



The Paw Print

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



Upcoming Events

September 14-21—
Kokomo, IN. All Veterans
Reunion

October 17—
San Antonio, TX. US War
Dogs 25th Anniversary
Celebration

November 9-11—
Columbia, SC
10th Anniversary
Rededication of the
South Carolina
War Dog Memorial.

Volume 5 Issue 4

April 2025

Surviving With Grief— A Journey of Loss, Recovery, and Reflection



Inside this issue:

From The President's Desk	2
Getting to Know Alfred Brenner	3
WWII Marine Dispatch—Barron	4
K9 Veterans Day	5
From Alabama, With Love	6
Doc Richardson	7
Dr. Danielle Diamond	9
Honoring Military Veterinarians	11

Photo above: An image shared by Alfred Brenner from his deployment to Afghanistan with his military working dog, Grief. Our volunteer, Amy Winck, read Brenner's book, *Surviving With Grief*, and studied an interview conducted by our President, Albert Johnson, with his friend and fellow USMC C-Pen (Camp Pendleton) handler, Alfred Brenner. This month's issue highlights Brenner and his K9, Grief.

"He didn't care where he went as long as he was with me." Marine K9 Handler Alfred Brenner didn't know he was getting a friend and brother when he picked up the leash of his military working dog, Grief. In his book *Surviving With Grief*, Brenner tells the story of their tour in Afghanistan and his healing process after a devastating injury and the loss of Grief.

Set in the early days of the War on Terror, Brenner paints a picture for the reader of life overseas for

the brave men, women, and K9s who protect our freedom. Deployment life, for the most part, isn't very exciting – until it is both exciting and dangerous.

The incredible talents of these dogs cannot be overstated. "As a human, when we smell a cheeseburger, we smell a cheeseburger. Meanwhile, a dog smells ketchup, mustard, lettuce, burger, and cheese... and, of course, the guy who made it. They can pick up

every little detail hidden behind the larger picture."

However, along with life during the war, Brenner shows the deep bond between these handlers and the K9s. Some of the most entertaining parts of the book unfold when Brenner describes Grief as his dog and not a K9 in service. "He was always like that guy who was there to help you move out of your house but never lifted a finger," he says, having me laughing out loud and relating to that with my dog.

From the President's Desk



President, Albert Johnson

Hello, everyone. I hope your March is ending well and you have a great April. The organization is off to a great start this year with many events we will attend.

We have already made a maiden voyage for the organization to Anaheim, California, for the International Police K9 Association Conference, where we set up a booth to educate police K9 officers and the public about the service and sacrifice of our incredible Military Working Dog Teams throughout American history.

We also had the opportunity to attend a K9 Veterans Day event at LMU College of Veterinary Medicine, where we met some great supporters and had a fantastic time. Some of our team went to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, for the "Send Me" dedication honoring Lucca K458—see that story inside.

I'm excited to share a story about a Marine I served

with in this newsletter. Alfred Brenner was a young Marine at Camp Pendleton when I was coming home from my second deployment. He eagerly gleaned new dog training methods, and always had a positive attitude. I am proud to know and watch him grow as a handler, published author, and public speaker.



On April 26th, World Veterinary Day, I want to give a nod to our veterinarians. I've had great experiences with our military vet staff, from learning about regular K9 health checks to K9 first aid, surgical procedures, and preventative wellness maintenance.

Over the years, I have worked with several excellent veterinarians: Major Todd Thomas, Captain Hedlin, and LtCol Matt Takara. These dedicated veterinarians taught me

much about prioritizing dog health regarding mission readiness. Vet staff have been with me through some of the toughest days of my handler life.

When my dog Rexi came back from our first deployment, he didn't take to living back at the kennels. He had a happy tail, a condition in which the dog is so anxious that it spins and whacks its tail on the concrete walls till it splits open, bleeds, and won't heal. Major Thomas recommended tail removal, which gave Rexi a better quality of life.

After leaving the Marine Corps, I returned to Camp Pendleton as a DOD police officer, where I partnered with an MWD named Piki. Piki was a hard case, a dog that had difficulty adapting after his first handler left the service and became more aggressive. He was kenneled at a different base, but Camp Pendleton was known for rehabilitating such dogs and giving Piki a way to continue his service.

