experiences with you, good, bad, or ugly. The unique perspective you get from each handler from different branches of service and eras keeps me excited to see what stories our newsletter team will uncover next.

After Greg's story, you will find a tremendous one-page piece on the fantastic veterinary care provided to our military working dogs in the Horn of Africa. This article features members of several organizations coming together to provide top-notch Tactical Combat Critical Care Training. This training allows handlers or other non-veterinary service members to provide adequate and timely treatment for K9 medical emergencies in combat.

On our final page, you will find an artifact highlight and one of our archives' clearest photos of handlers from the 1950s.

Happy reading to you all, and as always,

**K9 Leads the Way!**

*Albert Johnson*



## Bite and Hold: A Non-Lethal Method of Apprehension

by Michael Hurder

During the last week of January 1971, twelve recent MWD Training Programs stateside graduates made their way to the Dog Training Detachment on Bien Hoa Base Camp, War Zone D, III Corps RVN. These troopers gathered from all over the states to begin a two-week crunch course in handling a Patrol Dog. They would join the 1st Cavalry as part of the 34th IPSD, the *Point for the Cav*.

We graduated from the US Army's Scout Dog Schools and had never heard of a Patrol Dog. The alternative was to join the Cav as grunts and alternately spend 40 days and nights in and out of the bush until your DEROS.

"Yessir! Patrol Dog School. Where do I sign, sir?"

The training was intense. Every day, we learned of new ways to die in Vietnam, the Republic of, and none of them took a lot of effort. Because of that knowledge, we all dove into the art of patroling with a passion.

Orientation was a pep talk from a Spec4, Joe Casasa, who would end up as our *Acting Jack* at the Patrol Dog area, the old 25th IPSD Kennels, and one of my two hootchmates. This

talk occurred as we walked to the kennels to meet our new partners. Donnie Lassiter and I were the last to arrive at the Training Detachment. The cadre assigned us to two of the last three dogs available. The Vet mercifully put down the third dog, who had grown extremely sick.

### Shorty

I'm 5'6", and back then, I topped the scales at 130 pounds. Logically, "Shorty" became my nickname, even if I didn't like it. Liking anything in the Army was not a requisite, nor was such sentiment issued. **Shorty** is who I was in the 34th IPSD. Eventually, I wore that moniker as a badge of honor. Also, logically, or so you would think, partner selection would consider size. So imagine my surprise when all six feet, two hundred pounds of Donnie landed a sweet little sixty-pound cutie named Bodie while they handed Shorty the one hundred twenty pound beast with two-inch canines-Prince 16x5.

WTF, over?

We'd all heard the terrifying stories about handlers getting off the plane from the States and being immediately heliborne to a



SSilke, a military working dog assigned to the 355th Security Forces Squadron, bites simulated perpetrator Senior Airman Gabriel Higuera during a training scenario at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Utilizing a bite suit during training ensures MWDs are fully equipped to protect and attack on command in a real-world environment. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kaitlyn English)

grunt unit in the field with K9s attached. Worse yet, non-handlers were issued K9s, given a manual, and told to learn on the fly. "Here's your dog. You have the afternoon patrol with the third platoon. Report to the CP at 1300."

Joe said: "You boys belong to the Cav now. If you don't make the grade here, there ain't no other K9 units. This is it. Don't mess this up cause you'll end up humping the boonies with the Cav all the time instead of just once in a while."

With that knowledge, we earnestly got down to business.

### Patrol Dogs

When first introduced to the function of a Patrol

Dog Team, one might think sentry and be correct, but only partly so. There were sentry dogs all over Vietnam. All of the services used them. The Army's MPs had a corps of sentries, hundreds of them, as did the Air Force, Marines, and Navy. The more aggressive dogs assumed the task of sentry work, and that aggression served them well. Frankly, the more ferocious, the better.

The Patrol Dog was a slightly different concept in using K9s for battlefield security. Not just serving as sentries, these dogs could be scouts too and bring all those skills to the patrol mission. Retaining those abilities was essential in successfully

transitioning these Scouts into patrolling. We didn't just guard static locations; we aggressively sought out the enemy wherever he might be hiding on or off Bien Hoa and at the various fire bases the 34th supported. Scouting skills were imperative not just to do the job well but to survive it. Sentry dogs did the same job, but their countenance was far more aggressive, and they stuck close to their guard mount, focused on detecting intruders. Scout/Patrol dogs were not necessarily aggressive, although some were, especially when protecting their human. With some Scouts, we trained them to become more beligerent. Some never got it.

To go with that Scouting ability, the behavior known as "Bite and Hold" would become part of the Patrol Dog's lexicon. This behavior is a non-lethal method of detention, intended to preserve any intelligence value should we detain an actual enemy combatant, but it also provides for a more humane response to innocents when encountered. Since we patrolled in and around Bien Hoa Ville and all the tiny villages surrounding the base camp and fire bases, there was every reason to believe that we would occasionally confront an innocent civilian. However, they knew we patrolled there

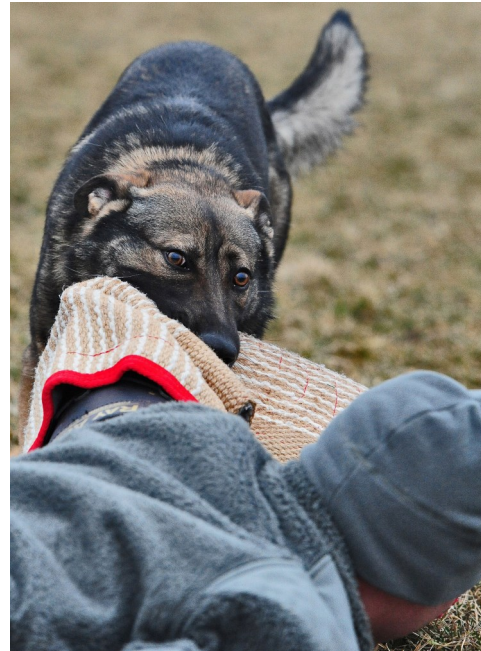
and should avoid contact with us at night.

We trained and retrained in detection and attack, often using the former to enable the latter. Our foe was a master at hiding and camouflage. If we wanted to detain Charlie with a Bite and Hold, we'd need to find him first - by scouting. Using those skills learned as Scout Dogs, the K9 will seek and alert to various scents, sights, and sounds - human and explosives among them. In this manner, we also hoped to find the VC and their bomb-making factories and capture one or two enemies.

Once located and pinned, we offered the prey a chance to surrender peacefully while the team was fully ready to attack at a moment's notice, should the need arise. The K9 receives the command to "Watch." The objective is, of course, to keep the target alive and prevent him from escaping. Suppose Charlie was hell-bent on *đi mau*-ing out of there or attacking us, well, depending on the circumstances. In that case, the handler might release the K9 to attack or, if necessary, terminate the threat himself.

### Challenges

The military much preferred the Bite and Hold. The "Hold" is more



Igore, 509th Security Forces Squadron military working dog, bites the sleeve of an MWD handler and brings him to the ground. The bite sleeve scenarios teach the canines to hold on to the body part they bite, helps strengthen their jaws, and builds confidence among them so they are prepared when responding to a real-world scenario.

(Photo by: SrA Nick Wilson.)

challenging to teach, much like it was to train for an extended "stay." Dogs can possess a wicked ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and quickly move on to the next exciting thing unless the handler keeps the K9s focused on the job. Tug-o-war aided in this tremendously. It also made for some fun exercises in releasing or **OUT-ing**.

Training for this bite-and-hold behavior entails a "bite" suit or sleeve. Even in winter, It was scorching hot in Vietnam; the bite suit stayed in the Kennel Master's storage bin. Everyone used the sleeve. We trained the K9s to take an

arm before anything else, and in fact, we did our best to shove that sucker in their mouths before they grabbed something else. I tried the suit once. I was sure the dog would latch onto me wherever there wasn't any protection. However, they don't make a "Shorty" version. I couldn't move, and that was that. Then I wore the sleeve like everyone else, though I convinced myself I would be chewed up like a raw steak in no time.