Piki and I made a great team as we found a balance that worked for us. One morning, I got a call that no handler ever wanted to get, and Piki was in distress. When I made it to the base and took him to the vet, Piki was in bad shape. He ended up with



stomach torsion, and he ended up passing away in my arms while LtCol Matt Takara and his vet staff tried to revive him with CPR and other life-saving steps.

I will never forget the vet staff's dedication, working tirelessly to bring him back. I am forever grateful for their actions that day. In closing, if it weren't for the high quality of vet care that these incredible veterinarians and their staff provide, MWD teams would not be an effective force multiplier.

Please take a moment to reflect on these amazing veterinarians and their tremendous service.



K9 Leads the Way!
Albert Johnson

Getting to Know Alfred Brenner

by Amy Winck

If I am ever fortunate enough to find myself at a cocktail party with Alfred Brenner, I will stick by him the entire time. With a warm face and voice that puts a listener at ease, any story that he tells would be one I would listen to.

In the interview conducted in 2024 by our president and Alfred's good friend, Albert Johnson, Alfred gives insight into his story and his book, Surviving With Grief.

Alfred joined the Marine Corps almost immediately after graduating high school in 2007. When asked why he became a K9 handler, he instinctively says, "The challenge."

As his career evolves, this love of a challenge continues. "We don't know why he was called Grief," Brenner notes, "but we think it has something to do with the fact that he gave all the handlers grief during training." So, leave it to Brenner to be up to the challenge and form nothing short of a once-in-a-lifetime bond with Grief, who inspired Brenner so much that he is now an author and speaker.

Brenner is humble about his military career. When

asked about some of his proudest moments, he responded, "We are proud of what we do, what the dogs do, no matter how small the moment. That's why we do it. Seeing what others in the K9 world are doing with their lives now makes people proud."

He is quick to give credit to others for his great achievements; whether it be getting into K9 handling because he admired another classmate who was going into it or Grief, who taught him to never give up and to keep going, Brenner is a teammate.

Without getting into the details of Grief's last day and Brenner's incredible story of recovery (I encourage you to read this book if you have not done so), it was another day in Afghanistan, and both parties were simply doing the job they were highly skilled to do.

Brenner is reflective and peaceful. Treated at Walter Reed Medical Center for his injuries, Brenner raves about the staff, the doctors, and the overall care and treatment he received. He later realizes that his plastic surgeon is one of the best in the world. Again, his humor



**Above: Photo of the team pre-deployment.
Below: Grief on deployment, with a favorite reward, the KONG toy. Both photos courtesy of Alfred Brenner.**



shines through in his story as he talks about how celebrities were always coming through to visit soldiers, but he only met Miss Florida, 2009.

A gifted storyteller with an incredible tale to share, he has gained tremendous wisdom from his life experiences.

We encourage everyone to find, read, and reflect on Brenner's life lessons from Surviving With Grief. The museum offers copies of this book at most of its public events, but if you don't get one from

us, you can find it at your local bookseller or online [here](#).

The ratings on this book are tremendous, as are the reviews, such as these from Amazon:

"What a genuine wartime account of Alfred and his K9 partner, Grief. I was drawn in immediately to the relationship that grew between them."

"Looking forward to seeing this depicted on the Big Screen!"

And so is the K9 community.



Above: A photo of Alfred Brenner and Grief on deployment. Photo courtesy of Alfred Brenner.

Barron

A Marine Dispatch from Okinawa by Sergeant George R. Voigt, Marine Corps Combat Correspondent

Disclaimer: This is an original source written at a time that uses language some may find offensive, or that is not acceptable today.

A Marine War Dog named Barron saved a company of Marines from a Jap ambush during the fighting on Motobu Peninsula here and also saved the life of his master, Marine Private First Class Joseph C. Coates of Cream Street, Poughkeepsie, NY.

Motobu Peninsula, a mass of deep, sharp ravines and high, narrow, heavily wooded ridges, probably is the roughest terrain encountered by Marines in the Pacific.

It was a natural country for ambushes. Barron, a Doberman Pinscher, and Coates were leading the company's advance across the peninsu-

la through the area of abandoned Jap entrenchments.

Suddenly, Barron alerted. There was nothing in sight. but the company took the dog's signal and dropped into one of the Jap trenches in the area. They didn't have to wait long.

Failing in their ambush, the Jap attacked. From the trench, Marines poured machine gun fire into the charging enemy and drove them back.

Then Coates, lying on the ground beside his dog, felt Barron's hair stand up and heard him growl. He glanced to the side and saw a column of Jap sneaking up the trail on the flank. He raised up and pumped four shots into the column, killing the officer in the lead.