Training started by getting the K9s to interact with the sleeve - bite it and play tug-o-war. A few dogs

looked from the sleeve to their partner and back again with little interest.

So, we had to improvise several ways to stir interest. Bodie would let the sleeve hit him in the face, then turn around and lay down and start licking himself between Donnie's feet. Santi's Rex would open his mouth but not close it, so the sleeve fell to the ground. Then Rex would try to scrape the horrible taste off his lips. Prince caught on pretty quickly but was so stoic it made me laugh. He wouldn't play tug-o-war. He stood there, jaw clamped shut, not giving an inch. I worried that something was wrong with Prince since he didn't want to play tug-o-war.

Cassasa asked me what Prince was doing that concerned me, so I told him.

"He ain't doing nothing, Joe: no tug, no move, no nothing. Just staring at me with the sleeve in his mouth. WTF?!"

"What's he supposed to be doing, Shorty?"

"What do you mean?"

"What's Prince's job when you tell him to **Get Him!**"

"He bites the target and holds him."

At this point, Joe stopped talking and stared at me like Prince.

It took a full minute before I bent over and said, "Good boy, Prince. Who's my best boy?"

Though they hid it well, I could see Prince and Joe smirking. I now believe Prince had done this before.

Once the dog started biting (or grabbing) the sleeve, we started tugging and getting excited and vocal. Run around with it, etc. Repeat *ad infinitum*.

The next step was attacking a live target on command. Since the K9s already knew how to "get" the bite sleeve, the target usually had to be slightly threatening, waving the sleeve around to get a rise from the dog. The target either runs away or stands his ground, constantly threatening. The handler commands, "Get him." The K9 attacks. Again, the handler and target may have to go through some gyrations to trigger the dog's aggression. Getting our dogs up to speed with the attack didn't take long. These K9s were eager to please and had been in some form of training since they were pups.

They responded well.

What did take time was training the handlers not to screw up.

### Horizontal Flight

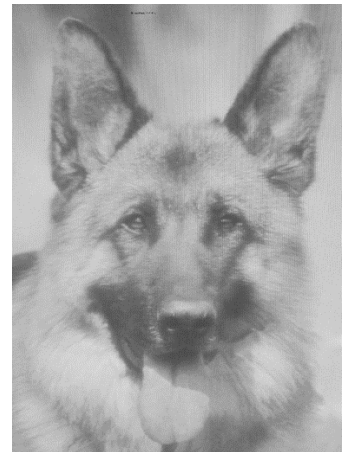
For instance, a certain trooper of slight stature

was so excited about the first training apprehension he yelled, "Get him," and got a running start with his partner but forgot to let go of the leash. Guinness has it listed as the longest and fastest recorded horizontal flight by a human at 3' above sea level without the aid of an aircraft. Shorty's reputation would serve him well in the mid-day BS sessions in the day room.

The attack led to the Bite, which led to the Hold, which then led to the behavior paramount to bringing the apprehension to a close. This action was the release. The command was **OUT**.

We were familiar with this command from Scouting, as were the K9s, so this part was fairly easy. I thought Prince would be a bear with **OUT**, but he was great. **OUT** was also used to stop an attack should the target surrender. It took a few tries to get it right. Prince (or I) always seemed to be a bit slow with the **OUT** (or Prince couldn't slow his fat-a\$\$ down soon enough). He bowled over almost everyone at least once.

In this manner, we brought all twelve Scouts up to par in time for the February 14 graduation and our inception into the 34th IPSD. In those two weeks, we all had the Bite and Hold down. Even the more



A member of the 34th Infantry Scout Dog Patrol, Prince 16X5 was handled by the author, Michael Hurder. In addition to the 34th dogs, Combat Tracker Dogs of the 62nd Combat Trackers were also attached to the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cav Division.

Note: This artwork created by the author's mother from a photo sent to her during the Vietnam War.

laid-back pooches would at least grab on and hold tight. The tug-o-war idea worked well. The dogs saw it as a game, and eventually, all wanted to play.

As with almost anything you teach a K9, they **will** do it for love. The treats were always a part of our daily routine but never necessary. Our partners and our teams were always ready and willing.

As I moved through this stage of my life, it became increasingly evident that I was the student. Prince was my master, and that was as it should be. K9LTW.



## Missing Prisoner Exercise

by Shaylee Borcsani

Testing the capabilities of Soldiers guarding prisoners at Europe's only correctional facility, as well as strengthening military and host-nation cooperation, came into play during an exercise here in the vicinity of the Sembach Correctional Facility. The Missing Prisoner Emergency Action Plan Exercise tested U.S. Army Correctional Activity-Europe's ability to trace, capture, and return Soldiers to the facility. This is the first full-size exercise conducted at this facility to test the readiness of the facility's military and partner organizations.

The exercise involves multiple units from the local area, including U.S. Army Garrison Rheinland-Pfalz's Directorate of Emergency Services, Combined Military Working Dog Detachment-Europe, and the Kaiserslautern Polizei.

During the exercise, correctional-facility cadre monitored three Soldiers who were simulating prisoners conducting area beautification outside of the facility's containment area. During this time, a Soldier fled custody of the cadre to attempt escape.

The facility's operations chief said the ability to react to scenarios like these is key to ensuring the security of the prisoners and the outside community.

"Our team is ready to react and has plans in place in the very unlikely event a

prisoner was to escape our cadres custody," said Sgt. 1st Class Davon Watkins, correctional facility operations chief. "We immediately lockdown the facility, establish an emergency operations center, deploy a search party, and coordinate with local partners for help."

Once the emergency action plan is activated, the cadre and senior leaders in the facility begin contacting multiple community organizations to assist in catching the missing prisoners. Watkins said the cooperation between all units is essential.

"Events of this scope require that we are able to seamlessly work with multiple military organizations and our host-nation Polizei partners," said Watkins. "We all must be able to work within the systems each party has in place, and this exercise allows everyone involved to learn how each organization operates so in the event there is an emergency, we are familiar with all systems and policies."

In the end, the combined team of Soldiers, a military working dog, DES officers, and Polizei caught the fleeing prisoners and returned them to the facility. While there were adjustments and challenges, Watkins called the exercise a success. "This exercise was a resounding success and met



**Sgt. Fabio Santana with the 100th Military Police Detachment Military Working Dog holds Staff Sgt. Eron, while he gives commands to the off-camera escapee during a missing prisoner emergency action plan exercise on Sembach Kaserne, Germany, on Dec. 14, 2023. In 1942, the Quartermaster Corps of the United States Army began training dogs for the newly established War Dog Program, or "K-9 Corps." Photo by Sgt. Scott Sparks.**

and exceeded every expectation we had," he said. "Any challenges we faced we overcame quickly and adjusted well. In the end, this was a great learning tool for us that we will take back to our teammates and will do even better next time."

The missing prisoner exercise allows the correctional facility to coordinate emergency measures with local partners within minutes of an emerging event occurring and is important since all organizations have different law enforcement roles throughout the community. "It is important to emphasize that the responsibility for security in the West Palatinate is not only the duty of the police alone but is a shared task that we carry together," said Bernhard

Christian Erfort, Kaiserslautern Polizei police spokesman. "The U.S. Armed Forces and their members have proven themselves not only as defenders of our freedom but also as committed members of our community."

U.S. Army Correctional Activity-Europe exercises command and control of all U.S. military service members in Europe and Africa awaiting trial or serving time for crimes committed. The facility falls under the 21st TSC's area of responsibility under the 18th MP Brigade. This scope of this exercise created buzz from media throughout Germany, with a slew of media outlets interested in the facility's crucial mission of the U.S. Army's only correctional facility in Europe.