A Marine armed with a Browning automatic rifle poured a clip of shells into the column. The Jap retreated.

"If Barron hadn't given me the signal that time, I'd still be lying in that trench," Coates said. "And so would a lot of other guys."

The attempt to infiltrate from the flank was the Jap's final effort to knock out the company. After a few more flurries from the front, they withdrew.

Barron was donated to the Marines Cops by Mrs. Anna Pashkow of 33 Berkley Street, Maplewood, NJ.



Doberman pinschers, like Barron, received their training at New River, North Carolina, Camp LeJeune.

The Museum Celebrates K9 Veterans Day

by Dixie Whitman

Celebrating K9 Veterans Day has always been an important tradition at the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum, and this year was no exception. We commemorated the occasion in several meaningful ways.

LMU Presentation

Our president, Albert Johnson, engaged with current and future veterinarians at Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) in Harrogate, Tennessee. The Paws of Valor Club, led by Aaron Anthony, invited our team to speak to their group.

Albert shared some of the museum's most precious artifact history with the attendees. Items shared with these dedicated students included the Army uniform jacket of Carol Roever, the first female with the MOS of dog handler, a WWII Messenger Dog collar, and numerous photos.

Round Table Discussion

The museum held a K9 Round Table Discussion as one of the day's events and released it to the public in honor of K9 Veterans Day. Since many participants had other commitments on March 13th, we hosted and pre-recorded the discussion earlier.

Those participating in the discussion included representatives of the USMC, the Navy, and the Air Force.

The museum welcomed questions from the general public and the K9 Community. These included questions such as "Tell me about your favorite K9" and "Tell me about one of your missions," to which the participants provided robust and in-depth responses.

Send Me

And, lastly, some of our team members attended the dedication of the new "Send Me" Memorial at Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The "Send Me" Memorial is a duplicate copy of the Jocelyn Russell statue installed in the Alice Walton Cowgirl Park at the National Cowgirl Museum, Fort Worth, TX, in 2021. This memorial honors one of the most notable dogs from the Global War on Terror, Lucca K458.

The new "Send Me" Memorial is located in Veterans Memorial Park, 1701 McFarland Blvd, Tuscaloosa, AL.

Our dedicated team stayed busy and motivated to honor the dogs on K9 Veterans Day.



Krystal Ann Tronboll, former Navy handler and President of the DDamien Project; Albert Johnson, former USMC handler and MWD Heritage Museum President; and Curtis Hendel, former Air Force handler and current AF Coordinator/ Board Member of the MWD Heritage Museum gather to discuss time their careers as dog handlers and time on the end of the leash.



Above: On K9 Veterans Day, Albert Johnson, Military Working Dog Heritage Museum President, accepted a gracious invitation to speak to the Paws of Valor Club at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee.

Photo by Aaron Anthony.

From Alabama, With Love, On K9 Veterans Day

by Dixie Whitman

A newly dedicated bronze statue of Specialized Search Dog Lucca K458 now patrols permanently along one of Tuscaloosa, Alabama's busiest corridors. Located in Veterans Memorial Park on McFarland Boulevard, beside a "Huey" attack helicopter and the mast of the USS Tuscaloosa, a heavy cruiser that participated in numerous WWII battles, Lucca serves as a symbol of protection for the citizens of Tuscaloosa. After all, they are her people.

Lucca's Story

Lucca's journey became one of the best-known K9 stories from the War on Terror. Born in Israel, the military selected her for a new Military Working Dog program capability:—Specialized Search Dog. These highly trained dogs play a vital role in detecting IED explosives, often working hundreds of yards ahead of their handlers. Lucca wore a radio receiver on her harness, which allowed her to receive directions. The command was simple: "Seek!"

Upon receiving the command, she got to work. With a keen nose capable of detecting explosive substances in the tiniest amounts, Lucca steadily inhaled, examined, and exhaled scent molecules with each breath. Whenever she identified and alerted her Marine handler to explosives from IEDs, he showered her with admiration.

"Good girl, Mama Lucca."

Lucca and her two handlers, Chris Willingham and Juan Rodriguez, completed over 400 missions to keep Americans safe. Around 10% of the time, her searches resulted in significant finds of ammunition, explosives, and/or insurgents. Each time, all of the men walking behind her returned home uninjured. Unfortunately, on her last mission, March 23, 2012, Lucca identified and alerted on an IED. A nearby secondary IED exploded, resulting in Lucca's catastrophic injury.