## The First Two Days In Vietnam (What the Hell is This?)

By Greg Dunlap

Every journey is an adventure; little did I realize that Vietnam would be more than just a normal one. From the start, dark clouds on the horizon should have tipped me off, but being young and dumb at the time, I didn't have a clue.

We gathered at a base in Southern California for the flight over. Tearful good-byes and "I'll promise to write/not forget you/be waiting when you come home" were exchanged. Quite a few of us young and eager men were going off into what we couldn't imagine. Southern California was a pleasant place then, with low 60s in temperature and clear, crisp days. We were dressed in light tan uniforms, expecting a tropical climate as our destination.

### FIRST DARK CLOUD

The call to load up into the aircraft came, and everyone gathered their carry-on luggage and walked down the ramp. We had been looking out the window at the airplane, waiting and wondering. "Flying Tiger Airlines." Who ever heard of that one?

After asking around, I found out it was a contract carrier the military used. Flying Tiger Airlines was normally a freight carrier but had won a contract to ferry troops to Asia for the war. Different freight,

same idea. No assigned seating, just get in and fill it up.

When all of us were seated, we had the usual drill, seatbelt, air masks, flotation devices, etc, and then buttoned it up. The engines started, and just as they were winding up, they stopped! We should have gotten off then and there and caught the ferry, but we had to sit there on the ramp, waiting for them to fix whatever was wrong.

The problem with this is that you have a 707 packed with people, sitting on the ramp without the engines going, and thus, no air conditioning operating and no doors and windows open; it got hot and damp in a hurry. After about 5 minutes, they opened the doors to allow airflow. "Minor problem," they said, "Be fixed in no time." I considered taking the ferry again, but now they were closing the doors, and this time, the engines started and held.

Has anyone experienced a Lehman's start with a 707 packed with people? With standard airlines, you would taxi up the side runway, turn onto the main runway, stop, rev up the engines, pop the clutch, and away you'd go, right? Flying Tiger had a surprise for us. Taxi up the side runway, start to turn onto the

main runway, and halfway through the turn . . . . . put the pedal to the metal, and off we went. You have this sensation of pressing back into the seat and being pulled to the right simultaneously. I hadn't done that before—accelerating and turning in an airplane on the ground. After they got the plane on the main runway, accelerating all the time, they had to straighten it out for the takeoff. The flight crew accomplished this while rolling down the runway and accelerating at the same time. You felt the plane swerve left and right as the corrections were being made and straightened

out, and then you felt the uplifting sensation you got as the plane left the ground. Goodbye, California and civilization. 'What's in store for me?'

After a while, the voice over the intercom said there would be stopovers in Anchorage, Tokyo, and Okinawa before we got to Da Nang. Anchorage was interesting. By now, it was 1 AM, and it looked dark and wicked out there. Anchorage in January, imagine it. When we touched down, the plane stopped in the middle of nowhere. Nothing around us could be seen, just like parking in the middle of a field. The



Above: Greg Dunlap poses with his partner, Blackie 129X, at the 366th Security Police Squadron. Blackie partnered with eight different handlers in Vietnam. Courtesy photo: Greg Dunlap

intercom came on again, informing us that a blizzard had struck Anchorage and that the snow drifts prevented us from parking near the terminal. We were to look for a light right before us as we got out of the plane and run for it. It was the terminal, about 100 yards away, and we were to wait there for them to finish servicing the plane.

"The temperature outside is -20°, so don't get lost because you'll freeze to death before we find you." Remember, everyone was still dressed in tropicals (lightweight summer uniform); we're going to Vietnam, not Alaska. Talk about a blast of juxtaposition. During our initial sprint at the Anchorage Airport in January, it felt like we were wearing what amounts to nothing. Who said military intelligence was an oxymoron? Everyone must have made it because I don't remember any panic or organized

search parties. Or else they didn't count all of us, and there is still some poor soul up in Anchorage, locked in the permafrost. The rest of the journey was uneventful, except for the takeoffs, flying for hours, landing, waiting in the terminal, loading up, and taking off again. Hurry up and wait; we've all done that.

### IN COUNTRY: THE SECOND DARK CLOUD

Coming into Da Nang for the first time, I occupied a window seat and got a first-hand view of it—a lovely, green, lush-looking country. Having lived in the Philippines for three years as a military dependent, I knew what the native housing would look like, so no surprise there. The base looked dismal, however. Red clay dirt everywhere; where were the grass and trees? 'Oh well,' I thought. They pulled us up to the termi-

nal and opened the doors, and the blast furnace of Vietnam hit us. I thought, 'It can't be this warm; it must be the inside of the plane and all the bodies again.' No, it was that warm. Robin Williams, in his role as a radio disk jockey in "Good Morning Vietnam," says on the weather report that today, "It's going to be HOT, HOT, HOT!!!! And tonight it will only be HOT, HOT!!!" He wasn't kidding. I was looking for the return stub of my round-trip ticket. 'Can I use this now?'

Everyone unloaded, got checked off, boarded a bus, and was taken to the main complex. At Da Nang, a center section of the base served as the headquarters for everything. We were left off there and told where to check in at our units. I found my way over to the Security Police section and reported in. A call down to the kennels that they had fresh meat waiting for them (me) got

someone up to show me around. I was taken over to supply, where I received sheets and uniforms. Then, I went to the armory for my M-16 and ammo belt and to the hut for bunk assignment. I got settled in. About an hour later, a truck picked me up to go to the kennels to get my dog. It was afternoon, so a lot of people were up already, and I was greeted warmly. "Hi!" "Fresh food for the puppies." "Hell, Charlie will have this guy for breakfast." "Did your parents have any normal children?" "Did you bring any nude pictures of your wife or girlfriend with you? Want to buy some?" It's just the typical banter between those who have been there a while and a new person. I took it in good nature, and then it was time to go to the kennels.

*More fabulous stories from Greg will appear in future issues of The Paw Print.*

## Melbourne, Florida Reunion



The Florida Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion will be held May 9th through 12th at Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida. 2024 will be the 36th and last year of this event.

There is no cost to attend the event, which will include The Vietnam Traveling Memorial, The Some Gave All Moving Tribute, and other static

displays that will be available for viewing for all four days.

The average attendance is between 40,000 and 50,000 people over the 4-day event. Stop by for some food, swag, and music. For more information, check out the [agenda](https://www.floridaveteransreunion.com/agenda.html): <https://www.floridaveteransreunion.com/agenda.html>.



## Remembering Billy Ross—An Excellent Instructor

by Curtis Hendel

"Hendel, you got controlled aggression today."

Hold on, I jumped into that one way too fast.

I wanted to start by bringing up some of the great people who had a tremendous influence on me during my time in the United States Air Force. One of these guys was an Air Force Staff Sergeant named Billy Ross.

I first heard of Billy at Osan, when one of my best friends spoke highly of him. Billy was in Kunsan while we were a bit further north on the peninsula, and if memory serves me right, I met Billy briefly before returning to the States.

After my return to Lackland and assignment to the Dog Training Section, Patrol, Billy beat me back and was an instructor in the Patrol Dog Course. This part is where that first line starts to make sense.

I was slotted to attend a Non-Commissioned Officer prep course shortly after returning to Lackland. The Friday before I started the two-week school, I was involved in an off-duty incident that damaged my left shoulder. Being my weak side, I went through the school

in pain but paid for it upon return to DTS. I was assigned a large Red Dog that came up leash at me, and I realized my shoulder was, truly, an issue. A visit to Wilford Hall Medical Center on the base proved a partially dislocated shoulder that would keep me out for six weeks.

The powers that be sent me to the Patrol Dog Course to assist (babysit) with training. My assignment to Billy Ross' team came about halfway through their training. This timing meant they had trained in the basics but were still working on their craft. I expected a sort of punishment for getting banged up off-duty, but I was wrong.

The first morning, with my left arm in a contraption that glued it to my chest, Billy dropped the news.

"Hendel, you got controlled aggression today."

"Um, what do you mean?" was my confused reply.

"Hendel, take the training area and run the students in controlled aggression."