Bloodied and with a severely injured leg, her handler, Juan Rodriguez, provided first aid on the battlefield to save Lucca's life, evacuated her to the nearest hospital, and remained by her side throughout the critical days that followed.

Three-Legged Heroine

Juan saved her. While he couldn't save her leg, he did save her spirit.

After her serious injuries, the veterinary staff decided to amputate her front left leg, which had been damaged beyond repair. Her years of active service came to an end, and she retired to the home of her first handler, Chris Willingham.

She continued to serve as an ambassador for Military Working Dogs and even worked at Walter Reed Hospital in the greater Washington, DC area, offering



Above: The "Send Me" statue of Lucca K458, by sculptor Jocelyn Russell, remains on permanent patrol at Veterans Memorial Park, 1701 McFarland Blvd E., at University Mall, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Photo: Dixie Whitman



Pictured left to right with the statue of Lucca after the unveiling: Joe Phillips, Chuck Rotenberry, Dusty Ruiz, Alex Schnell, Rosendo Madrigal, Chris Willingham, Kris Knight, Juan Rodriguez, Aaron Stice, Alfred Brenner, Orlando Nunez, Branden DeLeon, Daniel Cornier, and Shane Green.

Photo: Andy Hauser

therapeutic nuzzles to other amputees returning from the war zone.

K9 Veterans Day Gathering

At noon on K9 Veterans Day, March 13, 2025, the Alabama Marines Foundation organized an intimate luncheon for a small gathering of Lucca's fans, including K9 handlers, close family members, and a few fortunate friends. This event provided a comfortable space for attendees to meet and engage in conversation with one another. The meal and the opportunity to reconnect set a wonderful tone for the remainder of the day's events.

At 3:00 PM, a larger crowd gathered at Veterans Memorial Park in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to dedicate a bronze statue of Lucca. Her two devoted partners, Chris Willingham and Juan Rodriguez, were joined by over a dozen other handlers, extended family, members of the K9 community, public officials from various levels, and local residents.

The ceremony began with a welcome address and an invocation. Following, sharply dressed officers from the Tuscaloosa Police Department presented the colors. After the Pledge of Allegiance and a stunning rendition of the national anthem, the audience listened attentively. Speeches were delivered, notes were referenced, stories were shared, and proclamations were read—yet they did not capture the entire story of Lucca's legacy.

Back to 'Bama

Lucca's story intertwines with Chris Willingham, his hometown of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and the gracious and welcoming people who live there.

As Krystal Tronboll, US Navy handler, stated, "One thing that really struck me was how close all of Chris's and Juan's friends still are to them.

"So great to see after all this time. They are all such a band of brothers."

She continued, "Seeing how the community supports the Willingham family, and how proud they all are of Chris and Lucca's accomplishments. It was amazing!"

This remarkable city has a patriotic heartbeat. It's special, this place. And it provides a stunningly appropriate location for this newest dog sculpture entitled, "Send Me." This sculpture is inspired by the Bible verse Isaiah 6:8, which states: "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then said I, 'Here am I; send me.'"

America sent Lucca to Iraq and Afghanistan—around the world to help bring home the Marines and Soldiers who followed in her paw prints.

Now she rests symbolically at home in Alabama, where she belongs.



Above: Attendees to a special luncheon had an opportunity to meet and greet fellow handlers from different branches. Left to right: Krystal Ann Tronboll, USN handler, and Orlando Nunez, USA handler.

Photo: Dixie Whitman



Above: Chris Willingham, President of US War Dogs Association and former handler of Lucca K458, treated guests to a K9 demonstration with MWD Castro from Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, Alabama.

Photo: Rob Schnell

Doctor “Doc” Richardson, DVM, Procurer of Steaks

by Greg Dunlap

Bases with assigned dog teams also have veterinarians who provide medical care for them. However, in a diverse role, the base veterinarian also serves as the sanitation officer for Mess Halls, overseeing food inspections and food preparation practices. Sergeants in charge of Mess Halls are notoriously belligerent and stingy with their best meats. That means the chore of procuring steaks for our barbecues went to our veterinarian! And if the Mess Hall didn't want a snippy inspection, guess what they produced? Genuinely nice steaks for us.

The dog handlers from the Security Forces reciprocated for the gifts of ribeyes, which are part of the unwritten rules of military bartering. Supply personnel are known for insisting that all paperwork be filled out properly in multiple copies, ensuring that everyone in their domain can keep a copy in their wastebasket. However, "battle damage" can be written off easily—it's just gone, poof, without a trace.

Military Procurement

At night, the dog handlers guarded and patrolled the

supply yard. We would receive a shopping list from the veterinarian, find what Supply needed, and "midnight procure" those items. This way, the supply section could experience another "battle damage" loss without hassle, waiting, or fuss. It was Vietnam; sappers were attempting to infiltrate, and we were there to ensure security. Do you have a problem with that?

Also, we reported anything out of sorts with our K9 partners, and Doc Richardson was right in correcting anything wrong. On top of that, every dog was looked over at least once every month, and we had up to fifty dogs in the kennels in 1968.

Valiant Vet

There was one day when I was assisting him in cleaning the teeth of several dogs, and here, one went into cardiac arrest from the injection he received to knock him out. So, Doc gave him artificial respiration while I did CPR to keep his heart pumping. Doc brought him back three times before it finally took, and the dog could stand on his own.



Above: Photo of “Doc” Richardson, DVM, and procurer of steaks taken at Da Nang, Vietnam in 1968.

Doc is remembered as someone who always “had your back.”

Photo courtesy of Greg Dunlap.

Doc Richardson really showed his own when we were expecting something to happen on the line. Movement noticed. Radio traffic increased. Caution flags go up. We hear, "Be extra vigilant!" So, as we are out there, on the line, who shows up to back us up? Doc Richardson, helmet, flack vest, M-16, and ammo belt, ready for ac-

tion. He quickly checked to see if anything was happening in our area and then off to the next post. There was something about the way he acted that let you know he was there for you.

He was truly one of a kind, and we were fortunate to have him with us during our tour.

Dr. Danielle Diamond: A Cut Above

by Amy Winck

What got you interested in veterinary medicine?

I have always been interested in veterinary medicine (except for a short stint where I thought I wanted to be a Marine Biologist – the movie "Free Willy" seemed to fan the flame on that one). I still have some schoolwork that my folks saved from elementary school, talking about how I wanted to be a vet. My mom would always roll her eyes at me since I seemed to know all the dogs' names in the neighborhood wherever we moved, and not necessarily the owners. Even as a kid, I was the one who always would rather play with Barbie's horse than any of the actual Barbies that my friends had. As I grew older, I generally liked biology and science from an educational perspective. I majored in Animal Science with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine and had two minors: Biology and Wildlife Conservation & Biology. I always had my sights set on veterinary school.

Growing up a Navy brat, did you always feel the pull to continue the "family tradition," or did it evolve?

Yes and no. I come from a very, very long line of Navy service (both of my grandfathers were lifers – one of which lied at the age of 16 to become a Sailor, my dad was a lifer, my dad's sister ended up marrying his shipmate – a lifer, and they had

two kids that went on to do ROTC and join the Navy). I told my folks at one point that I would have considered ROTC if I wasn't so dead set on veterinary school. It wasn't until I was enrolled in vet school at Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine that I became aware of the Army Veterinary Corps and their Health Professions Scholarship program. I applied and was awarded a two-year scholarship in exchange for three years of active duty service. I was very large-animal-oriented through veterinary school, so my original plan was to do my three years and then go into private practice as a large animal ambulatory practitioner. Best laid plans, right? Instead, I stayed on for over 14 years on active duty, including a small animal surgical residency. Now, I'm continuing my time as a reservist while working in a practice limited to surgery.

How long were you deployed, and were you working with military working dogs?

I've been on two deployments thus far and have been fortunate enough to have been assigned around the world otherwise.

During my first deployment, I spent a year in Djibouti, Africa (Duty in the 'Bouti), working with the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa from DEC 2012 to DEC 2013. While there, I