I, off-balance and trying to understand, replied, "Um, Billy, you got that

pretty instructor's cookie on your uniform, and, if you haven't noticed, I ain't got one."

SSgt Ross was growing impatient, even with his patented sly grin. "Look, Hendel, we are short an instructor, and I know you can teach these kids what they need to know. Their job will be to brief you on their dog before starting; they know the drill. Now quit arguing with me and help me with this class." He said.

I was more than enthusiastic about playing the instructor role. I absolutely loved passing on my experiences to young

minds learning to become a human/dog team.

Most of the students were great and had dogs that helped them immensely. But one Air Force student struggled with bitework, manipulating his leash to the point of making his Red Dog a bit ornery, and I saw it coming. I tried to get him to understand what I saw, but he convinced himself that my lack of an instructor cookie meant I was not that smart. Finally, one day, I took his dog from him in all my one-armed glory and pushed the buttons that set the dog off.



Photo of Billy Ross.

Courtesy Camille Cheek.

Sure enough, this dog decided to come up leash at me but didn't have a great game. I corrected the MWD, one-armed, and returned the dog to the student. At this point, the student was shocked that this dog, the one he swore would never go up leash, had tried an experienced trainer. Suddenly, the young Airman wanted to ask questions and had an open mind. Lesson learned: move on, graduate, and do it without getting bit.

When the next team started, a day came when SSgt Ross and the Army instructor both had to be gone, and I was left to teach basic Scouting from the book. Then, the Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge of the Patrol Dog School stepped into the classroom.

"Senior Airman Hendel, what's up this afternoon?"

I knew I was in a bad place. "Well, Sergeant, I was just helping to, ah, answer a few questions as SSgt Ross and Sgt K both had appointments."

"So, you are teaching class? Is that what you are saying?"

"I'm not teaching, really. Just sharing my experiences, you could say."

"Looks to me like you were drawing Scouting diagrams right out of the book, or am I reaching here?"

I was cooked. Fighting it any further, especially in front of the class, would be disrespectful. Taking my beating in front of the class was the right thing to do.

That was my last day as a Patrol Dog "Instructor." The sad thing is that I loved it. I loved to teach controlled aggression, and my experience in the course would bleed over

into my return to DTS. It made me a better handler and trainer.

At the end of the day, SSgt Billy Ross believed in me. He trusted me with the students he was personally responsible for in the most dangerous phase of Patrol Dog School. Billy had never seen me work a dog and was going on reputation alone. Sure, he was hard up for instructors, but he could have stuck me with obedience, and he gave me my love: controlled aggression.

Billy Ross passed away on November 18, 2021, at the young age of 69. He was as talented a Military Working Dog Handler/Trainer/Student Instructor as anyone ever was. His natural charisma flowed through his eyes and smile, and he never put anyone down for no reason. Billy Ross was a great man, period.

Looking back at that short time on the team with Billy, I have great memories and believe I missed my calling. I loved to teach but never tried to get back to the Patrol Dog Course. I felt like I had to melt back into the Dog Training Section/Patrol and do my job there. Shortly after my return from injury, things did get much busier in DTS, and the idea of being an instructor faded into memory.

I always wonder what kind of instructor I could have been and how many students would remember my name three decades later. I could only hope that all of the young handlers in that one class and in DTS have at least half the great memories I have of handlers like SSgt Billy Ross, United States Air Force.

## Event Announcements



**EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

K9 VETERAN  
REUNIONS &  
EVENTS

Email your event  
details to  
[newsletter@mwdhm.org](mailto:newsletter@mwdhm.org)

Military Working Dog Heritage Museum will announce Veteran K9 Reunions and Events as space is available. These can be individual unit reunions, K9 veteran organizational events (such as VSPA or VDHA), or events that interest the K9 community—such as memorial events and gatherings.

We are honored to share event information and ask that you send us complete details of the event along with contact information as early as possible.

We may not always have space to include them in each issue, so by sending them in early, we will be more likely to ensure your information is shared.



## Combat Casualty Care

by Petty Officer 1st Class Patricia Elkins and Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Thomas

Camp Lemonnier's Expeditionary Medical Facility (EMF) veterinary service team held a joint international K-9 Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) training for Camp Lemonnier and Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa military working dog (MWD) handlers, medical professionals and regional allied and partner forces.

The K-9 TCCC training enables non-veterinary service members to provide timely and effective treatment for MWD medical emergencies in an operational environment. The handlers practiced treatment for massive hemorrhaging and respiratory distress, ultrasound and casualty evacuation using K-9 mannequins and their MWDs.

"I think it's important for us to conduct this training to build confidence and make people aware of what handlers and medical professionals are capable of, the assets that we have and how we support the Military Working Dogs' mission," said U.S. Army Sgt Andrea Serrano. "It's important for us to train on that elevated level of care because it is vital to the handlers and medics when it comes to

saving the lives of the Military Working Dogs."

Military Working Dogs are critical assets for military police and special operations units serving in operational environments. The K-9 TCCC training ensures injured working dogs receive the highest level of resuscitative care, even in the absence of military veterinary personnel.

As the only Level II military trauma center on the African continent, Camp Lemonnier's EMF operates as a force healthcare system providing emergent care, preventative medicine and veterinary services to support Camp Lemonnier and forward-deployed units in the region. CLDJ's EMF conducts regular trauma training for CLDJ medical and veterinary personnel to maintain crisis response readiness.

Camp Lemonnier is an operational installation that enables U.S., allied and partner nation forces to be where they are needed to ensure security and protect U.S. interests. The installation provides world-class support for service members, transient U.S. assets and 38 local tenant commands.



Service members from Camp Lemonnier's Expeditionary Medical Facility veterinary service team, medical professionals and military working dog handlers from CLDJ and Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, gathered for joint K-9 Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) training. Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Patricia Elkins.



Camp Lemonnier service members and French Air Force Kennel Master, Ghujvan Bezus, practice a medical evacuation on a K-9 training mannequin during joint K-9 Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) training. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Thomas.



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From the Team at MWDHM

We invite you to join the museum's journey  
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Military Working Dog Heritage Museum

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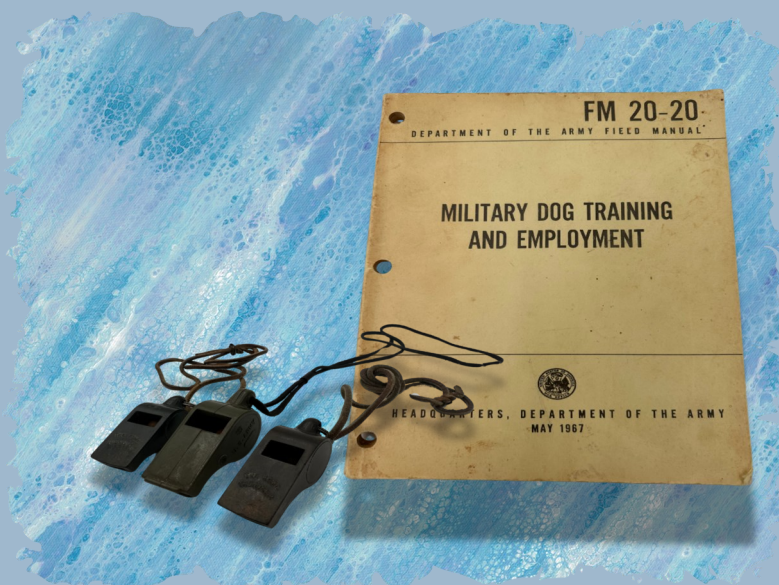
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our newsletter.**

## Artifacts of the Month



**This month, we feature the FM 20-20 Military Working Dog Training Manual from May, 1967 and three dog whistles. Items from the Museum Collection.**

## Historic Pooch Pic of the Month



**Please join us in honoring  
Air Force Handlers, AIC  
Gifford and Schutte with  
their dogs in 1956.**

**From the archives of the Military Working  
Dog Heritage Museum.**