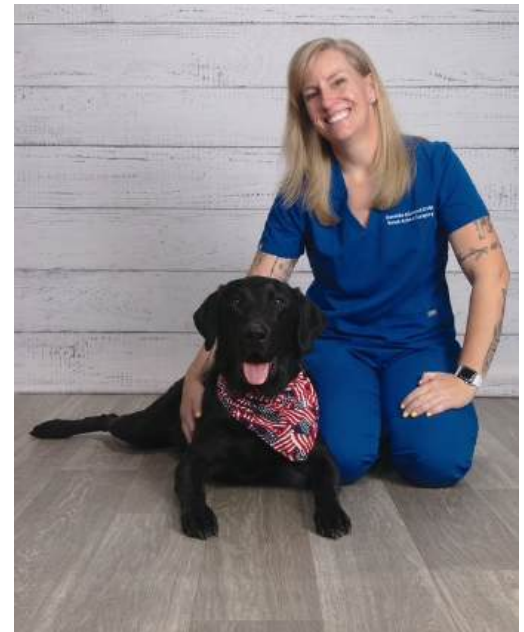
was the Surgeon Cell Veterinarian. I cared for about six to eight dogs at any time on the base and supervised my Food Inspection Sergeant. During my time there, I also conducted most of Public Health Command – Europe's food sanitary audits throughout the continent. I was fortunate enough to get linked up with a Civil Affairs unit during my time. Also, I conducted numerous missions with them, focusing on One Health topics with local nationals. It was an experience that was absolutely life-changing.

I recently completed a second deployment as a reservist, serving as the forward-deployed clinical consultant in the CENTCOM AOR out of Al Udeid, Qatar. Although my local military working dog

numbers were fairly small, I consulted with all veterinarians throughout the AOR on issues specific to the MWDs. I was also in charge of a team of five food inspectors, conducted several sanitary audits, and collaborated with the USAF Public Health team.

Working with animals must be stressful at times, how do you separate from work when it's time to do so?

Despite hearing jokes about how veterinarians must not like working with people (and let's face it, people are gross), most of our time and stress arise from the difficult conversations that we have to have with humans who are managing each pet or working dog that can't speak for themselves.



Above: Photo of Dr. Danielle Diamond and one of her beloved labradors, Eisenhower, aka "Howie."
Photo courtesy Dr. Danielle Diamond

Fortunately, I have a strong support group to turn to during tough times. I also have other outlets, such as spending time with my dogs, horseback riding, baking, fly fishing, and just getting outside whenever possible. I try not to take anything too personally and put a positive spin on any issues that arise.

Are there any military working dogs you have worked with that made more of an impression than most?

Ironically, we had one "dog that didn't exist" who came to me with an issue I had to collaborate with a human dentist to treat. When the dog and handler arrived for the procedure, I didn't think much of the bearded, burly entourage that accompanied the team. Anytime we have a dog team in a human healthcare facility, there's usually a lot of "paparazzi" involved and craning necks trying to get a peak of the action. It wasn't until a week or so later, when I was chatting with a human healthcare provider who had assisted, that it came to my attention that the dog we were working on was Cairo – the Belgian Malinois on the Osama Bin Laden raid.

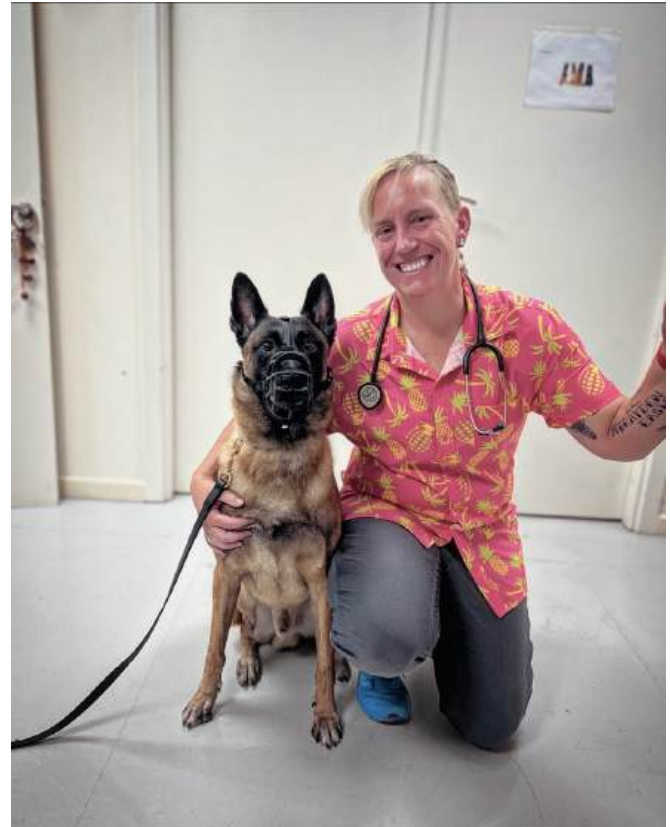
Do you currently have any pets?

I currently have two labradors: Eisenhower, aka "Howie," is an 8-year-old black labrador who I adopted from Peak Lab Rescue when I was in my residency in Raleigh, North Carolina,

and Queso, a 4-year-old chocolate labrador who I always joke is my "COVID/Mid-Life Crisis" puppy. I am dying to get another yellow labrador so that my trifecta will once again be complete!

Do you have a lesson or takeaway from your time helping and healing these military working dogs that you could share with the readers?

At the end of the day, I think that the bond that these handlers have with their dogs (well, or at least the ones that truly love the job and are passionate about their dogs) will always play a huge part in how effective I can be at helping them be at the top of their physical game to be successful at their jobs. Those handlers know their dogs way better than I ever will. Sometimes they don't have the best way to articulate it, but they are always first to know when something is off – even just by a subtle behavior. Their ability to key into what may be a minuscule change that would go unnoticed by an outsider may allow us to hone in on some problem before it becomes more pronounced. When it comes to the handler/dog teams, they truly get what they give – and those who really take the time and make the effort to get to the core of their dog's psyche are the ones who can best speak for them.



Above: Photo of Dr. Danielle Diamond and one of the Malinois she treated.

Below: Dr. Diamond with a mule. Military veterinarians treat a varied group of animals from working dogs, to Army mules, to livestock of our friends and allies and so much more. In addition to treating animals, they are responsible for the food safety of the troops they support.

Photos courtesy Dr. Danielle Diamond





**HONORING
MILITARY
VETERINARIANS**

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On April 26th we celebrate
World Veterinary Day

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MWDHERITAGEMUSEUM.ORG



Thanks to Dr. Danielle Diamond, Dr. Todd Thomas, and the Department of Defense for sharing these images of America's talented military veterinarians.



Military Working Dog Heritage Museum & Handler Center
P.O. Box 54
Newport, TN 37822
Phone: 865-507-8903

From the Team at MWDHM...
We invite you to join the museum's journey by signing up for a free *Paw Print* subscription.
Email: info@mwdhm.org

**Military Working Dog Heritage:
Always on Point**

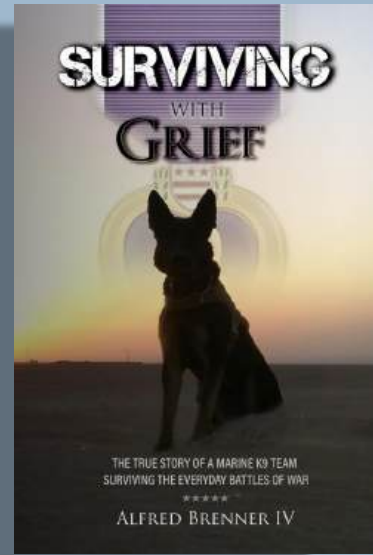
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Military Working Dog Heritage Museum



- Share your story.
- Share your vision.
- Share your voice.
- Share your copy of our newsletter.

Book of the Month

Military or civilian, dog owner or dog lover, **Surviving With Grief** is a book worth a read. The details of the author's time overseas and the loss of his K9 are only part of the story, and finding out the rest is something I highly recommend. Review by Amy Winck. See page 3 for more on this book review.



Did you read **Surviving With Grief**?
Please share your thoughts with us.

Let me know what I should read next.

Amy Winck

Submitted Photo of the Month



From Dr. Todd Thomas.

The US Army Corps of Engineers undertook the monumental task of building the Panama Canal between 1904 and 1914. It still serves as a connection waterway from the Pacific to the Atlantic. Americans built, maintained, and protected the area until 2000, when the canal reintegrated into the country of Panama.

From 1996 to 1999, Dr. Todd Thomas, an Army Veterinarian, served his county by running the veterinary clinic in the Panama Canal Zone. In this role, his primary responsibilities included caring for the military working dogs and the pets of the service members stationed there. The unique challenges of the jungle, with its dense foliage and rugged terrain, required some USAF Security Forces to patrol on horseback.

The Army ran a Jungle Training Center and maintained a small zoo for Soldier familiarization, so Dr. Thomas also took care of those captive animals. This photo features about an 11-12 feet-long anaconda. Many of the animals in the small zoo were getting older, so a few of them had various medical problems, including tumors. Dr. Thomas and his team sedated and X-rayed this massive reptile, looking for tumors.